

Submission
No 434

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

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Inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales October 2024

SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. I have been a cat lover, adopter, and owner all my life (70 plus years). I also love our native animals, and I want us to find a cat management solution that works – for wildlife and for cats.

Over the years I have made numerous submissions to numerous governments – state and federal – about this problem. Nothing has changed. Unwanted cats are still killed using 1080 poison - and cruel trapping.

I have attached at the end of this submission a PDF file of a federal government submission I made in 2020. The terms of reference are slightly different to this inquiry, but I have marked in yellow the sections that are relevant to the terms of reference of this inquiry. (My PDF opened for me in my NSW submission document, but please advise me by email if you cannot open it, and I will forward it separately.)

Since making that submission, I now agree there are shortcomings with curfews, because they are not suitable for all situations; perhaps in more affluent suburbs where owners are still ignorant of their cats' predation, education is important, and they can usually afford to build enclosures to solve the problem – once they realise their cat is the problem. However, in less affluent areas, curfews have not worked, and other tactics must be adopted such as those described below.

In short, I support humane, science-based solutions for cat welfare and wildlife protection in NSW and the rest of Australia.

In my 2020 submission I detailed how **community education** and programs that focus on rehoming, targeted desexing, trap-

neuter-release achieve excellent results in reducing stray cat numbers. I admire the work of G2Z – Getting to Zero G2Z. <https://www.g2z.org.au/> . I commend their work to inquiry members, and suggest they have a look at the G2Z website.

This organisation has spent many years providing excellent strategies, for many municipalities and other groups around Australia.

Groups like this also reduce the burden on councils, shelters and rescue groups and monitor the well-being of vets, nurses and volunteers.

The NSW Pound Inquiry recommended providing grants to councils and rescue organisations to fund large-scale, targeted desexing programs across the state. It recognised the importance of including community cat desexing in disadvantaged communities, which often have large numbers of homeless cats.

Cats must not be vilified as killers. We need continuing long-term programs that educate communities and reduce numbers of homeless cats

Inroads can be made by helping semi-owners and owners in disadvantaged areas by providing free desexing and microchipping through programs. As an example, see the link below:

[Community Cat Program.](#)

Such programs have scientifically shown reductions in stray cat populations, with corresponding decreases in nuisance complaints and wildlife deaths.

I recommend also the committee study Jacquie Rand's *The myth of domestic cats and urban wildlife*. It details

misconceptions about cats and recommends desexing programs to manage cat populations.

As I mentioned in my 2020 submission, policymakers MUST be cognisant of the ecological principle that if you take cats out of an area, it is inevitable that new cats will move into their territory.

Removal of cats is not a solution. It is wasting public money. The cats will keep returning unless long-term programs are put in place.

Cat containment, curfews etc

I refer the committee to my 2020 submission which discusses my personal experience of cat containment. Many councils have already implemented curfews and containment policies.

However, they are not the complete answer due to factors mentioned below. Some councils have even abandoned curfews.

Community education, and engagement, are vital.

Cat owners must be made aware that their roaming cats will kill wildlife. On the plus side, confined cats are not exposed to the trauma of outside dangers and associated vet bills resulting from fighting, traffic accidents and getting lost.

All councils, state governments and the federal government must consult and establish community outreach, media campaigns and school programs teaching pet care, the importance of spaying/neutering and safe indoor environments. Kids need to nag their parents about this issue.

Our governments must support local initiatives that help manage community cat populations through rehoming programs, targeted desexing and fostering.

Not everyone can afford expensive, comfortable caging for their cats. This is obviously so in rental properties with unsympathetic landlords, and in less affluent suburbs.

Moreover, it can prove difficult to contain and retrain a cat who is habituated to being allowed to roam. Some cat owners might even abandon their cat if they are fined because of curfew laws.

It has been shown that curfews invariably increase impoundments and lead to higher euthanasia rates. They do not solve roaming

As the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation (APWF) explains in its treatise, curfews obviously cannot work for semi-owned or stray cats. See their link further below.

Below are the RSPCA's 2018 statistics on containment -

In Yarra Ranges (Victoria), three years after introducing a 24-hour cat curfew, cat-related complaints rose by 143%, impoundments by 68%, and euthanasia by 18%, while the population grew by just 2%.

Similarly, in the City of Casey (Victoria), 20 years after implementing a cat containment policy, impoundments were up by 296% and complaints had also increased.

Other councils, like Hobsons Bay (Victoria), **have rejected cat curfews**, acknowledging their ineffectiveness at addressing cat population and related issues. See link below:

Our Vulnerable Wildlife

In my 2020 submission (PDF included at the end of this submission) I focus on how it is simplistic and wrong to blame cats for wildlife extinctions when human activities are responsible for most wildlife destruction through deforestation, clearing land for farming and urban sprawl. The destruction of habitat makes it easier for introduced species like cats to thrive.

If habitats are restored, cats find it more difficult to prey on wildlife. Science has proved this. Rescue data shows that key threats to wildlife are habitat loss, dog attacks, and vehicle collisions.

For example, I have given up driving throughout Tasmania because the road-kill of wildlife sickens me to my stomach. Where are speed limits and signage warning of wildlife presence? Tasmania prides itself on its tourist attractions; yet there are no warnings for tourists to avoid driving at dusk and dawn and to approach a dead animal on the road with caution in case of Tasmanian tigers feasting on the carnage. This is a common problem Australia wide. Governments must have awareness programs advising motorists to slow down between dawn and dusk – and at night, for the sake of our wildlife and the motorists' welfare and car damage as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. It is very disheartening that I am raising the same issues now that I raised back in 2020 – because few advances have been made by those who govern us, both state and federal.

And please take note of my comments in my 2020 submission about the abject cruelty of using 1080 poison to kill not only cats, but also dogs, dingoes - and native birds of prey who

clean up poisoned animals. Most other countries have banned 1080, and Australia must follow suit.

Jan Kendall

22 November 2024

NB: Below is my 2020 submission to the federal government, which covers some of the terms of reference in the NSW inquiry. Please contact me by email if the PDF below does not open, and I will arrange send it another way.



Jan Kendall July 2020
Federal Environment :