

**Submission
No 305**

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

Name: Colleen Wysser - Martin


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Dear NSW Parliament Inquiry members,


I hereby lodge my submission to the NSW Parliament Inquiry consultation on the management of cats.

Domestic cats (*Felis catus*) are among the world's most harmful invasive species. When roaming outdoors, cats threaten birds and other wildlife, disrupt ecosystems, and spread diseases. Species that evolved together over millions of years are thrown out of balance by cats and other invasive species, with devastating results.

Each year in Australia, new peer-reviewed evidence has revealed cats kill:

 More than 1 billion mammals, like the near threatened quoll.

 More than 399 million birds, like the critically endangered night parrot.

 More than 609 million reptiles, like the vulnerable great desert skink.

 Overall they kill 2 billion animals. A devastating annual toll. A true horror story.

These figures clearly show that cats are an extensional threat to Australia's native animal populations. It is very clear cats are having a major impact on threatened native species. Many native animals cannot take much more of this. Already, cats have driven 25 unique Australian animals to extinction and threaten the survival of 120 more! The New South Wales Government must lead the charge to protect native birds and animals from free-roaming cats.

My name is Colleen and I am lodging this submission because I agree and strongly support the introduction and toughening of measures to keep the cat population under control in New South Wales. My children, grandchild and future generations of Australians will not know our unique wildlife if the present situation is allowed to continue. Domestic and feral cats have been eating and enjoying a smorgasbord of native animals since the first cats landed in New South Wales 236 years ago.

The New South Wales Government must assist and help fund the expansion of Australia's existing network of predator-free wildlife havens. It should not fall solely to private organisations like the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and Aussie Ark, who do exceptional work, to save our vulnerable wildlife populations. All state and federal governments must take an active role in wildlife conservation. It has been ignored for over 230 years and we have a lot of catching up to do.

While saving our native species from cats must be our ultimate goal there are also other measures the state government can undertake to control and reduce cat populations. I urge the New South Wales Government to consider the following preventive measures:

1. The enforcement of 24/7 cat confinement laws. The New South Wales Government must pass legislation which mandates that all pet cats are kept safely at home and are not out preying on our native wildlife. This legislation must also specify that in situations outside the home the cat must be under the owner's direct supervision at all times.
2. A ban on the sale of animals by breeders, in pet stores, and online.
3. A ban on kitten farms.
4. Continuation of mandatory microchipping.
5. Increased public education about the importance of cat desexing, at-home confinement (including environmental enrichment), fostering, and adoption.
6. Increased state government funding of adoption groups and shelters to better house impounded animals and enhance rehoming efforts.
7. Government funding of desexing programmes.
8. In cases where it is necessary, euthanasia. Plus, an end to cruel, inaccurate lethal methods such as shooting and poisoning.

Feral cats present a persistent and severe threat to the landscape. Once spayed or neutered, they are abandoned back into the environment to continue a feral existence. Not only is this systematic abandonment inhumane to the cats, it perpetuates numerous problems such as wildlife predation, transmission of disease, and property destruction. They are now desexed but they still out there destroying our precious wildlife. Perhaps euthanasia is the better option in these cases.

Together, we can build support for effective domestic and feral cat management, including personal pet ownership habits, legislative provisions, and enforcement mechanisms.

I believe there is still hope for the future for Australian wildlife with cat control under the abovementioned conditions. We must act NOW to protect what is unique and wondrous about Australia. The chance to save our animals is now. If we miss it, it may be too late.

I thank you for this opportunity to express my opinions on this matter.

For the only planet we have.

Colleen Wysser - Martin