

**Submission
No 380**

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

Name: Mr Garth Wimbush

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As a passionate advocate for our unique and fragile wildlife, I am deeply alarmed by the devastating impact of roaming pet cats in Vincentia and across New South Wales. The unchecked freedom of these pets is a crisis for our native species, and I wholeheartedly support the urgent reform of the law to empower local governments to enforce anti-roaming regulations. It's time for NSW to join nearly every other state in the country and take a stand for both the welfare of our wildlife and the health of our pets.

Cats are beloved companions, but they are also one of the most formidable predators on the planet. In NSW alone, roaming pet cats are responsible for the senseless deaths of approximately 96 million native mammals, birds, and reptiles each year. This tragic toll equates to roughly 110 native animals lost per roaming cat annually. Yet, alarmingly, around 70% of cat owners still allow their pets to roam freely.

While we cannot change the instincts of cats, we can shift the culture that tolerates their roaming and the carnage they cause. The time for change is now. We need responsible pet ownership to be the norm, and that starts with clear, enforceable rules that require pet owners to keep their cats safely contained within their properties. This simple act of responsibility will safeguard our precious wildlife and help reverse the devastating loss of species.

Importantly, this reform would benefit our cats too. Cats that are kept indoors are happier, healthier, and live up to 10 years longer than those exposed to the dangers of roaming, such as car accidents, injuries from fights, and the spread of disease.

I call on the NSW Government and the Animal Welfare Committee to urgently support the following measures:

Amend the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to allow local governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats, aligning NSW with the rest of the nation.

Allocate a minimum of \$9 million in state government funding for programs focused on compliance, education, desexing, identification, and registration.

Require all local governments to develop and implement comprehensive companion animal management plans, as is already mandated in Victoria, to protect wildlife.

Establish a state-wide online resource to promote responsible pet ownership, ensuring every cat owner has access to the information and tools they need to do the right thing.

Make desexing mandatory for all cats by 4 months of age, as is required in WA, Tasmania, ACT, and SA, to prevent the uncontrolled breeding of unwanted litters.

We must act now before more of our native wildlife disappears. The time for change is here, and it's in our hands to make it happen.

Regards, Garth Wimbush