

**Submission  
No 276**

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

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Unfortunately the introduction of cats to Australia during early Colonial settlement and subsequent mismanagement on the human level has led to massive and devastating loss of our native wildlife, which we are faced with today. Cats are natural hunters. This is the very nature of cats, so responsibility must rest with owners and breeders to rectify the overpopulation of cats, many now feral. This problem has been caused by people and the cat should not be demonised for the issues we now face. I do not support cruel methods of poisoning and shooting of cats to contain the numbers. It leads to unthinkable suffering before death and that should never be considered acceptable. Irresponsible ownership needs to be addressed through education. People who are not prepared to contain their pets, ensuring they are both microchipped and desexed, should be considered unsuitable owners. To address these solutions Government must play a role in education and offer incentives to make microchipping and desexing programmes affordable to all. Likewise, I believe home containment and home run confinement in secure cat runs need to be affordable to all and made law. Given attention, toys and social enrichment cats can lead a very happy life confined to the home. Cats need responsible ownership and enforcement plays a role here.

Overpopulation comes from overbreeding and pet shelters and pounds should be the only means of cat purchases. Backyard breeding, pet stores, online outlets and breeders need to be banned as avenues of purchase. They are displacing shelter cats and kittens from securing a new home. Given animals purchased through pounds and shelters are microchipped and desexed prior to sale makes this the only responsible sales outlet. This would dramatically reduce cat populations and ensure a much brighter life for the animals we already have.

Education plays a major role in improving the current cat overpopulation. I see the Government needs to play a major role in this area as well as education at point of sale in shelters and pounds. Staff would play a major role here. Not all people should be allowed to own pets and they need to have the funds available to ensure the cat is afforded a healthy diet and access to vet care for life.