

Submission  
No 336

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

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# Ryde Cat Inquiry Report

**Jordan Lane MP, Member for Ryde**

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# MEMBER'S FOREWORD

As the Member for Ryde, I am pleased to make this submission on behalf of local residents into the NSW Parliament Cat Inquiry regarding management of cat populations.

Firstly, I'd like to thank those who took the time to complete my survey into this matter. These insights have formed the basis of this submission and represent a range of interested views from within the Ryde electorate.



At the outset, I should say I was disappointed to learn through comments made in the Legislative Assembly on 19 November 2024, that the Premier appeared unaware that this inquiry had been established under his watch. I trust the Government's awareness of these issues is elevated thanks to the work of this inquiry.

We all know that with the rising number of homeless cats, the sustainability of our wildlife and natural environment is being severely impacted. We also know that increasing cost of living pressures, strict strata and rent policies, and inadequate volunteer and community support are contributing factors to the increase in the number of homeless cats.

Given the large number of apartments and strata in my community (which is also rapidly growing), this issue will only get worse. My priority is to ensure our local community voice is heard and reflected in the recommendations for reform.

I am proud to represent the Ryde community in the NSW Parliament and am confident that their input has and will continue to help shape the future of these reforms.

If you require any additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Jordan Lane MP**  
Member for Ryde  
Shadow Assistant Minister for Health  
Shadow Assistant Minister for Multiculturalism

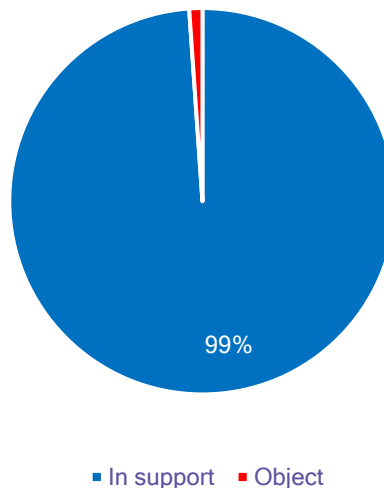
PS. I ❤️ Ryde

# OVERVIEW

This report presents a summary analysis of the valuable perspectives provided by respondents regarding the management of cat populations and its impact on residents in Ryde. With unique responses covering a range of different views, experiences, and ideas, this report aims to capture the common themes, concerns, and suggestions raised.

The survey gathered 95 detailed responses, from which **98.9%** of respondents were in **support** of implementing measures to manage cat populations. Only 1.1% of respondents were opposed to implementing support measures to better manage cat populations in NSW.

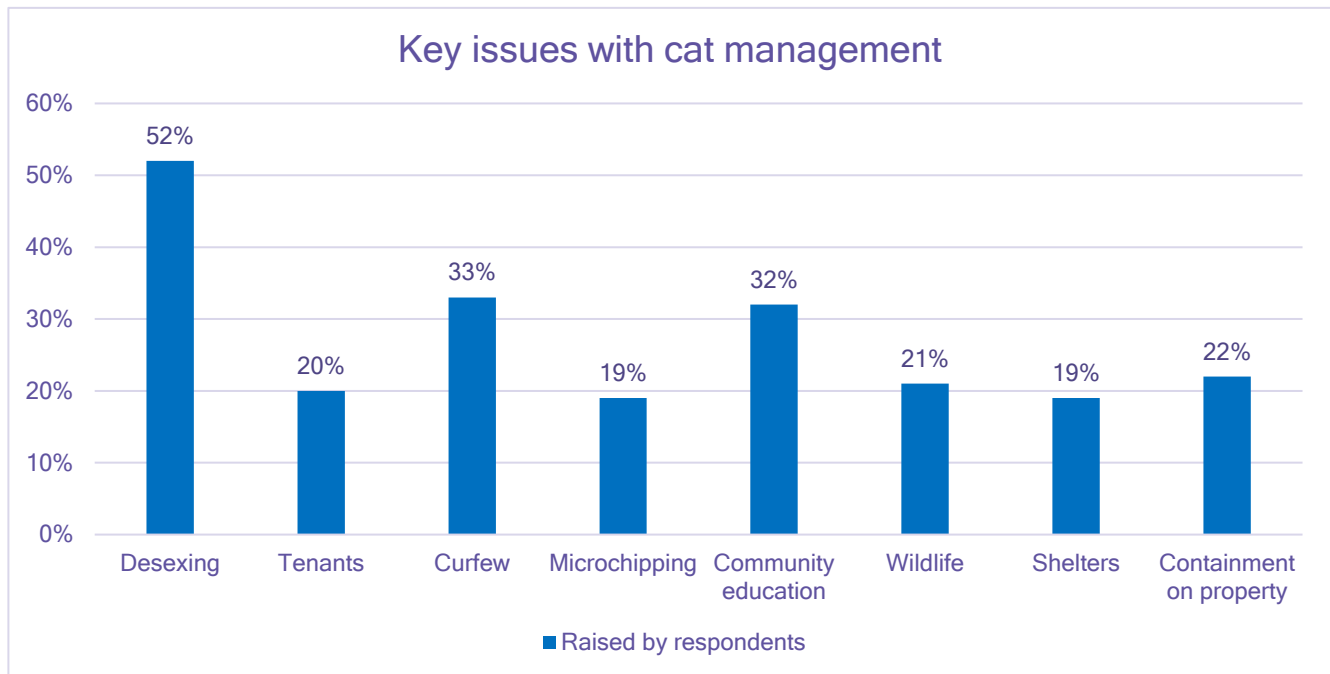
Do you support measures put in place to manage cat populations?



## Key Findings

- The majority of the respondents believe desexing should be more financially accessible for low-income households.
- A vast majority of respondents expressed concerns that tenants face difficulties owning pets in rental and strata.
- Many respondents expressed the need for community awareness campaigns to educate prospective and current pet owners of their responsibilities.
- More than a third of respondents recognised that curfews for cats would be an effective approach to protecting the environment, wildlife, and property.

- Respondents identified the following areas for requiring significant reform: animal shelters, support from the Ryde Council, and microchipping.



## Desexing

Mandatory desexing emerged as a widely supported measure, recognised as a critical step in reducing homeless cat population and alleviating strain on shelters. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that desexing should be a requirement for all domestic household cats, with exceptions only for registered breeders.

### Accessibility

While vouchers for low-income households received significant support, many respondents stressed a desire to expand this proposed program to include volunteers conducting trap-neuter-return

(TNR) initiatives, and the elderly or disabled.

### Cost barriers

To overcome cost barriers, especially during the current cost-of-living crisis, free desexing for stray cats, subsidized desexing services through local councils, and mobile veterinary clinics were proposed to remove financial and logistical barriers on individuals.

***“There should be free cat desexing, the vet costs are astronomical in this day and age.”*** - Melrose Park resident

### *Compliance*

Although desexing programs received wide support, concerns regarding non-compliance and enforcement were raised. Suggested solutions include requiring desexing as part of pet registration procedure, public awareness campaigns about the health and welfare benefits of desexing, and penalties for pet-owners who fail to comply.

## **Containment and curfews**

Introducing containment and curfew policies were another prominent theme, with strong support for mandatory measures to restrict free-roaming cats. Respondents highlighted the significant ecological damage caused by cats, including predation on native wildlife such as birds, as well as the spread of diseases like **toxoplasmosis**.

### *Enforcement of curfews*

While night-time curfews (i.e. from 8PM to 6AM) were widely supported, some respondents advocated for 24-hour containment, particularly in high-risk areas near bushland or national parks. Respondents emphasized the need for practical enforcement, such as fines, humane trapping, and microchipping to identify owners. This would likely require amendment of the *Companion Animals Act*

1998 (NSW) to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws at a local level.

***“Introducing curfews would protect wildlife, reduce the spread of disease and ensure cats are kept in safer environments.”***

*- Macquarie Park resident*

### *Support for pet owners*

Subsidies for outdoor cat enclosures, rebates for containment solutions, and educational resources were suggested to be provided to pet owners to assist compliance with proposed containment rules.

### *Wild-life specific zones*

Stricter containment requirements in areas around sensitive ecosystems (i.e. Lane Cove National Park) were proposed to mitigate localised environmental impacts.

## **Reforming tenant and landlord rights**

Strict strata and rent policies are widely accepted as a significantly contributing factor to increasing numbers of homeless cats. Many respondents have also identified restrictive or unclear rental and strata policies as a key driver of cat



abandonment. The large number of apartments and strata in Ryde – which is only set to increase in the future – means this issue will only get worse.

### *Legislative reform*

Respondents expressed strong support for reforms that elevate awareness about the rights to own pets in rentals or strata. Suggested measure includes mandating pet bonds to address the risk of property damage and relaxing the requirement for tenants to disclose pet ownership which it is believed could undermine their success of their rental applications.

### *Awareness campaigns*

Improved communication regarding tenants' rights under reformed laws were

highlighted by respondents as a key measure to reduce the number of surrendered or abandoned pets during housing transitions.

Reforming current rental laws are essential to addressing one of the root causes of cat abandonment. However, such reforms require balancing the rights of tenants with legitimate concerns of landlords and strata committees.

***“We must raise awareness of rights of both tenants and landlords to help reduce the tension.”***      *- Eastwood resident*





# MOVING FORWARD

The key findings from the survey highlight that effective management of cat populations in Ryde will require a multifaceted approach that incorporates education, containment policies, and improved support systems for pet owners, tenants, and rescue organisations. There is widespread agreement that balancing the welfare of cats, the preservation of native wildlife, and community well-being demands both thoughtful planning and collaborative action.

The community's insights highlight the importance of moving beyond standalone initiatives to create a comprehensive framework. This framework needs to integrate accessible services, effective enforcement mechanisms, and robust education programs. By addressing systemic barriers, such as financial constraints on desexing, inadequate resources for rescue organisations, and restrictive rental policies, the proposed measures can achieve meaningful outcomes.

As the local MP, my focus has been drawn towards advocating for changes that my community believe will make a difference. I will happily work with my parliamentary colleagues to ensure valuable suggestions are considered, including:

- (1) desexing initiatives that are accessible to all households
- (2) containment policies that balance practical enforcement and fairness
- (3) further advocacy on rent and strata policy to reduce the risk of pet abandonment
- (4) identifying other areas of policy (e.g. public transport) to make for a more pet-friendly NSW

Once again, thank you to everyone who participated in this inquiry/survey. These contributions are valuable in shaping future policy reforms, and your dedication to improving our local environment and animal welfare is deeply appreciated. Over the coming months, I will try my best to keep you updated as this inquiry progresses.

For further feedback or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me at (02) 9808 3288 or via [ryde@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ryde@parliament.nsw.gov.au).