

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

To whom it may concern

I would like to express concern about any laws around cat containment for the following reasons.

- free ranging domestic cats in urban areas may kill wildlife, but most kills are either non threatened wildlife or other invasive species. The role that cats play in controlling populations of mice, rats and rabbits is never considered in impact estimates. The types of birds killed by domestic pet cats reflect the dominant species in the local area, which are birds such as noisy miners (culls have been considered) and species that have thrived in human environments such as rainbow lorikeets.

- all statistics on the amount of killing cats do is based on extrapolations; it is nothing close to direct data, and would vary hugely based on where cats are roaming.

- not all cats kill; and many of the more specialised breeds are virtually unable to kill wildlife. Brachycephalic breeds for example are virtually unable to kill due to their facial anatomy. Some cats are disinclined or disinterested in hunting behaviour when their food needs are met.

- cats are companion animals who have a special relationship with humans. They are loved often with the intensity reserved for family members. Killing someone's pet as part of 'invasive species control' is a trauma that some humans would struggle to recover from.

- Cats, like dogs, are liable to escape occasionally, even if they are housed in appropriate cat enclosures and not allowed to roam. It's frightening enough to worry about a lost pet without the additional concern that deliberate harm may be inflicted on the animal by law. Issuing fines to pet owners limits people from owning pets and may result in a higher number of abandoned animals.

- cats have evolved to live outside and experience the joy and stimulation of sun, plants, trees and places to explore. Confining any sentient creature to a life indoors is cruel. Whilst outdoor cat enclosures are a good solution, they are expensive to install, often costing in the thousands. This is out of reach for many owners.

- classifying any animal as a 'pest' or 'invasive' denies it rights as a sentient being. Cats are present in Australia due to humans, they do not know they are in the 'wrong' place. They seek comfort, safety and stimulation; and they feel pain and fear. Any measures to manage their numbers or lifestyle must prioritise the basic rights of the individual animal which should include the right not to be killed, deliberately frightened or hurt.

There are other solutions beyond compulsory cat containment

- increased and compulsory desexing, subsidised if necessary

- feral cat trapping and desexing

- subsidies for outdoor cat enclosures

- breeding of endangered native species to be aware of cats and able to increasingly escape predation (this is not a fantasy, it's being attempted via multiple different strategies <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/05/release-the-cats-training-native-species-to-fear-invasive-predators/amp/>)

Attention should be aimed at human causes of species decline - traffic, land clearing/habitat destruction and deforestation. Unlike cats, we are morally culpable for the environmental damage we have wrought.

Yours Sincerely