



Bay City Roller Les McKeown "chills out" before the band's weekend gigs behind bars. Photo: Dustin Shum

Woman accuses SPCA of 'senseless killing' of her cat

Simon Parry

The owner of a cat given a lethal injection after being handed over to the SPCA has accused the animal welfare group of the "senseless killing" of her pet.

Althea Tan, 40, claims two-year-old Athos was wearing a collar and a stainless-steel tag engraved with his name and Ms Tan's phone number when he was handed in first to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and then to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Athos - who went missing in January after being trapped by the management of an apartment block in an effort to stop cats climbing over residents' cars - had also been neutered and had a clipped ear to show he was cared for, Ms Tan said.

However, the SPCA said that although Athos was wearing a collar, he did not have a name tag. An SPCA spokeswoman said the cat was put down when he was found to be "too aggressive" to put up for adoption.

Singaporean Ms Tan, who heads a branding company, responded it would not have been possible for the name tag to be sep-



Althea Tan with Athos

arated from the collar. "If the collar stayed, the name tag stayed."

Ms Tan claims she rang the department within 24 hours of her cat going missing near her home in Central on January 12 and made several follow-up calls but it was not until February 2 that she was informed that Athos had been found and passed on to the SPCA.

When she contacted the SPCA, Ms Tan said she was told Athos had already been put down. "I saw the cat care colony programme co-ordinator and the first thing I did was show her the picture of Athos.

"She said 'Yes I remember him with his collar' and then she told me, 'He was euthanised'. I was very

emotional and I was crying, and she just said to me, 'These things happen'."

Ms Tan said: "If they can give her a lethal injection through the bars of a cage, why couldn't they have looked at her collar and inspected the tag to see my phone number?"

A department spokesman insisted Ms Tan only reported the cat missing to it on February 2 and there was no record of her making an earlier report. The cat was handed in on January 12 and passed to the SPCA on January 16, he said.

The SPCA spokeswoman said Athos was found in an initial examination to be "too aggressive to be handled safely".

"A red collar was noticed," she said. "[But] there was no identity tag attached to the collar. If there had been one, Athos would have been sedated or anaesthetised to allow us to read the tag."

TALKBACK

What can be done to improve animal welfare?

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