

Submission
No 303

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

I am pleased to see that the NSW Government is finally responding to decades of scientific evidence and call from the community to fix the Companion Animals Act to prevent cats from roaming and give councils the powers to deal with cats that are not chipped.

Cats must be contained or under control at all times as is the case for dog, cats are apex predators and unless the government does something now then there will be not point in trying to protect Native Animals as there will be too few left to protect.

Unfortunately I do not hold out any hope that this inquiry will result in the logical necessary legislation needed to control cats. We have recently seen the opposition to the brumby cull where the inquiry recommendations supported the continuation of the programme yet the chair, who consequently is also the chair of this inquiry, opposed the findings despite the negative impact wild horses have on native animals and plants.

This group indicates that 'Ecosystem Balance: While recognizing the impact feral cats have on native wildlife, the AJP focuses on addressing the issue through ethical, humane methods that do not result in unnecessary harm to cats.' Clearly harm to native animals is not a key concern as long as cats can freely roam and continue to kill native animals. Releasing desexed cats back into nature is not a logical answer as it will continue to kill other animals.

Unfortunately I do not believe that this inquiry will result in meaningful change to the Act to control cats and give councils the power to manage unowned cats humanely to remove them from the natural environment and not keep them in pounds indefinitely while charging Tax Payers in NSW to keep them alive just for the sake of keeping them alive.

When there are zealots in NSW Parliament whose raison d'etre is that 'every animal must be kept alive no matter the harm they do to fragile native ecosystems' the chances of the necessary changes are remote. While there are strict laws that state that if a person kills a native animal there are severe penalties, but if a cat kills a native animal there are no penalties for the owner or ability to humanely euthanise the cat. If a dog attacks another animal or a person it can be declared dangerous, contained in a cage or potentially put down, if a cat kills another animal or attacks a person there are no repercussions and the cat may continue to keep doing the same thing.

I live in dwindling hope that there may be change to control cats before it becomes too late, but given the track record of many state governments over decades to do absolutely nothing because the cat lobby believes it's a cat's right to hunt, kill, maim and spread disease and these governments continue to kowtow to these groups and ignore scientific facts, this will be just another waste of taxpayer funds and another nail in the coffin of our native animals.

If the protection of native animals was something the NSW Government is serious about then cat containment and controlling uncontained cat colonies would have been legislated long ago. We have seen the government change laws with little to no consultation because of the political winds, so why could the laws be amended the same way without the need for an inquiry. It is a waste of time when scientific data and groups like RSPCA state cat containment is a necessary need.