

Submission
No 232

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

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Submission to the Animal Welfare Committee

Management of cat populations in NSW

I am an individual who occasionally rescues cats in trouble off the street when they turn up on my front verandah begging for food. I then provide them with a home at my house. I have encountered significant issues with the present registration system and also the legal requirements.

If I take an unknown cat to the vet to get it scanned, I am taking a significant risk with that cat's welfare. It would seem a sensible thing to do to see if the cat has a family searching for it. However, if it doesn't have a microchip or has a microchip and a family who doesn't want it anymore, the vet is required by law to hand it to a ranger to take to the pound where the cat may be euthanised. This seems mad when I am standing there offering the cat a home. There needs to be a better system where I can get the cat scanned without risk.

If the cat has a microchip and a family who has dumped it, there needs to be a straightforward system to enable the microchip to be transferred. I had a cat in this situation, and I had to get a statutory declaration from the vet, then put in an application to the council ranger. The ranger then had to sort out the situation with the owners, before I could adopt the cat. He was in a terrible state when I found him, very unwell and had been on the streets for months. The process of adoption in this case needs to be simplified.

If the cat is a feral stray, an understanding vet will vet treat, desex and microchip the cat. This is usually about \$500 so its not a cheap decision to take the cat on. The problem then is registering the cat as there is a monetary penalty for the cat not being desexed and not registering the cat by six months of age. This makes the whole process of adopting a cat off the street prohibitive for the average householder. I feel like I am being penalised for rescuing the cat. There needs to be an age exemption for cats rescued by individuals in the registration process as people need to be encouraged to adopt homeless cats.

For lower income families it would be great if desexing and registering a stray cat was paid for by the government this would reduce the number of female cats with kittens that are dumped.

Ensuring that rental accommodation accepts people's pets will also enable people to keep their cats.

A subsidy to allow families to build a cat run so the cats can be kept indoors with secure outdoor access would also be a positive management strategy to keep wildlife safe.

To reduce the pressure on the pounds and give the homeless cats a better chance of finding a home, the commercial breeding of cats also needs to be limited or stopped.

The reality is that many cats are unable to be rescued due to the pressure on the 'not for profit' cat welfare organisations. It has been shown that the most humane way to manage stray cat colonies is to 'Trap Neuter and Release' (TNR) the stray cats back into their colony. I believe strongly that the government should be supporting both cat welfare organisations and individuals to manage stray cat colonies both by funding TNR programs, veterinary care and the feeding of these colonies. Neutering will ensure the colony will eventually collapse due to old age.