

Submission  
No 409

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 19 November 2024

---

Partially  
Confidential

Australian ways of dealing with unwanted animals are cruel and ill conceived. It is really sad the way animals are shot or poisoned instead of looking for better, more humane ways to deal to stray animals.

Australia should offer free neutering of domestic animals to prevent the problem in the first place.

Look at solutions applied in the US through aspca:

Utilising Trap-Neuter-Return-Monitor (TNRM) to Manage Community Cat Populations. TNRM is the method of humanely trapping community cats, having them spayed or neutered and vaccinated against rabies, and then returning them to their managed location to live out their lives.

Killing cats to protect wildlife hasn't worked before and it won't work now, it's cruel and doesn't solve the problem.

Community cat programs that focus on rehoming, targeted desexing, TNR and community education have proven highly effective at reducing stray cat populations.

These initiatives also ease the burden on councils, shelters and rescue groups, while supporting the well-being of vets, nurses and volunteers involved.

A NSW Government-commissioned report supports large-scale desexing programs instead, showing that killing programs are ineffective.

The recent NSW Pound Inquiry has recommended a proactive solution: providing grants to councils and rescue organisations to fund large-scale, targeted desexing programs across the state, including community cat desexing in areas with large homeless cat populations, especially disadvantaged communities. These kinds of programs are a long-term, compassionate solution that reduces stray cat populations without demonising cats.

The best solution is helping semi-owners and owners in disadvantaged areas by providing free desexing and microchipping through programs like the Community Cat Program.

Proactive community cat programs have been scientifically proven to reduce stray cat populations, decrease nuisance complaints and prevent wildlife predation.

The Rand myth of domestic cats & urban wildlife provides a helpful summary of common misconceptions and effective solutions such as desexing for managing cats and reducing the number of homeless cats.

When creating policies for reducing feral and community cat populations, it's essential to consider the Vacuum Effect, an ecological principle demonstrating that removing animals from an area only results in new animals filling the space. Without addressing the root causes of population growth, removal efforts are unsustainable and ultimately ineffective.

Cats are wonderful animals, sweet and affectionate. We need a comprehensive program that will fix the problem permanently. Trapping, desexing, releasing and feeding, educating communities, providing free desexing for all domestic animals.

Please don't make shooting and poisoning the way of trying to solve a problem humans created in the first place by being irresponsible. We need to come up with permanent solutions compatible with a more compassionate, developed society.

### Educating Pet Owners

Educating communities about responsible pet ownership is essential.

Encouraging people about how to keep their cats safely indoors or contained within property boundaries, such as in cat patios, can help keep both cats and wildlife safe.

Community outreach, media campaigns and school programs teaching pet care, the importance of spaying/neutering and safe indoor environments.

Supporting local initiatives that help manage community cat populations through rehoming programs, targeted desexing and fostering.

It's easy to blame cats for the problems we face with wildlife, but the truth is, human actions have a much bigger role in creating these issues. Things like deforestation, clearing land for farming and urban sprawl are wiping out habitats for native wildlife, while making it easier for introduced species like cats to thrive. Unlike native animals, cats don't rely on specific ecosystems to survive, which means they can adapt and thrive in these altered environments. Instead of just pointing fingers at cats, we need to focus on fixing the root causes, like projects to restore habitats and bring back biodiversity.

Please consider a holistic, humane approach for this matter; simplistic and cruel approaches don't work and make us look as a barbaric society. We should be able to come up with better solutions than merciless killing. Feral cats are only feral because nobody provides for them, they are hungry and scared. They do not need poison, they need to be cared for.