

**Submission
No 430**

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

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Hi,

As part of this, I urge the government to consider what things need to change on a broader scale in order for cat owners to want to keep their cats indoors, similar to a dog.

Leashed trained cats are becoming a bigger and bigger occurrence, however there are many limitations that dog owners don't go through and it makes it harder for cat owners to be responsible whilst also allowing their pets the proper stimulation.

I've trained my cats to walk on leashes and use a backpack, so that way I keep them indoors to protect them and the native wildlife but then they also still have an opportunity to explore the world safely under my control and supervision.

There are many parks and establishments that allow for leashed dogs, but won't allow any other sort of leashed pets, such as leashed cats. Dog owners also rarely follow the rules regarding on/off leash dog areas, which make it unsafe for me to take my cats on walks. The other week I was walking my cats along a bush trail that was in a leashed animals only section, only to be attacked by two off leash dogs who were not under the control of their owner.

I also specifically refer to section 30 (1) (b) of the NSW Companions Animal Act 1998, which prohibits cats from entering wildlife protection areas. There have been multiple occasions that I've taken my cats to areas that I've had no issues taking my leashed dogs, only to discovered in the fine print on the sign that no cats are allowed.

1. This does nothing to prevent free roaming cats, which I imagine the legislation was designed for since leashed cats were probably not a thing in 1998 when the legislation was introduced
2. I would argue that I have better control over my leashed cats in a zipped up backpack compared to some leashed dogs, such as a husky

This goes back to my point that many cat owners are trying to be responsible but face so many roadblocks that it's difficult.

I agree that cats should not be allowed to freeroam, similar to a dog. However leashed cats should also be afforded the same freedoms as leashed dogs, and until this change happens, there is going to be a lot of pushback from cat owners who find it cruel to keep a cat locked up inside.