

Submission
No 476

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
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I strongly believe that cat management policies must prioritise humane and evidence-based solutions to ensure the welfare of cats and the protection of wildlife. The current approaches being advocated by some organisations - such as lethal controls, baiting and mandatory 24-hour cat containment - are cruel, ineffective and unsupported by scientific evidence.

Evidence-Based, Humane Solutions

Community cat programs that focus on rehoming, targeted desexing and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) have proven to be the most effective and compassionate way to reduce stray cat populations. These initiatives address the root causes of population growth, support animal welfare, and ease the burden on councils, shelters, and rescue groups. Studies show that killing programs only create a "vacuum effect," where new animals move into vacated areas, making these methods unsustainable.

The NSW Government should expand funding for large-scale desexing programs, particularly in disadvantaged communities. These programs help semi-owners and pet owners with desexing and microchipping their cats, reducing stray populations in a humane and lasting way.

Issues with Mandatory Cat Containment

Mandatory cat containment policies fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Data from areas like Yarra Ranges and Casey in Victoria demonstrate that such measures often increase impoundments, euthanasia rates and complaints about roaming cats, without reducing stray populations or addressing the underlying issues. Instead of punitive approaches, the government should focus on supporting pet owners by providing education and resources to safely contain their cats, such as guidance on creating enclosed cat patios.

Human-Caused Threats to Wildlife

While cats are often blamed for wildlife decline, the primary threats to native species are habitat loss, vehicle collisions, and dog attacks. Wildlife rescue data clearly shows these factors are far more significant than cat predation. Addressing habitat destruction, restoring biodiversity, and mitigating other human-driven threats must be prioritised. Demonising cats will not solve these issues.

Education and Community Support

Education is critical to effective cat management. Community outreach programs should focus on teaching responsible pet ownership, the importance of desexing, and how to safely contain cats. Supporting local rehoming, fostering and desexing initiatives is essential to creating long-term solutions that benefit both cats and wildlife.

In conclusion, I urge the NSW Government to reject ineffective and inhumane measures like lethal controls and mandatory 24-hour containment, and instead adopt proactive, compassionate policies focused on community-based desexing, education, and habitat restoration.