

Submission
No 92

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

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Partially
Confidential

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Dear Sir/Madam

Submission - Inquiry into animal cruelty laws in New South Wales

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide submissions on whether charitable organisations can effectively enforce anti-cruelty legislation. I am a final year law student and have been interning long term at the Animal Defenders Office and have also had the opportunity to volunteer with the Animal Justice Party. In addition, I am a former RSPCA employee; I worked as a veterinary nurse and animal attendant for close to 8 years at the Yagoona shelter in NSW.

Effectiveness of Charitable Organisations to Achieve Objects of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

(a) the effectiveness of the charitable organisations currently approved under section 34B of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (“the Act”) in achieving the objects of the Act, namely:

(i) to prevent cruelty to animals,

To effectively prevent cruelty to animals authorised officers must be able to carry out inspections, respond appropriately and rapidly to complaints, and carry out effective monitoring where notices have been issued or where perpetrators have been banned from owning animals or operating/working in facilities with animals. Authorised officers must have the powers and the resources to properly investigate and prosecute all cases where there is sufficient evidence. These fundamental aspects of the objects of the Act are not achieved by charitable organisations due to several critical factors – a significant lack of resources, independence, transparency/accountability and the inappropriateness of private charitable organisations enforcing the law, specifically criminal law. In fact the scale of the ineffectiveness cannot be properly assessed because of the absence of accountability of charitable organisations and unavailability of information and data; likely all we can gather is a limited picture.

Inappropriate for Charities to Enforce Criminal Law

Criminal law is the domain of specialised government bodies, coming under the executive branch of government. Under the separation of powers, these bodies do not make the law, which calls into question the law reform role of the RSPCA – the RSPCA works to reform the very laws and regulations which they are tasked with enforcing. While they might have valuable contributions to make to law reform, it becomes a conflict of interest when they play a major role in both reform and enforcement. In addition, it is inappropriate for private charitable fundraising and bequests to serve as the dominant source of funds for the enforcement of public law.

(ii) to promote the welfare of animals by requiring a person in charge of an animal:

(a) to provide care for the animal,

(b) to treat the animal in a humane manner,

(c) to ensure the welfare of the animal,

Under Resourced

Charitable organisations labour under scarce resources, which significantly hinders the effective prevention of cruelty, and enforcement of anti-cruelty legislation. According to annual reports, in 2018 and 2019 government funding to the RSPCA NSW was just over 1 million but the operational costs of the RSPCA are over 50 million for that period. The figure for the RSPCA inspectorate in Victoria (a similar jurisdiction) is 5 million¹; it is likely that the figure would be similar for NSW.

For animals in the shelter, this can translate into further limits on the amount of available funds for veterinary care. Consequently, many animals are euthanised due to insufficient funds for treatable illnesses or injuries. The donations that go towards the inspectorate could be better spent on actual animal care. Additionally, availability of space is also a major issue and its connected to education – if more resources were available for community outreach, then the amount of animals coming into the shelter could be lowered.

Under Staffed

¹ <https://rspcavic.org/services/inspectorate/>.

Requiring a person in charge of an animal to provide care for the animal and treat the animal humanely necessitates sufficient staff to undertake investigation and monitoring. However, due to low staff numbers effective investigation and monitoring cannot be undertaken. In 2017/2018 15,000 cruelty complaints were lodged annually with the RSPCA. In 2017-18 RSPCA NSW employed 32 Inspectors². In the same period the AWL received 1216 complaints³ and being a much smaller organisation likely has fewer inspectors.

Routine Inspections

Monitoring is crucial for ensuring and promoting animal welfare and effective enforcement of anti-cruelty legislation. Farms and related facilities are usually remote and animals are frequently housed within enclosed buildings. Without a proper auditing system, including unannounced inspections, effective monitoring cannot be achieved. And the number of animals raised for food annually is estimated to be half a billion nation-wide⁴ – that's a huge number of animals. There are an estimated 1446 commercial animal facilities in NSW⁵, this includes agricultural, entertainment and research establishments. To achieve the goal of annual inspections would require approximately 27 inspections per week – which is almost the amount of RSPCA inspectors. Further, these figures do not include events, such as racing and rodeos where animals are at risk and cruelty also occurs, therefore monitoring is required.

As an example, most laying hens are confined to cages or intensive barn systems: 55% are confined to battery cages⁶ and the other 45% are predominantly housed in intensive barn systems⁷. Laying hens in caged systems are confined for life within wire cages in a shed, while in barn systems they can roam but there is still no provision for outdoor access⁸. When it comes to pigs, two thirds are kept in giant sheds, where they spend most of their reproductive cycle in stalls⁹. Prior to being placed in stalls gilts are kept in group housing with a minimum of 1m² space per animal, while sows kept in group housing are to have a minimum of 1.4m² per animal¹⁰. Thus, given these conditions and the various ailments associated with confinement and routine painful procedures¹¹, annual inspections of facilities are vital to achieving animal welfare.

Prompted by terrible acts of cruelty at the Hawksbury Valley Abattoir¹², the NSW Government reviewed operations at all ten red meat abattoirs in NSW. They found various breaches at every single abattoir¹³. Concerningly, the ex-NSW Chief Food Inspector stated that these kinds of incidents had significantly increased due to self-regulation within the industry¹⁴.

Animals in Research

Regular or unannounced audits are not carried out in the research industry, it largely falls to industry employees and ethics committees to report breaches of the legislation. In NSW the Panel can authorise an inspection at any time and inspectors have the power to enter at any time but this does not equate to regular or unannounced inspections. Again, resources are a major factor in preventing regular inspections.

Investigations and Prosecutions

² <https://www.rspca.org.au/sites/default/files/RSPCA%20Australia%20Annual%20Statistics%202017-2018.pdf>.

³ https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AWL_NSW_AnnualReport2018-1.pdf.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) 'Livestock Slaughtering and Products', Australian Farming in Brief, Cat No 7106.0, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/7106.0Main+Features42012 from Sankoff, Peter; White, Steven and Black, Celeste, *Animal Law in Australasia* 2nd Ed. (Federation Press, 2013).

⁵ <https://www.aussiefarms.org.au/facilities?state=NSW&country=Australia>.

⁶ *The Importance of Nests for the Welfare of Laying Hens* (2017) Australian Egg Corporation Limited <<https://www.australianeggs.org.au/what-we-do/leading-research/the-importance-of-nests-for-the-welfare-of-laying-hens/>>; Katrina Sharman, 'Farm Animals and Welfare Law: An Unhappy Union' in Peter Sankoff, Steven White and Celeste Black (eds), *Animal Law in Australasia* (Federation Press, 2nd ed, 2013) 61.

⁷ Australian Consumer Law (Free Range Egg Labelling) Information Standard 2017 P2 - the stocking density for free-range chickens has been increased from 1500 to 10,000 per hectare, casting further doubt on free-range systems.

⁸ 2.1.1.2 Barn Systems (Non-cage systems) Birds in barn systems are free to roam within a shed which may have more than one level. No provision for outdoor access or comfortable flooring – may be based on litter.

⁹ Sankoff, Peter; White, Steven and Black, Celeste, *Animal Law in Australasia* 2nd Ed. (Federation Press, 2013) Chapter 3.

¹⁰ Model Code of Practice Pigs Appendix 3.

¹¹ For instance, *ibid* 5.6 Elective Husbandry Procedures.

¹² Steve Cannane, 'NSW abattoir closed over slaughter practices', ABC Lateline (online), 9 February 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2012/s3427271.htm>.

¹³ Katrina Hodgkinson, Abattoir Animal Cruelty (23 May 2012) Parliament of NSW <<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlament/hansart.nsf/V3Key/LA20120523023>>

¹⁴ This was confirmed in an email with Animal Liberation's Emma Hurst on March 21 2014.

In 2017/2018 15,000 cruelty complaints were lodged annually with the RSPCA. This resulted in 404 charges and 66 successful prosecutions¹⁵. While the AWL did not bring any prosecutions for that same period¹⁶. That amounts to less than 1% of cruelty complaints resulting in charges and convictions.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that in 2018 there were 532 finalised charges of (unspecified) animal cruelty and 329 proven charges (61.8%)¹⁷, with previous years showing similar numbers. Again, this demonstrates the tiny number of cases that are prosecuted relative to complaints. And it is very difficult to determine why there are variances between the two sets of data due to charitable organisations being exempt from the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW).

Prosecutions were often deemed unnecessary if the owner of the animal/s surrendered the animal or sought veterinary treatment. Usually there was limited follow up post notices mandating an owner seek veterinary treatment.

Failures in Investigations and Prosecutions

There are numerous examples of failure to see cases through to prosecution, typically they involve commercial farming. It is important to note that cruelty relating to farm animals is often first brought to the attention of the RSPCA by other non-profit organisations.

The RSPCA is not indemnified for costs (although there are some limitations)¹⁸, and while this also applies to police officers, council workers etc, the RSPCA is in a much more vulnerable position financially. This could constitute a serious hurdle when pursuing prosecutions.

Wally's Piggery

A prominent case is Wally's Piggery, which amongst the many horrific things uncovered included pigs being beaten to death with sledge hammers. Despite 53 charges being laid against the owners and financial backers of the piggery, the RSPCA dropped all charges following a not-guilty plea by the parties¹⁹. All the charges laid by the RSPCA were based on their own (and other agencies) independent investigation of the piggery²⁰ not on footage obtained or circulated prior to investigation. In addition, it is at the courts discretion whether it permits evidence to be adduced which is deemed 'improperly or illegally obtained evidence'²¹.

Lakesland Hens

In Lakesland Hens case activists first alerted the RSPCA to animal cruelty at the property. At the proceedings for the Lakesland Hens case body cam footage from inspectors was played in court. One of the inspectors can be heard stating that they do not even know what they should ask the owner. There was general confusion as to how they should proceed and no sense of urgency, despite facing potential biosecurity breaches as well as serious animal cruelty²².

Following the RSPCA inspections, activists further observed the owner discarding birds which were still flapping their wings. It was later revealed that the owner had in fact been ordered not to move any birds by the RSPCA. This again goes to the issue of ineffective monitoring. Information for how the thousands of birds were destroyed remains unknown.

Hawkesbury Valley Abattoir

The RSPCA investigation led to the prosecution of one man, who plead guilty to one act of animal cruelty²³. No other employees involved were charged - however, Hawkesbury Valley Meat Processors stated that casual staff involved in the abuse were fired, while permanent staff were re-located to other tasks²⁴. This indicates that Hawkesbury knew the identities of the other employees who were involved but they escaped charges. Following the reopening of Hawkesbury Valley Meat Processors, it was reported that a further two employees came forward with statements. One employee revealed that electric prodders were used on the genitals of animals and that animals' legs and necks were often broken due to issues with the automated race²⁵. But no further investigation ensued.

Lack of Transparency and Accountability

Charitable organisations do not operate under independent oversight. Determination of effectiveness is prevented by the inability to access information about investigations, particularly livestock cases, as charitable organisations are exempt from the

¹⁵ <https://www.rspca.org.au/sites/default/files/RSPCA%20Australia%20Annual%20Statistics%202017-2018.pdf>.

¹⁶ https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AWL_NSW_AnnualReport2018-1.pdf.

¹⁷ NSW Criminal Courts Statistics 2014-2018.

¹⁸ https://www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/publications/benchbks/local/costs_in_criminal_matters.html#d5e41245.

¹⁹ <https://www.voiceless.org.au/content/animal-law-spotlight-wally%E2%80%99s-piggery-charges-dropped>.

²⁰ RSPCA Media Statement Wally's Piggery 2014.

²¹ S 138 Evidence Act 1995 (NSW).

²² Present at proceedings as an intern of the ADO as a law student.

²³ RSPCA NSW, *Animal Cruelty Charge: Former abattoir employee guilty* (22 January 2014) RSPCA NSW Blog

<<http://rspcansw.blogspot.com.au/2014/01/animal-cruelty-charge-former-abattoir.html>>

²⁴ 'Abattoir accused of cruelty reopens', Sydney Morning Herald (online), 10 March 2012, <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/abattoir-accused-of-cruelty-reopens-20120310-1uqhy.html>

²⁵ 'Abattoir accused of cruelty reopens', Sydney Morning Herald (online), 10 March 2012, <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/abattoir-accused-of-cruelty-reopens-20120310-1uqhy.html>.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, and administrative review under the *Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997*. Explored further at (d).

Thus, to gain a true account of the failures and the ineffectiveness of charitable organisations to enforce criminal law is not possible because of the lack of accountability and available data on investigations and prosecutions.

Lack of Training of Staff

Here I defer to the Animal Justice Party submission, which covers the lack of expertise of charitable organisations and the ensuing problems and examples of how other jurisdictions have resolved this.

The Ability of Charitable Organisations to Achieve Objects of the Act

(b) the ability of the charitable organisations currently approved under section 34B of the Act (“the approved charitable organisations”) to achieve the objects of the Act, including:

(i) the level of funding provided by government,

As mentioned above, according to annual reports, in 2018 and 2019 government funding to the RSPCA NSW was just over 1 million. But the operational costs of RSPCA are over 50 million for that period. The figure for the RSPCA inspectorate in Victoria (a similar jurisdiction) is 5 million²⁶; it is likely that the figure would be similar for NSW.

(ii) perpetrator and community education about ensuring animal welfare,

Education is a huge factor in prevention of cruelty, this is the area that charitable organisations should be focusing on. Community education is key for improving care of animals, decreasing populations through de-sexing and reducing the amount of animals coming into the shelter. For instance, when I was employed at the RSPCA a review was conducted to determine which areas were the source of the highest numbers of animal surrenders. This was to ascertain which areas to target with campaigns on de-sexing and programs for access to reduced-cost sterilisations and vaccinations. However, again, this is all limited by resources, for instance, if the RSPCA was no longer funding the inspectorate, more funds could go towards these kinds of community education programs.

(iii) any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest between the investigation and enforcement of the Act, and one or more of the following:

(a) commercial activities of the approved charitable organisations including corporate sponsorship,

(b) industrial proxy membership payments or donations,

(c) private interests of board members, consultants, and senior staff,

RSPCA Approved

Through the RSPCA labelling scheme the RSPCA receives funding from commercial farming but is concurrently tasked with policing commercial farms. While RSPCA approved businesses²⁷ are part of RSPCA Australia, it is still RSPCA officers who investigate complaints – this creates, at the very least, a perception of bias.

The RSPCA approved labelling scheme has experienced various problems, with allegations of deceiving consumers²⁸, to serious cruelty allegations at ‘approved’ farms in Victoria. In 2014 in NSW there were issues with Pace Farms. Footage was taken by Animals Australia and a letter was submitted by legal counsel for Animals Australia to the RSPCA about complaints made in 2013 and 2014²⁹. While hens crammed into cages is unfortunately allowed under the code, the state of the hens in the footage and facility itself is a breach of anti-cruelty statutes and codes. There was no prosecution, only penalty notices were issued. At the very least this creates a perception of bias if the RSPCA is investigating Pace Farms which carries the RSPCA Approved label. The Animal Welfare League has also made questionable deals, accepting money from Kellyville Pets, which it is tasked with auditing, along with the RSPCA³⁰. A 2018 Guardian article links to a social media post of the check being presented to the AWL.

²⁶ <https://rspcavic.org/services/inspectorate/>.

²⁷ <https://rspcaapproved.org.au/rspca-approved-products>

²⁸ <http://blog.rspcaapproved.org.au/2011/05/25/otway-bred-free-range-pork/>;
<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/consumers-duped-by-rspca-farmers-claim-20120108-1pq77.html>;
<https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/pace-farm-denies-cruelty-to-chickens/news-story/ea7b807a7db274e3857ed400a0f4>.

²⁹ <https://www.news.com.au/finance/business/pace-farm-denies-cruelty-to-chickens/news-story/ea7b807a7db274e3857ed400a0f4>.

³⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/10/nsw-animal-welfare-inspector-accepted-35000-from-puppy-retailer-it-audits>.

Further, the AWL is opposed to the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores, yet it accepted money from the biggest pet store in Sydney, which is due to begin operating a large scale puppy breeding facility. At the very least, this all creates a perception of bias.

Adequacy of Standard of Care for Animals Under Control of Charitable Organisations and Euthanasia Rates

(c) the adequacy of the standard of care and kill rates for stray, surrendered or seized animals under the control or supervision of the approved charitable organisations,

Animals are still being euthanised due to space limitations. This is concerning for all animals, in particular animals that have been seized due to cruelty. An animal might make it to adoptions only to get sick and end up being euthanised.

Animals were regularly euthanised due to:

- general lack of space
- contracting perfectly treatable diseases, such as cat flu or ringworm (a skin fungus similar to athletes' foot)
- lack of space in adoptions
- requiring routine surgeries but absence of funds and room for them to recover prior to going to adoptions
- timid animals were often deemed inappropriate for adoptions
- FIV cats were often euthanised despite the fact that they do not require medication, can live with the disease all their lives and be virtually symptom free

Animals were also euthanised for non-aggressive behavioural reasons due to lack of staff and space in what is referred to as the 'rehabilitation' section, which consisted of two dog rows during my time at the RSPCA.

According to the most recent RSPCA annual report, close to 5000 animals were euthanised for behavioural issues (non-feral), illness or medical reasons. However, there is no specific information on the behavioural issues, illnesses and medical reasons that resulted in euthanasia.

Effective/Appropriate for Charitable Organisations to Hold Investigative and Enforcement Powers

(d) whether it is effective and appropriate for non-government charitable organisations to be granted investigative and enforcement powers for criminal prosecutions under the Act, with regard to their:

(i) capacity to exercise those investigative and enforcement powers,

(ii) ability to exercise those investigative and enforcement powers in relation to commercial premises and intensive farm operations involving high numbers of animals,

Another impediment to effective enforcement of the Act in relation to farm animals is that the RSPCA and the AWL are constrained by Departments of Agriculture, making it difficult for them to exercise the powers they have³¹.

Agricultural departments have imposed a compliance system wherein they have assigned inspection functions to the industry through formal and informal recognition of industry quality assurance (QA)³². Consequently, if a production facility is part of a recognised industry QA scheme, it will be subject to fewer or even no routine inspections for animal welfare compliance purposes³³. Departments of Agriculture in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia have limited the jurisdictional responsibilities of RSPCA inspectors with respect to livestock³⁴. There is a fear that the same can occur here if it isn't already. In NSW, there are requirements placed on inspectors in relation to 'stock animals'³⁵ - inspectors are required to seek advice from the DPI prior to charging a person in relation to an offence of failing to provide a stock animal with sufficient food, drink, or shelter³⁶. Similarly, 'seizure and disposal' of stock animals, in the absence of an associated prosecution, can only be authorised by the Director-General of the Department, and only after a process of establishing, and receiving advice from a 'Stock Welfare Panel'³⁷.

Moreover, there is a serious lack of transparency when it comes to monitoring and enforcement activities by Departments and tellingly no charges of cruelty have been brought by Departments. Only animal welfare agencies, like the RSPCA, have brought charges but only in rare cases.

³¹ Jed Goodfellow, 'Regulatory Capture and the Welfare of Farm Animals in Australia' in Deborah Cao and Steven White (eds), *Animal Welfare Law and Science - International Perspectives* (Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2016) 220.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ POCTA, definitions.

³⁶ Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, s 8(4).

³⁷ Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, Part 2B.

Even the Productivity Commission acknowledged there were issues with transparency, monitoring and enforcement³⁸.

Moreover, evidence of corruption within the departments, has come to light³⁹, indicating that agricultural departments cannot promote productivity, be responsible for animal welfare, and regulate the industry. And their influence on the RSPCA and the AWL, further hinders proper enforcement of anti-cruelty legislation.

Added to which there are unfortunate signs of a general attitude of opposition to compliance by producers⁴⁰.

(iii) ability to conduct cases to test the application of legislative provisions in the Act,

No due to being constrained by scarcity of resources and not being indemnified. As an ex-employee, I witnessed a culture where prosecutions went ahead based on certainty of winning. There was no possibility of conducting any test cases or engaging in strategic litigation.

(iv) accountability to government and the community,

(v) exemption from the provisions of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009,

(vi) exemption from administrative review under the Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997,

Inspectors of charitable organisations do not operate under independent oversight. Charitable organisations are exempt from the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, and administrative review under the *Administrative Decisions Review Act 1997*. Thus, conducting a complete analysis to gain a true account of the ineffectiveness of charitable organisations to enforce criminal law is not entirely possible. Complete analysis is prevented as access to information about investigations, particularly in relations to farm animals, is disallowed. There is a lack of accountability, no data is collected and even if there was, access to information is currently blocked due to the above exemptions.

Limitations of Administration and Enforcement Common to Other Jurisdictions

(e) whether any limitations and deficiencies of the administration and enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 are common to other national or international jurisdictions which use similar models,

I witnessed similar problems as mentioned above during my time at the Humane Society in Oakville Milton Ontario Canada when I worked there in 2012. The OSPCA (which worked together with the Humane Society) has since announced its withdrawal from enforcing animal anti-cruelty laws in Ontario. This was partially motivated by the Ontario Supreme Court's decision in *Bogaerts v. Attorney General of Ontario (2019) ONSC 41* which held that some of the enforcement powers of the province's animal welfare agency were unconstitutional. For a more detailed account, please refer to the Animal Justice Party Submission.

Whether Government Should Establish Specialist Unit to Investigate Animal Cruelty

(f) whether the Government should establish a specialist unit to investigate animal cruelty complaints and enforce animal protection laws, either as part of the NSW Police Force or as a separate statutory enforcement agency;

Here again I defer to the Animal Justice Party submission. I feel the issue is comprehensively addressed and excellent examples from other jurisdictions in the US are provided within that submission.

In summary, an independent, accountable government body or specialised police task force should be established. This has been established in several jurisdictions in the US, which have proved far more successful at enforcing criminal law. And jurisdictions in Canada and Europe look to be heading in that direction. Victoria also appears to be moving in that direction, after an inquiry found serious issues within the inspectorate.

Related Matters

Mental health issues related to animal cruelty, euthanasia and high case load in comparison to staff is a huge issue impacting inspectors and other staff. This leads indirectly to ineffective enforcement due to staff taking leave, particularly within the

³⁸ Regulation of Australian Agriculture, Productivity Commission Inquiry Report, No. 79, 15 November 201.

³⁹ ABC, 'Allegations of backroom deals to keep battery hen eggs on the market', 7:30 Report, 21 December 2017 (Leigh Sales) <<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/allegations-of-backroom-deals-to-keep-battery-hen/9281050>>.

⁴⁰ Jed Goodfellow, 'Animal Welfare Law Enforcement: To Punish or Persuade' in Peter Sankoff, Steven White and Celeste Black (eds), *Animal Law in Australasia* (Federation Press, 2nd ed, 2013) 201-2.

inspectorate. There was generally a high turn-over of staff – it is significant that during 2017/18, eleven of the 29 NSW RSPCA inspectors resigned⁴¹.

Charities enforcing animal cruelty laws results in additional stress in the form of shelter and veterinary staff being routinely harassed in person or over the phone by people whose animals have been seized. As an employee I experience this several times, as I had to deal with owners of seized animals calling and behaving in an abusive manner. Likewise, on a few occasions we had to be on guard as owners of seized animals had made threats about coming to the shelter and harming staff.

These issues could be significantly mitigated if charitable organisations no longer enforced anti-cruelty legislation and funds were directed towards sheltering, education and increasing/maintaining staff numbers.

Lastly, the RSPCA lacks sufficient equipment or facilities to transport or house large amounts of farm animals or to set up mobile veterinary clinics to effectively treat large amounts of farm animals on site. Shelter areas were always full and have nowhere near the capacity to house high numbers of animals. Likewise, there is inadequate staff to remain on the premise of farms where high numbers of animals might require treatment – there was a persistent issue with sufficient staff numbers on shelter premises.

⁴¹ The RSPCA (NSW) *Annual Report of the Board* 30 June 2018. <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Annual-Report-of-the-Board-17-18.pdf>