

**Submission
No 87**

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

Name: Terry Howard
Date Received: 8 November 2024

Killing cats is not the way to protect wildlife.

There is no evidence it does.

There is another way that does - a way that is not cruel or barbaric.

Community cat programs that focus on rehoming, targeted desexing, TNR and community education have proven highly effective at reducing stray cat populations.

I have family who live in an area that has introduced this and the success has been remarkable.

The cats clearly benefit but so do the hard pressed rescue orgs and shelters that are buckling under immense pressure.

These are the facts:

A NSW Government-commissioned report supports large-scale desexing programs instead, showing that killing programs are ineffective.

The recent NSW Pound Inquiry has recommended a proactive solution: providing grants to councils and rescue organisations to fund large-scale, targeted desexing programs across the state, including community cat desexing in areas with large homeless cat populations, especially disadvantaged communities.

These kinds of programs are a long-term, compassionate solution that reduces stray cat populations without demonising cats.

The best solution is helping semi-owners and owners in disadvantaged areas by providing free desexing and microchipping through programs like the Community Cat Program.

Proactive community cat programs have been scientifically proven to reduce stray cat populations, decrease nuisance complaints and prevent wildlife predation.

The Rand myth of domestic cats & urban wildlife provides a helpful summary of common misconceptions and effective solutions such as desexing for managing cats and reducing the number of homeless cats.

When creating policies for reducing feral and community cat populations, it's essential to consider the Vacuum Effect, an ecological principle demonstrating that removing animals from an area only results in new animals filling the space.

Without addressing the root causes of population growth, removal efforts are unsustainable and ultimately ineffective.

Those points are compelling and must be taken into account.

Finally, the greatest risk to native animals is not cats.

It is destruction of habitat, land clearing, being hit by vehicles and other human activity.

Humans are the real threat to wildlife - not cats.

In conclusion rehoming, targeted desexing, TNR and community education is the solution along with preventing the destruction of wildlife habitat and stopping other human behaviour such as hunting.

Killing cats is not the answer.

Thank you.