

Submission
No 42

**INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

Members,

In 2018 I was part of a group that entered a chicken farm in Lakesland, NSW in order to rescue hens who had been abandoned by their owner. Over 1000 hens had already died due to starvation and lack of water.

Many of us had called the RSPCA up to 10 days prior to report this neglect; even their CEO Steve Coleman was contacted. The RSPCA not only failed to act, but were providing false and misleading information to those of us seeking updates on the RSPCA's intentions.

After a week of no action, we called the police. The police attended, but were denied entry to the property by the farmer. Those police then instructed the RSPCA to attend the property and investigate.

As body worn camera footage later showed, the RSPCA inspectors were preparing to leave the property after a short interview with the farmer, and were satisfied that the farmer would "dispose" of the remaining chickens as he saw fit. This despite over 1000 dead chickens collected in plastic bags, and many more bodies strewn around the shed.

As the inspectors were leaving, we asked them for information. They refused to provide any. Given the RSPCA is a publicly-funded and charitable organisation, we found this to be arrogant and unacceptable. Given the RSPCA had effectively abrogated its responsibilities, we felt we had no choice but to step in and help the remaining chickens.

That action is currently subject to an appeal.

Because of the media attention we generated, the SPCA appointed a separate team of investigators, which eventually led to the successful prosecution of the farmer.

The point is this should not have happened like this. The RSPCA failed to follow protocol, yet is apparently immune from sanction. It also failed to properly inform its own people, the public, or properly uphold its own mission statement.

The RSPCA is currently the recipient of millions of dollars from animal agriculture, for the use of its "RSPCA-approved" logo. This is the most egregious conflict of interest, profiting from the deaths of the very animals it purports to protect.

The RSPCA is also the largest killer of companion animals in Australia. Not to be confused with euthanasia, which is the alleviation of suffering, the vast majority of animals killed in RSPCA "shelters" are healthy.

There are many ways in which the RSPCA has failed animals. It has failed to properly police live export, which is monumentally cruel. It has failed to ban the whipping of racehorses, despite scientific evidence that horses' hides are more sensitive than human skin. It has failed to outlaw or properly police greyhound racing, leaving it instead to the ABC to unearth the endemic cruelty. It has failed to stem the tide of the killing of companion animals; 200,000 healthy dogs alone are killed every year due to oversupply. It has failed to properly police the killing of kangaroos, the largest massacre of native wildlife on the planet. It has failed to innovate or even monitor the baiting of introduced species, which cause the agonising deaths of millions every year from DDT poisoning and myxomatosis.

I could continue for pages and pages about the failures of the RSPCA, but I hope you get the drift.

The RSPCA has for a long time put its own finances ahead of its *raison d'être*. It can no longer be trusted to carry out its role of protecting animals against cruelty. It's my submission that the RSPCA be removed from its legislated authority and replaced with a permanent Anti-Cruelty Commission.