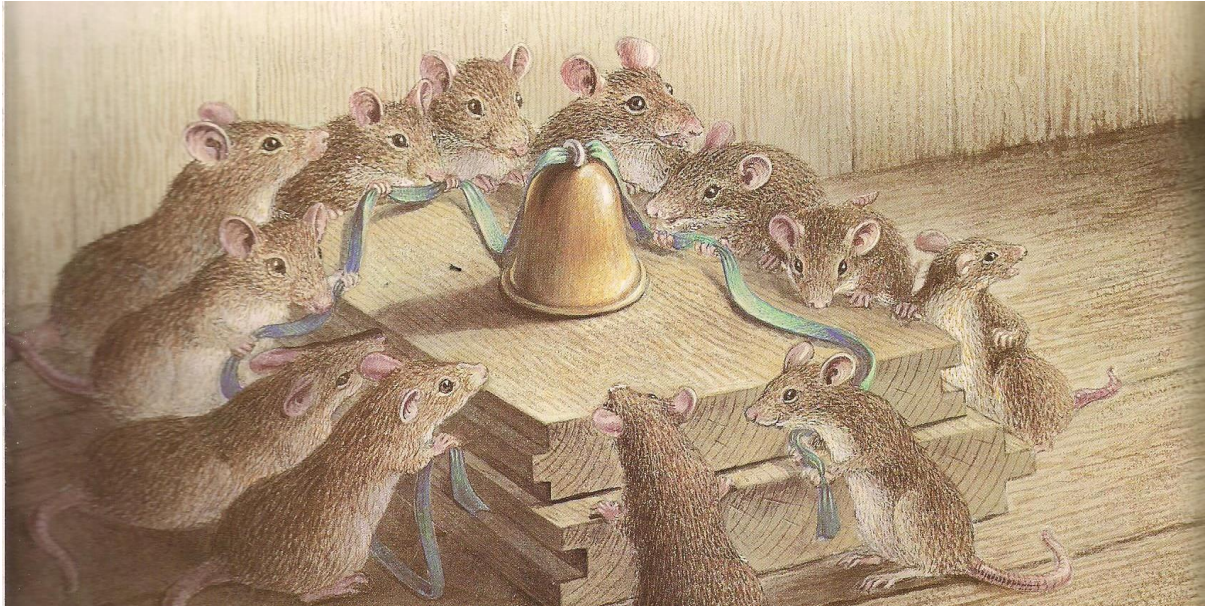


## Who Will Put the Bell on the Cat?

*Shôn Ellerton, December 2, 2018*

*Stick your head above the parapet and do something rather than just talk about it!*



You crank up a post social media stating that politicians are pinching from the public purse, or new laws come into effect to double the number of speed cameras, or schools are banning certain words because they might offend someone. More often than not, a barrage of comments will follow especially if the post is witty, brief and controversial. Brief as most readers these days have the attention span of a 6-year-old itching to get out of the classroom to play with their iPads. At this point, many readers are probably starting to give up now. After all, it's a whole paragraph!

Now try this. Create an online petition where *action* can be taken to either support or disagree with a new policy, law or proposal. I bet my last dollar that only a handful from your intended audience actually read the post, let alone, sign the petition, no matter how easy it is to do so. However, post three words like 'Drunk on Beach' within one of those colourful backdrops Facebook provides, you will, for sure, get more than your fair share of comments and likes! Recently, I've stumbled across a few great petitions on [change.org](https://www.change.org) which have recently been shared on Facebook. For example, saving the only passenger railway between Adelaide and Melbourne, saving a heritage building about to be knocked down in the name of progress, protesting against new tax rulings on electric cars, and many more. Fair enough, you will find some that comment against the petition

which is fine, providing a reason is provided. Everyone has an opinion. However, it absolutely irks me when the comments are in line of ‘*surely there are more important things to worry about in the world... blah blah blah*’. I’ll leave this for another article, but sometimes it is often the *small* things in life we should address because we *can* make a difference and get a result. What is a little more frustrating is when someone likes or positively comments on the post but takes no action.

This takes us to the title of the post, *Who Will Put the Bell on the Cat?* I attribute this story to one of Aesop’s fables, *The Bell & The Cat*, whereby a group of mice think up of a way to avert the danger of the household cat. A solution is provided by all the elders of the mice by the proposal to put a bell on the cat’s neck in which to alert the mice. However, a story which is often too common, no one raises their hands to volunteer for the act of doing the deed! I wholeheartedly recommend Aesop’s fables to anyone, especially to children. They provide a fantastic set of morals encased in beautifully-scripted very short stories with no religious context.

For me, posting of petitions where everyone can take part is one of the best *use-cases* for social media; an outlet to raise awareness to others to take real action on real-life issues. It was so much harder before social media where spreading the knowledge meant making cold phone calls, going from door-to-door and dropping leaflets in letterboxes. Maybe the amount of ‘noise’ in social media is diluting our senses, but damn it, we’ve just become incredibly lazy and dismissive.