

**Submission
No 41**

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Egg Farmers of Australia

Date Received: 22 November 2019



Egg Farmers of Australia
44 Pacific Avenue
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Submission to the New South Wales Legislative Council Select Committee on Animal Cruelty Inquiry Laws in New South Wales.

Egg Farmers of Australia

Egg Farmers of Australia is the voice of Australian egg farmers. We advocate on key policy issues affecting our industry and promote egg production by providing transparent information to the public.

Organisations with Charity Status

Egg Farmers of Australia is aware of only two organisations that have charity status and are undertaking enforcement activities. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the Animal Welfare League.

The information provided by Egg Farmers of Australia relates to the engagement with NSW RSPCA. Our organisation relates to intensive and extensive livestock farming and not companion animals.

Our position is that any move to take activities currently undertaken by RSPCA to another body or entity would not be creating efficiencies but rather expanding departmental functions under a Government full cost recovery model.

Prevention of the Cruelty of Animals

Although RSPCA has policies in place in order to meet the requirements of enforcing the Prevention of Cruelty Act 1979, from a legislative approach, it is important to update Acts as new science comes to hand.

It should be noted that the egg industry has a range of accreditation programs in place to ensure that animal cruelty does not exist and egg producers have contracts with large hospitality chains that also have requirements to ensure the wellbeing of hens.

Egg Standards Australia (ESA) has been developed through an extensive consultation process and represents a robust, credible and workable Quality Assurance standard that meets the needs of regulators and retailers. ESA is a practical mechanism for delivering more consistent quality outcomes across the egg industry and provides the framework to demonstrate compliance, capturing industry practices.

National v's State organisation

It should be noted that Egg Farmers of Australia differentiates very clearly between the National RSPCA, an organisation that in our view undertakes policy decisions and campaigns from funds gained from charity to the enforcement work undertaken by state organisations of the RSPCA.

Egg Farmers of Australia places on record that we do not agree with the long term policy of the National RSPCA in relation to their campaign against caged eggs.

The egg industry understands the prime focus of the NSW state RSPCA organisation is enforcement.

Independent Office

The Terms of Reference state that an Independent office should be established. We do not understand the reasoning for consideration of what would be a full cost recovery service when the RSPCA undertakes work through multi skilled offers with an understanding of a range of industries.

We believe that the RSPCA is Independent and that the Government may wish to consider an increase in funding rather than setting up a new office with overheads and more red tape.

Should the function be linked with Government, such as placed with the Department of Agriculture, a perceived conflict of interest could be viewed due to the Department also undertaking poultry policy development.

Government Funding of Charitable Organisations

Egg Farmers of Australia understand that RSPCA NSW receives funding from the NSW State Government of less than 1% funding to run the costs of the inspectorate. The RSPCA is effective in what it does and ensures provision of additional funding to meet the aim of preventing animal cruelty and assisting where an incident occurs.

Conflict of Interest

Any RSPCA industry member who is deemed to have a claim made is transferred over to the Animal Welfare League so no conflict of interest exists.

Advantages of the work undertaken by RSPCA

The current process of a private organisation working with Government is an advantage rather than an office with a full cost cover service undertaking such work.

Egg Farmers of Australia is able to engage with RSPCA NSW and have meaningful dialogue. The organisation deals in the facts and understands the law.

Engagement with RSPCA has been in relation to legislation and we understand the focus of the state on enforcement activities rather than lobbying and activism.

Improvements can always be made by any organisation. With more resourcing RSPCA would be able to take a more productive approach.

It is hoped that the aim of this inquiry is not to undermine the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines process* though a focus on enforcement activities prolonging the process further.

Contact details for Egg Farmers of Australia

Egg Farmers of Australia would welcome the opportunity to attend the upcoming hearing pertaining to this inquiry. For further information pertaining to this submission, please contact Egg Farmers of Australia CEO, Mrs Melinda Hashimoto by email info@eggfarmersaustralia.org