

Submission  
No 370

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 20 November 2024

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Partially  
Confidential

Dear Panel,

Unfortunately the problem of feral cats needs to be addressed to protect Australian native animals. I would urge that culling be done in the most humane way possible, e.g use of Curiosity bait which sends cats to sleep, prior to death. Please see

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet-tackling-feral-cats-and-their-impacts-faqs.pdf>

It is important to recognise that euthanising stray cats in urban or regional areas is a waste of life and resources and imposes extreme mental stress on shelter workers. There is a practical cost for each animal that is caught, sheltered, then euthanised. That cost would be better targeted at investing in more shelters in communities, rather than defunding them, with sterilisation mandatory for all shelter animals. More sterilisation results in less kittens. Suggest more free or low cost sterilisation programmes made available in all communities, with specialist vet units (perhaps mobile units) servicing communities. They could also provide immunisation programmes. This would be much more satisfying work than euthanising healthy animals, which again has adverse mental stress for the people involved. The initial cost might be high, but enforced sterilisation for any animals beside those owned and bred by registered breeders, will reduce cat numbers within a couple of years. Introduction of curfew hours of at least sunrise to sunset for cats would be beneficial. It would be better to encourage this with positive measures, such as advertising campaigns and and community engagement, rather than punish those whose cats escape. Cats make wonderful companions and also improve the mental health of their owners. It would be sensible to encourage people to build cat enclosures, but they are expensive. We have one for our cat and we put her in it early morning, until the birds have flown off, keeping her and them safe. We try to bring her in if there is a storm brewing. Education is key to looking after any animal and veterinary support, especially for people with financial difficulty, would help to enrich the lives of both people and pet cats. Mental health is a cost to community that is hard to quantify, but companion animals are key to allaying loneliness and giving purpose, also promoting caring qualities in children. I hope the Panel will value compassion and the positives that cats can bring to the world, when considering their future management. Thank you.