

Submission  
No 34

## INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**Organisation:** Companion Animal Network Australia

**Date Received:** 24 October 2024

---



24/10/2024

The Director  
Hon Emma Hurst MLC, Chairperson  
Portfolio Committee 8, Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
NSW 2000

**Subject: Response to NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management of Cat Populations in NSW**

Dear Hon Emma Hurst and Committee Members,

[Companion Animal Network Australia](#) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the management of cat populations. As an organisation dedicated to improving the welfare of companion animals across Australia, we are keen to offer evidence-based and humane strategies to address the challenges posed by cat overpopulation in New South Wales.

Our submission highlights the significant ecological impact that feral and free-roaming domestic cats have on native wildlife, particularly in both urban and regional environments. We propose a multi-faceted approach to this issue, centred on the implementation of humane management practices such as **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)** programs, **mass desexing initiatives**, and strong public education campaigns **promoting responsible pet ownership**.

We believe that **cat containment policies**, which have already proven effective in other regions, should be adopted to reduce the threat to wildlife and manage free-roaming cat populations more effectively. These policies, when combined with **public awareness programs** and financial support for containment solutions, can significantly reduce the number of unowned cats entering shelters and protect vulnerable wildlife species.

In addition to containment and education, we recommend legislative changes that include **mandatory desexing laws**, **stricter regulations on pet retailers**, and **support mechanisms for vulnerable pet owners**. Stronger enforcement of **microchipping and registration** laws, alongside **enhanced tenant rights** for pet owners ([see our Rent with Pets program](#)), will further prevent the abandonment and homelessness of cats.

The success of these strategies depends on collaboration between government agencies, local councils, animal welfare organisations, and communities. With a commitment to sustained investment in prevention programs and the necessary legislative reforms, we believe New South Wales can adopt a humane, effective, and sustainable approach to cat population management, benefiting both animals and the environment.



Companion Animal Network Australia is committed to working alongside all stakeholders to create positive and long-lasting change. We welcome further discussion on our recommendations and thank the Committee for considering our submission.

Sincerely,

Trish Ennis  
Chief Executive Officer  
Companion Animal Network Australia

### **About Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN)**

Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN) is a registered charity representing the companion animal welfare work of our five member agencies across the country, including Animal Welfare League QLD, Lort Smith (VIC), Sydney Dogs and Cats Home, Dogs' Homes of Tasmania and Saving Animals From Euthanasia Inc (WA).

Together, our members provide rescue, shelter, re-homing, fostering, health care and enrichment services to more than 50,000 animals every year. Through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives, we celebrate the human-animal bond and promote responsible pet ownership. We use our national voice to campaign for the humane treatment of all companion animals and we rally support for programs that deliver high welfare standards.

Australia CAN celebrates the human-animal bond and promotes responsible pet ownership through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives, including the Rent with Pets and Pets in Aged Care programs. To discover more, visit [www.australiacan.org.au](http://www.australiacan.org.au)