



# ALLEY CAT RESCUE

AN ALLIANCE FOR CAT PROTECTION

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Mr. Greg Georgopoulos  
CEO, Kangaroo Island Council  
[pa@kicouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:pa@kicouncil.sa.gov.au)

August 9, 2021

cc: Mayor Michael Pengilly  
[kicouncil@kicouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:kicouncil@kicouncil.sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr. Georgopoulos:

Alley Cat Rescue and over 1,000 petition signers from around the globe urge you to end the culling of cats on Kangaroo Island.

Not only is the practice **inhumane**, it is **misguided**; every previous attempt at culling cats on islands has resulted in rats, mice, and rabbits no longer having a predator to control them and then overrunning the islands. I will use the infamous example of Macquarie Island to illustrate this. In 1997, cats were eradicated from the island with the result that the rat and rabbit populations exploded, devastating the landscape. Rats fed on baby birds and eggs, decimating ground-nesting bird populations (Strickland, 2009). Rabbits destroyed the island's vegetation; this resulted in decreased materials for birds to build nests and left the native penguin population more susceptible to predators. Scientists spent seven years eradicating the rats, mice, and rabbits to combat their increased predation on birds (Strickland, 2009; Australian Department of the Environment, 2009).

Dr Bergstrom, writing in the Journal of Applied Ecology, concluded: "With the luxury of the wisdom of hindsight, we can suggest that the current situation arose as a consequence of inadequate recognition of top-down control of rabbits by a population of only 160 cats" (Bergstrom, 2009).

There are a plethora of similar examples of ecological destruction from small carnivores and rabbits following eradication of cats from islands. Marion Island, Amsterdam Island, and Wake Atoll military base are some prime cases. In the interest of the tax payers of Kangaroo Island, it behooves you to look into the damage sustained by other islands that killed off their cat populations, and the heavy costs to later correct the damage.

Culling is also **impractical**. There are an estimated 1,610 cats on the island. During the time it takes to kill all of them, more will be born, and then more. Kittens are able to become pregnant by four to five months of age, and cats have short gestation periods so there is no way to overtake their numbers by killing off individuals. The campaign of killing could go on forever. An

island-wide trap-neuter-return program will be every bit as effective in controlling the feral cat population there in the next few years, and much more effective in the long term.

This is an issue of both morality and practicality. Too many cats have been unnecessarily killed already. **Please follow the science and data and outlaw cat extermination.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Holton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Louise Holton  
President/Founder

#### References

Australian Department of the Environment. "Lessons Learned from Devastating Effects of Cat Eradication on Macquarie Island — Australian Antarctic Division." N.p., 13 Jan. 2009. Web. 12 Jan. 2015.

Bergstrom, D.M., Lucieer, A., Kiefer, K., Wasley, J., Belbin, L., Pedersen, T. & Chown, S.L. (2009) Indirect effects of invasive species removal devastate World Heritage Island. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 46, 73–81.

Strickland, Eliza. "Attempt to Control Invasive Species Backfires Spectacularly on an Antarctic Island." *80beats, Discover Magazine*. N.p., 12 Jan. 2009. Web. 31 July 2014.