

Submission
No 119

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

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The management of cats needs to be done on a scientific and humane basis. The killing of cats to protect wildlife has not worked before and will not work now. Programs that focus on rehoming, desexing and education are far more successful than a mere blanket ban.

As a case in point. My sister suddenly had 5 adult cats appear in her garden in a suburban backyard in Sydney west. We assumed that they had been shifted from one of the surrounding large factories. Within 3 weeks there were 12 kittens to add to the mix.

With the outstanding help of the Cat Protection Society, we trapped and desexed all the adults, 2 males, 3 females. 7 of the kittens died due to misadventure and failure to thrive. The remaining kittens were also desexed when appropriate, 3 were rehomed, and 2 joined the colony.

All cats are now fed, housed and given medical assistance when required. Whilst 7 cats was probably more than anyone expected to care for at one time, they have become family members, along with a rabbit and a dog.

The targeted desexing of this small group has prevented the delivery of approx 25 to 30 kittens.

Large scale desexing of family, semi owned and stray cats, particularly in Sydney west would have a much greater impact as shown by this one small colony.

Such programs would dramatically decrease the cat complaints, the impounding, relieve the already overburdened rescues and assist the vets and nurses required to euthanise healthy animals and kittens at an astronomical rate. The toll on their mental health must be debilitating.

The protection of wildlife is a priority but the studies relied upon, particularly by the Invasive Species Council, are laughable. The figures of billions of animals predated by cats annually are based on 4 studies that have extrapolated the figures from a small group of cats. None of the studies actually identified how many cats in the studies actually hunted but then concluded that if 1 cat predated 2 birds then all 130 in the study must do the same and then went even further to suggest that all 3 million cats do the same.

Yet when the stomach contents of urban stray cats are examined, the contents were nothing but black rats

It is habitat destruction and degradation that is impacting biodiversity, fragile species and causing extinctions. The cat is the easy scapegoat. Car strikes kill more native animals than cats and dogs put together. One only has to drive west on the M4 to see dead kangaroos and wallabies forced from their feeding grounds by the latest housing development.

I support targeted free or subsidised desexing of pet, semi owned and stray cats.

I support education and encouraging cats to be kept at home.

I do not support mandatory curfews or 24 hour containment. This is not possible for many owners, renters and the socially disadvantaged as such enclosures can cost up to 2 thousand dollars. It is not possible to contain the semi owned or the stray cat but would then encourage some to inflict cruelty on cats found outside their containment.

It has been my experience that once a stray cat is provided with food, medical treatment and a warm bed, they rarely leave it. Cats have provided companionship, a friend during difficult times, a source of amusement and a valued family member. All animals should be treated as sentient and protected from acts of cruelty, mass euthanasia, poisoning, shooting and bludgeoning.

The NSW Pound Enquiry supported a proactive solution of large scale desexing with a resulting decrease in cat intake into pounds and shelters, a reduction in the killing of healthy cats and lessen the impact on the mental health of staff. This proactive solution was supported by WIRES as a way of reducing impact on wildlife

I hope the NSW government takes this opportunity to support proactive, humane and scientifically based programs that have that their core the philosophy that the cat is much loved animal and a sentient being