

Submission  
No 446

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

**Name:** Ms Diane Townley

**Date Received:** 17 November 2024

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Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this subject which has been concerning me for many years as I live in a small community surrounded by the Royal National Park and unfortunately see many cats roaming during the day and especially at night into the park.

I would like to see laws enacted across the state of New South Wales which give local councils the power to enforce the containment of cats on their owners' properties throughout the day and night.

Research has shown that roaming pet cats have a devastating effect on local wildlife. The Invasive Species Council and Birdlife Australia have an excellent fact sheet on this. Given that there are over 5 million pet cats in Australia, they can do untold damage when allowed to roam.

As a former cat owner I understand that the hunting instincts of pet cats are still strong and fitting a cat with a bell will hardly stop it hunting and disturbing wildlife.

The only responsible way is to keep the cat inside 24 hours a day or in a specially constructed cat run.

I am also concerned for the welfare of the cats which are allowed outside as they face many hazards and threats to their health when they roam, especially at night.

Contained cats live longer, healthier lives. Cats often pick up diseases and get into fights with other cats and animals such as dogs and possums which can result in injuries and expensive vet bills.

Some cat owners think that indoor cats will be bored and not stimulated but I have not found this to be the case. They are very good at finding ways to entertain themselves indoors.

Having spoken to a number of cat owners, I think that more people are coming to see the importance of containing their pets because they understand the effect cats can have on local wildlife.

Unfortunately there are still some owners who do not responsibly manage their pets and this is where council laws would help to shift people's actions.

Where I live is a case in point, being so close to the National Park. We should have containment by-laws, limits on the number of cats per household and if possible no new cats introduced into the area unless they are contained.

Sensitive areas on the rural/ urban fringe should be highlighted and councils in these areas given appropriate resourcing to work with communities to ensure compliance and enforcement of the rules where necessary.

Given that dogs must be contained and controlled in public spaces, I think that it is long overdue that we are only now considering the impacts of pet cats.