

Submission  
No 135

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

**Name:** Rebecca Howard  
**Date Received:** 5 November 2024

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Hello, my name is Rebecca. I wish to express my concern about the impact roaming pet cats are having on our native wildlife. I live in Charlestown 2290 NSW and in my 15 years in my home, I have noticed a significant decline in the wildlife visiting my garden. When I first moved here I saw a variety of lizards and small birds, however despite planting a wildlife friendly garden I find that I no longer see these creatures. My next door neighbour alone has 5 cats and these are allowed to roam freely 24 hours a day.

I therefore support sensible amendments to the law to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

Cats are both valued companion animals and one of the world's most successful predators. In NSW, approximately 96 million native mammals, birds, reptiles and insects are killed by roaming pet cats every year.

We can't change the nature of cats, but we can change the social acceptance of allowing pet cats to roam and kill. NSW urgently needs responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained.

This will also benefit pet cats. Cats that are kept at home are happy and can live up to 10 years longer than cats that roam which are often injured or killed through fighting, car accidents and disease. As a registered Pet Carer with the Mad Paws app, I have seen first-hand successful indoor cat ownership by my clients. The cats have plenty of indoor stimulation and live a contented, happy, healthy life.

Reform to regulations would work best accompanied by funding for education and compliance and to make desexing and registration easier for owners. We also need clear rules around desexing by 4 months of age to prevent unwanted breeding and requirements for all local governments to develop and implement companion animal management plans.

I am therefore calling on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare committee to support:

Amendments to the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

State government funding of a minimum of \$9 million to fund compliance, education, desexing, identification and registration programs.

Requirements for all local governments to develop companion animal management plans to protect wildlife (as is required in Victoria.)

Development of a state-wide web resource for responsible pet ownership.

Making desexing mandatory state-wide by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT and SA.

Kind Regards,

Rebecca Howard