

Submission
No 378

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current management of cat populations in NSW. As a dedicated cat carer for over 30 years, I have observed several critical issues that need urgent attention:

Poor Education on Responsible Pet Ownership

Despite decades of advocacy, myths about cat care persist. For example, many people still believe that cats should be fed only dry food or that they should have a litter of kittens before being de-sexed - if they believe in de-sexing in the first place. This highlights a significant gap in public education about responsible pet ownership.

Irresponsible Cat Ownership

The root cause of uncontrolled cat populations lies with lax management by authorities and chronically irresponsible owners who fail to de-sex their cats, subsequently abandoning litters of kittens when they cannot sell or give them away on social media. It is crucial that future funding and management efforts ensure local authorities actively address this issue. Authorities should monitor local social media groups and pages, follow up with individuals selling these animals, and impose fines where necessary. This proactive approach is essential, as it is unrealistic to assume that everyone will comply with regulations voluntarily, which has been the case so far.

Inadequate Management of Stray and Feral Cats

The control of stray and feral cats in urban areas is severely lacking. In my own experience, attempts to seek assistance from local council and the RSPCA to manage or even assist with a single stray female cat were futile. Both entities refused to help, along with financial barriers imposed by council for residents attempting to trap these animals themselves. This lack of support has led to an explosion in the stray cat population, leaving residents to deal with the consequences.

Improved Animal Welfare Regulations for Private Animal Rescue Organisations

There must be stricter regulations for private animal rescue organisations and no-kill shelters. I recently adopted a cat from a no-kill shelter and was shocked by the poor conditions at the site. The facilities were overcrowded, the cats were in very poor condition, and there was no transparency about their health or the outbreak of cat flu at the time of my visit. It took six months for my adopted cat and thousands of dollars in vet bills to recover from several illnesses contracted at this facility. Many other adopters have reported identical experiences. Despite reporting this to the RSPCA with the full support of our vet, to date, no action has been taken as the facility is considered within current regulatory guidelines. This situation underscores the need for improved welfare standards and oversight.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes better education, more effective management of stray and feral cats, stricter enforcement against irresponsible pet ownership, and improved regulations for animal rescue organisations. I urge the NSW Parliament to consider these points and take decisive action to improve the management of cat populations in our state.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,