

**Submission
No 231**

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

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Domestic & Feral Cats No1. Invasive Species

“It is incumbent upon an elected government to be the guardian for future generations of its environment, including its native flora and fauna. The State should protect its native flora and fauna above all other invasive and harmful non-native species”

Here are a number of points for your review to consider”

1. Lack of appropriate action by political leaders.
2. Australia has unique native wildlife under attack
3. A biological control is needed to reduce cat predations
4. Domestic cats are not controlled in NSW.
5. The scientists have relegated into the too hard basket
6. A suitable biological control could be developed
7. Safe Havens are not the answer
8. Current culling methods are inadequate

There has been a lack of appropriate action by all Australian political leaders which has allowed the inadequacy of their government action to deal decisively with the No1. European Cat Invasive species causing the extinction of native fauna.

When I first came to Australia, I never knew that cats were a such a predatory species devastating native wildlife. I am saddened that not enough has been done to protect unique native wildlife from this invasive species. The loss of Australia’s unique fauna is shocking to other countries, and continuation of the current rate of loss is devastating to this country’s economic and social standing in the World.

I made a submission to the House of Representatives Committee on the problem of Feral Cats (ISBN 978---1---76092--194---1) in which I suggested funding the development of a suitable cat virus to biologically control the feral cats. I also made a reference to the feline panleukopenia virus, for which there is a vaccine, as being a suitable biological control.

This specific cat virus was used to eradicate feral cats in Western Australian and it was recommended for control of large feral cat populations by WA Biological Science Institute (refer below).

Under NSW legislation control of domestic cats is lacking as currently they are allowed to roam freely and devastate native fauna. They also providing a continuing feedstock for feral cats.

Despite an extensive report in 1995, identifying that feral cats were the No.1 predatory invasive species, the CSIRO have conducted no further research on feral cat eradication since then. I also have concerns about the CSIRO’s objectivity in submission to the above HOR Committee, when stating "that feline parvovirus does not have as good a safety track record when it comes to species specificity; this virus has been reported to also occasionally infect raccoons, civets, mustelids, badgers and even skunks". We clearly need to eradicate all raccoons, civets, mustelids, badgers and skunks in Australia before going for uncontrolled predatory cats.

The Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI) submitted to the Committee that:

"However, feline panleucopaenia virus was successfully used as part of an integrated control program against feral cats on one small subAntarctic island ... and, if social acceptability changes, may be effective as a control solution where cats occur at higher densities. If this approach was given further consideration, effective vaccinations are available for all three viruses to protect the pet cat population".

Building of safe haven enclosures to protect species goes against scientific findings that species confined to such enclosures are highly unlikely to return to their previous territories and are more likely to be more easily hunted by predators after release into a wild environment, and the cost of building and maintaining enclosures is prohibitive.

The Federal Threatened Species Commissioner reported that just over three hundred thousand feral cats were being culled each year. Yet these numbers do not even reduce the annual increase in feral cat numbers of four litters of kittens.

It is self evident that controlling cats now needs to be urgently addressed by the NSW government under its responsibility to protect the State's unique native fauna.