

MR. STEVE COLEMAN  
Received by  
STEVE HILL  
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Resolved to publish Yes / No

• Good afternoon, Chair and Honourable Members of the Committee.

- Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you again on behalf of RSPCA NSW as CEO.
- Today, I am joined by our:
  - General Manager of Regulation and Business Services, Mr William Beerden,
  - Chief Inspector, Mr Scott Meyers,
  - General Counsel, Ms Kathryn Jurd, and
  - Senior Government Relations Manager, Mr Troy Wilkie.
- This second hearing was notably scheduled before we were due to respond to the questions taken on notice at our previous appearance or the dozens of supplementary questions we received from the Committee.
- Since that first hearing, we have provided the committee with substantive responses to all questions, totalling nearly 20,000 words.
- As the committee has already been advised, we wrote to the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, shortly after the first hearing.
- She has endorsed our efforts to deliver greater transparency when reporting on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 compliance and enforcement activities.

- Subsequently and in addition to our detailed responses, we have submitted our 34B reports for the last two financial years, NSW Government budget submission, and confidentially provided all Inspectorate Standard Operating Procedures to the Committee.
- Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that our 34B reports for the last two financial years are now published on our website and accessible to the public.
- We will continue to publish them annually alongside our Annual and Financial reports.
- Today, I also wish to table our employee handbook, which comprehensively addresses how workplace matters are handled within our organisation.
- It goes without saying that RSPCA NSW is deeply committed to transparency.
- While we do not claim to be perfect, we have robust governance and workplace management practices in place to ensure the highest standards of operation and accountability.
- Given the United Workers Union's appearance before us today, it is essential to address our interactions with the union and the matters they've raised.
- RSPCA NSW employs approximately 560 staff. There have been relatively recent allegations made against RSPCA NSW Senior Management, which have been investigated and outcomes provided to the staff who made them.
- We believe that forums more appropriate than an Upper House inquiry exist to address workplace complaints. We

note that the Union and its Members have elected not to <sup>use</sup>~~sup~~ those forums. RSPCA NSW is committed to working with our staff to ensure their wellbeing in a difficult arena. As these repeated inquiries prove, there is nothing simple about animal welfare, and we back our staff.

- In June 2023, RSPCA NSW received \$20.5 million in NSW Government funding following the 2021 Inquiry into the operation of the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and its recommendations for the NSW Government to provide ongoing sustainable funding to our organisation.
- This recommendation was matched as a commitment by NSW Labor before the state election, and we welcome their continued commitment to that pledge.
- We have acquitted the funding received in line with that inquiry's recommendations, including the operation of a 24/7 call centre and increasing our utilisation of a two-out operation procedure, among other measures that best protect the safety of our frontline workers and provide enforcement of the state's animal welfare laws in line with community expectation.
- The funding will be fully expended by June 30, 2024, and our ability to continue these practices relies on recurrent funding from the NSW Government.
- We look forward to answering any further questions you may have regarding our organisation's enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.