

Submission
No 321

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

Name: Ms Amanda Collier

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I currently feed two separate cats colonies, one with 12 cats (5 kittens under 6 weeks, and 4 about 9 months old) (there were more kittens but they disappeared over the weeks). These live in an outdoor park that's been locked off, so people can't enter. The other colony has 26 cats, all adults, living across two properties in an industrial area.

I also feed another 18 cats that live across 4 separate warehouse and industrial sites. These cats are all in Kirrawee alone. I know other people feeding yet more cat colonies in Kirrawee. I thought the stray cat situation was out of control in the Shire but it is really dire in the western suburbs.

I know women with 25 and 30 cats in their homes right now (mostly kittens, as it's "kitten season." I have 2 cats with kittens, picking another up this Sunday, and a single cat - meanwhile people are asking me to take more and it breaks my heart to say no, as there's literally no room. I don't live in a large house, and have my own cats.

Spaying, microchipping and registering must be made mandatory. ESPECIALLY spaying. Dumping and abandoning cats should be considered animal cruelty and those people should not be permitted to own pets ever again. International students, people in uncertain visas and working visas, and any others who don't have certain permanent residency should not be permitted to own a cat. They can foster but not adopt.

New cat owners should also be given educational information about caring for cats and be required to sign a certificate promising to provide a forever home. This will hopefully make people think twice about adopting when they're uncertain about their future plans.

Breeding regular domestic cats should be illegal and carry an extremely severe penalty.

Finally, the current situation needs IMMEDIATE assistance. There are so so many wonderful volunteers doing amazing work to feed, protect, provide vet care, rescue and foster cats. All of these cats I'm feeding need to be neutered and I've bought all the traps (I have 5 traps) to start but it's going to cost me a fortune! I can do the Cat Protection Society Adopt a Stray for a few cats, but I don't know what other financial assistance is out there.

In addition, I don't want to send the cats back to these dangerous awful properties they exist on. Today I saw a cat that was skin and bones, bleeding from its feet and limping slowly in pain. No animal should suffer like that.

If someone were to fund me to purchase a large property with plenty of outdoor space, I'd turn it into a cat refuge, with space for the unsocialised cats separated from the cats that are less scared of and traumatized by humans - ie adoptable. That way, as cats are trapped for vet care and neutering, they can be brought to the refuge instead of being returned to the streets.

Finally, people need to be educated. The cruelty and ignorance of some people towards cats is appalling.

This tragic situation CAN be solved if existing teams of feeder, trapper and foster carer volunteers are supported financially to do what we do, and if the initial vet care, neutering etc is done for free at all vets.

And in regards to the purpose of this inquiry - the law must be changed so that it's no longer legal for cats to be strays. They must belong to someone.