

**INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION OF THE CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS  
UNDER THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979  
RSPCA NSW - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

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**DATE** 11 June 2024

***(1) Regarding workplace culture at RSPCA NSW;***

***(a) Could a survey be conducted to provide insight into the current workplace culture across all levels of the organisation so that the committee can ascertain the veracity of claims made regarding workplace culture at RSPCA NSW?***

Yes.

***(b) If so, could the results be shared with the committee?***

At RSPCA NSW, we are committed to fostering a workplace environment where every team member feels valued, supported, and connected to the meaningful work we do. In the short time provided, RSPCA NSW has conducted a survey that was made available to all staff across the organisation via Meta's Workplace platform, which we use to share information and connect staff across the state.

RSPCA NSW conducted a workplace engagement survey to assess its employees' sentiments and experiences. The survey aimed to gather insights into the workplace environment, employee satisfaction, and organisational culture. This overview analyses the key findings from the survey to demonstrate the positive workplace culture at RSPCA NSW. The survey received responses from 146 employees, ensuring a comprehensive representation across various departments.

**Key Findings**

**1. Overall Job Satisfaction**

Employees were asked to rate their enjoyment of working at RSPCA NSW on a scale of 1 to 10. The results indicate a high level of satisfaction, with 85% of respondents rating their experience positively (scores between 7 and 10):

- High satisfaction scores: Many employees rated their experience between 8 and 10, highlighting a strong sense of fulfilment and enjoyment in their roles.

**2. Workplace Culture and Environment**

Employees were surveyed on various aspects of the workplace culture, including teamwork, support, and organisational values:

- Teamwork and Collaboration: 78% of respondents mentioned a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration within their departments. This sense of camaraderie contributes to a supportive and productive work environment.

- Supportive Management: 82% of employees reported feeling supported by their managers and supervisors. Positive feedback included mentions of approachable leadership, effective communication, and recognition of employee efforts.
- Alignment with Organisational Values: 87% of employees expressed alignment with RSPCA NSW's core values, such as animal welfare, community engagement, and ethical practices. This alignment fosters a sense of purpose and motivation among the staff.

### 3. Professional Development and Growth

The survey also explored opportunities for professional development and career growth:

- Training and Development Programs: 76% of respondents appreciated the availability of training programs and workshops to enhance their skills and knowledge. These programs are seen as valuable investments in employee growth and career progression.
- Career Advancement Opportunities: 70% of employees highlighted the potential for career advancement within the organisation. The presence of clear career paths and opportunities for internal promotions was positively received.

### 4. Work-Life Balance

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is crucial for employee well-being. The survey findings indicate that RSPCA NSW supports this balance effectively:

- Flexible Working Arrangements: 74% of employees noted the availability of flexible working arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours. These arrangements help employees manage their personal and professional lives effectively.
- Supportive Policies: 79% of respondents acknowledged the organisation's policies on leave, wellness programs, and employee assistance as supportive measures contributing to overall well-being.

### 5. Community and Social Impact

Employees expressed pride in the social impact of their work, particularly concerning animal welfare and community engagement:

- Animal Welfare Initiatives: 81% of respondents highlighted the positive impact of RSPCA NSW's initiatives on animal welfare as a source of pride. Many felt that their work made a meaningful difference in the lives of animals and the community.
- Community Engagement: 77% of employees valued the organisation's commitment to community outreach and education. Participation in community events and programs was seen as a rewarding aspect of their roles.

The RSPCA NSW workplace survey results show a positive and supportive work environment. While no workplace is perfect and RSPCA NSW strives to improve the workplace culture continuously, high levels of job satisfaction, strong teamwork, supportive management, and

alignment with organisational values are all shown to contribute to a thriving workplace culture. The organisation's focus on professional development, work-life balance, and community impact further enhances employee engagement and motivation. Overall, the survey findings reflect a workplace where employees feel valued, supported, and proud of their contributions to RSPCA NSW's mission.

***(2) Has this inquiry impacted any of RSPCA NSW's staff, members, volunteers, donors, or supporters, either positively or negatively?***

Yes, this inquiry has significantly impacted several RSPCA NSW staff and some volunteers, members, and supporters. Consequences directly attributable to this inquiry include resignations, multiple staff members taking stress and extended medical leave, and caused some staff to seek psychiatric care and medical attention.

Our RSPCA NSW staff undertake roles driven by a commitment to animal welfare, not to become public figures. It is inherently unfair for relatively minor workplace disputes to be aired publicly without providing the individuals involved a fair opportunity to defend themselves. These public hearings are visible to the friends and family of those mentioned and remain on record for the rest of their lives. This practice subjects individuals to potential public shaming for what may be political purposes, causing significant undue stress and anxiety.

The inquiry's negative effects extend beyond our staff to our volunteers, donors, and supporters, who are also affected by the public portrayal and the resulting organisational strain. We acknowledge the importance of transparency and accountability, but balancing these with the rights and well-being of our dedicated team and supporters is crucial.

There are many mechanisms for resolving workplace disputes, none of which have been used by staff or the Union to date. These mechanisms would be a more appropriate and respectful method of working through such issues without causing significant, potentially lifelong impacts.

***(3) Are there any matters that RSPCA NSW wishes to clarify regarding the issues heard in this inquiry?***

Not at this time.

***(4) In the RSCPA's answer to Q1 of supplementary questions provided on 22 May 2024, you outline a list of training that all inspectors undertake "upon recruitment", including a Certificate IV in Government Investigations and training in safe stock handling, dangerous/aggressive dog handling, tactical defence including use of batons and handcuffs, verbal tactics, humane euthanasia and legal training.***

***(a) Do all RSPCA inspectors undergo all of this training before they go out on any jobs as an inspector?***

No, as part of training, Inspectors will shadow more senior officers.

***(b) If not, can you please advise the deadlines for when inspectors must complete each aspect of the training? What does a typical timeline look like for completing all of this training?***

Each case is reviewed based on the individual's experience and previous employment history.

***(c) Do all current inspectors have a Certificate 4 in Government Investigations? If not, why not?***

No, we have Inspectors with extensive law enforcement background and qualifications in Policing.

***(5) In respect to the RSPCA's answer to Q17c of supplementary questions provided on 22 May 2024, can you please advise:***

***(a) the number of days between RSPCA receiving the Safe Work notice, and all inspectors having completed their baton and handcuff training?***

Inspectors were advised on 5/3/24. The first round of training and issuing appointments commenced on 12/3/24.

***(b) the number of days inspectors were unable to attend to jobs due to not having baton and handcuff training?***

There was a reduced capacity to attend jobs as single officers.

***(6) Can you please provide a breakdown of the number of prosecutions initiated in the past 5 years by Sydney/metro inspectors, versus regional/rural inspectors?***

RSPCA NSW initiates more than a hundred prosecutions annually, and the breakdown of these cases between Sydney/metro and regional/rural inspectors is documented in the s34B report and in statistics compiled by NSW Courts and Tribunals. The Committee can refer to the records maintained by the NSW Local, District, and Supreme Courts for detailed and specific information regarding the number of prosecutions.

***(7) How many prosecutions have been initiated by Newcastle-based inspectors in the last 5 years?***

RSPCA NSW initiates more than a hundred prosecutions annually, and the breakdown of these cases between Sydney/metro and regional/rural inspectors is documented in the s34B report and in statistics compiled by NSW Courts and Tribunals. The Committee can refer to the records maintained by the NSW Local, District, and Supreme Courts for detailed and specific information regarding the number of prosecutions.

***(8) How many search warrants have been obtained by Newcastle-based inspectors in the last 5 years?***

The number of search warrants obtained by Newcastle-based inspectors is considered sensitive operational information and protected via Public Interest Immunity. Disclosure of this data could undermine our law enforcement activities and compromise ongoing investigations. We are committed to maintaining our operations' confidentiality to ensure our efforts' effectiveness and success in protecting animal welfare.

***(9) Is there a difference between salary and conditions for Sydney-based inspectors as compared to regional/ inspectors? For example, does one get paid more than the other, do they have different conditions in terms of overtime?***

All inspectors at RSPCA NSW are hired on the same terms and conditions. However, the location and job-specific nature of some terms being used and accessed means that there can be different outcomes for regional inspectors compared to metro inspectors.

For example, while the base salary and general conditions, including overtime provisions, are consistent across all inspectors, regional inspectors might experience variations in outcomes due to factors such as travel requirements, workload distribution, and resource availability. These differences are not a result of disparate contractual terms but rather the practical application of the same terms in different geographical contexts.

Overall, there is no inherent disparity in pay or conditions between Sydney-based and regional inspectors; any variations arise from the specific demands and logistical realities of their respective roles.

***(10) As an approved ACO under the POCTA Act, does the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of NSW have the purview to audit and report on the RSPCA's activities in relation to the exercise of their functions under POCTAA?***

It is recommended that you contact the office directly for specific details about the Auditor-General's purview and activities. They are best placed to provide comprehensive information regarding their auditing processes and authority over organisations such as RSPCA NSW.

RSPCA NSW is subject to oversight by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) who require RSPCA NSW to provide:

- **Annual Financial Report:** This is required for medium and large charities, with large charities needing an audited financial report by a registered company auditor or equivalent.
- **Annual Information Statement:** Submitted annually, detailing governance, financial performance, and activities.
- **Compliance with ACNC Act 2012:** Ensures lawful operation, accountability, and transparency of the charity.

RSPCA NSW is also subject to oversight by NSW Fair Trading, with the *Charitable Fundraising Act (1991)* requiring:

- **Annual Financial Statement:** Including income statements, balance sheets, and statements of cash flows.
- **Audit Requirement:** An independent audit is mandatory if fundraising income exceeds \$250,000.
- **Statement of Compliance:** A declaration that the organisation complies with the Act, is solvent, and maintains accurate and fair financial statements.

The governance structure of RSPCA NSW is designed to ensure effective oversight, transparency, and accountability in the organisation's operations. The overarching governance of the organisation is managed by an independent Board of ten, with five supporting key sub-committees, each with specific objectives, responsibilities and memberships.

These subcommittees are integral components of the broader governance framework, contributing to the implementation of the organisation's strategy and operations. They are led by the Executive team, with the CEO at the helm and supported by three General Managers (Community and Engagement, Regulation and Business Services, and Animal Operations and Fundraising).

We encourage anyone who has an issue with RSPCA NSW or one of our investigations to contact us and make a formal report. Members of the public can also contact the DPI, AWL, or NSW Police if they believe a matter needs to be externally investigated.

RSPCA NSW is subject to regular Parliamentary oversight, with committees like this one ensuring that public expectations are met and that we provide the enforcement required by POCTAA. Departmental oversight from DPI also provides the NSW Government and members of the public with the assurance that RSPCA NSW acts in accordance with the relevant legislation and meets our obligations. Public funds are acquitted with rigorous oversight from the relevant NSW Government Department.

**INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION OF THE CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS  
UNDER THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979  
RSPCA NSW – QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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**DATE** 11 June 2024

*The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Coleman, can you detail for me how you handle conflicts of interest within the organisation?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: Well, it's picked up in our Respect@Work handbook, how conflicts of interest should be managed. In effect, the most simplistic way to deal with that is that they are declared.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: Do you keep a register of declarations?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: Yes.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: And who keeps that?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: Our executive administrator keeps logs of—sorry, for the board, any conflicts of interest that are disclosed, they are recorded.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: What about senior management?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: I would have to take that on notice.*

RSPCA NSW has specific procedures for conflict of interest management in our Employee Handbook. Conflicts of interest for the Board and Board subcommittees are recorded in a conflicts register maintained by our Executive Administrator. For other employees, including senior management, conflicts of interest are managed according to the guidelines provided in the handbook, which has already been provided to the Committee.

These guidelines include:

- **Declaration Requirement:** All workplace participants must immediately notify the company in writing of any potential or actual conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of them. This includes circumstances where the company employs a family member, a competing business employs the person, or they have an economic interest in a client, supplier, or competitor of the company.
- **Documentation:** Conflicts of interest are documented and addressed by the appropriate management level to ensure transparency and proper management. While the board's conflicts are recorded in a formal register, other conflicts are managed on a case-by-case basis, following the guidelines set out in our handbook.

In summary, while there is a formal register for the board and its sub-committees, conflicts of interest for other employees, including senior management, are handled per the procedures outlined in our handbook, which emphasises the need for immediate declaration and proper management of any conflicts.

*The Hon. WES FANG: I think it's pretty clear with my questioning where I'm going with this. Did the RSPCA purchase horse floats recently?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: I believe so.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: Can I ask which company you got to supply those to you?*

*STEVE COLEMAN: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't know.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Beerden, do you know?*

*WILLIAM BEERDEN: No, I don't. I'd have to take it on notice.*

RSPCA NSW has purchased one Kara Kar Horse Float in the past twelve months and five Kara Kar Horse Floats in the past three years. RSPCA NSW chose to use Kara Kar for our horse floats and trailers due to several compelling reasons:

1. **High-Quality Products:** Kara Kar has a long-standing reputation for producing some of Australia's highest-quality horse floats and trailers. Their products are renowned for their durability, structural integrity, and ease of towing. This ensures the safe and secure transportation of animals, which is a top priority for RSPCA NSW.
2. **Australian-Made:** All Kara Kar products are manufactured in Australia, specifically in their state-of-the-art factory in Nambucca Heads, NSW. Using locally made products supports the Australian economy and ensures adherence to stringent Australian standards for quality and safety.
3. **Experience and Innovation:** With over 60 years of experience, Kara Kar introduced the angle load float to Australia, which uses space more efficiently and provides better animal comfort and safety. Their continuous innovation and understanding of animal transportation's specific needs align perfectly with RSPCA NSW's requirements.
4. **Customisation and Variety:** Kara Kar offers a wide range of products, including horse floats, cattle trailers, and goosenecks, which can be extensively customised to meet the specific needs of different animals and operational requirements. This flexibility is crucial for RSPCA NSW's varied and demanding tasks.
5. **Customer Service:** Kara Kar provides excellent customer service and support, with agents available across Australia. This ensures that any issues or maintenance needs are promptly addressed, minimising downtime and ensuring that our operations continue smoothly.

The combination of high-quality, Australian-made products, extensive experience, and excellent customer service makes Kara Kar a preferred supplier for RSPCA NSW. Their products help us to carry out our mission of protecting and caring for animals effectively and efficiently. There are not many Australian-made horse float providers, and RSPCA NSW proudly tries to purchase from Australian-owned and operated businesses whenever it is feasible and cost-effective.

*The CHAIR: That's a pretty generous sister-in-law, given that the prices of agistment during that period would've been fairly exorbitant. I don't even know how she would've covered her costs at even \$10 to \$15 per day. What happened with those horses after RSPCA were finished with them, in terms of prosecution and holding them?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I think there was one euthanised by a vet after it suffered colic. There were three or four that were returned back to the owner after the court proceedings had finalised. There were horses that were adopted by my sister-in-law—and then the account credited, paperwork supplied. Every horse was accounted for.*

*The CHAIR: The answer given says that no horses have ever been purchased, adopted, transferred or sold to your sister-in-law, but you just told me that you had how many? Five? Several were adopted?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: There were a number that were adopted through that process, but they were mainly from people local to the area that they were able to find homes for. They did it as an agent for us, in effect.*

*The CHAIR: So the answer in supplementaries was incorrect in saying that none were adopted to your sister-in-law?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: She didn't adopt them; she processed the adoption to an external party, a third party.*

*The CHAIR: Was there a payment or fee received for those adoptions?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: Yes. The next invoice that she would send in, I believe, was credited. I never approved the invoices.*

*The CHAIR: I'm just trying to get my head around the process in terms of how you managed that conflict of interest and not being part of it.*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I wasn't part of the process.*

*The CHAIR: So she sends in an invoice. There were invoices periodically in terms of this is the agistment fee for this month, this is the agistment fee for this month and then the last invoice, when they were getting rid of the animal, that was—I'm trying to understand what that invoice looked like.*

*STEVE COLEMAN: Would it assist if we took that on notice? Scott wasn't part of any process, as I understand it.*

*The CHAIR: Yes, I'd appreciate it. That's why I said if anyone else wants to chime in on the process—*



**STEVE COLEMAN:** *It's typically done on a monthly basis, but we can find that out.*

Mr Banasiak noted the generosity associated with caring for RSPCA NSW Inspectorate animals, and that is exactly the experience RSPCA NSW has of its members, volunteers and supporters. Thousands of animals are cared for in NSW homes and on NSW properties on behalf of RSPCA NSW whilst court processes run to rehabilitate animals, to give animals a break from shelter life, and whilst they await permanent homes. The decreasing demand for particularly companion animals post COVID means animals in RSPCA NSW custody are spending longer waiting for those homes. On one day, 47 kittens were placed with RSPCA NSW administrative staff and their families in foster care alone after an email was sent explaining the need for those places. This is the support RSPCA NSW enjoys and is grateful for within NSW communities.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** *Another question I had on notice was regarding the Kim Hollingsworth prosecutions and what ended up happening to the horses seized from her, whether they were rehomed, euthanised or still in the care of the RSPCA. The RSPCA declined to answer that. Could you explain why?*

**KATHRYN JURD:** *I indicated that the prosecutions didn't take place in the current inquiry's time frame and that to access records—some of those prosecutions are now 10 or 12—or possibly more—years old. I don't have those files on site and so to retrieve them from storage was going to—to, in a fulsome way, answer your question—take longer than the two weeks available to us. That was the reasoning for the framing of my answer.*

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** *Looking at the terms of reference, paragraph 1 (a) is "the matters contained in the annual reports", including the financial statements, and then:*

*(b) the exercise by the approved charitable organisations of their compliance and enforcement functions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979; and  
(c) any other related matters.*

*So we are not limited to a time line we can ask questions about. The Committee's understanding is that this is a more general inquiry into the RSPCA, rather than limited to what's happened in the last 12 months.*

**KATHRYN JURD:** *I suppose I took my guide from the heading of the inquiry "2023 Inquiry". I appreciate that it has a broad remit but, by the same token, the two weeks with which we had to—these were 13 prosecutions and hundreds of horses. Some were ordered back to her in the early prosecutions and were re-seized by us, I think, twice. I can say there are no Hollingsworth horses still in the RSPCA's custody any longer. But as to what happened with every individual horse, to acquit that would take an extraordinary amount of time across those 13 prosecutions.*

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** *I understand, obviously, that two weeks might be limited. I understand you have limited resources. But could I ask that you go back, have a look and try to get as much information as you possibly can for the benefit of the Committee, given it's something that has come up in this inquiry quite a lot?*

**KATHRYN JURD:** *Sure.*

Of the two most recent seizures in 2018 in relation to Ms Hollingsworth, a total of 55 horses were seized. Two of these horses were euthanised with the remaining 53 being re-homed.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** *Are you able to tell us how many NDAs have been signed with exiting employees, whether terminated or resigning or whatever?*

**WILLIAM BEERDEN:** *I'll take it on notice so I get you an accurate answer, but it's not many. It would be a handful.*

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** *If you could let us know over the particular time period as well, so maybe each financial year. That would be really helpful.*

**KATHRYN JURD:** *This financial year?*

**The CHAIR:** *Just to help the RSPCA, how far back do you want them to go?*

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** *That's a very good point. If we could have just the past four years, that would be excellent.*

**WILLIAM BEERDEN:** *Four years; no problem.*

From time to time, employees leave the organisation for various reasons, including on negotiated terms. These terms may involve confidential settlements but are not strictly Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). Instead, they are deeds related to terminations, where the settlement terms are confidential at the request of one or both parties. Over the past four years, RSPCA NSW has entered into such deeds with 19 employees.

Please note that these agreements are deeds with confidentiality clauses rather than NDAs. None of these agreements imply any wrongdoing by RSPCA NSW, or the staff member leaving

subject to those terms, or a breach of its obligations concerning procedural fairness or substantive determinations on employment.

*The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: How many GIPAA applications have been received—and please feel free to take this on notice—in the last four years?*

*KATHRYN JURD: I will have to take the last four years on notice. We publish a register that discloses the outcome of the GIPAA applications on our website. There's a GIPAA officer allocated to incoming inquiries and ordinary quasi, but essentially government, protocol is undertaken with respect to those applications. There are, in addition, a number of informal GIPAA applications made generally by persons of interest who seek access to their own personal information which are not processed formally because that's the statutory mechanism and we obviously attempt to give people access to their own personal information where we can, subject to appropriate statutory restrictions like public interest immunity and things of that nature.*

*The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Thank you, and could you take that on notice?*

*KATHRYN JURD: The four years—I will.*

RSPCA NSW has received and answered 21 formal and informal GIPA applications in the last four years.

*The CHAIR: Can I go to a concern that has been raised. It probably goes to Mr Fang's line of questioning as well. Mr Meyers, do you have any relationship with a person by the name of Suzette Turner.*

*SCOTT MEYERS: No relationship at all. I know who that person is.*

*The CHAIR: Would you say she is well known to the RSPCA or well known to the inspectorate? Would that be a good description? SCOTT MEYERS: Yes.*

*The CHAIR: Known for a good reason or a bad reason?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: We've received multiple complaints in relation to dog-breeding activities.*

*The CHAIR: Would you say in line with puppy farming, for want of a better—*

*SCOTT MEYERS: Correct.*

*The CHAIR: We don't have an accurate definition of what puppy farming is.*

*The Hon. WES FANG: I was setting a long run-up here and you've just gone and—*

*The CHAIR: Sorry, mate. I'm straight to the point. Have those investigations borne fruit at all?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I'm not aware of the outcomes of them, but I could take that on notice.*

Following an investigation and breeding codes inspection Ms Turner was issued with a Section 24N Written Direction. These directions were complied with and no further action was taken.

*The CHAIR: On what grounds would you knock back a prosecution, more generally speaking? Maybe this is to Ms Jurd. Do you have a set of guidelines that you could provide the Committee in terms of what reaches a point where you think you can successfully prosecute?*

*KATHRYN JURD: I think we've provided them previously, possibly not to this Committee, but we can re-provide them.*

RSPCA NSW applies the NSW ODPG Guidelines, its own Inspectorate Independence Policy and a Prosecutions Independence Policy to determine whether to proceed to prosecution or not. The criminal standard is well understood by three solicitors with over 45 years' experience in the criminal justice system. The prima facie case test, and determinations as to whether or not proceedings are in the public justice are well understood and applied on behalf of RSPCA NSW. We take advice from the most senior solicitors and barristers NSW has to offer to ensure impartiality, independence, and transparency. The over 100 cases prosecuted in NSW each year, some 550 cases during Ms Jurd's tenure alone, are subjected to scrutiny by defence lawyers, Magistrates and Judges. Animal cruelty prosecutions are, by their nature, complex and often the subject of intense media scrutiny. It is often the case that RSPCA NSW is simultaneously criticised for excessive enforcement and/or prosecution at the same time as it is criticised for insufficient enforcement and/or prosecution. Clearly both views cannot be simultaneously true.

*The CHAIR: To circle back to Ms Turner—*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I think I know, Chair, the matter you're talking about and I can give you some information on that.*

*The CHAIR: How about I throw it out there, and you may answer or you may not. To circle back to Ms Turner, she's a renowned breeder of dogs in the Shanes Park area. There have been numerous complaints, as you've outlined. My*

*understanding is that you oversee this breeders compliance unit, but you can't recall whether she's been brought forward for prosecution or attempted to be brought forward for prosecution?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I believe that the last lot of inspections that the breeders compliance unit did was they worked with her, through issuing 24N directions, to bring her up to compliance with the breeders code of practice.*

*The CHAIR: And that's as far as your inspectorate activities have gone with her in terms of a 24N? SCOTT MEYERS: I have a recollection that there may have been a penalty infringement notice issued, but I would have to take that on notice.*

No Penalty Infringement was issued.

*The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, can I just jump in? I want to go back to this idea of how many are going in pairs. Can I get an estimation from you around the percentage of jobs that are still being done solo compared to in pairs?*

*SCOTT MEYERS: It can vary daily.*

*The Hon. EMMA HURST: Say, in a year? In the last six months, what percentage do you think is solo? I'm happy for you to take it on notice. I don't need exact figures; I'm just trying to get an understanding of an estimation.*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I could probably take it on notice to provide it. But initially with the training phase, every new inspector went out with other suitably qualified and trained inspectors. As they've received further training and received their authorities, they might go to routine jobs or jobs where there's no risk identified on their own. But we can take it on notice.*

At the election, NSW Labor committed to reviewing the NSW Government's funding arrangements with RSPCA NSW's Inspectorate to develop and implement a sustainable long-term funding model.

RSPCA NSW received \$20.5 million in June 2023 from the NSW Government. That funding provides operational funding for our Inspectorate for one financial year, while the review is completed ahead of this year's June Budget. It was provided on the basis that Australia's largest animal welfare enforcement agency, the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate, would dramatically expand, with dozens more inspectors having now been recruited and trained.

For the first time, this allows the team of inspectors across NSW to regularly operate in pairs, with two-out jobs becoming standard more often as recruitment and training have taken place. With that process now nearing completion, we will finalise the two-out SOP to ensure this is standard practice, echoing instructions already provided in writing and verbally to our Inspectors.

We know that where there are animal welfare issues, there is a very high risk of violence to people as well. Pairing inspectors provides additional protection against potential harm from individuals involved in cruelty cases. It means our inspectors, who are on the front-line day in and day out, can do their jobs and get home safely.

Inspectors can sometimes investigate a cruelty complaint with a low-risk profile individually. These premises include Zoos, Council Pounds, Pet shops, and other animal handling facilities. Revisits where the person of interest is known and has previously complied with Inspectorate directions or is amenable to working with the RSPCA may also be attended individually.

RSPCA NSW has many experienced inspectors who are capable of making risk assessments as to the jobs that will require an additional Inspector, and which will not. They are also assisted by Team Leaders, the DCI and CI in making those determinations. Additional safety features, such as providing whereabouts to the contact centre in advance, GPS tracking of all inspectors, BWC

devices, radios, and making contact with NSW Police, AWL and rangers in advance, are all well-deployed strategies to be used in conjunction with the two-out policy.

*The Hon. EMMA HURST: I understand if you want to take this on notice, but are you able to give us the figures of the number of assaults that have occurred in the last two years?*

*WILLIAM BEERDEN: I can take it on notice, unless Mr Meyers knows off the top of his head.*

*SCOTT MEYERS: I can take it on notice.*

*KATHRYN JURD: There've been a number where New South Wales police commenced proceedings for assault in conjunction with our POCTAA matters, so there have been some. The three that I'm aware of all happened with more than two inspectors and more than two police officers present at the premises when the assault happened.*

*The CHAIR: Can you also include in that any, for want of a better word, near misses—*

*KATHRYN JURD: Like near misses?*

*The CHAIR: —or serious incidents when the inspector didn't get assaulted but felt threatened in some way—*

*KATHRYN JURD: Or was worried.*

*The CHAIR: —in doing their duties.*

*KATHRYN JURD: Yes.*

By its nature, law enforcement is a stressful and sometimes high-risk occupation. Over the last two years, there have been two near misses and three assaults/serious incidents. RSPCA NSW is aware of the risks our staff encounter each day in the field, indeed, Mr Coleman and Chief Inspector Meyers have spent decades in the field performing that work themselves. However, there are factors that appear to be coalescing to cause an increase in the nature and type of interpersonal risk faced by Inspectors. Some of it may have to do with cost-of-living pressures, low wage growth, high interest rates, veterinary shortages, and an increase in companion animal ownership during COVID. We have seen concerns raised in other areas, including with respect to poor states of mental health, homicide, family and domestic violence, for example, which reflects the experience of RSPCA NSW Inspectors and prosecutors. Generally speaking, RSPCA NSW Inspectors encounter thousands of civilians each month and have no issues interacting with them. However sometimes people do react violently or unpredictably. This often occurs when multiple officers and NSW Police or Council Rangers are present.

*The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: I want to go to one of your questions on notice—I think it was on page 29—with regards to staff engagement and satisfaction. You do a survey each year, and you've got 560 staff, roughly. What percentage of staff would complete the survey?*

*WILLIAM BEERDEN: I'd have to take that on notice, but it's a very well-used platform that we have. It's called Workplace and it's used daily by hundreds of people. It's a very strong communication tool.*

*The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Are you also able to provide a copy of the survey that you give to the employees.*

This has been responded to in our answer to supplementary question one.