

Submission
No 401

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

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As a resident of Vincentia on Jervis Bay, I am very concerned about the impact roaming pet cats are having in and around my area on our native wildlife. The area has a range of native species which are all prey for cats including 3 species of antechinus, native bush rats and swamp rats, gliders, possums, bandicoots, birds and reptiles.

I strongly support sensible amendments to the law to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

Cats are both valued companion animals and one of the world's most successful predators. In NSW, approximately 96 million native mammals, birds and reptiles are killed by roaming pet cats every year – with about 110 native animals killed by each roaming, hunting pet cat. Unfortunately about 70% of cat owners still allow their pets to roam and many are unaware of the damage their cat does. Cat tracking by the University of South Australia Discovery Circle 2017 found cats free roaming cats travel further at night than they do during the day and often travelled further than their owners knew. Published results attached separately.

Cats on neighbouring properties cause neighbours to fight. Cats can't easily be prevented from entering a property unwanted causing distress from spraying and defecation, fighting, caterwauling when mating and triggering security lights all adversely affecting the enjoyment of property owners of their one home.

We can't change the nature of cats, but we can change the culture that allows pet cats to roam and kill. We urgently need responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained to their property to save our native wildlife.

This will also benefit pet cats. Cats that are kept at home are less likely to be injured or killed through fighting, being hit by cars and or catching communicable diseases. They can live up to 10 years longer than cats that roam.

This reform should be accompanied by funding for education, compliance and to make desexing and registration easier. We also need clear rules around desexing by 4 months of age to prevent unwanted breeding and requirements for all local governments to develop and implement companion animal management plans.

I am therefore calling on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare committee to support:

Amendments to the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

State government funding of a minimum of \$9 million to fund compliance, education, desexing, identification and registration programs.

Requirements for all local governments to develop companion animal management plans to protect wildlife, as is required in Victoria.

Development of a state-wide web resource for responsible pet ownership.

Making desexing mandatory state-wide by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT and SA.