

From: [REDACTED]
To: david.templeman@mp.wa.gov.au
Cc: [Cat and Dog Review](#)
Subject: Take pause for paws to review dog and cat laws
Date: Friday, 19 July 2019 10:02:58 AM
Attachments: [Greenwell et al. 2019. Cat gets it's tern. A case study of cat predation on a threatened coastal seabird..pdf](#)

Dear Minister Templeman,

I am writing with respect to the new proposed cat ownership laws for Western Australia which would, potentially, restrict cats to the confines of their owners property.

Suburban environments are important areas for biodiversity, supporting large numbers of threatened species. Yet cats are ubiquitously distributed in these environments and are having a significant impact on native fauna. According to a new book "Cats in Australia: companion and killer" (Woinarski, Legge & Dickman, 2019), each pet cat kills an average of 75 animals per year. With an estimated 4 million pet cats in Australia, the cumulative predator-induced effects on wildlife arising from cats are of concern.

I have seen, first hand, the devastating impacts that can arise from a single, free-roaming cat. Last year, a threatened seabird colony of Fairy Terns in Mandurah was subject to persistent incursions at night by a desexed cat over several nights, which led to the death of six adults, at least 40 chicks, and ultimately, the abandonment of ~110 nests.

My research has just been published in the journal of Animals (special edition: interactions of free-roaming cats and wildlife), which I have attached for your interest. Importantly, it highlights the impact of a single, free-roaming cat, the rapidity with which predation events can occur and the potential for swift population declines. It also raises important messages for the management of cats to protect wildlife.

Regulations to restrict pet cats to their owners' property will, undoubtedly, improve conservation benefits for a diverse range of species utilising urban, suburban and peri-urban environments. Targeted education programs that highlight the welfare benefits that arise from restricting pet cat movement and encourage wildlife-friendly cat husbandry, implemented at community- and state-levels, could be used to drive change in attitude and behaviour among cat owners.

Professor Mike Calver from Murdoch University is working in this space and has developed a series of educational videos that could be used for this purpose. There are numerous hazards arising from a roaming lifestyle, thus programs which promote cat welfare could be used secondarily to reduce the impact of cats on wildlife. Zoos Victoria have developed such a campaign - please see the following link for your information <http://www.safecat.org.au>.

Thank you for your time and your efforts to enhance responsible cat ownership. I fully support measures to restrict the movement of pet cats, which will have significant benefits for native wildlife.

Should you have any queries in relation to the above, feel free to get in touch.

Best regards,

Claire Greenwell | PhD Candidate
Environmental and Conservation Sciences

