

Submission
No 443

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 18 November 2024

Partially
Confidential

I believe that responsibility for a cat should lie with its owner, not be dictated by legislation. While I understand the concerns about cats roaming and the potential harm to wildlife, I worry that such an inquiry would unfairly punish responsible cat owners and could lead to unintended consequences.

One of my main concerns is the potential danger such a curfew could pose to cats. If owners are forced to keep their cats indoors at night, they may be more vulnerable to accidents or health issues. Cats, by nature, need to explore and exercise, and restricting this freedom could lead to stress or behavioral problems. Moreover, a curfew would not address the real issue of irresponsible ownership, which could be more effectively handled through education and better enforcement of existing animal welfare laws.

Another significant issue is the possibility that individuals may take matters into their own hands, thinking they are enforcing the law. This could lead to an increase in vigilantism, with people capturing cats that they see roaming, potentially causing harm or distress to the animals. Worse still, some people might start bringing in stray or lost cats from their neighborhoods, believing them to be feral or in violation of the curfew. With local pounds already overwhelmed, this could exacerbate the problem and put additional strain on an already overburdened system.

It's also important to recognise that human activity, not just cats, is the primary threat to wildlife. From car accidents to deforestation for development, humans are responsible for far more harm to the environment than any cat ever could be. It feels contradictory that we would place the burden on pet owners to solve the problem of wildlife conservation, without addressing the much larger and more immediate human-induced threats to the ecosystem.

Ultimately, I believe that laws like this are a sign of growing reliance on regulation instead of personal responsibility. Why is it that, as Australians, we can no longer take ownership of our actions and make responsible choices without the need for a law? It would be a shame if a few irresponsible cat owners were allowed to dictate the terms for the rest of us, especially when there are more effective and less harmful ways to address these concerns. Instead of imposing curfews, I would advocate for more education, better management of feral cat populations, and a focus on reducing human-caused environmental damage.