




Speech By  
**Robbie Katter**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Feral Cats

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.48 pm): I rise in the House to raise the issue of the feral cat bounty. It was an issue that was raised in question time the other day, and it is very relevant to my electorate. Around 2009, following a run of good seasons, feral cat numbers built up in the western areas and have since exploded. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence out there, but I think one of the best statistical examples is to be found in the records of councils who have had feral cat bounties. In 2010-11 the McKinlay Shire had a cat bounty of \$16 per tail, and in 12 months 880 tails had been taken in by the council. The same council two years later started the year with a bounty of \$5 per tail and within two months had 5,000 tails. They had to shut off the bounty. That demonstrates the explosion in the number of feral cats—an increase of some 570 per cent in just over two months.

There are countless stories and much evidence of the damage feral cats are doing. I saw in the paper last year that one grazier had got over 400 feral cats in two nights. They are hugging the bore drains and the waterholes, killing the wildlife and doing enormous damage. I mention the dunnart—a cute little furry animal around Julia Creek which is bordering on extinct. The feral cats would be just tearing holes in the numbers of dunnart. Even in the urban areas of Mount Isa and Cloncurry there have been numerous stories of people's chook yards being decimated. All of the lizards and so on that you usually see in town just are not there. Feral cats are a terrible problem.

There is an army of people out there—landholders and people who work on cattle stations—who are doing it tough at the moment. At \$15 a tail, if the state government could subsidise the councils that already put up money for a bounty—we are talking about only a few hundred thousand dollars—it would go a long way to addressing the problem. It would also represent some much needed pocket money for these landowners. It is a very affordable way for the government to eradicate this pest that is very damaging to the environment.

We already have the people out there. They will use their own fuel. It is almost recreational for some people. They could really use the money. One hundred cats a week at \$15 a tail represents good money for them. It would come in handy for a lot of people out there who are really struggling. There is an affordable way to address this problem and I would be grateful if the government would look into it.