

**Submission
No 382**

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

Name: Mr David Yazbek
Date Received: 19 November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this submission in response to the Inquiry Into The Management of Cat Populations Submission Guide.

I am an animal lover. I became a vegetarian in 2020 because I could no longer cope with the suffering animals endure being a food source for humans.

I am 60 years old. I was a couple of months shy of 54 when my partner and I adopted two Burmese cats. This was my first time ever being a pet owner. I was not allowed to have pets as a child. The experience has been profound. We have also added a couple of rescue cats to our family and they are kept indoors at all times.

Cats are extra special to me because I feel they are maligned more than any other pet/animal. They have been demonised by Hollywood (especially in animations) to always be "villains". They have been associated with evil and black magic and witchcraft since the 16th century. Cats are portrayed negatively in literature and children's books. (In the graphic novel 'Maus: A survivor's Tale', cats are portrayed as Nazis!!) Even recently in the American election, cats were targeted alongside single women!

Perpetual negative reinforcement has demonised and targeted cats throughout society, and they are scapegoats for negative aspects of environmental care.

I spend a great deal of my time and money supporting cat rescues. This includes transporting street cats and kittens to veterinary surgeries for trap-neuter-release programs, as well as finding homes for cats and kittens after desexing. I have met many wonderful, caring people through cat rescues (mostly women – the stigma of men and cats is mind-boggling) and looking after cats, whether they be street cats, abandoned litters, etc, has given me purpose in life. I can't do enough for them. Nor can all these selfless caring people who donate so much of their time and money keeping cat colonies well fed, desexed, health and cared for.

Cat rescues and pounds are now full 365 days a year, despite all the effort these committed and compassionate volunteers put in. One of the reasons they are full is because of the rental crisis, which has stopped would-be pet owners from adopting, and forced current pet owners to abandon their beloved cats on the street because they can't find a rental home with a landlord who will allow pets. This has to change. If you pay rent you should be allowed to own a pet. It's family. We domesticated dogs and cats over hundreds of years. We can't give up on them now when they need us more than ever. I beg you to prioritise cat welfare and support humane management practices, including desexing and education. Cats do not produce kittens on their own. It is due to mismanagement by people who, for whatever reason, allow their pet cats to roam outdoors without having them desexed.

Kind regards,

Dave Yazbek