

Submission  
No 300

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

## **Inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales**

Dear members of the “ Inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales.”

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in the North-West Region of the Sydney metropolitan area which is a semi-rural area. I would like to respond to this inquiry as a concerned citizen, an environmentalist and a person who loves all animals.

I support humane, science-based solutions for cat welfare and wildlife protection in NSW

My concern is that cats are being increasingly and unfairly demonised in the media; by certain organisations such as the Invasive Species Council and now by politicians who are increasingly calling cats ‘pests’ due to the perception that they are the main perpetrator’s causing the loss of faunal biodiversity and destruction of native wildlife across Australia.

By calling cats ‘pests’ means that people no longer see cats as the intelligent sentient beings that they are but instead think they can do anything to them. Cats are then subject to incredible cruelty - Just ask any cat rescuer such as Hills Cat Rescue who bears witness to what human violence and inhumanity can inflict on these small creatures.

My hope is that this inquiry chooses to follow humane solutions and to support scientific evidence based on long term solutions for the management of cat populations rather than resorting to punitive measures such as convenience killing of healthy cats by councils and continuing the myth of cats as pests and the primary cause of the reduction in native fauna. (1)

All cats need to be desexed; microchipped and registered and kept inside at night. This should be the primary focus for governments in the management of cat populations.

Proactive Community Cat programs such as those proposed by the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation, (2) have been scientifically tested and proven to reduce stray cat populations, decrease nuisance complaints and prevent wildlife predation

Governments can support these Community Cat programs that focus on rehoming, targeted desexing, TNR and community education which have proven to be highly effective at reducing cat populations.

The government can also support education programs encouraging residents on keeping cats inside. Educating communities about responsible pet ownership is essential:

- Encouraging people about how to keep their cats safely indoors or contained within property boundaries, such as in cat patios, can help keep both cats and wildlife safe and will naturally reduce the number of wildlife predated on.

- Community outreach, media campaigns and school programs teaching pet care, the importance of spaying/neutering and safe indoor environments.
- Supporting local initiatives that help manage community cat populations through rehoming programs, targeted desexing and fostering.

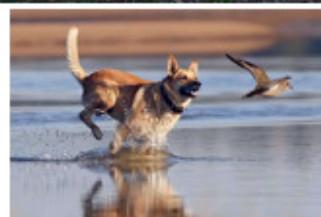
Scientific studies show that mandating in law cat containment; desexing and euthanasia have negative outcomes (especially for cats) and do not work over the long term. “(3)  
 Strict mandated 24/7 cat containment have shown to increase impoundments and lead to higher euthanasia rates without actually solving issues like roaming. Cat containment laws didn’t reduce complaints about roaming cats or make a noticeable difference. “ (3)

It’s easy to blame cats for the problems we face with wildlife and it is a myth that domestic cats are the major cause of biodiversity loss. Wildlife rescue data shows : Dogs, car strikes and land clearing are worse for native wildlife than cats. (1). Deforestation, clearing land for farming and urban sprawl are wiping out habitats for native wildlife across New South Wales , which makes it easier for cats to thrive.

## NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation dashboard - 2019-20

### • Threatened species – reasons for rescue

- 402 loss of suitable environment
- 290 collisions with motor vehicles
- 127 dog attacks
- 31 cat attacks



<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/nativeanimals/rehabilitating-native-animals/wildlife-rehabilitation-reporting/wildlife-rehabilitation-data>

I would suggest to government that instead of demonising cats, the focus needs to be on the root causes with efforts made to habitat conservation; reducing speeds to minimise car strikes

and addressing threats to habitat destruction (such as in implementing independent Fauna Management Plans for every Development Application to include such things as pre-clearance faunal surveys; fauna protection, rescue relocation and installation of fauna nest boxes).

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a comment on the management of cat populations in New South Wales.

1. <https://petwelfare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Rand-Myth-cats-Wildlife-2023.pdf>
2. <https://petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-program-faq/>
3. <https://petwelfare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Key-issues-to-consider-related-to-mandated-cat-containment-1.pdf>