

**Submission
No 5**

INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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I live in rural Northern NSW and have been involved in rescue for many years, even running one myself, for 6 years. The main and most important change I believe, is that ALL animals by law, be desexed. The govt could impose fines, if they want to create funds, which could benefit animal welfare directly. Ideally animal birth would slow and over time stop unwanted/unplanned pregnancies and so many less animals going to pounds. To purchase/adopt/own any animal should require a license.

It could be free, or again charge a fee, to generate income, for direct use in animal welfare. Breeders of any kind should have to jump through many hoops to be able to obtain a license. The RSPCA or even a complete separate group should be visiting these people after complaints and have actual power to remove the animals. So many times I have reported an animal in distress and heard the following - The RSPCA cannot do anything, contact the Ranger. The Ranger cannot do anything, contact the Police. And so on and on, in a circle of referral where no one has any power. The RSCPA are a disgrace and have become just a business to make money. Currently they are trying to close a shelter in the Blue Mountains - whose land was gifted to them, by locals raising funds to create a pound there in the first place!

The govt could create a new Animal Police Force - we then have more job creation and better welfare for animals immediately. Many pounds do not even look for rescues, they just put animals to sleep. I have seen many times an animal has an offer from rescue to save, but has been put to sleep anyway. I only have anecdotal evidence of this, but have a look on most pound facebook pages (where local individuals create pages in the hopes to help these animals - these people are not pound staff and do this for the love of animals and the hope they can save as many as they can.)

Temperament testing needs to be much fairer. So many animals do not cope well in pounds and are easily labelled "dangerous" because they are terrified out of their minds.

There needs to be more full time, paid staff at these facilities to spend decent time training these dogs. So many rescue dogs are advertised as - must be only dog. This is because they haven't been socialised. Time needs to be spent with them to ensure they have human contact and become adoptable animals. I know some rescue groups take volunteers who are unemployed and they receive points from Centrelink for working in voluntary positions. This needs to be shouted from the roof tops. Perhaps also fostering an animal could also come under this system as so many animals cannot be saved as rescue groups have so few carers.

Above I have mostly had dogs in mind, although most is applicable to cats too. However the issue of feral cats, is a completely different problem. I know many countries use TNR but I don't think this is a good solution for Australia. We have so many endangered species, that need now more than ever, to be given every assistance available to help save them. Whilst I love cats, I believe if they cannot be kept indoors or the owner has a catio/enclosure provided, then owners should not get a license.

I also believe that we need to make a radical move to stop the current problem. Any feral cat should be euthanised. For example, I have a neighbour who has maybe 12 cats. I live in the middle of Crown Land, some 2 or 300 acres. Her cats roam. I have never seen an adult cat. They are all small and I doubt even get to a year old, but there are always the same number of them. I have reported this to the RSPCA, all they asked was if the cats were getting fed. If there were licenses, this couldn't happen. I see them running around and of course in the day time they are mostly safe themselves, but what are they catching for food or just sport? There are foxes in the Crown Land and at night the cats become prey, not predator. These enclosure rules protect cats who are beloved pets whilst saving our wildlife at the same time.

Thank you for reading my submission and I hope many points/ideas have been useful. I do believe there is a way to generate income as a council to directly impact animal welfare and maybe even create jobs as Animal Police Officers.

Michelle Jackson