

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

## **Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the management of cat populations – November 2024**

I make this submission as a cat loving owner, and as a volunteer who works to rehome shelter cats.

No one denies the damage cats have on our native wildlife populations. Left to their own devices domesticated cats, even pampered pets, naturally hunt and kill small animals. Ideally cats, like dogs, should be contained to their owner's property, and only allowed off their property when under the owner's control (caged or being walked on a harness).

**I support a change in legislation to enforce cat containment, but this change has to happen in stages.** This is to ensure sufficient time is given to the implementation of firstly, measures to greatly reduce the numbers of cats in our community, and secondly, to educate cat owners on the new 'normal' of responsible cat ownership.

### **Measures to reduce cats in our community**

The top 3 reasons cats end up at the shelter I volunteer at are:

1. As a kitten when a female cat falls pregnant. This could be from a stray cat which people have found, or where the cat's owners state they were unable to desex their cat (due to cost and/or access to desexing. Access can be getting to the vet as they have no car, and local public transport won't allow animals.)
2. Surrendered because the owner is unable to secure rental accommodation with their cat/s.
3. As an adult stray who gets picked up by council rangers and is never claimed from the pound.

These reasons are replicated throughout Australia, and all shelters are currently struggling to deal with the huge number of cats needing help.

So, what avenues best address the top 3 reasons cats are ending up in shelters?

1. Managing community cat populations by the TNR method (Trap/Neuter/Release) to greater reduce the number of stray cats which continue to breed. In addition, making the desexing of pets EASY - through free or heavily subsidised desexing, which is widely available, and includes services to safely transport pets to and from the owner's residence for desexing.
2. Improve rental laws so that pet owners are not discriminated against and denied rentals because they have a pet cat/s.
3. Generally the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of cats (strays which are never claimed) exist because of points 1 and 2. The typical cat in this scenario is an unplanned pet that was never microchipped or desexed, who is left to stray and find an alternative home as soon as it becomes difficult to keep.

### **Education on responsible cat ownership**

At the same time as the government implements measures to address the huge numbers of unwanted cats in the community, an education program needs to be rolled out to cat owners regarding what responsible cat ownership looks like moving forward.

This would include information about the improved life expectancy and the minimisation of injuries and disease experienced by cats who are safely contained on their owner's property.

It would also include information about cat containment and how this can be achieved inexpensively, and include engagement with local councils to work with owners to set up cat containment systems.

### **Staged legislated cat containment measures**

Once a reduction in overall cat numbers and owner education has been achieved, then a staged implementation of cat containment measures could be legislated, allowing current owners and their cats set periods of time to adjust to the new arrangements.

The staged implementation also allows additional time for work to continue on the overall reduction of cat numbers in the community. This additional time would hopefully serve to minimise animal welfare abuse directed at cats, such as mass dumpings or killings.

Thanks for considering my submission.