

Submission  
No 248

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

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## **Personal Submission**

### **Re: Inquiry into the Management of Cat Populations**

Cats are one of the most common species of companion animal in the world. Many Australian households enjoy feline family members.

Modern life is incredibly stressful. The fast pace, the cost of living, fierce competitiveness in the job sector, family pressures.....it never ends and the toll on human health is great. Having companion animals in your home truly does ease stress, provide comfort, provide a positive distraction from life's woes, improve mental and physical health of humans in the home and provides an animal with a happy home and a wonderful life. Quality of life is achieved for both human and feline members of the household through responsible cat ownership.

Companion animals such as cats are precisely that, companions. They are domesticated and have been bred to provide humans with companionship. There are many isolated and lonely people in Australian society. Having a cat in their home may be the only comfort, joy, companionship and happiness they have in life.

For far too long, cats have been demonised in Australian society, through no fault of their own. Human incompetence is to blame for cats being on the street; nothing to do with cats themselves. I myself am a responsible cat owner and have been the proud and happy owner of six rescued street cats over the last twenty years. I personally rescued each and every cat from life on the streets. Each cat received the very best of veterinary care. All were immediately health assessed, wormed, vaccinated, microchipped, flea treated, de-sexed, placed on premium diets and provided with secure outdoor cat enclosures to enjoy during daylight hours and all were provided with safe housing inside the home at night. This balance, this lifestyle, this responsible cat ownership helped to ensure all six cats led long, happy, safe, secure and healthy lives while ensuring that native birdlife and native animals were safe.

Native birds are attracted to my garden with birdseed and birdbaths. They are safe to come and go and do so freely. Native birds and animals and cats all co-exist on a 636m<sup>2</sup> urban block with no problems at all. I love cats. I also love native birds and animals. I protect all of them. It isn't difficult, nor is it costly. It's simple and all cat owners should be forced to do it for the sake of their cat and native birds and animals.

Culling cats is not an option. It's cruel, inhumane, unnecessary and unfair. It's barbaric. Poisons, traps, shootings etc are absolutely not the answer. All such methods of feline control should be unlawful and prohibited. Any form of animal cruelty should be punished. A life is a life. All lives are precious. Cats experience the same emotions as humans. They too have a right to life and a right to live their lives, free of cruelty, fear, pain, suffering, persecution, exploitation etc.

All levels of government must promote, introduce, ease in and then enforce responsible cat ownership. Local, State and Federal Governments in Australia do indeed waste money where they shouldn't. Investing in humane, fair and easily managed responsible cat ownership programs would be wise and worthwhile for the sake of cats, cat owners and our precious birdlife and animal life.

All levels of government within Australia should work with animal welfare groups, rescue and rehoming groups etc who rescue, rehabilitate and adopt out cats. Street cats are not feral. A feral cat is a very different thing. A feral cat is large, unable to be trained, handled, rehabilitated etc. I have with great ease personally rescued, trained and rehabilitated numerous beautiful street cats over the last 20 years who all very quickly became loyal, loving, domesticated feline family members.

Any cat not intended for breeding should be de-sexed. It has been proven that subsidised de-sexing programs are very effective in preventing cat overpopulation. De-sexing is essential. All pet cats should be registered and microchipped for their own safety. All pet cats should be confined to their property for their safety and the safety of native birds and native animals. Education, subsidies and enforcement will prove very beneficial.

All levels of Government need to work with the likes of the Animal Justice Party, the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League. Working together with animal shelters, rescue groups etc will ensure that all cats who do not belong to a human companion will have the chance of being adopted and will enjoy a normal, happy, healthy, safe and secure life, a life which every companion animal should enjoy. It is their purpose and their right and it is up to humans, the so-called superior species on earth to facilitate this for the betterment of cats, Australian citizens and the native birds and animals of this country. We should be striving for a world class cat management strategy which is effective, humane, fair to cats, humans and native birds and animals. It is indeed achievable and in these enlightened and so-called civilised times, any form of barbaric cat management should be prohibited.