

Submission  
No 412

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

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Once, I was a responsible dog owner... I had Rabbits, Guinea pigs and other animals as pets. Never a cat- I'd never wanted to own one. All that changed in 2005 when my dogs alerted me to 4 tiny kitten faces peeking out from behind our outdoor shed door. So began my life as a cat owner and lover.

These 4 kittens had been born 'courtesy' of a poor mother cat who lived across the road from us. The negligent owners never had her desexed and apparently it was known that she produced multiple litters over the years. Ours were lucky- we kept them, neutered all 4 boys and I still am lucky enough to have one - who is now 19! I have known such love from these boys - they have been indoor cats from day one. ( with the occasional promenade around outside the house - supervised. )

Today, I still have a dog and 2 cats. The comfort the company of a cat brings and their affection is beyond words. I advocate for cats all the time.

Cats need our protection. They do not ask to be born or discarded to live on the streets. Or can they help that their nature is to catch and play with things.

It is surely obvious to all, that the issue of cats being a threat to wildlife, starts with reducing their numbers by an immediate desexing programme. Right now. Cat rescues do amazing work finding homes for stray animals, which should be supported!

Mandatory microchipping and a very affordable licence fee should be applied.

I do believe public education that promotes cats living indoors totally is essential. It's not unusual now for people to walk cats or have cat enclosures if they want. My cats have lived long and healthy lives because they have lived indoors. I never wanted to lose one on the road or find them bringing a dead little bird or animal home.

Ultimately owning a cat is a responsibility but right now Government can help change the future of cats in our environment and society.

- \* Immediately begin a free spay/neuter programme.
- \* License and microchip cats like dogs.
- \* Public Awareness and Education campaigns about cat ownership.
- \* Promote the benefits of cat ownership for mental health.
- \* Give funding to animal rescues / sanctuaries etc
- \* Make legitimate cat breeders pay a significant fee and make sure they are registered. Cat breeding like puppy farming should be outlawed.

I hope my unexpected experience of cat ownership will show that cats can be managed... I took 4 'strays', had them all desexed and microchipped and kept them safely indoors , enjoying long lives.

These beautiful and often maligned animals need our help. Not be targeted as animal terrorists. They need managing in a kind way. Good government can help achieve this.

Please try.

Thank you.

Julie Henson

NB I was living in Sydney when I 'acquired' my cats. Though currently in Tasmania, I will be returning to NSW next year.