

**Submission
No 21**

INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Australian Wildlife Society (AWS)

Date Received: 4 November 2024



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Correspondence via email: animal.welfare@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Re: Inquiry Into the Management of Cat Populations in NSW Submission

Dear Committee,

We are concerned about the impact of roaming pet cats on our native wildlife. We therefore support sensible amendments to the law to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

Cats are both valued companion animals and one of the world's most successful predators. In NSW, approximately 96 million native mammals, birds, and reptiles are killed by roaming pet cats yearly – with about 110 native animals killed by each roaming, hunting pet cat. Unfortunately, about 70 percent of cat owners still allow their pets to roam.

We cannot change the nature of cats, but we can change the culture that allows pet cats to roam and kill. We urgently need responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained to their property to save our native wildlife.

This will also benefit pet cats. Cats that are kept at home can live up to 10 years longer than cats that roam, and they are often injured or killed by fighting, car accidents, and disease.

This reform should be accompanied by education and compliance funding to make desexing and registration easier. We also need clear rules around desexing by 4 months of age to prevent unwanted breeding and require all local governments to implement companion animal management plans.

We call on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare Committee to support:

1. Amendments to the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state,
2. State government funding of a minimum of \$9 million to fund compliance, education, desexing, identification and registration programs,
3. Requirements for all local governments to develop companion animal management plans to protect wildlife, as is required in Victoria,
4. Development of a state-wide web resource for responsible pet ownership, and
5. Make desexing mandatory state-wide by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT and SA.

Australian Wildlife Society, founded in 1909, is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation dedicated to conserving Australian wildlife (flora and fauna) through national environmental education, advocacy, and community involvement. The Society encourages your strong support for this action and an acknowledgement of the receipt of this letter, please.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Medway AM
Chief Executive Officer

