

Submission
No 211

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

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As a resident of Cumbalum, I am very concerned about the impact roaming pet cats are having on our native wildlife. 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. As a member of our local residents association I drafted a proposal for our local government which would help to control cats and the damage they do as well as control cats and reduce harm to them from dogs and cars and even aggressive birds and snakes.

Our estate has an unenforceable cat curfew between 6pm and 6pm, which RSPCA and other organisations have indicated remain ineffective as cats are predators 24 hours a day.

Cats are both valued companion animals and one of the world's most successful predators. I used to be a cat owner (we no longer have a companion animal because we travel a lot) In NSW, approximately 96 million native mammals, birds and reptiles are killed by roaming pet cats every year – with about 110 native animals killed by each roaming, hunting pet cat. Unfortunately about 70% of cat owners still allow their pets to roam.

We can't change the nature of cats, but we can change the culture that allows pet cats to roam and kill. We urgently need responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained to their property to save our native wildlife.

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.

This reform should be accompanied by funding for education, compliance and to make desexing and registration easier. 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.

The Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy, Commonwealth Of Australia, 2020, report on the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia accepted the need for greater powers for local councils.

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.

Cat control is good for cats and for other species and sensible reform, phased in, and funded is a much needed reform for protecting our environment. Please give local councils the tools to care for cats and other species by changing the Companion Animal Act 1998 (NSW)

Kind Regards,

Anthony Gooley