

Submission
No 436

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

Name: Ms Penelope Milson

Date Received: 17 November 2024

17 November 2024

Submission to: *Inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales*

I wish to thank the NSW Parliament Legislative Council's Animal Welfare Committee for launching an Inquiry into the management of cat populations in New South Wales. This Inquiry is long overdue, and I am extremely hopeful that the NSW Government will *act decisively* to address the issue of feral, stray and roaming pet cats in NSW.

I am a rural resident; living in Tamworth (North West NSW). I have personal experience of the problem of roaming cats. We have created a wildlife-friendly garden on our 850 sqm block by planting native grasses & shrubs and installing a frog pond. Our neighborhood in East Tamworth is adjacent to publicly owned natural bushland (Oxley Park).

As a nature lover, I experience continual frustration and distress as a result of roaming cats regularly entering our garden to play, defecate, hunt and kill native birds, frogs and skinks. We have observed cats prowling and actively hunting in our garden and have found feathers/bird remains near low lying nectar shrubs.

Please find below a list of strategies that we have deployed (and their respective effectiveness) in addressing the problem of cats entering our property.

Strategy to prevent roaming cats entering garden	Result?
Installation of TALLER hardwood boundary fence on RHS (2.1m; previously 1.5m) – additional \$3,621 (half-share) for extra height; installed 2020.	INEFFECTIVE
CATWatch Ultra Sonic Units x 2 & Adapter from fauNature (\$335 in 2018)	INEFFECTIVE
Installed mesh underneath front & driveway gates	INEFFECTIVE
Mesh obstacles placed on top of garden shed (favored entry point for cat)	INEFFECTIVE
'Keep Off' Repellant Spray (from Bunnings)	INEFFECTIVE
Polite requests via text/letter to next door neighbor requesting pet containment	INEFFECTIVE
Complaint to Council - <i>Ranger advised that they have no recourse</i> as they operate under an 'outdated' legislation (Companion Animals Act 1998)	INEFFECTIVE
Letterbox-drop in a newsletter-style raising awareness of Cats and Indian Mynas and their impact on local wildlife – delivered over Winter 2024.	PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE*

*Non-immediate neighbor texted me to say she would no longer let her cat roam our neighborhood.

In light of the failure of the above methods, and in particular the inability of my local Council to 'do anything'. I would like to propose that the Animal Welfare Committee recommend greater powers and support to Councils to enforce mandatory cat containment; 24/7, specifically through an amendment to the Companion Animals Act 1998.

I urge you to consider the cat issue in the current context i.e. the multiple and accumulating factors which are already impacting on threatened native animals that being; *habitat loss and habitat fragmentation, climate change and it's associated droughts and floods, growing spread of invasive species like the Common (Indian) Myna, and a growing human population (therefore an increasing number of pet cats).*

Australian scientists are telling us that our native species are not able to withstand the high levels of predation caused by cats. I urge you to read 'The impact of pet cats on Australian wildlife'. Research findings factsheet, Project 7.4. Threatened Species Recovery Hub.

Penny Milson BSc. MPH.