

Submission
No 458

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Submission on the Inquiry into the Management of Cat Populations in NSW

To: Emma Hurst, MP, Chair of the Inquiry into the Management of Cat Populations in NSW

I am writing to express my support for humane, effective, and science-based approaches to managing cat populations in New South Wales. I appreciate the Animal Justice Party's commitment to reforming cat welfare policies, especially given the pressing issues that homeless and community cats face.

Why We Need Humane Solutions

Lethal control methods like baiting and trapping are not only cruel but also ineffective. These methods overlook the root causes of stray cat populations and often lead to unnecessary suffering. Furthermore, evidence from community cat programs suggests that humane strategies—such as targeted desexing, rehoming initiatives, and public education—are far more effective in reducing stray and feral cat numbers sustainably. For example, the NSW Government-commissioned report and the recommendations from the NSW Pound Inquiry both advocate for large-scale, targeted desexing programs, which provide a compassionate and lasting solution.

Concerns About Mandatory Cat Containment

While many cat owners already keep their pets contained, mandatory containment laws often target semi-owned or stray cats, which have no owners to enforce confinement. Imposing strict 24-hour curfews could inadvertently increase abandonment, impoundments, and euthanasia rates. Victoria's experience with containment policies shows a significant rise in complaints and impoundments without a decrease in roaming issues. We need nuanced approaches, not blanket policies that may lead to more harm than good.

Educating Pet Owners and Building Awareness

Promoting responsible pet ownership through education is essential for cat welfare and for protecting wildlife. Community outreach, media campaigns, and school programs can teach owners about spaying, neutering, and safe containment practices. Supporting local rehoming, fostering, and desexing initiatives can further manage community cat populations and reduce the burden on shelters and rescue groups.

Understanding Wildlife Threats Beyond Cats

Cats are often blamed for wildlife decline, but human actions—such as habitat destruction, vehicle collisions, and urban sprawl—are far greater threats. Data from the NSW Wildlife Rehabilitation Dashboard highlights that cats are not the primary risk to threatened species; instead, issues like habitat loss and vehicle collisions pose more significant threats. Our policies should focus on these broader environmental impacts while addressing the ecological role cats have adapted to due to human encroachment.

Conclusion

In summary, I urge this Inquiry to prioritise humane and scientifically proven solutions for managing cat populations. Programs that focus on desexing, education, and compassionate community support are more likely to be effective and sustainable. Cats deserve care and protection, not inhumane treatment.

Thank you for considering my submission. I hope this Inquiry will help create a compassionate future for cats in NSW.

Sincerely,