

Submission  
No 493

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

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In regard to: New South Wales seeking submissions from the public on its plans for cat populations in the state.

I am urging policymakers to bear in mind that the proliferation of homeless and unsocialised animals is the result of human failures. It is humans who continue to breed, buy, and sell cats and kittens; humans who abandon their animal companions; and humans who fail to desex, contain, and supervise them. To then allow humans to shoot or poison the resulting animals (and any other unlucky enough to become an unintended victim) is inhumane and illogical.

Controlling Australia's cat population requires a multipronged approach that must rest first and foremost on stemming the flow of new cats via breeding restrictions, educating the community and intensive funding for community cat desexing programs, including Trap, Neuter, Release.

Options for reducing the feral cat population:

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 regard 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.

I urge 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
- 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 and financial incentive for individuals who volunteer their own time and money to Trap and desex stray cats.