

#135

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Q1

First name

[REDACTED]

Q2

Last name

[REDACTED]

Q3

Organisation name (if relevant)

[REDACTED]

Q4

Email address

[REDACTED]

Q5

Phone number

Respondent skipped this question

Q6

Can we contact you about your submission (if required)?

Yes

Q7

What best describes you?

I am representing an NGO or community group,

I am representing an environmental group

Q8

South East

Which of the following regions best describes your location/area of interest?

Q9

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I agree to have my submission published anonymously – please remove my name and company/organisation before publishing

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Q10

To what extent are the NSW environment, industries and communities currently impacted by invasive species?

Invasive species are a significant threat to habitat and wildlife in NSW

Foxes and cats (feral and domestic) are widely identified as significant extinction threats to NSW native wildlife.

Research into roaming domestic pet cats show they kill wildlife at 30 - 50 times the rate of feral cats in residential areas.

ANU 2023 research findings include 66 million native animals killed by pet cats each year in Sydney (Nature Conservation Council and Invasive Species Council Sept 2023)

Increased population/household growth in regional areas means increased pet cat numbers, consequently increased rates of predation in residential areas and in nearby habitat.

Adjoining habitat includes National Parks, reserves and remnant habitat on privately owned lands.

In the SE Region, a significant proportion of remnant TECs are found on privately owners lands and are at risk of predation by invasive species as population increases.

██████████ activities occur predominantly within Shires of Wollondilly and Wingecarribee.

Drawing on recent research into impacts of roaming pet cats an annual minimum toll of predation by roaming pet cats in these two LGAs is 1,218,300 native animals killed by pet cats every year.

SE Region has been significantly impacted by bushfires, rain events and clearing for greenfields development sites. Remnant habitat is at increased risk of predation by invasive species.

NSW track record on protecting biodiversity is poor and getting worse.

2023 Global Report into Plants and Fungi identified Australia as failing in conservation compared to other countries.

Henry Review of NSW BC Act 2023 found that without major reform only half of NSW threatened species are expected to survive in 100 years

In NSW in the three years to December 2020, the number of listings of threatened species increased by 18 (or 2%), with 1,043 species listed as threatened under the Biodiversity Conservation and Fisheries Management Acts (EPA report 2020)

Overall assessment was that more species were threatened, responses to threats were 'poor' and overall getting worse.

Research post 2020 indicates further increases in extinctions.

Q11

To what extent do you think existing programs in NSW are effectively managing invasive species?

Indicators referred to in Q10 demonstrate the extinction trajectory in NSW is getting worse.

NSW (along with WA) is identified as a 'laggard' in managing companion animals and pet cats in particular.

NSW track record in managing feral cats is identified as more effective than for pet cats.

Q12

What, if any, are the key barriers to effective management of invasive species?

NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 is inadequate and provides local government with little direction, guidance or resourcing. LGAs identify this legislation as inhibiting efforts in managing threats from roaming pets.

██████████ has been promoting the benefits to cats and owners of cat containment and the impact of roaming pets on wildlife.

Community awareness is poor about the impact of roaming pets on wildlife and habitat.

The research is available and clearly articulates issues and effective management options. <https://invasives.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Pet-cat-impacts-June-2023.pdf>

Q13

How has invasive species management changed since the introduction of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 legislation and associated programs and plans?

NSW Companion Animals Act is unchanged since 2015.

Many LGAs and NSW Local Government have argued strongly for revision of NSW Companion Animals Act 1998.

Q14

What are the future risks posed by invasive species to the NSW environment, industries and communities?

Increased extinction trajectory for species listed as threatened.

More species and habitat listed as threatened.

Threatened status of already listed species and habitats worsens.

Increased population numbers and more housing in regional areas will result in exponentially greater toll in wildlife killed by roaming pets.

Loss of income from nature tourism in regional areas (such as SE Region) where the richness of biodiversity is a tourism drawcard.

██████████ 2021 research into bird tourism in Australia identified bird tourism as contributing \$283M annually to Australia's economy.

Bird tourists spend on average more than other forms of tourism per night.

Q15

What opportunities do you see to improve the outcomes of invasive species management in the future?

Amend NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable local councils to mandate that pet owners contain domestic pets to their property, in line with other jurisdictions in Australia.

As in other jurisdictions, provision is included for pets being exercised on leads, or at designated off lead areas, or transported in appropriate pet carriers

Require LGAs to implement pet cat management plans.

Ensure LGAs can establish wildlife protection zones in areas adjoining habitat used by wildlife, such zones have been established by several NSW LGAs.

Implement recommendations identified in the June 2023 Factsheet, Biodiversity Council, Birdlife Australia and Invasive Species Council.

<https://invasives.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Pet-cat-impacts-June-2023.pdf>

Allocate adequate resources to support monitoring by State (LLS or NRC) and Local governments.

Mandate that DA approval for all new greenfields developments/NLAs in NSW require cats be contained 24/7 on owners property (unless in a carrier or being walked on leash).

Initiate NSW wide community awareness/information campaigns on the importance of managing invasive species so as to protect biodiversity and habitat.

Community awareness is already a taken for granted strategy used for road safety, sun protection, responsible alcohol consumption and more.

Q16

Any other comments?

A question to be explored is whether monitoring of companion animals is best achieved by devolving monitoring to LGAs or managing pet cats (as a predatory invasive species) at NSW Regional level, such as LLS (or similar).

If devolved to LGAs but at the discretion of each LGAs little may be achieved. This is demonstrated by variations in the extent to which NSW LGAs do, or don't, promote responsible pet ownership. Inadequacies of the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 notwithstanding, there is nothing that limits Councils promoting responsible pet ownership which is doable and a minimal cost initiative. If managed by LGAs resources will be required or little will be gained.
