

Submission  
No 456

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

As an Environmental Scientist and a resident of Lyne electorate, I am very concerned about the impact roaming pet cats are having on our native wildlife. I therefore am in support of sensible amendments to the law to enable MidCoast Council and other Councils to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.

I have owned cats for most of my life and I understand their importance as a companion animal. However, as someone who works in biodiversity conservation, I am also aware of the impact they are having on our local wildlife.

Native wildlife needs to be free to roam, to be able to find food and habitat safely. This is not the case for cats who are fed and homed by humans. While undertaking wildlife monitoring in public reserves as part of my work the majority of cameras capture cats, both feral and domestic showing up regularly, with cats sometimes outnumbering the number of native wildlife found.

Cats are one of the world's most successful predators. In NSW, approximately 96 million native mammals, birds and reptiles are killed by roaming pet cats every year – with about 110 native animals killed by each roaming, hunting pet cat.

Cats will not change their nature, but we need to change the culture of pet ownership and the idea that they should be free to roam and kill whatever they like. Just because they are a human companion should not mean that they have more rights than our native wildlife.

We urgently need responsible pet ownership, and this starts with clear rules to ensure pet owners keep cats contained to their property to save our native wildlife. Cats should be kept inside the home or in a cat run at all times, with their only access to the world being on a leash. There should also be rules ensuring that all animals are fully desexed at a young age to prevent unwanted breeding.

Additional funding for compliance should also be available to ensure that Council's are able to enforce these rules.

Education for owners is also important, this should include letting them know that these new rules would benefit their pet cats. Cats that are kept at home are happy and can live up to 10 years longer than cats that roam which are often injured or killed through fighting, car accidents and disease.

I am therefore calling on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare committee to support:

- Amendments to the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level, bringing NSW into line with almost every other state.
- State government funding of a minimum of \$9 million to fund compliance, education, desexing, identification and registration programs.
- Requirements for all local governments to develop companion animal management plans to protect wildlife, as is required in Victoria.
- Development of a state-wide web resource for responsible pet ownership.
- Making desexing mandatory state-wide by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT and SA.