

**INQUIRY INTO 2021 INQUIRY INTO THE APPROVED  
CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979**

**Organisation:** RSPCA NSW  
**Date Received:** 2 March 2022

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**Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the  
*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*  
Portfolio Committee No 4 – Customer Service and Natural Resources  
SUBMISSION - RSPCA NSW**

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**DATE**      2 March 2022

RSPCA NSW provides the following to the Committee in respect of our enforcement and compliance function. It should be read in conjunction with the 2021 Annual Report and Financial Report.

**Introduction**

RSPCA NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide the Committee with information regarding the enforcement and compliance function we perform pursuant to the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (NSW) (hereafter POCTAA).

RSPCA NSW is a community based, not-for-profit animal welfare charity that cares for, treats, protects and rehomes animals across NSW. For nearly 150 years, RSPCA NSW has actively sought to prevent cruelty to animals by advocating for their welfare and actively promoting their protection and care. RSPCA NSW has performed a statutory role in enforcing animal cruelty legislation since 1928.

Every year, RSPCA NSW:

- Receives over 15,000 reports of animal cruelty or neglect from the community, each of which are investigated and addressed, through a range of responses, from education or support for the animal owner, to written directions, penalty infringement notices or prosecution for offences under the Act;
- Treats, shelters and re-homes many thousands of animals which are abandoned, surrendered, or seized by its Inspectors;
- Supports the community in NSW in relation to animal welfare through a range of programs which include providing education in schools and through community organisations and direct support to the aged, victims of domestic violence, the homeless and indigenous communities; and
- Provides animal welfare assistance during periods of natural disaster, including drought, bushfires and floods.

RSPCA NSW believes that, as an organisation with long experience, a team of specialised and experienced inspectors and volunteers, as well as an existing, integrated network of vets, animal shelters and education and community outreach programs, all directed solely to the prevention of cruelty to animals, RSPCA NSW is ready, willing and able to effectively and efficiently investigate animal cruelty complaints and enforce animal protection laws in NSW, having done so successfully for over 90 years.

The following submission has been compiled to provide the members of Portfolio Committee No. 4 an overview of how the RSPCA NSW exercises its' compliance and enforcement functions under POCTAA.

**1. Complaints relating to animal cruelty or mistreatment received by the organisation:**

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, RSPCA NSW received a total of 15,114 complaints alleging cruelty to animals contrary to the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW)* (hereafter the Act). These complaints often involved more than one animal and multiple complaint types.

**2. Visits or investigations made by officers of the organisation as a result of complaints:**

Of the 15,114 complaints received, RSPCA NSW investigated 13,838 complaints (an average of 53.2 jobs per day). The investigation of these complaints involved 13,838 initial inspections and a further 3,890 revisits (average of 14.9 jobs per day). Revisits were generally conducted to inspect subject animals and assess compliance with either written or verbal directions.

Of the 15,114 complaints received, RSPCA NSW referred a total of 151 (1%) to NSW Police Force for investigation in the first instance. The referrals were made based on the urgent nature of the animal welfare concern and proximity of the nearest RSPCA Inspector. In relation to the complaints attended by NSW Police a proportion were returned to the RSPCA for revisit or follow up inspection.

RSPCA NSW referred 3 complaints to the Animal Welfare League NSW during 2020-2021.

RSPCA NSW referred a total of 51 complaints to other agencies as the allegation fell outside the jurisdiction of RSPCA NSW.

401 complaints were logged for intelligence purposes only as there was information alleging one or more offence within RSPCA NSW jurisdiction but insufficient information to determine or identify a person of interest.

**3. Number of visits or investigations made by officers of the organisation that were unrelated to those complaints (such as routine inspections of abattoirs, veterinary practices, pet shops or saleyards):**

RSPCA NSW's animal management database does not have the capacity to distinguish between cruelty complaints and 'routine' (proactive) inspections conducted on animal trades under the provisions of Section 24G of the Act.

Data is captured separately to record the number of 'routine' inspections conducted by the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate. A summary of the 201 'routine' inspections conducted during 2020/2021 is tabled below.

Please note that the capacity to conduct 'routine' inspections is dependent on available resources with investigation of animal cruelty complaints taking priority. During the reporting period the impact

of COVID-19 public health regulations restricted Inspectorate capacity to enter facilities other than in respect of a cruelty complaint.

<b>ROUTINE INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED 2020/2021</b>		
<b>Animal Trade</b>	<b>Routine Inspections Conducted 2020/2021</b>	<b>Routine Cruelty Complaints</b>
Agricultural Show	Cancelled due to Covid-19	
Boarding Facility	2	1226
Breeding Facility	139	
Caged Egg Facility	1	
Feedlot	2	7
Filming Facility	3	91
Knackery	1	
Pet Shop	30	130
Petting Zoo	1	24
Quail Farm	2	
Rescue Group	2	
Rodeo	1	
Saleyard	17	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>1482</b>

#### **4. Counselling and advice provided by officers of the organisation:**

RSPCA NSW provides counselling and advice or educational material to many of the individuals with whom they come in contact via a logged complaint. These specific details could only be obtained by reviewing the visit reports associated with each of the 13,838 logged complaints. In practice the RSPCA Inspectors provide verbal advice in one form or another as part of the investigation of the majority of complaints. In addition, Inspectors regularly provide educational materials to animal trade operators in the form of NSW DPI resources, printed copies of relevant Codes of Practice, and verbal guidance in respect of animal welfare.

#### **5. Number of persons cautioned by officers of the organisation:**

Official Cautions issued by the RSPCA NSW in accordance with the *Fines Act 1996 (NSW)* are issued by the Chief Inspector or Deputy Chief Inspector. During the reporting period 15 Official Cautions were issued by RSPCA NSW.

#### **6. Notices issued by officers of the organisation under Section 24N of the Act:**

During the reporting period a total of 527 Written Directions were issued pursuant to Section 24N of the Act during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

## **7. Penalty notices issued by officers of the organisation:**

RSPCA NSW issued a total of 109 Penalty Infringement Notices during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

## **8. Proceedings for offences under the Act or the regulations that were instituted by officers of the organisation:**

RSPCA NSW initiated 104 criminal prosecutions during the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. A total of 104 defendants were charged with 541 offences, involving 1582 animals.

## **9. Outcome of such of those proceedings as had been finally determined as at the date of the report:**

Of the 104 prosecutions initiated between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 the following outcomes were recorded as at 30 June 2021:

- 50 prosecutions had been finalised; and
- 56 prosecutions were still to be finalised.

Of the 50 prosecutions finalised - 32 defendants pleaded guilty, 1 defendant pleaded not guilty, 9 matters were dealt with ex-parte, 4 matters were withdrawn, 2 matters were finalised following a District Court appeal, 1 matter was dealt with under Section 32 of the *Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1999 (NSW)* and 1 matter was dismissed.

## **10. Outcome of such proceedings for offences as were referred to in the immediately previous report but not finally determined as at the date of that report:**

Prosecutions can take several years to finalise. Of those finalised during the reporting period 2020/2021, 49 matters from previous financial years were concluded:

- Initiated in 2014/2015 - 1 x matters finalised
- Initiated in 2015/2016 - 2 x matters finalised
- Initiated in 2018/2019 – 3 x matters finalised
- Initiated in 2019/2020 – 43 x matters finalised

The following numbers of cases were still before the Courts as at 30 June 2021:

- Initiated in 2017/2018 – 1 x Appeal by RSPCA NSW, 1 Local Court Matter
- Initiated in 2019/2020 – 9 x Local Court matters
- Initiated in 2020/2021 – 53 x Local Court matters, 2 x Severity Appeal matters, 1 x Section 32 Application

## **11. Officers of the organisation:**

As at 30 June 2021 the RSPCA NSW had a total of 38 authorised officers. Of the 38 Inspectors, all are holders of Prescribed Authorities issued by the Minister for Primary Industries.

## 12. Training provided by the organisation for its officers:

The following table details the training provided by the RSPCA NSW for its officers in the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. Due to COVID-19, office training was significantly reduced during the reporting period.

Date	Course	Attendees
10 July 2019	Animal First Aid	7
14 & 28 July 2020	Using Trailers	15
23 & 24 July 2020	Jayco Training & License	6
28 & 29 July 2020	Humane Destruction Course	5
17 August 2020	Notice of Readiness, Court Returns & Disclosure Policy	38
16 September 2020	Animal First Aid Training	6
29 & 30 September 2020	Batons, Handcuffs & Verbal Tactics	9
27 October 2020	Firearms Training	4
21 April 2021	Dealing with people in Domestic Violence situations	38
21 April 2021	Dealing with people affected by Drugs and Alcohol	38
21 April 2021	Dealing with people affected by Mental Health issues and disabilities	38
21 April 2021	Enforcement & the Law – Internal from General Counsel	38
4 June 2021	Large Animal Rescue Training	13
Various Dates	SEINS Training	7
Various Dates	Light Rigid Training and Licence	3
Various Dates	Internal Training – with other departments – Programs, Customer Service, Vet Clinic, Call Centre	3
Various Dates	Internal Training – SOPs, Prosecutions, Notebooks	3

**Conclusion:**

This submission represents the ninth occasion in two years that RSPCA NSW has provided the NSW Parliament with detailed and lengthy submissions in respect of vital issues of animal welfare. That is in addition to filing submissions on published discussion papers, giving evidence before Parliamentary Committees, providing individual and direct advice to the NSW DPI and other stakeholder groups, and participating in roundtable discussions established by Members of Parliament.

It is clear that animal welfare remains at the forefront of the public consciousness, and RSPCA NSW welcomes the opportunity to provide these comments in addition to the advice given throughout this reform project. We have served the animals and their people in NSW for nearly 150 years, and we look forward to continuing the work of preventing animal cruelty and promoting animal welfare, which is our reason for existence.



# **Your Year in Review**

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## **2020-2021**

**Photo Credit:** Rachele Quigley,  
Animal Attendant, Sydney Shelter

**RSPCA**   
New South Wales



# From the CEO: My thanks to you

Looking back on my 30 years with the organisation, it's incredible to see just how far animal welfare has come.

And with you by our side, progress continues. Your giving delivers programs that protect animals from cruelty *before* it occurs – aiding pet owners undergoing hardship and crisis; desexing initiatives that reduce overpopulation and prevent neglect and abandonment; inspectors who ensure only qualified, responsible breeders operate. With you by our side, no animal will suffer.

That's why I'm sending you this 'Year in Review'. I want to celebrate, with you, all that you have achieved for the animals of our state over the last year. You are the one who keeps our doors open to welcome in pets who need a home. You are the one who puts inspectors on the ground to protect animals from cruelty. You are the one who makes sure we have vets ready to provide life-saving medical care.

Please know how deeply thankful I am for your generosity and compassion for animals in need.



Steve Coleman  
Chief Executive Officer



## Year at a glance

This year, you helped

**24,271**

animals to receive the care they need

because

**45,358**

generous supporters like you donated an incredible

**\$34,358,000**

**13,399**  
Cats



**6,900**  
Dogs



**591**  
Wildlife



**3,381**  
Livestock and other animals



# Message from the President

There is no doubt it has been a challenging year. As I write this, many of us across the state are back in lockdown.

Just as we did when the pandemic first hit, or the bushfires or floods, RSPCA NSW has been swift to pivot to the changing needs of animals and communities—whether it's emergency rescues, pop-up relief points providing animal health checks and supplies, or delivering contactless adoptions to people's homes.

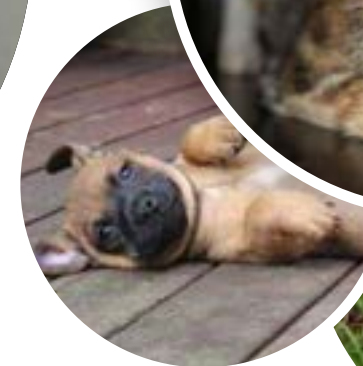
We are still on the road to recovery from so many challenges, but our commitment to the strategic goal of ensuring we are always working within our means has not wavered. Thanks to generosity like yours, we have maintained the organisation's financial health, and our ability to care for animals has not been jeopardised.

And we are venturing down new and exciting roads as we continue to collaborate with the animal welfare community, allocating \$2.4 million of donations received from our bushfire appeal to a series of long-term partnerships with wildlife organisations. Working with Taronga Conservation Society Australia, our investment into the platypus population is coming to fruition—to conserve their natural habitat and protect them from fire and drought using cutting edge technology.

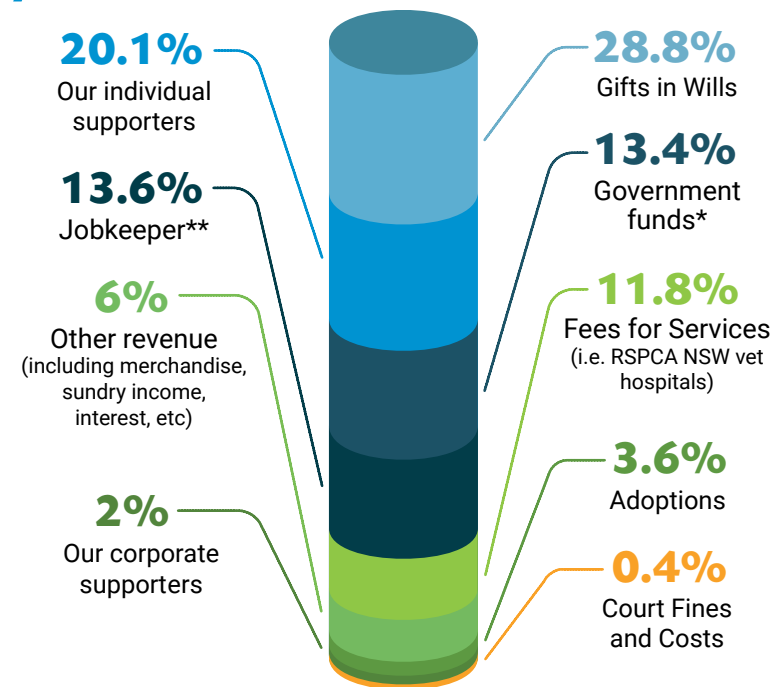
I am incredibly proud of our dedicated staff members and volunteers for adapting to meet every new challenge. I also wish to personally thank you, our generous supporters, for making this work possible.



Dr Peter Wright  
President, RSPCA NSW Board of Directors



## Where RSPCA NSW funding came from in 2020/2021:



\*This year, the state government generously provided building grants towards the reconstruction of the Sydney shelter, as well as improvements to RSPCA facilities across NSW.

\*\*RSPCA NSW was classified as an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and like most Australians could not have continued operating without the assistance of the Jobkeeper program.

## How your generous donations are used:

### Providing immediate care for animals in need

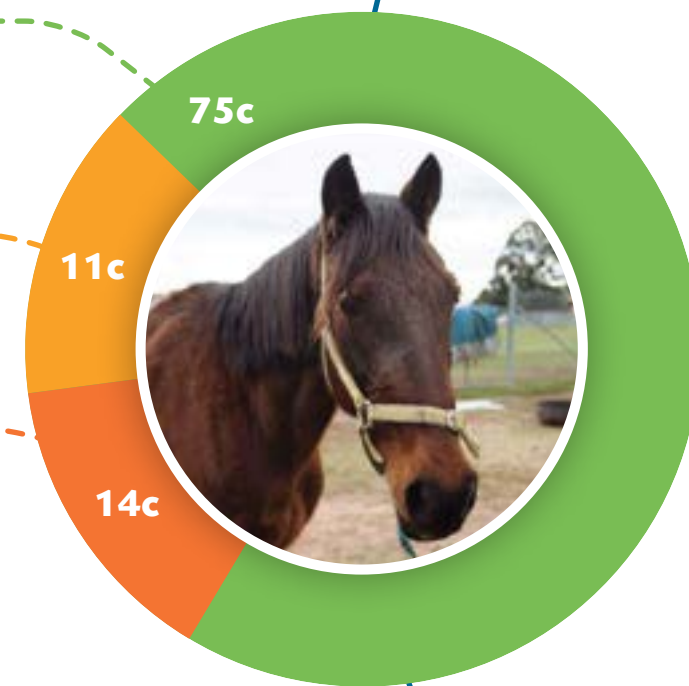
75 cents in every dollar directly supports animals in need *right now*, including the Inspectorate, shelters, veterinary hospitals, and community outreach and education programs.

### Investing in the future welfare of animals

11 cents in every dollar is reinvested into raising vital funds, so we can be ready to help even *more* animals in the future.

### Making sure we do things the best way

14 cents in every dollar is essential to providing the *most effective and sustainable impact* for animals, including prosecuting cruelty offenders, staffing our contact centre, employee mental health support, and more.



Graphs represent pre-audited figures that are subject to change. Complete statements for the 2020-2021 financial year will be available at [rspcansw.org.au](https://rspcansw.org.au) from October.



## You've launched the taskforce

At a puppy factory, profits come first. That means the welfare of the dogs in these intensive breeding facilities is not a priority—with animals going without even their most basic needs.

With your support, we are determined to put an end to the dark and often hidden world of illegal breeding. We have launched an 'Intensive Breeding Taskforce' specifically dedicated to finding, inspecting and, if necessary, removing animals from poor conditions and charging non-compliant breeders.

We've identified nearly 900 breeding facilities across the state and aim to inspect each to ensure compliance with all laws and codes of practice.

*"So many of the dogs we find are living in extremely bad conditions. Malnutrition, painful ear and eye infections, dental issues—you name it. That's why the Taskforce is absolutely vital to ensuring animals are bred in safe environments where their welfare matters."*

Scott Meyers,  
Chief Inspector



38

RSPCA NSW  
inspectors have  
conducted



13,838

cruelty investigations

## You've helped families escape violence

Even after Cassie\* had escaped an abusive relationship, her ex-partner had broken into her home. Cassie and her daughter were terrified, not only for their safety, but for their much-loved dogs, Daisy and Gidget, who had already experienced his violence. He had picked up little Daisy and thrown her out of a window. Daisy had survived but was hurt and traumatised.

Calls to RSPCA NSW for help doubled over the last year, during COVID-19 lockdowns and isolation, as people found themselves trapped at home with their abusers.

Cassie and her family needed to flee to safety, and they weren't going to leave without Daisy and Gidget—but no refuge could take the dogs. Because of your support, we could welcome Daisy and Gidget into our care whilst Cassie figured out their living situation. Thanks to you, they have now been reunited as a whole family in a safe new home.

If you or anyone you know needs the assistance of RSPCA NSW in this manner, please contact us at (02) 9782 4408.

\*To protect the identities of the people and animals in this story, we have changed names.



866 animals  
580 people

have received help through  
RSPCA programs  
like this one.

### PROGRESS

*A new law was recently passed in NSW to legally protect the pets of domestic violence victims when an Apprehensive Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) is granted.*

# The crucial volunteer programs you support

When animals are too young to be adopted, recovering from illness or surgery, or just not coping in the shelter environment—a temporary home is what they need. That’s where RSPCA NSW’s Foster Care program comes in. Our extraordinary network of carers volunteer their time welcoming animals into their home and providing that special care.



Natalie Conway has been fostering since 2014. She started out caring for litters of young puppies, then as her confidence and experience grew, she began taking on dogs who came to us through inspector cases. These can be some of the most traumatised, fearful dogs when they arrive—and their transformation after receiving loving foster care will melt your heart.

“Volunteering for these pets is such a rewarding experience.”  
**Natalie Conway,**  
*volunteer foster carer*



This year,  
**2,917**  
**RSPCA NSW**  
**Dedicated**  
**volunteers**

spent an  
incredible  
**238,137**  
**hours making a**  
**lifesaving difference**  
**to animals in need**

  
Our Animal Ambulance  
responded to  
**1,071**  
calls for help

  
**196**  
Emergency rescues  
were made

## Quack quack, ouch!

Your generous support ensures we can be on the ground and ready to respond to animals in need at a moment’s notice.

We recently rescued a sweet-natured duck from a distressing situation. The poor thing had a fishing hook lodged painfully in his cheek and desperately needed help. Inspectors rushed to (carefully) catch this little duck and bring him in to our hospital for emergency care. He did so well to let us check him over and gently remove the hook from his cheek.

We’re happy to say that he made a full recovery and was released, all thanks to supporters like you!





# Happy Tails you've made possible

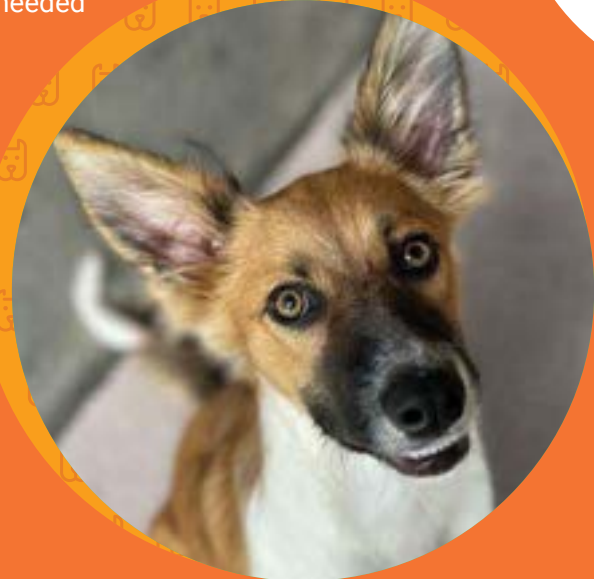
Thousands of animals turn up on our doorstep each year through no fault of their own — abandoned, injured, neglected, and desperate for love. Thanks to you, these animals can receive the help they need and happy forever homes.

## Todd fetched a happy new life

When five-month-old puppy, Todd, came to us through our inspectors, he had a fractured leg and needed proper care and the chance to heal.

Thanks to supporters like you, Todd got the help he desperately needed. He went to a loving foster home while he recovered, and when he was healed and ready for adoption, someone immediately fell in love with him!

Todd has been so happy with his new family! He now spends his days going to the dog beach and park, running around with his doggy friends, and playing fetch to his heart's delight.



  
**10,892**  
animals found  
forever homes

**30**  
Horses

**929**  
Other  
animal  
types

**277**  
Livestock

**7,451**  
Felines

**2,205**  
Canines

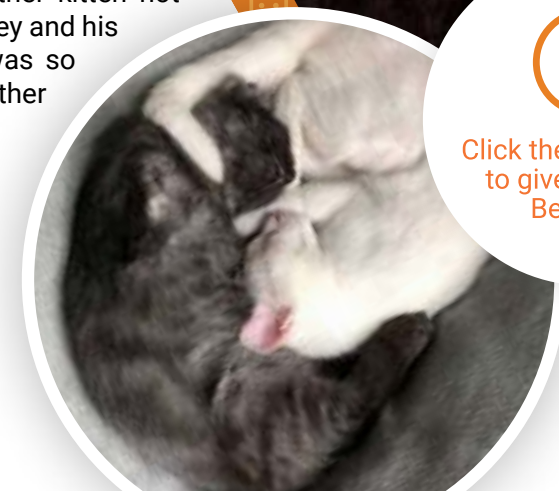
## Ain't nothin' gonna break his stride

Rodney came into the world as a stray, and sadly, was born with a bad leg. A compassionate member of the community found him and brought Rodney to the vet. To help give Rodney a life free from discomfort, his leg had to be amputated.

But having just three legs didn't slow this sweet and playful kitten down! Rodney was placed in foster care, and there he met another kitten not yet ready for adoption - Angel. Rodney and his new best friend's beautiful bond was so strong that they would cry if the other one left the room!

We knew they had to find a home together. Great news - a delightful adopter fell in love with the pair, and now Rodney and Angel are living a happy life together in their new forever home!

**Photo Credit:** Madeline Dyer,  
Animal Attendant, Sydney Shelter



Click the play button  
to give Rodney a  
Belly rub!

## A Major General with a soft spot

Major General Ron Grey is a retired senior army officer and former Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police. He's a tough and respected military man who also happens to have an incredible soft spot - his tremendous affection for dogs!

But over many years of service, he has witnessed acts of deliberate cruelty to animals that broke his heart. Ron was moved to take action. At 90 years old he still generously donates every year and has included a gift to RSPCA NSW in his Will.

***"RSPCA NSW is a leader in bringing to justice those guilty of cruelty to animals. It is worthy of as much support as possible."***

**Photo caption:** Ron is in good company with Rascal, a little stray dog he and his wife Avril recently adopted from RSPCA NSW.



## They said "I DO" to helping animals in need

"When we were planning our wedding, our best decision was asking friends and family to donate to RSPCA NSW rather than bringing a gift. We already had all the cheeseboards, plates, and cutlery we needed!"



"The wedding was one of the best days of our lives, and it was even better knowing we were able to support the excellent work of a charity which has special meaning for both of us."

***John and Bonnie,  
newlywed supporters.***

John and Bonnie's wedding day was a beautiful celebration of their love for each other, and animals! They raised more than \$3,000 for RSPCA NSW!

## Thank you to our corporate supporters!



**National Pet Nutrition Partner**  
and official dog and cat food provider  
Contributing \$860,789 in product in 2021/21.



**Official Animal Health Partner**  
providing all dogs and cats in care with \$384,952 worth of parasite protection in 2020/21.

### Featured Corporate Partners

**PETBARN**

Not just our **Official Adoption Partner** (2702 animals rehomed this year!), Petbarn always lends a paw! Whether providing sheltering space for a large seizure, delivering essential food and supplies to affected communities after flooding, or raising an incredible \$175,000 for RSPCA NSW Programs through their in-store 'Tree of Hope' campaign, Petbarn has gone above and beyond for the animals!



This year, Greencross Vets generously desexed 355 cats and dogs before adoption, as well as supporting RSPCA NSW Outreach events by offering microchipping, vaccinations, and health checks to pet owners in need. They also collaborated with RSPCA to launch the first Veterinarian Graduate program at Sydney Shelter Hospital.

# All creatures great and small

This year more than 24,000 animals of all shapes, sizes and species found themselves with one thing in common – they needed our help.

All animals come to us with different backgrounds and in varying states of health, and we work hard to provide each one with the assistance they need.

Our open-door policy means that many animals come to us because there is nowhere else for them to turn, or they have experienced serious neglect and trauma, which has lifelong implications for their wellbeing.

Animal welfare is challenging work, and euthanasia is a difficult and confronting reality that we face. However, no matter how difficult, we are committed to making decisions for our animals that prioritise, more than anything else, their chance of having a life worth living.



## Animal Outcome

	Dogs	Cats	Horse	Livestock	Wildlife	Other*	Total
Reclaimed	2304	583	13	10	0	138	3048
Rehomed	2205	7451	30	277	0	929	10892
Wildlife Released	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Still In Care	742	936	76	36	16	131	1937
Transferred <sup>^</sup>	467	250	9	32	170	38	966
Euthanased <sup>◇</sup>	1156	3913	36	900	378	630	7013
Died In Care	22	251	1	14	23	74	385
Other <sup>~</sup>	4	15	0	0	1	7	27

## Reason for Euthanasia

Euthanasia Reason	Canines	Felines	Horse	Livestock	Wildlife	Other	Total
Behavioural	872	723	6	162	0	111	1874
Fractious Feline	0	1234	0	0	0	0	1234
Infectious	5	494	0	8	14	9	530
Medical	213	1025	30	75	364	191	1898
Legal <sup>†</sup>	64	0	0	0	0	305	369
Organisational <sup>‡</sup>	2	437	0	655	0	14	1108
TOTAL	1156	3913	36	900	378	630	7013

\* Refers to pocket pets (rodents, guinea pigs, ferrets,rabbits), birds and non-native animals

<sup>^</sup> Includes animals transferred to rescue groups and other RSPCA states

<sup>~</sup> Includes stolen, escaped and released-to-habitat animals

<sup>◇</sup> Includes animals from RSPCA-operated council facilities

<sup>†</sup> Refers to animals deemed dangerous or menacing by local council or otherwise ordered by the council

<sup>‡</sup> Refers to unweaned or animals too young to survive without their mother. Or where resources (foster carers or physical capacity) is restricted



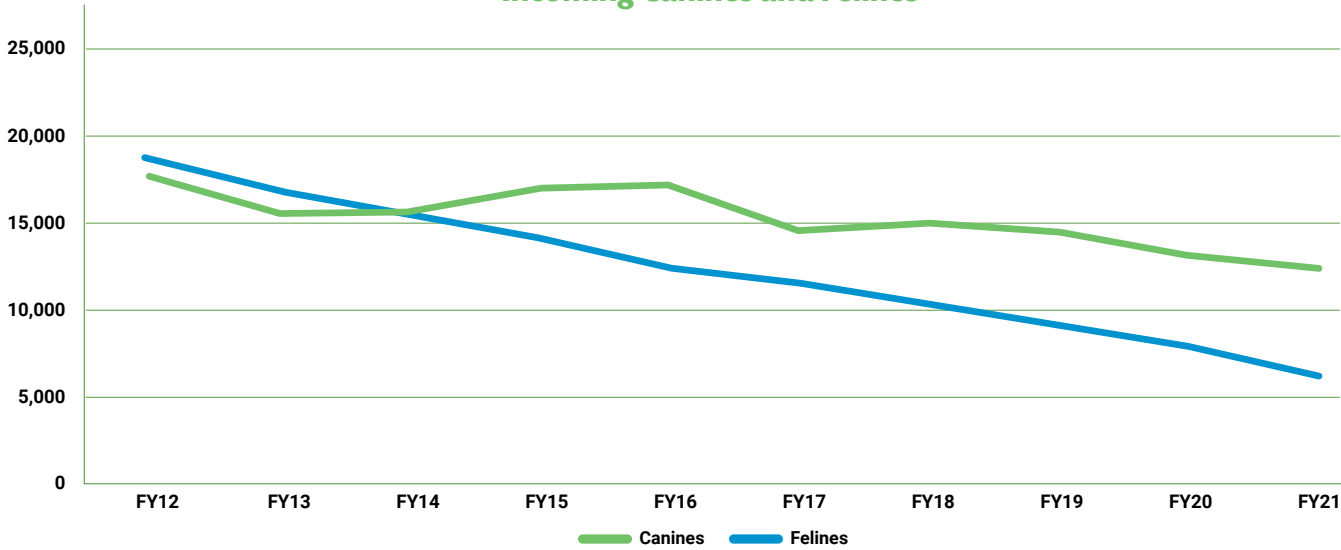
# Incoming animals

These graphs represent the total number of animals that turn to RSPCA NSW for help each and every year, as well as those that we were able to find forever homes for.

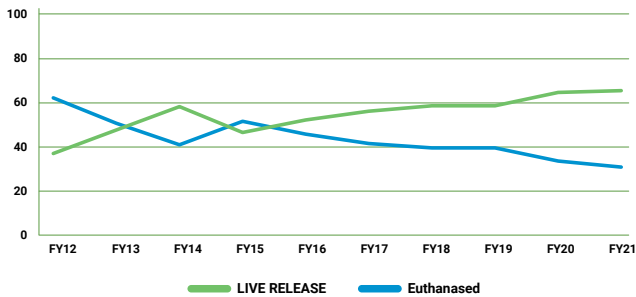
Through our work in veterinary care, rehabilitation and working with rescue partners, we continued to see positive animal welfare outcomes across the board.



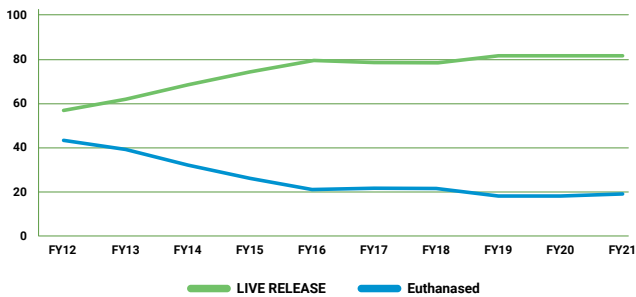
Incoming Canines and Felines



Feline outcomes (%)



Canine outcomes (%)



# We simply can't thank you enough

We hope you've been as inspired as we have by reading through Your Year in Review.

You are the reason for every success story.

Every time an abandoned dog gets adopted into a doting forever home, or an injured kitten receives life-saving medical care, or a frightened wild animal is rescued from a dangerous situation—that's your support in action.

Because of you, vulnerable animals can be protected, cared for, and placed in loving homes every day.

Your generosity achieves tangible, life-changing impact for hearts, homes, and tails all over New South Wales.

## Thank you!



**Thank you**  
for walking with us  
every step of the  
way this year!

