

Submission
No 403

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 19 November 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Honourable Members of the Committee of Inquiry,

Thank you for the opportunity to lodge a submission to this important review of legislation regarding the management of household domestic cats. I would like to share my experience of the devastating impact of uncontrolled cats on native animal populations on our farm, which is located in Stony Chute, Lismore Council.

I grew up on a dairy farm and have been involved in rewilding since I was nine. Not a lot happening on a remote rural property perhaps. I have continued this activity in every location where it was possible to do so.

My partner and I purchased a farm in the Northern Rivers to pursue both farming and rewilding activities, both in segregated zones. The majority is allocated to rewilding. Lismore Council has generously provided funds to assist with engaging a qualified and experienced bush regeneration firm. Significant and may I say, surprising, progress has been made with the joint efforts of the team and ourselves. The benefits include fire risk reduction, fuel load management, erosion control, healthier waterways and improved outcomes for wildlife, including access to food sources unencumbered by invasive weeds.

As responsible land managers we sought the advice and assistance of Local Land Services, Wollingbar, to help manage pest species, including foxes and cats. We have managed to trap and euthanize foxes and cats. The use of government funded traps is limited, and we appreciate the opportunity to access these. We have purchased a trap of our own.

The trap predominately catches cats; feral and domestic. Domestic cats are difficult to control because after trapping the animal, one has to contain the animal and transport it to Lismore Council to check ownership via microchip. If that exists. The animals are wreaking havoc. Despite owners best intentions (bell on the neck), I have observed them killing small birds and bandicoots. Domestic cats are the single greatest source of preventable native animal and bird deaths.

The economic impact is significant in relation to the costs of bush regeneration. We have received over \$10,000 in assistance and provided another \$10,000 in assistance in kind and materials including herbicides, equipment, establishment and maintenance of access paths, participation in initial weed management and follow up activities including planting. Cats are uncontrolled and we have observed a decrease in local populations of bandicoots and wallaby joeys in particular.

Controlling domestic cats would allow owners the benefit and charm of keeping a pet, while protecting other animals which rely on the absence of cats. In value for money terms, outcomes for expenditure (\$20,000 to date) would increase significantly, that is bush with animals and birds, rather than a sterile environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and to participate in your review. I wish you the best in your work.

Sincerely yours,