

Submission  
No 219

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

**Name:** Lea Kannar-Lichtenberger

**Date Received:** 20 November 2024

---

Hello

As a past and current (indoor) cat owner and a current a resident of Birchgrove, I am very concerned about the impact roaming pet cats are having on our native wildlife. I have seen first-hand the damage done by stray cats in my area to the ringtail possum population (I can supply images if required). Knowing there was astray cat in my area, I was unable to get any action on its removal/relocation. All avenues I approached said it was impossible under our current government legislation. I feel strongly that it is time to change these rules.

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 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. I know that some councils say it's impossible to police, however not having any restrictions makes it impossible for anyone to put pressure on other owners to protect our 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.

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.

I feel that NSW should not be lagging behind other states in making desexing mandatory state-wide by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT and SA.

Kind Regards,

Lea Kannar-Lichtenberger