

**Submission
No 74**

INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Street Cat Sanctuary

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I have been caring for street cats since I was 15. I used to work all weekend at markets to buy their food. I am now a senior woman caring for over 100 street cats. I used all my superannuation made available during Covid to build their enclosures and we were forced to move by Georges River Council who said my enclosure was too big. Apparently in suburbia you can only have an enclosure 10m² x 2 which is absolutely ridiculous. Surely the bigger the enclosure the cleaner the conditions for cats and neighbours and more space equals less stressed cats and stress causes illness.

I moved to Camden area a year ago. I spend all my income after rent on the cats. I go without the basic necessities in life to most people to desex, vaccinate and vet them when unwell. I receive no assistance from the government despite carrying out this service to the community. Getting cats off the street where they are subjected to cruel people who hurt them, poison them and sick their dogs on them. There is no protection for them. They are not feral cats. Feral cats are huge cats in the bush. The name feral is conveniently used for street cats that Pounds and vets acting on behalf of local government use to euthanise a cat found in the street so as not to cause their numbers to go on their stats like feral cats don't matter. They are a living being with as much right to life as any of us.

Cats do not kill for fun. They kill to survive. This is why me and thousands of others do street feeds every night. I spend around \$800pw feeding the cats at the sanctuary and the street cats who live in colonies and are breeding out of control. Feeders try to trap and desex and rehome as many as we can but it's impossible to financially sustain this plus their feeds. If Councils or State government funded free desexing and ear tattoos and release TNR then these cats would live out their lives being fed and cared for by their feeders as semi owners not required to microchip and register until their death. They would not be a threat to wildlife as they are fed. They would not be breeding out of control. The cost of euthanasia including liquid injected into them busts more than a straight desex. If you vaccinate also it stops the spread of FIV and other STD's amongst cats. These are simple fundamental solutions to a huge problem. Killing us not a humane answer. When did we take the humanity out of human??

I cannot continue to sustain these desexed on my own. We need help from government. There needs to be protection for street cats from sadistic cat haters also with strict harsh penalties for anyone found hurting these cats. Their lives are hard enough. They were dumped by humans and left to survive as best they could. Not addressing these fundamental rights is sheer ignorance and animal cruelty on the part of all governments. We need your help not your hinderance.

Legislation needs to be amended so people have the right to enclose their entire yard if wanted for their pet cats. 10m² is a solitary confinement cell to a cat. They will stress and get sick. Cats are natural roamers and if they want out they will find a way. Owners dump cats in other places where this mandatory cat confinement is introduced. It does not solve the problem. Free desexing does. It stops cats going looking for a partner. If they were neutered then this would certainly reduce cats from roaming, fighting and disturbing people's sleep. Think about it. Life is hard enough without governments penalising people like myself who devote all their free time and the most of their money to street cat rescue and neutering. Work with us not against us.