

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 8 – CUSTOMER SERVICE - INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES HEARING

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - ANIMAL LIBERATION (Lisa J Ryan)

1. Additional information for the Committee

In response for the opportunity to provide the Committee with additional information including the question put to Animal Liberation by the Hon. Peter Primrose about 'other jurisdictions who are achieving better outcomes' we provide the following informed comments:

We particularly wish to reinforce :-

The critical need for the Committee to undertake a thorough audit of all impounding facilities (infrastructure) and related policies, procedures and processes for both council pounds and shelters (private or charity run, i.e. RSPCA and contracted facilities which have been outsourced.

The critical need to incorporate consideration of all impounded animal species, not just companion animals – many pounds and shelters house a variety of species.

The critical need for a new robust, stand-alone and enforceable Code of Practice to be placed on public exhibition without delay.

The critical need for the NSW State Government to outlaw shooting of impounded animals.

The critical need for the Committee to consider Anima Liberation's [NSW Pound & Shelter Reform](#) petition 'asks':

This petition is calling on the NSW Government to:

Introduce a fully funded, mandatory and legally enforceable NSW pound and shelter 'duty of care' regime which focuses on proactive life-saving initiatives and solutions, and best practice animal welfare outcomes, rather than killing and disposal;

End the currently unacceptable treatment and neglect of homeless and vulnerable impounded animals under NSW's traditional animal pound and shelter model, which manages animals under 'waste management' or 'feral pest management' policies, focusing on disposal rather than care, rehoming and adoption;

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Immediately halt all NSW pound and shelter shooting and discontinue all 'euthanasia' methods apart from intravenous injection for compassionate reasons;

Immediately end all pound and shelter 'euthanasia' procedures being undertaken by anyone apart from qualified and licensed veterinary practitioners;

Urgently conduct a public online survey (~8 weeks) to engage the community and harness a broad range of views and expectations about the management of NSW pounds and shelters;

Publicly exhibit (for ~4 weeks) a tailored, stand-alone Code of Practice for all impounded animals in NSW pounds and shelters;

Carry out comprehensive and independent audits of:

all NSW impounding facilities to identify the level of compliance/non-compliance and

all NSW impounding practices, procedures, policies,

and actual 'no kill' performance;

Introduce mandatory Local Government Council Strategic Companion Animal Management Plans ('SCAMPs') with attached policies and KPI's to enable ongoing 4 yearly 'local' public consultation periods, reviews and improvements in line with evolving public expectations.

Enact a 'No Kill' Bill or sweeping changes to POCTAA to include all impounded animals (of all species) and outlaw the killing of otherwise healthy homeless animals. These reforms must incorporate the full suite of No Kill programs and principles as mandatory, which, when combined, form a highly effective life-saving plan;

Substantially overhaul the Companion Animals Act to include a revised focus on all impounded animals, regardless of species;

Establish a new OLG NSW Pound and Shelter Reform website, including an online complaint form and 1800 'hotline' tailored specifically for public pound and shelter complaints and concerns;

Enhance inspection and enforcement powers for agencies authorised under POCTAA to undertake routine NSW pound and shelter inspections and enforcement.

Conduct a comprehensive review and overhaul of the NSW Companion Animals Fund, including an assessment of evidenced outcomes and how it is distributed and managed'

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Introduce an annual grants program for NSW not-for-profits, including self-funded and volunteer rescue, rehoming and advocacy organisations;

Introduce NSW pound and shelter initiatives to support vulnerable or at-risk animal owners or caregivers during periods of intense need, in order to keep animals in homes and ensure the welfare and wellbeing of both humans and animals. This should include those experiencing:

Financial stress, homelessness or are at risk of homelessness;

Domestic violence;

Emergency management incidents (e.g., bushfires and floods) and;

Physical or mental health issues, including hospital stays or other medical needs.

The critical need for the Committee to consider Anima Liberation's submission recommendations:

We recommend:

That as part of this Inquiry, Committee Members visit a number of NSW Council pounds including those referred to in Animal Liberation's submission or recommended by Animal Liberation to witness firsthand some of these facilities, and how they are managed and run;

That the Committee obtain and read the SINC Solutions report on Leeton Shire Council;

That the Committee review all questions and responses from the NSW Legislative Council Budget Estimates hearings (2020 onwards) put to the then Minister/s for Local Government and then Minister/s for Agriculture in relation to NSW Council pounds and shelters;

That the Committee review submissions lodged to the Companion Animals Taskforce Inquiry;

That the Committee make public the final report compiled by the Centre for International Economics, on 'Rehoming of Companion Animals in NSW';

That the Committee review all Memorandums of Understanding ('MOUs') between the NSW Office of Local Government ('NSW OLG') and other agencies and organisations such as the

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NSW State Ombudsman with a view to revise all such MOU's and levels of transparency and accountability;

That the Committee review submissions lodged to the 2021 Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to review submissions related to the performance of RSPCA NSW, AWL NSW in respect to impounded animals, and rates of killing and adoption;

That the NSW Government introduce a fully funded, mandatory and legally enforceable NSW pound and shelter 'duty of care' regime which focuses on proactive life-saving initiatives and solutions, and best practice animal welfare outcomes, rather than offloading, killing and disposal;

An end to the currently unacceptable treatment and neglect of homeless and vulnerable impounded animals under NSW's traditional animal pound and shelter model, which manages animals under 'waste management' or 'feral pest management' policies, focusing on disposal rather than care, rehoming and adoption;

That the NSW Government immediately legislate to end all state pound and shelter shooting and discontinue all 'euthanasia' methods apart from intravenous injection for compassionate reasons;

An immediate end to all pound and shelter 'euthanasia' procedures being undertaken by anyone apart from qualified and licensed veterinary practitioners;

Publicly exhibit and call for public submissions for a four (4) week period for a tailored, stand-alone and revised Code of Practice for all impounded animals of all species in NSW pounds and shelters;

That the NSW Government carry out comprehensive and independent audits

of:

all NSW impounding facilities to identify the level of compliance/non-compliance and;

all NSW impounding practices, procedures, policies, and;

actual 'no kill' performance.

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Introduce mandatory Local Government Council Strategic Companion Animal Management Plans ('SCAMPs') with attached policies and KPI's to enable ongoing 4 yearly 'local' public consultation periods, reviews and improvements in line with evolving public expectations;

Enact a 'No Kill' Bill or sweeping changes to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 ('POCTAA') to include all impounded animals (of all species) and outlaw the killing of otherwise healthy homeless animals.

These reforms must incorporate the full suite of No Kill programs and principles as mandatory, which, when combined, form a highly effective life-saving plan;

Substantially overhaul the Companion Animals Act to include a revised focus on all impounded animals, regardless of species;

Establish a new OLG NSW Pound and Shelter Reform website, including an online complaint form and 1800 'hotline' tailored specifically for public pound and shelter complaints and concerns;

Enhance inspection and enforcement powers for agencies authorised under POCTAA to undertake routine NSW pound and shelter inspections and enforcement;

Conduct a comprehensive review and overhaul of the NSW Companion Animals Fund, including an assessment of evidenced outcomes and how it is distributed and managed;

A complete overhaul of the current annual data 'categories' collection and reporting of Council pound data to also include all shelters (both private and charities) to enable a complete state picture. To be published quarterly rather than annually and to be published independently as well by all Council pounds and shelters on their own websites;

Introduce quarterly data collection and public reporting of all rescue groups approved by NSW OLG to ensure full transparency with outcomes for all animals;

Introduce an annual grants program for NSW not-for-profits, including self-funded and volunteer rescue, rehoming and advocacy organisations (all species);

Review the make-up of the NSW Animal Welfare Advisory Council (AWAC) and NSW Responsible Pet Ownership Reference Group (RPO) to open up positions from other animal welfare organisations and members of the public;

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Introduce NSW pound and shelter initiatives to support vulnerable or at-risk animal owners or caregivers during periods of intense need, in order to keep animals in homes and ensure the welfare and wellbeing of both humans and animals. This should include those experiencing:

financial stress, homelessness or are at risk of homelessness;

domestic violence;

emergency management incidents (e.g., bushfires and floods) and;

physical and mental health issues, including hospital stays or other medical needs.

No Kill philosophy and full suite of programs

The No Kill Equation provides a humane, life-affirming means of responding to every type of animal entering a pound or shelter, and every type of need those animals might have. It requires Advocacy, Pound and Shelter protocols and Legislation.

While shelter leadership drives the No Kill initiative, it is the community that extends the safety net of care. Unlike traditional shelters—which view members of the public as adversaries and refuse to partner with them as rescuers or volunteers—a No Kill shelter embraces the people in its community. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform.

No Kill starts as an act of will: the decision to end shelter killing through an embrace of proven methods, flexibility, imagination and often, moral courage.

The US (statistics):

There are roughly one million dogs and cats killed in U.S. shelters annually because they lack a home, but as many as 30 million Americans add a new animal to their households every year. We do not have a “pet overpopulation” problem; we have a market share challenge. When shelters compete for the market share of homes and keep animals alive long enough to find those homes, shelter animals are saved rather than killed.

About 4.5 million animals enter shelters every year.

Approximately one million animals are killed.

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Roughly 30 million acquire a new companion animal every year.

Less than 1% of shelter animals are irremediably suffering.

Millions of people live in communities saving between 98% and 99% of dogs and cats in their shelters,

Tens of millions of people live in communities saving between 90% and 99% of dogs and cats in their shelters.

The No Kill Equation (programs) include:

- Volunteers, Rescue Partnerships, Foster Care, Sterilization & Release, Comprehensive Adoption Programs, Medical & Behaviour Prevention & Rehabilitation, Pet Retention, Proactive Redemptions, Public Relations/Community Involvement, High-Volume Sterilization, Compassionate, Dedicated, Capable Leadership.

Community Cat/Dog Sterilisation

Community sterilisation programs humanely reduce impounds and killing.

High-Volume, Low-Cost Sterilisation

Free and low-cost, high-volume sterilisation reduces the number of animals entering the shelter system, allowing more resources to be allocated toward saving lives.

Rescue Groups

An adoption or transfer/transport to a rescue group frees up scarce cage and kennel space, reduces expenses for feeding, cleaning, and killing, and improves a community's rate of life saving. Because many thousands of dogs and cats are killed in pounds and shelters annually, rare is the circumstance in which a qualified rescue group should be denied an animal.

Foster Care

Foster care is a low-cost, and often no-cost, way of increasing a shelter's capacity, caring for sick and injured or behaviourally challenged animals, and thus saving more lives.

Comprehensive Adoption Programs

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Adoptions are vital to an agency's lifesaving mission. The quantity and quality of shelter adoptions is in shelter management's hands, making lifesaving a direct function of shelter policies and practices. If shelters better promoted their animals and had adoption programs responsive to community needs, including public access hours for working people, offsite adoptions, adoption incentives, and effective marketing, they could increase the number of homes available and replace killing with adoptions. Contrary to conventional wisdom, shelters can adopt their way out of killing.

Pet Retention

While some surrenders of animals to shelters are unavoidable, others can be prevented — but only if pounds and shelters work with people to help them solve their problems. Saving animals requires shelters to develop innovative strategies for keeping people and their companion animals together. And the more a community sees its shelters as a place to turn for advice and assistance, the easier this job will be.

Medical & Behaviour Programs

To meet its commitment to a lifesaving guarantee for all animals who are not irremediably suffering, shelters need to keep animals happy and healthy and moving efficiently through the system. To do this, shelters must put in place comprehensive vaccination, handling, cleaning, socialisation, and care policies before animals get sick and rehabilitative efforts for those who come in sick, injured, unweaned, or traumatized.

Public Relations/Community Involvement

Increasing adoptions, maximizing donations, recruiting volunteers, and partnering with community agencies comes down to increasing the shelter's public exposure. And that means consistent marketing and public relations. Public relations and marketing are the foundation of a shelter's activities and success.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a dedicated "army of compassion" and the backbone of a successful No Kill effort. There is never enough staff, never enough dollars to hire more staff, and always more needs than paid human resources. That is where volunteers make the difference between success and failure and, for the animals, life and death.

Proactive Redemptions

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One of the most overlooked opportunities for reducing killing in animal control shelters is increasing the number of lost animals returned to their families. This includes matching reports of lost animals with animals in the shelter, rehoming animals in the field, and use of technology such as posting lost animals on the internet.

A Compassionate Director

The final element of the No Kill Equation is the most important of all, without which all other elements are thwarted — a hard-working, compassionate animal control or pound/shelter director not content to continue killing, while regurgitating tired clichés about “public irresponsibility” or hiding behind the myth of “too many animals, not enough homes.”

While shelter leadership drives the No Kill initiative, it is the community that extends the safety net of care. Unlike traditional shelters — which view members of the public as adversaries and refuse to partner with them as rescuers or volunteers — a No Kill shelter embraces the people in its community. They are the key to success: they volunteer, foster, socialize animals, staff offsite adoption venues, and open their hearts, homes and wallets to the animals in need.

The public is at the centre of every successful No Kill shelter in the nation. By working with people, implementing lifesaving programs, and treating each life as precious, a shelter can transform itself.

Responses to the nay sayers and deflections

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/631da1c3be6a0b0252612c53/t/631e6cde9032e57093999f73/1662938336786/Countering+the+Opposition.pdf>

Other Inquiry witness comments and responses