

Submission  
No 497

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

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Please prioritise support humane cat welfare.

The impact of cats on our wildlife is minimal. Killing cats will not solve the problems you are trying to solve.

Please pursue rehoming, desexing, TNR and education as all of these have proven highly effective at reducing stray cat populations.

A NSW Government-commissioned report supports large-scale desexing programs instead, showing that killing programs are ineffective.

Please provide grants to councils and rescue organisations to fund large-scale, targeted desexing programs across the state, including community cat desexing in areas with large homeless cat populations, especially disadvantaged communities. These kinds of programs are a long-term, compassionate solution that reduces stray cat populations without demonising cats.

Also please support semi-owners and owners in disadvantaged areas by providing free desexing and microchipping through programs.

Most cat owners already keep their cats confined, but some face barriers like housing restrictions, high costs to modify properties, or lack of information. Mandatory 24-hour cat curfews, however, often target semi-owned or stray cats, which have no owners to enforce confinement. These curfews can backfire, with some people abandoning cats to avoid fines, adding to the stray population. Demonising cats can also encourage harmful actions, with mandatory curfews sometimes leading to unchecked cruelty, as there's often little oversight on trapping practices or what happens to the cats afterward.

Strict mandated 24/7 cat containment have shown to increase impoundments and lead to higher euthanasia rates without actually solving issues like roaming. Cat containment laws didn't reduce complaints about roaming cats or make a noticeable difference.

For example, the RSPCA's 2018 report shows that councils with containment laws have not seen reductions in cat-related complaints or wandering.

Things like deforestation, clearing land for farming and urban sprawl are wiping out habitats for native wildlife, while making it easier for introduced species like cats to thrive. Unlike native animals, cats don't rely on specific ecosystems to survive, which means they can adapt and thrive in these altered environments. Instead of just pointing fingers at cats, we need to focus on fixing the root causes, like projects to restore habitats and bring back biodiversity.

Wildlife rescue data shows that cats aren't the primary risk to many threatened species. Key threats include habitat loss, vehicle collisions and dog attacks. We should therefore protect wildlife with well-rounded, scientific and humane approaches. Efforts should be focused on habitat conservation and address threats like habitat destruction and collisions.