

**Submission  
No 180**

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

**Organisation:** The Stray Cats Project Inc.

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# The Stray Cats Project Incorporated.

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## **Submission to the inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales**

We are an incorporated association and registered charity based in Newcastle NSW and funded by the generosity of our donors and our own efforts. We deal with 'colonies' of stray cats around Newcastle. When our means allow it we assist individuals who have 'cat problems'. Particularly the elderly and those on a low income.

We receive no government funding beyond the ATO extending DGR status to us.

Our activities are centered around desexing and where possible finding a permanent home for street cats and stray cats who are otherwise unwanted, unloved, under fed, over sexed, and regarded as a 'problem' by many in the community.

In the event of an animal being unsuited to a domestic life it is returned to the colony after being desexed and subsequently fed and monitored. We endeavour to relieve the suffering of the cats, reduce their proliferation by desexing, and reduce their social and environmental impact.

If we had a motto it would be desex, desex, desex. The root cause of an overabundance of fertile cats running free whether it be because of an irresponsible owner or because they are homeless.

- a) Obviously we are cat lovers but do not attempt to deny that a population of homeless or unrestrained cats does have communal and environmental impact.
- b) The most effective 'cat containment' measure is for owners to keep their animals securely at home. This benefits the cats, the environment, and the community. Barrier fencing is available and might suit individual owners and properties. Many owners of 'indoor' cats are able to maintain a secure annexe or outdoor area.
- c) Our experience is that containment of cats on the owner's premises benefits the cat as well as the community and environment. provided of course that the living area that provides mental stimulation, exercise facilities, etc. We note that the RSPCA express

similar opinion provided of course that mental stimulation and exercise facilities are provide. Where practical the provision of a secure outdoor where practical is to be encouraged.

- d) Education certainly has a role to play and is reasonably cost effective but it is wasted on those who do not care. There is a place for responsible pet owner initiatives such as the free or subsidised microchipping and desexing programmes such as those operated by some Councils.
- e) In our experience the role of Council in cat management is limited. The rangers roles are varied and they have a budget/Much of the work would need to be done outside office hours. If stronger cat containment controls were to be introduced the average council animal department would need a large increase in their budget and staffing.
- f) The benefits of a mass desexing programme would depend on how it were to be conducted and by whom. It it were to support individuals with the cost of the procedure it could be very effective. We have an obvious conflict of interest e but believe that assistance to groups such as ours who are doing the work would be beneficial. There are also groups such as Newcastle based 'Hunter Animal Watch who assist low income individuals with the cost of desexing.
- g) We would hope that a properly conducted cat containment programme particularly in conjunction with education would reduce the number of animals arriving at pounds. Desexing is likely to be more effective.
- h) We are not familiar with measures taken in other states or territories.
- i) We prefer not to use the word 'Feral' even if it is technically correct as it is generally used as a pejorative term. Again we believe that desexing and education are of the utmost importance

Thank you for the opportunity for expressing our views.

David Horkan

Hon. Secretary,  
The Stray Cats Project Inc.