Spit into the bag, please, sir

Michael McDonald

In case there is one among you who might on the rare occasion take a-smidgeon of a soupcon of a forbidden substance, please note that from June 2005 the NSW government intends to run a 12 month trial of random drug testing. It will target truck drivers and dance party folk for traces of cannabis, ecstasy and speed.

The main areas for the RDT will be obviously high-ways and major rave parties but, given the prevelence of cannabis and ekiy in this area, we might expect some attention.

The test will involve a mouth swab which takes about five minutes to process in a little gizmo. You can just see the gridlock on Lwins-dale Road on the weekend or in some rural community unwittingly hosting a doof.

No-one will be charged with an offence during the trial but you will not be allowed to drive your car for 24 hours. If, from the swab, police gain a ‘reasonable suspicion’ you might have more drugs, they can search your premises and request an order blood test.

‘What does this mean for the proposed medical cannabis trials Mr Carr has been calling for?’

The serious value in the RDT trial is in getting dangerous drivers off the road, those who sucked out they don’t know what they’re doing and truckies who have been up all night fuelled by speed. As the truckies’ union has pointed out, this is treating the symptom and not the cause, which in some cases is unscrupulous fleet owners who expect their drivers to reach perilous deadlines.

The downside is yet another intrusion upon civil liberties, a fiddling with our personal freedoms and our cause, which in some cases is dangerous drivers off the road.

Spit into the bag, please, sir. In a major first for both the recently opened Animal Welfare League NSW (AWL) Cat Adoption Centre and Mullumbimby Vet Neil Farquhar, a litter of surrendered kittens was recently desexed at eight weeks of age.

Initially reticent, Neil was pleasantly surprised by the results. ‘The kittens had an extremely quick recovery,’ he says. ‘Within a couple of hours, the five of them were up to their usual kitten shenanigans, jumping and playing around.’ Neil is now supportive of early desexing for animals in welfare.

There are definite advantages to the early neutering of cats up for adoption, for both the cats and the welfare organisations. Kittens need a much lower dose of anaesthetic, for example, and recovery time is substantially much quicker due to both

The art of kitten desexing

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This and their age. For under-funded welfare organisations like the AWL, this practice eliminates the need for the follow-up of adopted animals, thus saving valuable time and resources that can be spent caring for animals still in need.

As we approach kitten season, the desexing of stray and surrendered cats becomes even more important. Responsible desexing goes some way towards protecting our native wildlife by keeping the cat population in check.

The Cat Adoption Centre in Mullumbimby is looking for volunteers to help feed, clean and socialise the cats, while they await new owners. If you’d like to help, contact Kate or Alana on 6684 4070. Vet Neil Farquhar and Kyra Baker may be contacted at the Mullumbimby Veterinary Clinic on 6684 3818.