

Submission  
No 499

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

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

The recent NSW Pound Inquiry has recommended a proactive solution: providing 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.

The best solution is helping semi-owners and owners in disadvantaged areas by providing free desexing and microchipping through programs like the Community Cat Program.

Proactive community cat programs have been scientifically proven to reduce stray cat populations, decrease nuisance complaints and prevent wildlife predation.

The Rand myth of domestic cats & urban wildlife provides a helpful summary of common misconceptions and effective solutions such as desexing for managing cats and reducing the number of homeless cats.

When creating policies for reducing feral and community cat populations, it's essential to consider the Vacuum Effect, an ecological principle demonstrating that removing animals from an area only results in new animals filling the space. Without addressing the root cause, 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.

In Yarra Ranges(Victoria), three years after introducing a 24-hour cat curfew, cat-related complaints rose by 143%, impoundments by 68%, and euthanasia by 18%, while the population grew by just 2%. Similarly, in the City of Casey(Victoria), 20 years after implementing a cat containment policy, impoundments were up by 296% and complaints had also increased.

Other councils, like Hobsons Bay(Victoria), have rejected cat curfews, acknowledging their ineffectiveness at addressing cat population and related issues. Encouraging people about how to keep their cats safely indoors or contained within property boundaries, such as in cat patios, can help keep both cats and wildlife safe.

Community outreach, media campaigns and school programs teaching pet care, the importance of spaying/neutering and safe indoor environments.

Supporting local initiatives that help manage community cat populations through rehoming programs, targeted desexing and fostering.

Wildlife, removal efforts are unsustainable and ultimately ineffective.