

**Submission
No 58**

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Review of Animal Cruelty Laws and Enforcement Legislation

I would like to make a submission regarding a review of the outdated animal cruelty laws and enforcement legislation.

These laws are outmoded and not in keeping with community expectations. Too many animals have fallen through the cracks and have suffered or are still suffering needlessly.

An independent Office of Animal Welfare is urgently needed to investigate and enforce crimes against animals. It should not be done by charities.

No other crimes are policed by charities ie the Salvation Army doesn't investigate and enforce our child abuse laws. It is an old model from the 19th century that has never been modernised.

The money raised by charities is insufficient to run expensive prosecution cases. On average the RSPCA receives 15,000 cruelty complaints each year but only 1% end up in court with a conviction.

More than 14,000 of those complaints don't get charges laid. We have no idea if they should have or could have gone to court. There are no systems in place to analyse where and why complaints are followed up - unlike the massive administration, intelligence and IT systems support in the police force.

Cross over between animal abuse and domestic violence is a missed opportunity or early intervention to prevent further crimes.

Charities don't have the same powers as police regarding entry and warrants.

Charities can't rely on the same level of expertise for investigations and enforcement as the police.

Police are 100% accountable to the Minister, the charities are only required to produce an annual report with basic statistics. If a case is dropped we can never find out why.

Police are stationed all around the state. The RSPCA has 32 inspectors and AWL has a handful. There is no way they can cover all of NSW.

These are the reasons why these inappropriate and outmoded laws need to be changed urgently.