

Submission  
No 122

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

**Name:** Mrs Nicole Ferrara

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# **SUBMISSION**

## **Management of cat populations in New South Wales**

### **Introduction**

My name is Nicole Ferrara. My husband Alex and I founded Lazy Bones Cat Rescue, near Goulburn NSW.

20 years ago when we took in our first homeless cat, we had no idea there was a problem with the amount of homeless cats in our area. Since then we have assisted individuals and other cat rescues to trap and rehome cats. We have trapped cats from three colonies on our own. We have done all this with our own money. It is a very expensive exercise.

We currently have 32 cats in care, 31 at our own house and 1 cat in foster. Most of these cats are unable to be rehomed as they are not friendly, are old or have ongoing medical issues. No one has asked us to adopt any of these cats, we only ever get asked for kittens or the odd cat on the younger side. We only ever get asked for 'lap cats'.

The reason we currently have so many unadoptable cats is once you start trapping a colony you can't pick and choose who you trap, and we wouldn't anyway. Some cats are friendly and can be rehomed, while the cats that don't care too much for humans will live out their lives at our rescue. While we would never turn away a cat simply because they are not a 'lap cat', it has prevented us from taking on further cats in the last year. We are just over our capacity of 30.

Issues that I believe should be looked at:

### **Cat containment**

All cats adopted from a certain point (ie 1 July 2025) must be kept indoors or in an outdoor enclosure. All cats must be desexed, microchipped and registered. If councils had more funding, there could be staff directly responsible for ensuring cat ownership rules are followed.

A contained cat does not kill wildlife.

### **Money for rescues**

Government funding to cat rescues to carry out desexing programs.

### **Enquiry into RSPCA**

I believe the RSPCA has lost its social licence.

This organisation, 'for all creatures great and small', for one, concentrate mainly on cats and dogs and two, have a very high euthanasia rate.

RSPCA NSW financial year ended 30 June 2024 paid over \$75 million in wages, \$7 million in superannuation and \$18 million in admin expenses amongst other things. Animal related expenses accounted for just over \$11 million. They hold over \$20 million in cash and cash equivalents.

Now I can honestly say that I don't know of one single cat rescue (in my circle of friends) that has any 'spare' money, let alone \$20 million dollars. ALL money that comes into these smaller rescues goes on the cats . . . always. Why would rescues 'hoard' money when animals are suffering on the streets? Why would any rescue pay themselves a wage when animals are suffering on the streets? ALL people (that I know of) that run cat rescues mostly use their own money. Most people are too busy rescuing cats to take time out to fundraise.

Why do the RSPCA, who already bring in millions of dollars, get any form of government funding while smaller rescues that I see doing all the work, get little to nothing from the government? This needs to change.

The RSPCA, as far as I am aware, do not undertake any form of cat rescue. They do not have any trapping programs. They do not even assist with cat hoarding situations where cats are in danger. I know of two such instances, that I have participated in, where cats were in hoarding situations. All local rescues were full. The RSPCA were called, they visited the premises and said they couldn't help. If they were to help, the cats would have to be euthanised. It was left up to small rescues that were already full to trap the cats and find homes for them. Sadly not all the cats were able to be saved due to their neglect.

Again, why are smaller rescues left to do all the work while the RSPCA hoards money and euthanises as a first resort.

### **Less funding for RSPCA and more for smaller rescues who do all the work**

As above, I feel that smaller rescues that undertake trapping and rehoming programs, should be considered for funding.

At a minimum, trapping one cat costs roughly \$300.00 for desexing, microchipping, vaccination and flea and worm treatment. This is more if the cat has other health issues. A few cats that we have taken off the streets have required a lot more work for example, bad teeth. Dental issues can cost between \$800 and \$2200 per cat (this is from my own personal experience). Tests for other issues can also go into the thousands of dollars, x-rays, bloods etc.

The RSPCA's answer to high costs is to euthanise (even with a bank balance of \$20 million). As someone that runs a cat rescue, we would never euthanise unless it was absolutely necessary and vet recommended. We have never euthanised and would never euthanise because it was 'easy'.

### **Vouchers for desexing**

More funding for councils could result in them offering desexing vouchers. I understand that some councils do offer such vouchers however it is usually only for pensioners or people currently on government benefits. With the cost of living, many people are

struggling. With more funding, these vouchers could be offered to everyone, including rescues.

### **Councils need more funding**

Council animal facilities have been underfunded for too long. My local council animal facility could definitely do with an upgrade, especially in the cat room. I would like to see all councils offering desexing vouchers as well as free microchipping and vaccinations.

### **Harsh penalties for cat hoarders. Hoarders are heavily fined for allowing cats to breed uncontrollably. Offenders should not be allowed to have any further cats . . . ever!**

Cat hoarders are a genuine problem. They believe they are helping cats by taking them off the streets. Cats are left un-desexed and before they know it they have too many cats to handle. This results in cats not being fed a proper diet and not receiving proper, or any, veterinary care. Again, small rescues are called in to clean up the mess (so to speak).

Laying charges and having a record against these hoarders goes a long way to prevent them from just starting over.

### **Trap, neuter, release programs to be legal**

Amend legislation so TNR programs are legal. Although I am not a fan of returning cats to the streets, I would much prefer cats be taken off the streets and kept off the streets. I also believe TNR has a purpose. When rescues are full, TNR prevents further births. TNR programs have been proven to reduce numbers of cats in colonies.

### **Funding for TNR for colonies**

Smaller cat rescues should be able to access funding to trap, neuter and release. There are more and more colonies popping up, I know of many in my area alone. Left unattended, these colonies blow out to huge numbers in a very small amount of time. Unless you can trap all the cats in the colony, the exercise is useless. It is sometimes too costly for smaller rescues to take on such a huge task.

Regards  
Nicole Ferrara