

Submission  
No 267

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

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Felines are not native to Australia. They have colonised the Australian landscape with dreadful and devastating results. Cats had no intention of being such a bane on Australia. They arrived here with people who did not realise their potential for harm.

Cats provided and continue to provide companionship for people; they are amazing, beautiful animals which, unfortunately, are natural hunters.

As a wildlife rescuer and rehabilitator, I have picked up hundreds of birds and lizards which have been attacked by cats. Most have died in spite of the best veterinary care. Rarely do birds survive a cat attack. Even if they are saved from being eaten alive, the mere bite or scratch by a cat to a bird is nearly always fatal. Cats will try to catch most small native animals. Domestic and feral cats are all skilful hunters.

The owners of domestic cats are usually appalled to find their darling cat has brought home for them a beautiful but dead bird that they have killed and want to share their bounty with their human.

Take a step out of most towns of NSW and the enormous destruction the feral cats wreak on wildlife is on an industrial scale. Feral cat eradication programs need to take into account the large population of cats in the peri-urban situation. Programs need to take in the differences and be modified to suit the local situation. Flexibility and timing of programs will assist in making programs more worthwhile.

People often feel sorry for an abandoned cat so they feed them. This results in even more unwanted cats in the long term. When cat populations become a problem in local situations, cruelty and suffering are often inflicted upon cats.

Desexing programs need to be encouraged by local councils and the State Government. Incentives, education and pricing will all play a role in having positive results in this regard.

There are many reasons and ways that government, organisations and individuals should work together to formulate humane solutions to a very significant problem