

**Submission
No 102**

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

Name: Ms Dorin Suci
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Disclaimer - we own a cat, a stray, beloved by the whole family.

Since we moved onto our double suburban block 2 years ago it has killed: a family of quails, numerous ringtail possums, rosellas, lorikeets, noisy mynahs and countless small reptiles (smaller birds in our community haven't been seen for decades).

He is now always supervised outside but even this isn't enough.

One day standing right behind him and oblivious to a rosella about 4 metres away he pounced. Too late. Took rosella to the vet. Will never forget the grip of that little beak on my finger especially now knowing the bird was in terrible pain with a broken wing. It had to be euthanised.

We're buying a cat containment a very for outside which he will go into for a few hours each day while the rest of the time he'll be indoors.

It will be a great relief to us once this animal's life is over. He has destroyed so many others because that's what, despite being neutered, he is designed to do.

We have new neighbours across the road.

After what we suspect was a roaming cat killed the family of ringtail possums we had been watching for months (leaving the remains strewn across the lawn) we were moved to make a notice including "graphic content" and the story of our unlucky possum family.

We delivered it to around 20 homes to encourage people to keep their cats in at night (we often catch the roamers on the roads, eyes glowing in the headlights), including to our neighbours.

Last week we found their cat in our garden ready to pounce on a family of butcher birds.

We decided to put our cat trap out (it has come to that).

Within a few hours I received a text - their cat was in the trap (10.15pm).

Neighbours feel we weren't being "community minded" when we trapped their cat.

I explained the details - millions of animals killed every year throughout Australia, small bird populations decimated, small marsupial populations decimated, animals extinct due to local cat populations and a tonne of scientific (and anecdotal) evidence about the damage they do.

I was told that protecting native wildlife was at the bottom of their list of priorities, that it was their son's pet and he would be devastated if anything happened to it. The mother was extremely stressed by other issues so I agreed we wouldn't put the trap out (not wanting to add to her stress). She said they would do their best to keep their cat in at night (they often rattle a bag of cat biscuits to bring it in - always after 9 or 10 pm). She said they can't afford screen doors. Funny, because their kids attend a private school, they drive new vehicles, have a huge camper van,

expensive bikes, drones etc. And they have just bought a kelpie.... I told them they would have no wildlife in their backyard (nor will the Reserve which their property backs onto).

So this is an example of the attitudes we're up against.

Many people are disconnected from nature even though we're a part of it. They don't understand and don't care.

I have been teaching for 30 years. Perceptions and priorities have changed dramatically.

I am really shocked at the way young children perceive nature and how at an early age they are frightened, repulsed or not interested.

It's normal practise after the holidays to ask how it was for them, what they did, where they went etc.

I make a point of asking if they saw anything wonderful in nature or in their gardens.

Quite often I will hear stories of how their cat/dog killed a possum/lizard/bird and it went to the vet but died.

Domestic pets are causing havoc to our native wildlife.

Our local council, Lake Macquarie, has 100,000 registered dogs and about 220,000 humans. I couldn't locate data for cats (if there is any).

Council spends a fortune accommodating dogs and their owners owners - signs everywhere as to the dog status of the area (often ignored), specially built off-leash areas in parks, off-leash areas on beaches.

But for cats? Nothing.

No legal requirement for neutering, breeding (the kittens oh the kittens!), containment during the day or night.

I am at a loss to understand how we've gotten here - a nation which has effectively prioritised pet ownership, including the most prolific and deadly of them all, cats, over our helpless, greatly diminished and threatened native wildlife.

It is time to act. A commitment to National Cat Containment Laws at Local, State and Federal levels would be a start. It can't come quickly enough.