

Submission  
No 3

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

**Organisation:** Lions Club of Clarence - Environmental

**Date Received:** 18 November 2024

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## **NSW Parliament Legislative Council – Animal Welfare Committee**

### **Inquiry into management of cat populations in New South Wales**

#### **Submission statement from Barbara Linley, November 2024**

I believe it is time to change the NSW Companion Animal Act 1998 (CAA) in order to prevent cats from roaming and causing untold damage to native wildlife. No other domesticated animal is allowed to roam outside its owner's property boundaries. Cats must be managed in the same way. With the CAA revised, all NSW councils would be able to establish effective cat management policies. We already have a huge amount of evidence from across the state (and the whole country) of the damage to wildlife wrought by feral and domesticated cats – we must act to stop this now.

I have arrived at this position as a consequence of my personal experience working on the land and, more recently with community groups aiming to implement change at a local level. After moving to the Clarence Valley in 2015 I became very aware of the shocking amount of roadkill and the lack of community concern about this, especially in relation to the now endangered Coastal Emu. As a consequence, I co-founded a new Lions Club, the first in Australia to focus on the importance of biodiversity and the protection and preservation of threatened species. We had great success with our Coastal Emu campaign and working with the community to bring about change. This project taught me the power of collaborating simultaneously with a range of individuals and community groups.

My background as a superfine merino farmer in Victoria, gave me firsthand experience of abortion in sheep (not to mention humans) caused by feral cats with toxoplasmosis. In recent years I have become more and more concerned about the impact of roaming cats on native species in the Clarence Valley. I was invited to consider whether our Club could take this issue on as a campaign. In 2021 I formed a Lions Club Cat Committee. We undertook a community survey and published an educational pamphlet which was endorsed by Clarence Valley Council (documents attached). I was also an invited member of Council's Biodiversity Advisory Committee to which I introduced motions related to the management of feral and domestic cats (see attached).

Recently I joined forces with two colleagues, Reece Luxton (Clarence Valley Council) and Laura Noble (Clarence Valley Conservation in Action), in order to bring attention to the crucial issue of changing the CAA to bring cat management into line with other domesticated animals. We would be delighted to address the Animal Welfare Committee in person with our ideas for what could be done in local communities once it is illegal for cats to roam.