

To Whom it may concern

Re. Recommendation 17, to classify feral cats as pests.

The recommendation to classify feral cats as pests will initiate a program of eradication of these animals, by poisoning or shooting. Poisoning is a cruel practice causing a great deal of unwarranted suffering, while laying baits endangers many native animals and domestic cats as well. The suggestion that unlicensed hunters be permitted to shoot without being answerable to any authority leads to indiscriminate use of firearms which also endangers native wildlife and domestic cats which roam. It will also be impossible to control.

Classifying feral cats as pests will lead to the demonization of cats in general which will encourage anti-cat sentiments and result in cruel and inhumane activities by sadistic individuals who will not be held accountable under the proposed relaxation of laws and regulations against animal cruelty.

The recommendation appears to assume that cats that live in the wild exist in huge numbers and are responsible for the extinction and endangerment of indigenous species. I very much doubt that this is the case and question whether there is any scientific evidence to support the assumption. Even the document which recommends regarding feral cats as pests acknowledges that they mostly prey on rabbits and mice, preferring the sick, the weak and the old,

It needs to be acknowledged that native predators also account for reductions in the numbers of small marsupials and birds - the dingo, the kookaburra, quolls, eagles and butcher birds, owls, snakes and goannas. The encroachment of human activity on the landscape - roads and motor vehicles, power lines and windfarms - also take their toll on indigenous and non indigenous animals alike. The destruction of habitat has been acknowledged as a major factor in endangering native fauna.

What has not been significantly recognized is that feral cats provide a useful service keeping rat and mice populations down in urban areas and help the control of rabbits on farms and in the wild.

I appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to this initiative and hope my contribution has been helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Young

