

**Submission  
No 330**

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

**Name:** Mr Alan Ginns  
**Date Received:** 21 November 2024

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Animal Welfare Committee  
NSW Legislative Council  
Parliament of New South Wales  
NSW Parliament House  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

## **Inquiry into the Management of Cat Populations in New South Wales**

Dear Sirs,

I write to support sensible amendments to NSW legislation to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, as a key step in protecting our unique wildlife – and particularly our highly valued urban wildlife. Such a change is long overdue given the demonstrable evidence on the enormously destructive impacts of roaming domestic cats, and feral cats, on our biota. It would also belatedly bring NSW into line with almost every other state.

Cats are voracious and highly effective predators responsible for the extinction and decline of many species of mammals and birds both in our state and nationally. Predation by feral cats has been listed as a “key threatening process” for native fauna in NSW for over 20 years, and predation by feral cats is similarly listed as a “key threatening processes” under the national *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In terms of their behaviour and impacts there is little difference between a feral cat and a roaming domestic cat. Both have devastating impacts on our wildlife. It is estimated that in NSW approximately 96 million native mammals, birds and reptiles are killed by roaming pet cats each year. Every unconstrained roaming pet cat hunts and kills an estimated 110 native animals every year. Unfortunately about 70% of cat owners still allow their pets to roam freely perpetuating this carnage on already stressed and often isolated urban wildlife populations.

Coming from a 20 year career in conservation land management I can personally attest to the enormous and devastating impacts that cats have on our native wildlife, including threatened species, and the urgent need to curb the damage done by (and the numbers of) both feral and domestic cats.

Regarding domestic cats – while any living cat will hunt and kill wildlife (it’s their instinctive behaviour) we can change the culture that allows pet cats to roam and kill. NSW urgently needs clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained to their property – and preferably indoors – for the sake of our native wildlife. Such a requirement will also benefit domestic cats, with evidence that indoors or “house” cats that are constrained can live up to 10 years longer than roaming cats.

Such a reform should be accompanied by funding or assistance for mandatory desexing and simpler registration, as well as for compliance and education. NSW should have clear rules requiring all cats to be desexed by 4 months of age to prevent unwanted breeding, and requirements for all local councils to develop and implement companion animal management

plans (that include designated “Wildlife Protection Areas” under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* as well as “cat curfews” and cat free housing developments).

I am therefore calling on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare Committee to support:

- Amendments to the NSW *Companion Animals Act 1998* to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.
- State government funding, of a minimum of \$10 Million, to fund desexing, registration, identification and compliance programmes, and community education.
- Requirements for all local councils to develop and implement companion animal management plans to protect wildlife, as is required in Victoria.
- Making domestic cat desexing by 4 months of age mandatory state-wide – as is already required in WA, Tasmania, the ACT and SA.
- Wider declaration of “Wildlife Protection Areas” under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* as well as cat-free housing developments, “cat curfews” and other local measures to contain domestic cats.
- Development of a state-wide web-based resource for responsible pet ownership, along with a wide ranging advertising campaign.
- Funding for the accelerated implementation of lethal control measures for reducing the NSW feral cat population, and the development and roll-out of new more effective lethal control measures against feral cats.

Yours sincerely,

**Alan Ginns**  
21 November '24