

Parliament of New South Wales
Parliament House
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Dear Sir/Madam

POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES – POST HEARING RESPONSES – 14 NOVEMBER 2023

Ref: *lr/GV Document Set ID 1956414*

The following points are listed in reply to your supplementary question below. Please note these are not in order of priority.

What strategies do you believe would be most effective in reducing euthanasia rates in pounds, and how can the State Government help to reduce unnecessary euthanasia?

- *Amend the Companion Animals Act to reinforce Council's primary role being the rehoming of adoptable companion animals.*

Local Government need to be clear that its focus is to be the rehoming of all adoptable animals which should not be dependent on a set time limit.

- *Amend the Companion Animals Act/Regulation to stipulate a minimum holding period (number of days) for both dogs and importantly any cat whether considered feral or otherwise.*

There is currently no definition of what is a "feral cat" and the Companion Animals Act does not refer to "feral cats". It needs to be clarified that any cat should be given the opportunity of being assessed over a period of days in terms of whether it is adoptable. It is too easy to make the assumption that any stray cat is "feral" and therefore can be immediately euthanised.

- *Amend the Companion Animals Regulation to establish minimum standards for Council pounds/rehoming centres.*

The existing guidelines are significantly out of date and irrelevant noting the change in Council's role to a rehoming focus. Minimum standards for the size of pens, area that should be set aside for quarantine, exercise etc.

- *State Government funding needs to be provided to enable Local Government to meet the above minimum standards.*

In reality most Councils need to expand, renovate or build an entire new facility to meet the numbers of animals that are being surrendered. Without funding this becomes another “unfunded” mandate which Local Government cannot afford.

- *Clarify the relationship between the Companion Animals Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the role of the RSPCA as being a primary compliance organisation.*
- *Office of Local Government (OLG) to undertake a full review of the breeder permit system including implementing a maximum number of litters per breeder.*

As outlined in evidence given at the Inquiry there are simply too many companion animals for the number of potential owners. So, if we are to significantly reduce euthanasia rates there needs to be strict and enforceable laws around breeding and the number of litters that any “owned” animal and any breeder can have.

- *State Government to provide significant funds to Councils for annual desexing programs.*

Combined with the point above this is the only way to reduce the number of unwanted, surrendered and abandoned companion animals that pounds, rescue organisations etc have to manage and try to find suitable homes.

- *State Government to provide funding for Councils to have access to animal behavioural experts so that animals with behavioural issues can be assisted to become adoptable. This is particularly relevant to the rural Councils where there may not be behavioural specialist available locally.*
- *State to amend rental laws so that it is not lawful to prohibit tenant from having a pet and it is not lawful to give preference to a tenant or prospective tenant who does not have a pet.*

I have no issue with this correspondence being made public and there are no transcript corrections needed in regards to my presentation at the Inquiry.

Yours faithfully

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Director – Liveable Communities

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13 December 2023