

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Sydney Dogs & Cats Home

1. How would you describe the state of the pound and rehoming sector at the moment? We've had other witnesses say it's reached a crisis point, what is your perspective?

The current state of the pound and rehoming sector in NSW is undeniably in a state of crisis. The influx of animals into pounds has surged, surpassing the capacities of facilities to adequately care for and rehome the animals that come into care. Overcrowded conditions and limited resources result in compromised animal welfare, hindering the ability of pounds to provide the necessary medical attention, behavioural rehabilitation, and quality living conditions. This crisis not only impacts the well-being of the animals but places immense strain on our organisation's capacity to meet the growing demand for community support.

The crisis extends to the challenging task of finding suitable forever homes for the animals in our care. At Sydney Dogs and Cats Home, we constantly witness the struggle to balance the influx of animals with the need for responsible and thorough rehoming processes. Without increased government funding, this crisis will persist, jeopardising the welfare of countless animals and impeding our ability to fulfill our mission to support the community effectively.

2. Can you talk about the role rescue groups play in the rehoming system and the degree to which pounds rely on rescue groups?

- a. Is it commonly the case that there are more requests from pounds than rescue groups can cope with? If so, what kind of pressure does this put on you as a volunteer organisation?

Rescue groups play a pivotal role in the rehoming system, acting as vital partners for pounds facing capacity constraints. These groups often specialise in particular breeds or species, allowing for a more targeted approach to finding suitable homes for animals. However, the demand for rescue services far outweighs the available resources. Pounds consistently find themselves in the position of seeking assistance from rescue groups to manage the overflow of animals, leading to an increasing burden on both the pounds and the rescue organizations.

As a volunteer organisation, we experience firsthand the strain of balancing the needs of our animals with the limited capacity of rescue groups to accommodate them. The pressure is substantial, with rescue groups often inundated with requests that surpass their ability to respond adequately. This imbalance highlights the urgent need for increased government funding to strengthen both pounds and rescue groups, ensuring a more sustainable and humane rehoming system.

- b. How can the State Government better support rescue groups, so that they are able to support pounds by rehoming animals and reducing euthanasia rates?

To better support rescue groups and alleviate the pressure on pounds, the State Government can increase funding which would enable them to expand their facilities, enhance their medical capabilities, and employ qualified staff to meet the rising demand. Financial support could also be allocated for educational programs, outreach initiatives, and community engagement efforts, fostering responsible pet ownership and reducing the overall number of animals entering the system.

Increasing funding to pounds and rescue groups is pivotal in reducing euthanasia rates in several interconnected ways. Firstly, heightened financial support allows pounds to expand their facilities, hire qualified staff, and enhance overall infrastructure. This expanded capacity improves the quality of care, extending the duration animals can stay in shelters, increasing the chances of successful rehoming, and decreasing the necessity for euthanasia due to space limitations.

Moreover, robust adoption and rehoming programs are made possible with increased funding. This enables pounds and rescue groups to invest in marketing, outreach, and educational initiatives, facilitating successful matches between animals and adopters. Collaborative efforts between pounds and rescue groups are also strengthened, allowing for the efficient transfer of animals between facilities. This redistributes the workload, offering more rehoming options and minimising the need for euthanasia as a population control measure.

Community outreach and education programs, supported by government funding, play a crucial role in reducing euthanasia rates. These initiatives educate the public on responsible pet ownership, spaying/neutering, and the benefits of adopting from shelters. By addressing the root causes of overpopulation and relinquishment, these programs contribute to a decrease in overall animal intakes, alleviating the strain on rehoming services.

Additionally, increased funding enables comprehensive medical and behavioral support for animals in shelters. Treatable conditions and behavioural issues can be addressed, improving the adoptability of animals and reducing the likelihood of euthanasia.

In essence, by empowering pounds and rescue groups with the financial resources needed to enhance their capabilities in care, rehoming, collaboration, and community engagement, euthanasia rates can be effectively diminished, promoting a more humane and sustainable approach to animal welfare in NSW.