

**Submission
No 506**

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

Name: Mr Norman Webb
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Submission into inquiry into management of cat populations in NSW

22nd November 2022

NSW Companion Animals Act 1996

I would like to make the following submission after reading the terms of reference pertaining to the domestic and feral cat problem.

The N.S.W. Companion Animal Act was introduced in or around the year of 1996 to the best of my recollection.

A Committee of members who had experience in matters pertaining to issues of cat and dog management was set up a few years previously to examine all aspects of introducing the Act. The Committee formulated a draft Green paper followed by a white paper which outlined the recommendations of the Committee.

Resistance

The final recommendation's of the committee in the white paper recommended some curfews and compulsory desexing of domestic cats but there was strong resistance from vested interests backed up by a well known shock jock and finally, an opposition who, taking advantage said they would stop any strong recommendation's of cat containment or desexing.

Weak Act

When the recommendations reached the Senate an outnumbered and nervous State Government did not try too hard to fight for the proposals of the Committee and a very weak act was introduced resulting in the deaths of millions of native animals over the last 28 years. A shameful thing in my eyes and those who love our native wildlife.

Overdue

Why do I retell this sad story. I tell it to impress on those concerned with any changes to the Act that change is long overdue and the present situation can not continue.

Since 1996 when the Act was introduced my wife and I have read and noted much about the urban cat as we developed our native habitat garden at St. Georges Basin, on the South Coast of N.S.W.

Wildlife Carers and the Domestic Cat

We fell in love with the native birds and possums that were still doing well in our developing area and joined "The Native Animal Network" a wildlife and rescue association.

Later I became the Vice President of the group.

No recourse

Over the years we have witnessed the destruction of many beautiful birds, possums and other wildlife at the tooth and claw of the domestic cat in our work and in our own garden without any recourse to Government for any solution to this destruction.

NSW & Western Australia left behind

If we lived in Victoria or Canberra then we would take comfort in the knowledge that we were in a State that was doing something positive to stop the deaths of our precious wildlife by giving Councils the right to make laws that restrict the movements of cats through the community.

These restriction must also be accompanied by legislation to restrict the careless breeding of excess cats by compulsory desexing of most animals.

The Feral Cat

The situation when it comes to feral cats is very different to the problem with domestic cats as feral cats have few friends and few protectors and many environmental actors are involved in wildlife protection by buying vast areas of pre used farming land and returning them to wildlife friendly areas, establishing vegetation in the process.

Conservation Groups actions

One of these groups is Australian Wildlife Conservancy who actively eliminate feral pests including the feral cat.

Another group is Bush Heritage who operate in somewhat the same manner.

National Parkes and Wildlife also take positive action to eliminate feral cats.

There are many people working on ways to fool the feral cat and some new types of traps that are computer smart and work well.

There is no doubt that feral cats are a huge problem to our wildlife but at least wildlife lovers can act on this problem within the law.

Time for NSW Actions to protect our wildlife and even the pet cat.

Many Councils are ready to act to stop the indiscriminate killing of our precious wildlife by way of unrestricted domestic cats but need the power to act within the law, unlike the restrictions of the present Act.

I look forward to positive actions from this inquiry into management of cat populations in NSW resulting in the containment of the domestic (pet) cat for 24hours on their owners property.

Thank you
Norman Webb