

Submission
No 369

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

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I feel deeply that we humans have a responsibility to care for the welfare of all our fellow sentient beings. I have had the privilege of having many cats as companions and they have enriched my life, as they have for many of us. They are part of our community.

I am saddened that they are often so vilified as "killers ". This is ironic as usually those accusing cats are not vegans. We brought them to Australia: it was not their choice. And it is our species that is wreaking the worst havoc on native species. Habitat destruction is the proven greatest killer of our precious native fauna.

Various studies have shown that the detrimental effect of cat attack on wildlife populations is greatly overestimated [Rand].

We need to focus on addressing management and causal factors of straying. Community and school education programs, spaying and neutering and rehoming projects have proven more successful in management than full curfews, which have resulted in an increase in strays, surrenders, abandonments and euthanasia [NSW Pound Inquiry].

Many committed cat owners do not have the wherewithal to confine cats and curfews would disadvantage these people unfairly. Curfews in Victoria have proven ineffective and counterproductive.

Our feline friends deserve to live with care, safety and respect. It's not either or: we should love and value our wildlife and our cats equally. Each creature deserves the highest standards of welfare we can afford. Let us follow the science and protect not persecute.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion and speak up for our innocent cats.