

**Submission
No 140**

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

Name: Ron Woodham PSM

Date Received: 9 December 2019

My name is Ron Woodham and I have supported the RSPCA all of my life. Some 18 years ago, I became the Commissioner of Corrective Services. In the year 2000 as Senior Assistant Commissioner of Corrective services, I introduced a number of animal care programs into NSW jails. These included Adopt a Greyhound program, 7 Acre Animal Care program and the 30 Kennel program at Windsor Jail.

The 30 Kennel program catered for up to 30 dogs at a time that had serve behavioral problems when they came to the RSPCA shelters. I signed an agreement with the Senior Executive of the RSPCA Steve Coleman to care for these dogs using prisoners under the supervision of a RSPCA employee and a Senior Prison Officer. Steve and my staff designed the facility and the prisoners built it. I also built an adoption centre that the RSPCA designed at Windsor Jail where families could bring other pets and family members to see how they interacted with the dog they were looking at giving a home.

I had a personal interest in this facility and its operations meeting regularly with RSPCA Staff. The RSPCA staff that worked at this facility also had a role in training the prisoners to care for these dogs. I found all of the RSPCA personnel that I had contact with and in particular Steve Coleman to be totally dedicated to the welfare of the animals in their care. This program is still running today and is prized showpiece of the jail.

I also signed an agreement with the head of NSW racing Peter V'landys on reclaiming former racehorses at jail in Muswellbrook called St Heliers Correctional Centre. I asked the Governor of that jail recently how many horses they had there at this time and they replied 70. Prisoners were involved with NSW Racing staff in reclaiming former racehorses. Some of the horses have gone onto dressage and other horse events. As an example, I know the South Australian Police brought 3 of the horses for their mounted police division. Any money from the sale of these horses goes back into the management of the program. As St Heliers Correctional Centre is a prison farm each year it provides cheap hay to the horse program. Again, this is a very successful program.

I found a marked difference for the better in prisoners' behavior who were involved in the animal programs.

Yours sincerely

Ron Woodham PSM