

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 3a

**INQUIRY INTO 2025 INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION OF  
THE APPROVED CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS UNDER  
THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979**

**Name:** Ms Louise Webb

**Date Received:** 21 October 2025

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## **2025 Inquiry into the operation of the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979**

### **Submission**

I make this supplementary submission to the inquiry as I wish to call to the attention of the committee a matter of great concern: RSPCA NSW's investigation of a complaint made regarding an incident at the Moruya Rodeo on 1 January this year.

During the rodeo, a horse fell heavily to the ground multiple times. The video of this incident was made public on Animal Liberation's Facebook page, and a complaint was made to RSPCA NSW. I sought information about the outcome of that complaint via the Government Information Public Access (GIPA) process. I have attached a copy of all the documents I received as a result of my GIPA application.

They reveal:

- 1) The horse did not receive veterinary attention at that time or subsequently, to establish that it had not been injured during the falls.
- 2) The senior inspector in charge of the investigation did not issue a fine or undertake a prosecution, but she did say, in correspondence with the Rodeo Association of Moruya:

***“ ... it is advisable that if such a situation occurs in any future rodeos, the best course of action would be to have your veterinarian assess the animal.”***

- 3) When the horse was actually looked at by an RSPCA inspector, some six weeks after the incident, it was described as being “in good body condition”. Photos of the animal, however, show a lumpy rash on its back and sides. There is no indication in the documents released under GIPA that the inspector made any note of this or enquired as to whether a veterinarian had been consulted in relation to it.

The following are, I believe, important and relevant points concerning RSPCA's handling of this matter:

- At the 1 January 2023 Moruya Rodeo, a steer was so distressed in the chute that it thrashed about and almost tore off one of its horns. The horn could be seen in video footage to be hanging loosely from the side of its head. RSPCA NSW went on to issue two \$500 fines in relation to the failure to provide any veterinary care to that animal until some days afterward. Such information is recorded by

RSPCA and should have been known to Senior Inspector McMillan when she investigated this further incident. In that case, with a recent and serious incident associated with the same rodeo, it would seem to be much more appropriate for RSPCA to have recorded an offence in relation to the horse, rather than simply require the attendance of a vet should such an incident occur again.

- In email correspondence released under GIPA, the president of the RAM, Andy Mehl, repeatedly claims that the horse was uninjured, and this view was shared by the rodeo's "welfare officer". However, they were not qualified to make this judgement, as clearly indicated in the attached letter from Sentient\*. President of Sentient, Dr Rosemary Elliott, states in the letter:

***"It is horrifying that the horse in this situation received no veterinary attention at all, despite enduring a number of very hard falls."***

- Again, the RAM has been conducting rodeos for several years. In such circumstances, it surely is reasonable to expect that someone titled "welfare officer" can judge when an animal should be seen by a vet. Yet RSPCA's inspector let this failure to do so pass with nothing but a recommendation to do things differently in the future.
- When the animal was actually looked at by an RSPCA inspector, on 13 February, no mention at all is made in the notes obtained via GIPA that the inspector inquired about the obvious multiple lumps on the horse's sides (seen very clearly in photos released under GIPA). Surely questions should have been asked about whether a vet had assessed the condition and what treatment was given, if needed.

In my view, RSPCA's handling of this incident was seriously lacking, and I hope the committee will make further inquiries about the basis of the decisions that were taken by RSPCA's inspectors.

Thank you.

Louise Webb

21 October 2025

*\*Dr Elliott wrote to Eurobodalla Shire Council because it is council-managed land on which the Moruya Rodeo is held, under a five-year licence.*