

Submission
No 421

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

The NSW Government's posting an inquiry into Cat Population management is greatly concerning.

There is very little information released for the public to go by, a mere single page terms of reference.

I am pro- safe housing of cats, my own are indoor and only taken outside in an enclosure or leashed.

I am pro- Trap, Neuter, Release, as this keeps stray and feral populations down without allowing more successful predators to flourish and hunt native species nor to continue the cycles of endless kittens.

However, while I believe cats AND DOGS alike should be at home, safe and well, this inquiry concerns me greatly.

2 years ago a man in North NSW happily caught his neighbors cat, he posted a video online of him trapping then drowning the cat in a wheelie bin. He posted the whole thing delightfully on social media. An absolutely disgusting act of animal cruelty and in colder more formal terms, a callous destruction of someone else's 'property' but furthermore an animal companion that was precious to someone.

This is what happens when people see words like "cat curfews".

This inquiry will have a deluge of responses from people who want to harm cats. Though the inquiry means well, and is seeking community response, I have seen it already to be a magnet for people who would happily take a cat and kill it in myriad ways with a sickening glee.

If this management of cat populations is done hastily and incorrectly, the pounds and shelters will be overloaded with cats, and tens of thousands of animals will needlessly die.

I solemnly urge the Government to expand the brief beyond curfews and into other, absolutely vital areas of community:

- The legalisation of TNR Programs, and support for the rescuers that focus on reducing colony sizes.
- Implementation of funding support for rescuers that run desexing programs.
- Ways to take assertive action with cat hoarding without punishing the cats.
- Improvements to education and support in areas that have religious, socio- economic or other drivers that bring population challenges.

Every day on local lost and found pages on social media, people post dogs, cats, horses, cows, birds. If dogs, horses, cows, birds are blameless and their owners likewise blameless (but for the occasional pound fee), so too are the cats.

Responsible cat owners who microchip, spay and neuter their much loved and much cared for animal companions, and keep them indoor only or enclosed in their properties unable to roam, are unfortunately not held exempt from mishap anymore than dog owners or owners of any other kind of pet - sometimes a visiting tradesman or child will see a cat accidentally let out. A 'cat curfew' could see horrific acts of abuse and cruelty, occasioning death, for even these cats. This is unfair and callous.

Community access to education regarding responsible pet ownership, and 'trap neuter release' programs, subsidised spay and neuter programs (which are shown to be successful), are but a few ways that our wildlife can be protected whilst maintaining the safety of our much loved companions. I urge the Government to allow those in the community working on these goals to continue, and perhaps even direct funding toward them.

Thank you.