

Submission
No 361

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 20 November 2024

Partially
Confidential

All decisions relating to cat welfare in NSW should always be undertaken in genuine partnership & collaboration with grassroots cat rescue groups, who work & volunteer every day with cats including community cats. One would hope that once submissions are received and reviewed, no action will be implemented without their further in-person consultation. They have expertise and knowledge about what initiatives work, and how they can be supported by all levels of government.

Sadly, there is a culture of cat hatred and demonisation that exists in Australia, and as such any new laws should not further fuel these beliefs, giving rise to increased incidents of cat cruelty whether enacted by local Councils or individuals.

Cat welfare would be improved by:

- Free State wide desexing programs
- Additional, targeted desexing information campaigns for the general public including in community languages. There needs to be a lot more community education, including addressing the myths around desexing.
- Legalisation of TNR Programs, and support for rescuers that focus on reducing cat colony sizes
- Funding for rescuers who provide desexing programs to community cats
- Rental laws protecting those who have pets to ensure that more cats aren't dumped or surrendered due to a change in housing circumstances. People have, and want cats & dogs as part of their families, but the housing situation has not only impacted those surrendering their beloved animals, but those willing to foster or adopt in the first place. Let's do something to protect people's furry family members.
- Funding grants for veterinary practices that support cat rescue groups
- Substantial animal cruelty laws, the current ones are woefully inadequate
- Increased funding to grassroots cat rescues, that do unbelievable work caring for homeless cats & kittens, relying on volunteers, goodwill and donations
- Cat containment laws won't deter people from dumping cats in bushland; there needs to be legal consequences for those cruel actions.
- Blanket cat containment laws could lead to an increase in people abandoning their cats
- Blanket cat containment laws will have a devastating impact on community cat colonies that aren't a threat to native wildlife
- Avenues for addressing animal hoarding that doesn't punish the cats

Keeping cats as indoor only is a relatively new concept in Australia. Many people believe that cats should be able to go outside. We need to help people understand that in some areas, keeping cats inside is best for the cat and our native wildlife. Whilst my rescue cats are indoor only, I know of cats who laze about in their family's front or back yards, causing no problems to anyone or any wildlife. Let's move away from the misconception that every de-sexed outdoor cat is a problem. They are not, and nor should they be treated as if they were. Also, many people in cities who allow their cats out during the day, always bring them in at night. Responsible cat care looks different, in different areas. This is not an easy answer issue; there needs to be many approaches to cat welfare, emphasis on welfare. Cat welfare usually gets overlooked by all levels of government.