

## **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the control of feral and domestic cats**

I wish to address the issue of control of domestic cats which may or may not become feral if not cared for responsibly.

I live in a reasonably new subdivision of Pomona a country town in the hinterland of Noosa in SE Qld. The subdivision has 4 narrow green belts of bush between each road and there is bushland less than 0.5 km on Yurol Forest Road. Since I came to live in the Songbird Estate 11 years ago, I have developed a largely native garden and have welcomed and nurtured the local birdlife and other wildlife.

Smaller birds and native animals have unfortunately subsequently disappeared from the garden and bush.

There has been an ongoing influx of domestic animals as the area has grown with more incoming residents. Domestic cats were most noticeable and those which were allowed to roam and or were not housed at night threatened the safety of the birds of 'Songbird', a name not often appreciated by some residents. Small dogs seem to have become more popular with changes of residents. I am not sure of their impact apart from barking to frighten birds away.

In the early days I usually knew which addresses the cats had come from but now it is more difficult to tell as the area has been fully housed. From the beginning I would approach the cat owners politely either face to face or by letter enclosing the local Noosa Council Guidelines for responsible pet care. In one case where repeated requests went unheard the local council officers made a visit on my referral which reinforced council policy.

Most owners were responsive, but some were not. It has become an ongoing campaign and requires vigilance. I am a cat lover and have recently adopted a rescue cat from RSPCA, but she is an indoor cat. I keep windows, doors and blinds closed if another cat comes visiting and the subsequent mutual antagonism ensues. I believe that I am a responsible pet carer.

I would like to see more stringent control of domestic cats to protect local wildlife. Pet carers need to be cognisant of their broader neighbourhood and community responsibilities including penalties for ignoring the safety of local wildlife. I would like recommendations for responsible cat ownership enforced:

- **Keep cats indoors or use an enclosed cat run**
- **Keep cats inside at night**

These rules should be enforced at local council, state and federal government levels. This could be part of wider policies aimed at eliminating feral cats and control of domestic pets.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

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2 July 2020