

Submission
No 344

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

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SUBMISSION TO THE NSW ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

THAT THE ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CAT POPULATIONS IN NSW.

RESPONSE FFRANSES INGRAM

- a. While no study exists to show the impact of cats on wildlife in regional settings, it must not be overlooked that human driven animal extinction is far greater and allowed to continue and be legislated for. There is ample evidence of this habitat destruction. Every aspect of threats to native animals must be addressed. To not do so is unacceptable.
- b. Many pets are not contained effectively. This is due to factors such as ignorance, laziness, housing situations. Some areas are more prone to it than others e.g. lower socio-economic, or financial. Also lack of community awareness and education in animal welfare is also responsible.
- c. Cats under contained conditions can be maintained so the animal leads a happy, healthy life. But this is dependent on the amount of cats per household, the needs of the cat e.g. some cats need more territory than others.
- d. Unfortunately, any measures set in place for containing cats have not worked. The amount of abandoned and homeless cats is horrendous. It is a never ending battle to try and alleviate the suffering and to contain the cat colonies extant. I have been involved in colony cat control for many years and it is a heartbreaking 24/7 task to make any inroads at all. Obviously community education and programmes have not worked. People are so irresponsible. (It is the latter that need controlling more than the demonised cats.)
- e. As far as I am aware my Inner West Council has no policy, nor does it help in any shape or form to contain or help in controlling cat colonies.
- f. The most effective way to reduce the number of cats is massive desexing programmes by councils and aid from government bodies to help the various cat charities committed to this method.
- g. The pounds are struggling at the moment to cope with the large quantities of unwanted cats and this can lead to sub standard care for a sentient animal's needs and wellbeing being met. Large scale desexing programme can bring down the population thus relieving the pressure on pounds.
- h. I am not aware of the outcomes of similar policies on cat containment in other states or territories.
- i. Humane options for reducing the feral cat population are few. Mandatory containment does not work. Culling, trapping, hunting, shooting and poison baiting - is not humane, especially poisoning, which involves in a slow agonising death. Shooting also is not an option due to an animal being partly shot and escaping with injuries. Desexing programmes is a humane solution which results in decreased to nil population in colonies. Immunocontraception is also a highly acceptable and humane approach.
- j. The explosion in homeless cats is at unmanageable proportions and completely out of control. Urgent attention and implementation needs to be fast tracked by councils and government bodies. Educational programmes need to be implemented starting in low socio-economic areas. Responsible pet ownership and wildlife care should be a mandatory subject in schools so that each child is encouraged to be a protector of her/his community/country, and take the knowledge home. Programmes to assist people with mental health issues such as hoarders. The amount of people in my area alone is staggering with seeming responsible people have 80+ cats or more per household.

Immediate funding for community cat programmes and desexing initiatives is needed. Australia is a country where animal and human welfare should be enjoyed. This is not happening at present. It is dire.