

**Submission
No 95**

INQUIRY INTO POUNDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Ms Carmen Terceiro

Date Received: 18 August 2023

I am concerned that some local councils in the Sydney metropolitan area that service relatively affluent local government areas do not have dedicated animal impoundment facilities while less wealthy councils appear to do the heavy lifting. Why does my own Council of Hornsby not have a dedicated pound while Councils including Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Campbelltown do? How is it that Blacktown Council was able to spend tens of millions of dollars to build the Blacktown Animal Rehoming Centre while Hornsby has no pound at all?

I would like the state government to provide more funds towards establishment and enhancement of existing impoundment facilities across the entire state, to ensure that perfectly healthy animals are not euthanised for purely economic reasons.

I would like the state government to establish an independent statutory Animal Welfare Agency staffed by professional and suitably qualified staff that will administer, regulate and oversee impoundment facilities across the state that meet hygiene and welfare standards set by veterinarians, veterinary nurses, animal behaviourists and related experts.

I would like impoundment facilities to have educational units that proactively teach the public about humane treatment of companion animals and responsible pet ownership that includes desexing, immunising and registering their animals.

I would like to see impoundment facilities provide means-tested veterinary services to pet owners unable to pay for them. The Veticare model negotiated between the Animal Justice Party and the Victorian government before the 2022 Victorian election provides an achievable model of subsidised veterinary services that could address the issue of unsustainable numbers of abandoned and surrendered animals by making desexing more affordable.

I would like an independent statutory Animal Welfare Agency establish a rigorous but fair regulatory system for breeders of companion animals that will ensure that more minimum standards of welfare, veterinary and hygiene are met.

I would like to see legislative restrictions on the sale of companion animals, for example banning sales via channels such as Gumtree or the sale of companion animals in pet shops. Instead, I would like to see a system by which only persons or organisations authorised by a statutory Animal Welfare Agency would be liable to sell or reassign ownership of companion animals.

Companion animals are sentient animals that feel pain, fear, loneliness, hunger, thirst, boredom, distress, and suffer in extreme heat or cold. This must be recognised in law so that they are treated in a humane and responsible manner in impoundment facilities. Companion animals have been our friends and allies for millennia, in times of peace, war—and during pandemics. We must remember this and not allow them to be discarded as mere chattels. As well as this moral imperative, the proactive animal welfare practices described above will reduce the number of abandoned animals and, ultimately, the cost of managing them. If the Netherlands could achieve this, so can we.