

Inquiry into the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia

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I would like to make the following submission in regard to this inquiry.

I think that it is extremely important that something is done in regard to the amount of cats that are allowed to roam in Australia. When I was a child my relatives had large numbers of cats that were allowed to roam and breed with no restraints at all. Later, after I left home and was living in a rural area just outside of Devonport Tasmania I again encountered feral cats. They were living in the bush near to the home I was renting and were huge. You had to be very careful when outside, especially after dark, as they would attack you if they could.

Now my family are once again having problems with cats in our neighbourhood both here in Buderim and previously at our former address in Ninderry. We lived in a rural residential area in Karnu Drive and for the first 25 years that we lived there had no problems with cats. This was because we had a succession of pet dogs that kept them out of our large yard. After our last dog passed away we started getting nuisance visits from cats that defecated and sprayed urine on our timber deck. We went to the Sunshine Coast Council about the problem and their only solution was to get a cat trap from Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge. We did this and tried for a week to catch it to no avail. We took the trap back to SCAR and just continued to put up with the cat causing us annoyance.

We moved from Ninderry late last year to a residential house in Buderim in Quambi Place. We have put up with other people's cats constantly coming into our yard since then. They walk all over our new cars that are parked under our carport. They urinate anywhere, including on our car wheels. They defecate in our yard, mulched areas and lawn. The stools are so large that my husband thought they were from a dog. He almost vomits from dry reaching when removing them with a shovel! I woke in the middle of the night a few weeks ago to the sound of cats fighting. When I got up in morning I discovered a rat tail, half a rat head and its entrails on our doormat. I'm glad the rat is gone but shouldn't have to put up with that. However, the worst occurrence so far has been that my adult son contracted a large ring work on his body from the cat/cats. He had not been anywhere for weeks due to Covid 19 restrictions and had been working from home. He had been using our back patio to do his fitness workouts as his local crossfit gym was closed. The pharmacist at local chemist advised that cats carry ringworm and this was how he most probably had contracted it. He was lying on a towel to do floor exercises and then using that towel to wipe himself.

I have read that cats can also carry and possibly pass on to humans the Covid 19 virus. It seems ridiculous to me that we were being made to stay home to protect ourselves. However, no one was doing anything to stop others allowing their cats to possibly bring it into our yards. We are paranoid about walking outside at all now, especially in bare feet and have to be very careful that no visitors to our home wear their outside shoes inside. We feel that our freedoms are being severely hampered just because other people are allowed to let their pets roam at large.

The local council refuses to do anything about it.

Apparently cat owners have to register their cats, but who checks up on that?

Why don't they do a door to door to check if people have cats?

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Why isn't it made compulsory that people have cages/aviaries etc built on to their homes to ensure that they don't roam?

Dog owners have to fence their properties to ensure that their dogs don't roam. I think that cat owners should have much tougher boundaries put in place.

I was talking to one of my neighbours across the street about the problem and she said that they let their cat roam. She said that he is too old and stupid to kill wildlife. When we first moved in here we had a major skink living in the garden but I saw one of the nuisance cats running off with that in his mouth one day.

Please do something about the way that cat ownership is regulated. Surely the local councils can implement some kind of strategy to stop these nuisance cats (and owners) from making other peoples' lives a misery!