

**Submission
No 132**

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mr Peter Cornick
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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL CRUELTY LAWS IN NSW

The submission made by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) Australia (being submission number 15) is one that I strongly support in essentially all respects. Its reference to the RSPCA as a “private farmer-beholden charity” is one that I cannot comment on, except that I see from the brief CV’s of some of the members of the RSPCA board that there may well be some conflict of interests issues, in which ‘farming interests’ may conflict with the RSPCA’s obligations under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (the Act). At the very least, there is a perception that such conflicts exist.

My wife and I are regular donors to the RSPCA (and a number of other animal welfare organisations) and so I am a little unsettled by PETA’s criticisms and identification of actual, significant failings on the part of the RSPCA – all substantiated by reference to source material. And, with reference to (d) (iv), (v) and (vi) of the Terms of Reference, I am shocked to learn that that the RSPCA is exempt from mandatory, public accountability, given that it carries out functions enabled by the legislature.

Because this very brief submission is quite literally being written within the last hour of the deadline, I am unable to do justice to any of the Terms of Reference but, whatever failings there are by the RSPCA, there can be no doubt that, certainly as far as domestic pets are concerned, it performs remarkably well, and for that my wife and I are very grateful, especially given the disgraceful lack of government funding. The care that the dedicated staff and volunteers give to animals in need is worthy of the highest commendation. The 2018-19 RSPCA Annual report shows that the NSW government provided a paltry 2% of the overall revenue; with \$32.4 million coming from donations and \$20.2 million from receipts from members and from customer payments. The government clearly has not even a token commitment to animal welfare. And there lies the core problem: a dire lack of resources. Redressing that issue would be a natural starting point.

And, as I flip through the Act, what is to be made of section 5, which requires that “A person shall not commit an act of cruelty upon an animal” when the Act does not define “cruelty”?

As I have said, I support, essentially without exception, PETA’s submission and ask that it be given the attention it clearly warrants.

Sincerely,