

Submission  
No 489

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

**Name:** Mrs Maria Ferraro  
**Date Received:** 22 November 2024

---

I would like all policymakers to bear in mind that the proliferation of homeless and unsocialised animals is the result of human failures and intervention.

Humans continue to breed, buy, and sell cats and kittens. Humans who abandon their animal companions; and humans who fail to desex, contain, and supervise the animals. T

Therefore, it's ludicrous to then allow humans to shoot or poison the animals (and any other unlucky other creatures, to become an unintended victim) - not only is this process inhumane, it's illogical.

The Government should therefore focus on promoting adoption of animals and encourage, and if necessary, supply desexing stations in areas where there is a prolific amount of unwanted animals. It would also appear that there are humans out there that need to be educated in 'animal care' so an education program should be available encouraging people to be more responsible; more thoughtful and more proactive in keeping pets safe.

Animals that are not desexed, and reproduces, the problem is compounded. A single free-roaming, unfixed cat can give rise to as many as 5,000 cats in seven years. Extensive and readily available desexing programmes made affordable via state government subsidies must therefore be coupled with legislation banning the breeding and sale of animals by breeders, kitten farms, pet stores, and online operators to stem the flow of new animals.

Desexing also improves the welfare of each animal. Spaying eliminates female feline stress and discomfort during heat periods, eliminates uterine cancer risk, and greatly reduces mammary cancer risk. One study found that spaying cats younger than 1 year old was associated with an 86% reduction in the risk of developing mammary gland neoplasia.

Neutering of male cats, makes the cats far less likely to roam or fight, prevents testicular cancer, and reduces the risk of prostate cancer. Altered animals are less likely to contract deadly, contagious diseases, such as feline AIDS and feline leukaemia, which are spread through bodily fluids.

Allowing cats to roam outside the home is dangerous not only for wildlife but also for the cats themselves, who are at risk of disease, being hit by cars, or becoming the victims of cruel people. Cats responsibly contained at home can live up to 10 years longer than those allowed to roam free.

Cat management strategies must be focused on humane ways of addressing the root cause of overpopulation, not employing cruel, dangerous lethal measures.

Poisoning as a cat control measure, for example, is counterintuitive to protecting wildlife. Sodium fluoroacetate (colloquially 1080), which is commonly used in cat baits, is an environmental disaster. It is easily ingested by companion animals as well as native species, and its victims endure a slow, agonising death.

Similarly, shooting cats is cruel. Shooting moving targets, which is usually done at night, can result in inaccurate shots and cause prolonged, painful death.

In regards to tackling the root causes of overpopulation, it is not enough to rely on reactionary control methods, such as the impounding of animals identified as having homes and the killing of homeless animals. PETA urges the New South Wales government to consider the following preventive measures to reduce cat populations:

- \* A ban on the sale of animals by breeders, in pet stores, and online
- \* A ban on kitten farms
- \* The enforcement of 24/7 cat confinement laws
- \* Continuation of mandatory microchipping
- \* Increased public education about the importance of cat desexing, at-home confinement (including environmental enrichment), fostering, and adoption
- \* Increased state government funding of adoption groups and shelters to better house impounded animals and enhance rehoming efforts
- \* Government funding of desexing programmes
- \* In cases where it is necessary, euthanasia – and an end to cruel, inaccurate lethal methods such as shooting and poisoning

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Best regards, Maria