

Submission  
No 238

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 22 November 2024

---

Partially  
Confidential

Cat Management -

22/11/24

I wish to comment on the management of cat populations in New South Wales. I have been involved in animal welfare in a number of roles since the early 1990's. I was a board member of the RSPCA NSW at the time when microchipping was first introduced. Since then many databases have evolved which can cause confusion.

**All these items below, impact on cat populations**, ownership, rehoming and funds for desexing, veterinarian staff to do the work of desexing. The pound system is always overflowing with cats, many who should not be impounded. Often it is due to misinformation which impacts on the space & attention for lost dogs.

**Databases for microchips:** Some chip data does not link with other states e.g. Queanbeyan NSW and Canberra. This is quite an issue especially when pets are stolen.

**The NSW pet register** does not have the ability to share its existence on facebook. To utilise - existing users have to re enter more private data to connect via service nsw. <https://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au> If you have just lost your pet, especially possible when moving the last thing needed is to have to find up to date address information when you are in that process. Why not have leaflets in vets about the time frame to change address etc. The pet registry (for phone calls & emails) is on holidays at Christmas time when many people go away on holidays.

Most people are unaware of what is required or even where their local shelter is. I am a real estate agent. I ensure all tenants with pets know where to change their pet's address.

Recently the site was unavailable for many weeks, it appeared to be a scam asking for more sensitive personal information, as I enquired to this end myself.

**Rehoming:** some shelters do not have enough photos or promotion of lost pets on their website. e.g. RSPCA which is not a pound. There are volunteers who can & have assisted with this. e.g. Blacktown who over time have managed 7- 10 council areas.

So many of these cats would have been destroyed.

I believe there is not enough focus on how many rescue groups are in existence who desex, rehome and pay expensive vet bills for cats and dogs which aid the local council shelters.

There are many instances of cruelty where people have decided that cats should not be outdoors in council areas where they have 24/7. Examples are in teh Canberra area and in Victoria and recently the north coast of NSW. There are threats on facebook of people suggesting to kill cats if they find them outside. This cruelty and misunderstanding has to stop. Much of it has been fuelled by the threatened species commissioner from many years ago.

The whole process of demonising cats is promoting cruelty and the FBI in USA watches those people who harm animals as they tend to turn on people. I believe cats and women are in the same vein of being the more gentle species.

Aside from the distress of many cats who may have owners, being impounded unnecessarily there is the suicide rate for vets who with their staff have the role of killing healthy animals. If you care about dogs, help the cats as this will allow resources for lost dogs in need.

Many council shelters do not have all the photos available of pets for ease of finding lost animals. Hornsby council is using a shelter located 35 km from their general location. How could anyone find their lost pet with such a distance?

There are a number of instances where microchips do not reveal information or travel in the body evading the scanner.

The suggestion to have all cats indoors is not practical and has been proven not to be effective as there are a large percentage of indoor cats that escape.

In the big picture, there will be & are already vigilantes. Not everyone can contain cats, can afford to, or want to attach cages to their house. Aside from this it is cruel & unnatural to cage cats who naturally move about.

Impact of cats on “threatened” native animals. I wonder how many native animals are threatened that actually live in suburban areas. I have lived in a number of suburbs with leafy environments. From my personal experience, I live near a creek with large lizards who lazily do not get out of the way of my car. My cat and others do not worry about them.

The cats do worry about rats, which are a problem with the food recycle bins despite being elevated. Possums actually prey on raised garden beds. I have been told that kittens need to be taught by their mothers to hunt. Not all cats are prey driven. This is from my own experience of having cats for the last 50 years and liaising with so many other cat and dog owners. I have heard of cat tracking, where the question is asked “where does your cat go”. I know of cats who visit the neighbour’s houses for company.

**I do not agree with naming cats who are unowned to be semi feral.**

Councils need to, and apparently can have, their own jurisdiction to keep an area to have community cats and their funds would be better expended for those to have them desexed and pay staff to feed them. This is a TNR, trap neuter release situation which Dr. Helen Swarbrick of Campus Cats (University of NSW) has successfully run for more than a decade.

Many cities worldwide do the same, including Disneyland. Factory owners like having cats around to stop rats and save the environment from poisons which indirectly affect wildlife e.g. kookaburras and carnivorous animals eating poisoned carcasses.

**There is data showing that killing cats** (which has been occurring for years) does not change their population numbers. The population actually increases due to the younger cats thriving without the competition for the older cats. Refer J. Rand.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-programs/>

- **I agree with Jacquie Rand's ideals & suggestions (Pet Welfare Foundation)** of bedtime feeding for cats to encourage them to be indoors for safety and **no curfew for cats**. The public need to know it is not okay to harm animals (or humans).

- **The legalisation of Trap Neuter Return Programs**, and support for the rescuers that focus on and implement reducing colony sizes.

It is disappointing that despite years and years of animal welfare help, there are still the same issues due to lack of understanding and caring about our companion pets who actually save people's lives. This is especially true of those who are disadvantaged by giving them companionship. I hope some of my comments are taken on board.

Yours sincerely