

Submission
No 156

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 22 November 2024

Partially
Confidential

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in regards to the inquiry into management of cats in NSW.

I am a registered volunteer wildlife carer and I see first hand what cats do to our wildlife. I care for birds specifically, and the impact of a cat bite is usually fatal regardless of whether the bite itself was serious. The bacteria in a cats mouth makes it impossible for a bird to survive a bite without antibiotics. We usually have less than 5 hours to get antibiotics into these birds, otherwise it is not reversible. This is problematic as we don't always get the birds into care immediately and can't always access a vet to get the antibiotics. These birds die a slow and horrible death as the infection takes over their little bodies.

We urgently need responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to **ensure pet owners keep cats contained in their houses**, they do not belong in backyards (unless in cat enclosure) nor in public spaces or other peoples properties. Should they wish to take them outside, they should be leashed.

In addition to pet cats being contained, an additional serious issue is that of cat rescue organisations who have the policy of 'treat and release'. I was absolutely dumbfounded when I heard this was occurring and upon speaking to others, realise that not many people know they do this. These **volunteer run cat rescue organisations catch feral cats off the street, take them to the vet to be treated** for their illnesses/injuries/worming etc, then, as they know they won't be able to rehome them, **they release them back on to the street**. Not only is this devastating for our native wildlife but is also cruel to that cat who will likely end up very sick again. To give an example of how devastating that practice is for our wildlife, I will on average rehabilitate up to 300 birds per year, these organisations releasing just 3 cats in that same year will undo all the work I have done for our native wildlife during that time. That is approximately 20-30 hours of wildlife volunteer work per week, with the worth wiped out completely by three cats.

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. Further, large fines for cats found outside owners property with proceeds of fines going to wildlife organisations.

Requirements for all local governments to develop companion animal management plans in consultation with wildlife organisations.

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,

