

Submission  
No 20

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 30 October 2025

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Partially  
Confidential

## Introduction

My submission consists of four sections, each dealing with one aspect of RSPCA NSW's operations which I think are worthy of further investigation by the committee. The information provided may alert committee members to some existing problems if they aren't already aware of them. It should at least provide information as to where to go should they wish to follow up any of the issues raised.

While I have considered one aspect of AWL NSW's performance in one section of my submission, the great majority of the submission relates to the performance of RSPCA NSW. This is simply because I consider the performance of that organisation to be seriously deficient while being the ACO which receives the vast majority of government grant assistance.

While only one section of my submission addresses issues relating to the inspectorate, all of the submission relates to the honesty and integrity of RSPCA NSW. Its performance in regard to the animals it claims to protect will be questioned as well as its performance as an employer.

### 1. The current state of RSPCA NSW - is there need for panic?

Following in italic typeface are excerpts from an email from RSPCA NSW CEO Steve Coleman to supporters sent just before the end of last financial year. My remarks below are obviously written tongue-in-cheek in keeping with the absurdity of the email. However, the information provided is both serious and accurate. It can be readily checked from publicly available sources (shown in parentheses).

#### ***URGENT DONATE URGENTLY***

*Hi (first name of recipient),*

*There are over 1,000 vulnerable companion animals in our care across NSW right now. That number is likely to grow, and it's keeping me awake at night.*

It was sad to learn of Mr Coleman's sleep problems. Certainly over the years many have questioned how he manages to sleep at night. However, I think we can put his mind to rest.

Firstly, are the number of animals in RSPCA NSW's care actually growing? It seems not. Mr Coleman certainly shouldn't lose any sleep on that account. In fact there has been a dramatic decline in cat and dog intakes under his watch. As the table below shows RSPCA NSW is taking in only 20% of the number of dogs it did in 2007/8 and 35% of the number of cats. No doubt the figures for the last financial year when available will show further declines.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dog Intake</b>	<b>Cat Intake</b>
2007/8	22,676	19,871
2023/24	4,554	7,007

Derived from RSPCA National Statistics 2023/24 and National Statistics Archive - <https://www.rspca.org.au/about/annual-statistics>

Dog and cat intakes had in fact been increasing until Mr Coleman took over as CEO in 2007. However, in the year beginning 2008 the decline began and has followed a steady downward pattern ever since.

So fear not Mr Coleman, that number is not likely to grow with you at the helm and should not be the cause of any more sleepless nights.

In the same email from Mr Coleman he bemoans the cost of caring for these needy animals which he claims are now staying longer. He says

*Every day they wait, the costs for their care add up.*

One of those costs would be food for the dogs and cats, but Royal Canin supplies and delivers food for free as well as sponsoring a fund-raising drive for the charity. Pet Barn also helps ease the burden by running a rehoming service for RSPCA while giving them the full adoption fee ranging from \$620 for a puppy to \$270 for a kitten. (See <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/adoption-or-foster/adoption-process/adoption-fees/>) On the 10 year anniversary of the partnership in 2022 RSPCA's own Media Office wrote:

"With the first RSPCA adoptions in Petbarn stores taking place in NSW in 2012, the partnership has grown to include 125 in-store Petbarn adoption centres across the country, which altogether have seen over 47,198 dogs, cats, puppies, kittens and rabbits rehomed over the past 10 years." (See <https://www.rspca.org.au/latest-news/media-centre/47198-lives-changed-and-counting-thanks-petbarn/>)

While Petbarn adoption centres have grown, RSPCA NSW shelters and adoption centres have decreased. Past records show that in 2013 it had 12. Today it lists 4 on its website. (See <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/support-services/locations-and-services/shelters-and-adoption-centres/>)

While Pet Barn's efforts represent a significant burden lifted from RSPCA NSW's shoulders, there are another couple of factors that are perhaps more significant which are easing the strain on the charity. The first is the shift to the use of foster carers which wasn't a practice of the charity in earlier years. This is undoubtedly a positive move for the animals involved but, as the foster carers are all volunteers, they considerably reduce the charity's wages bill. Also RSPCA NSW is now allowing the small rescue groups to rescue animals from RSPCA shelters. All these changes should be taking the strain off the RSPCA NSW both in space and financial terms.

However, these factors which have reduced the costs born by RSPCA NSW do not seem to have eased Mr Coleman's mind. It would seem his overwhelming concern for the welfare of the animals is clouding his judgment. Ever concerned about his ability to meet their needs he says:

*And every day they wait, the costs for their care add up.*

He concludes his email:

*(First name of recipient), innocent animals are counting on kind people like you to help provide the loving care and forever homes they desperately need.*

Supporters receive many similar desperate emails from Mr Coleman throughout the year. However, again it would seem he need not stress. The financial situation of RSPCA NSW is, in fact, very healthy.

The latest Financial Statement for the period ending June 2025 reveals that supporters were indeed very generous. RSPCA NSW received \$8,649,000 in donations and \$32,163,000 in legacies, both figures up from the previous year, as well as \$17,436,000 in government grants and \$485,000 in non-government and other grants. The charity made \$7,776,000 from investment activities and its financial assets (shares and other investments) are worth \$42,886,000. It has another \$7,143,000 in the bank. (See *RSPCA NSW, General Purpose - Financial Statements, 30 June 2025* - <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/RSPCA-NSW-Financials-2025.pdf>)

The always entrepreneurial RSPCA NSW is revealed in, the financial statements to have engaged in a new business venture: RSPCA NSW Software Pty Ltd with the principal activity described as “Commercialisation of Software”. No more details are provided but it has an ABN and is listed with the ACNC. Hopefully it will will prove another big money spinner for the charity and allow Mr Coleman to get a bit of sleep.

RSPCA NSW’s ability to bring in the cash is very much dependent on its reputation. As their website says “RSPCA NSW is a household name in animal welfare, with 85% brand awareness and a reputation as the leading voice for animals in need. We have been voted the number one cause Australians support in 2022, 2023, and 2024.” (See <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/ways-to-give/corporate-support/sponsors-and-partnerships/> ) That reputation ensures money flows to the charity from an animal-loving public, corporate sponsors as well as governments trusting that their grant money is in good hands.

The charity’s reputation is a tribute to its promotional activities. Over the last two years RSPCA NSW has spent \$12,838,000 on its various fund-raising/promotional campaigns. Its animal related expenses actually came to slightly less than that at \$12,527,000. It takes money to make money, as they say.

I think we can conclude that RSPCA NSW is financially secure and, if it pursues its current strategy of reducing the numbers of animals that it physically has to deal with and concentrates on the fee-for-service animal-focused educational programmes it is currently running, along with its sponsorships, several business and investment activities, it will no doubt continue to be a very successful business, eh charity, into the future.

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## **2. Euthanasia rates, an indication of the performance of the ACOs**

The focus of the two animal welfare charities under discussion is, or is meant to be, prevention of cruelty to and improving the lives of animals through rehabilitation and rehoming. The prevention of cruelty aspect has been dealt with later in this submission. The other aspect, improving lives so that rehoming can take place will be discussed here. A good indication of how well animal welfare charities are doing in this regard is their euthanasia rate. No rehabilitation or rehoming is necessary for a dead animal and the workload and costs encountered by that organisation can be reduced if animals are euthanised. Note that I am adhering to convention by using the term “euthanasia” which is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “the act or practice of killing or permitting the death

of hopelessly sick or injured individuals (such as persons or domestic animals) in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy”. In the brief discussion that follows it should become clear that in a lot of cases “euthanasia” is a euphemism and some of the figures I will reproduce below give some indication of that.

The latest available figures for both ACOs appear in each charity’s Annual Reports for 2023/24. Unfortunately different reporting methods are used and AWL NSW’s figures lack sufficient detail to allow a detailed comparison of how the two organisations fared in relation to euthanasia of animals coming into their care.

Neither organisation have had a good euthanasia record in the past. Both killed a lot of animals but RSPCA NSW has over the years killed more of the animals they received at their shelters than has AWL NSW. The euthanasia rate for RSPCA NSW began to fall only after they reduced animal intakes, i.e. around 2008, but even after that time was still high and seems to be on the rise again. 2019/20 was a fairly good year RSPCA NSW’s euthanasia rate. That year they euthanased 20% of dogs coming into its shelters while AWL NSW euthanased 9% of dogs. (See Animal Welfare League NSW, Annual Report, 2019/20 - [https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AWL\\_NSW\\_AnnualReport20\\_28pp\\_proof7.pdf](https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AWL_NSW_AnnualReport20_28pp_proof7.pdf) [RSPCA NSW Annual Report, 2019/20 - https://www.rspca.org.au/sites/default/files/RSPCA%20Australia%20Annual%20Statistics%202019-2020.pdf](https://www.rspca.org.au/sites/default/files/RSPCA%20Australia%20Annual%20Statistics%202019-2020.pdf) )

The euthanasia rate for RSPCA NSW since then and has increased despite their animal intake continuing to decrease. Whereas the euthanasia rate for AWL NSW has continued to decrease over that period.

RSPCA NSW in its most recent 2023/24 Annual Report records an overall euthanasia rate of 34%, i.e. they killed one third of all the animals coming into their care. (See RSPCA NSW Annual Report 2023/24 - <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RSPCA-NSW-Annual-Report-2024.pdf> ) AWL NSW on the other hand claim in its 2023/24 Annual Report. “Our euthanasia rate is one the lowest on record at below 1.5% with 92% for critical quality of life medical reasons.” It reported only 6 animals euthanised for behavioural reasons. (See <https://www.awlnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Animal-Welfare-League-NSW-2024-Annual-Report.pdf> )

RSPCA NSW report that the great majority of animals were euthanised for either behavioural or medical reasons. 1,370 animals were euthanised by RSPCA NSW in the 2023/24 year for behavioural reasons and 1,631 for medical reasons. (See RSPCA NSW Annual Report 2023/24, op cit)

Medical reasons for euthanasia, if genuine, are less controversial. However, that is not so for the ‘behavioural reasons’ category. The behaviour assessment test (alternatively called the temperament test) used by RSPCA NSW has had much written about it and is viewed negatively by many dog behaviourists in particular. One way of assessing the credibility of RSPCA’s published results is to compare the percentages of animals killed for behavioural reasons by the various RSPCA state branches. For example, comparing the figures provided by RSPCA Australia for 2023/24 for each state: in NSW 75% of its euthanised dogs were killed reportedly for behavioural reasons; in Western Australia, that figure was 42%; in South Australia 53%; and in Victoria 58%. If we were to take those figures at face value it would seem that New South Wales has a lot of very badly behaved dogs. (See RSPCA National Statistics, 2023/24, p. 6 - <https://rspca.sfo2.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/public/Uploads/annual-statistics/RSPCA-Australia-Annual-Statistics-2023-2024.pdf> )

With regard to the overall euthanasia rate, as mentioned above, RSPCA NSW reported a euthanasia rate of 34% for all animals coming into its care in the 2023/24 period (op cit). By way of comparison, the small rescue groups usually have a euthanasia rate of 1% or lower. If AWL NSW's claims of a euthanasia rate of below 1.5% is accurate, then there is a huge gap between theirs and that of RSPCA NSW and they appear to be making genuine efforts to significantly reduce their euthanasia rate. The opposite seems to be true for RSPCA NSW.

It should be noted that while RSPCA NSW are reducing the number of shelters they operate and the number of animals received into them, as discussed above, AWL NSW would seem to be expanding. They say they plan to double their capacity with the new Precinct for Animal Welfare (PAW) at West Hoxton. This facility they claim will be "purpose-built for inspectorate animals, offer domestic violence respite, and support the rehoming of research animals." (See AWL NSW, Annual Report 2023/24, op cit.) The same charity also operates an Animal Care Truck which provides veterinary services to regional towns and cities across NSW. Last year the service provided 2,620 Animal Health Checks, 2,201 Vaccinations and 1,114 Microchips travelling over 18,000 ks visiting regional towns and cities. (See AWL NSW, Annual Report 2023/24, op cit.) RSPCA NSW does not operate a similar service.

Judged by their willingness to increase facilities in order to improve outcomes for animals and importantly the actual recorded outcomes discussed above, AWL NSW would appear to be going rapidly forwards. On the other hand RSPCA NSW appear to be going rapidly backwards.

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### **3. Staff/Volunteer Reviews of RSPCA NSW**

I have never worked for nor volunteered with RSPCA. However, several friends and acquaintances have and have given me devastatingly bad reports mainly relating to the working environment in the Yagoona office and the unnecessary 'euthanasia' of animals, the latter causing one friend to resign and seek psychological counselling for PTSD. Over two different periods I went on-line to find staff reviews of the charity to see how they tallied with the experiences reported to me.

The Portfolio Committee has questioned RSPCA NSW Management in the past about poor management practices and working relationships. The responses from RSPCA NSW management were less than forthcoming. The best analogy might be trying to get blood out of a stone. The reviews copied below may help to fill out that picture and the Committee may wish to do their own research using such sites. They are simply copied unedited off the websites and are, for the most part pretty damning.

If one was to condense responses into a two point summary: respondents reported the good points being working with animals and the bad points being working under RSPCA NSW management.

The following are staff/volunteer reviews of RSPCA NSW from job search sites as at 17 August, 2020 and 5 October 2025. Note the sites record comments from various past years.

**Reviews of RSPCA NSW displayed on Seek.com as at 17 August 2020 at**  
[https://www.seek.com.au/companies/rspca-new-south-wales-796756/reviews?  
mode=sentiment\\_reviews&sentiment\\_name=workload&sentiment\\_type=positive](https://www.seek.com.au/companies/rspca-new-south-wales-796756/reviews?mode=sentiment_reviews&sentiment_name=workload&sentiment_type=positive)

Fundraiser, Yagoona, NSW, March 2020

“Working towards a great cause feels good, but management makes it difficult to stay there.”

The good things: The animals are wonderful, and to know you get to help innocent creatures is amazing. The cause is great and we need more and more places and people who care about animals who can't speak for themselves.

The challenges: The management and communication between departments is something that be greatly worked on. It is the management that makes this place difficult to work for.

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Veterinary Nurse,  
Ruitherford, NSW, Nov. 2019

Great people to work with but zero respect, zero opportunity for development and zero interest in improving the facility in any way by management.

The good things: Staff are friendly and genuinely care for animals.

The challenges: Management has no interest in anything staff have to say and no interest in improving the terrible conditions and archaic methods of running the shelter.

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Animal Assistant,  
Newcastle, NSW, Nov. 2019

OK at first but changed very quickly.

The good things: Not a lot. One good thing is seeing the animals leave.

The challenges: Many stress unfair decisions, employees thoughts, ideas not considered.

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Management.  
Assistant,  
NSW, Sept. 2019

High expectations with little reward.

The good things: The interaction with staff.

The challenges: Constant criticism with little recognition.

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Veterinary,  
NSW, June 2019

Fulfilling, growth, camaraderie

The good things: Welfare work. Opportunity to help vulnerable, voiceless animals. Most people there really care about the animals, especially the workers at the front line/coal face. Working as a team. Most people are really kind hearted and love the animals to the best of their ability. Innovation and progressive.

The challenges: The board do not value or respect the staff especially the vet clinic. Senior management are reactive rather than proactive. Too top heavy. Emotional toll of caring and staff burnout. Poor rate of remuneration.

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Administration Role,  
Yagoona, NSW, May 2019

There for the animals.

The good things: Making a difference for animals.

The challenges: The CEO has been there too long and has little/no experience outside.

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Working with animals,  
NSW, February 2018

Eye opening.

The good things: Working for a company that has a goal to help animals in need.

The challenges: Lack of training for staff, no internal promotions, hiring external parties over internal, lack of communication.

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Donations,  
Yagoona, NSW, February 2018

An eye opening, learning experience.

The good things: Working for a reason. Knowing the ins and outs of a charity. Seeing animals go from horrible to amazing.

The challenges: Poor management skills. No career opportunities. Management seem to be in a mind set of don't improve a system until it stops working. Reasons seem to get lost behind making money.

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Animal Attendant,  
Rutherford, NSW, Feb. 2018:

Good if you are a robot bad if you have human emotions.

The good things: If you stick your head down and do the job it's fine.

The challenges: Management is one sided and don't tell anyone what is going on, they spend more time in meetings than managing their employees.

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Animal attendant,  
Yagoona, NSW, December 2017.

Your average day is hard by comparison. If you want to work extra or go beyond your duties, it will burn you out quickly.

The good things: Work with animals and improve on their lives.

The challenges: High volume of work. Lack of resources.

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Animal Care Assistant,  
Yagoona, NSW, November 2017

Badly run, too many chiefs, not enough communication

The good things: The animals are well taken care of. No welfare issues at all.

The challenges: Too many casual/young/inexperienced staff. Having supervisors, teams leaders, then managers is overkill since nothing gets done either way. I'm highly experienced having done this role in a supervisory position yet I was treated like a casual and my experience was not taken advantage of.

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Clinic Animal Attendant,  
Yagoona, NSW, October 2017

Emotionally draining with no work family balance.

The good things: Great co-workers and the reward of helping animals.

The challenges: Management shortsighted views.

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Administration Assistant,  
Yagoona, NSW, October 2017

Loved it but management has a lot to answer for.

The good things: People are nice but too many chiefs.

The challenges: Trying to get managers to listen.

Accountant,  
Yagoona, NSW, September 2017

Pleasant.

The good things: Relaxed environment. No corporate red tape.

The challenges: Old school systems. Change management.

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Volunteer,  
Central Coast, NSW, Feb. 2016

Challenging but very rewarding work.

The good things: Rewarding, fun, eye opening and empowering.

The challenges: Management, hours and availability.

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### **Reviews of RSPCA NSW displayed on Indeed.com as at 17 August 2020**

<https://au.indeed.com/cmp/Rspca/reviews>

If you work here you will burn out and hate the RSPCA

Animal Attendant (Current Employee) - Australia - 11 January 2020

This was initially my dream job and I had wanted this job since I was 7yrs old but it quickly turned into a nightmare.

Bullying and exclusion was done from day one from all levels - colleagues, team leaders and managers.

When I raised that I was being bullied and had health issues they cut my shifts from 4 a week to 2 a week. They expect you to stay back 10 minutes to 1 hour without extra enumeration.

They will put you on a casual contract and only offer full time to a select few.

There is a lot of office politics. If you're not a managers favourite expect to get very few shifts. If you speak out against bullying expect to be gradually removed.

You will see at least one coworker crying per shift due to the shelter practice and the high euthanization rates (approximately 20-50 animals on average are put down per week, contrary to what they say they appear to euthanize for space). Despite saying that they only kill and euthanize for behavioral issues this is not truly the case and animals are euthanized regularly for very inconsequential reasons (animals euthanized when they have not been in the shelter's care for longer than a week) and if they aren't the favourites of management staff who make these decisions.

The managers have little to no management skills and do not know how to explain or delegate tasks. Then they will blame you.

They will expect you to do all the menial jobs and cleaning gutters full of poo that havent been cleaned in months for at least your first 3 months.

I wish I did not have to say all these bad things and could say that it is a great company but I am walking away from the company feeling sick of their horrible nature, mentally in a bad state, less confident in myself due to the bullying and disillusioned and disgusted by their bullying, bad practice and high rates of euthanization for arbitrary reasons.

If I could give working there 0 stars, I would. -

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Horrible place to work - very poor culture

Animal Attendant (Current Employee) - Australia - 7 December 2019

Bullying, exclusion and disrespect is the norm. Very poor culture, with very poor management on most levels.

Putting animals down is very very common.

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Wish I'd never worked there.

Veterinary Nurse Assistant (Former Employee) - Brisbane QLD - 18 May 2016

I worked at RSPCA Australia for some time. In that time I found the staff to be very rude, unhelpful, bullying and generally making it really hard for me to do my job. 97% of animals brought into the RSPCA were euthanised and most weren't done humanely. The press that you see is on TV is hugely exaggerated to get donations but the reality and behind the scenes is very much different. The staff you see on the TV are using their 'press' and 'TV' persona. I got mental health issues, compassion fatigue and PTSD due to the job and when I told the manager I was threatened with losing my job so in the end I voluntarily left. The job was hard enough without the staff making it even harder.

Pros

I got to make some animals better.

Cons

Bullying, long hours, exhausting, a lot of euthanising.

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### **Reviews of RSPCA NSW displayed on Glassdoor.com as at 17 August 2020**

<https://www.glassdoor.com.au/Reviews/Royal-Society-for-the-Prevention-of-Cruelty-to-Animals-Australia-Reviews-E1171770.htm>

Former Contractor, Animal Care Assistant, 19 April 2020

“Bullying is the norm”

Doesn't recommend. Negative outlook.

Pros: Being around dogs and kittens. Cons: Bullying is extremely common among all levels. Many employees cry due to the bullying culture. Management is unsympathetic and will blame anyone who speaks up against the bullying. My mental health was significantly affected and detrimental because of working there.

Advice to Management: Please address bullying.

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Former Employee, Sydney, 27 February, 2018

“Great cause, great employees, poor leadership of CEO NSW”

Neutral outlook. Disapproves of CEO.

I worked at Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia full-time for more than 3 years

Pros: Amazing cause however like the other reviewer I am finding it difficult to write 20 positive words. Would never recommend. This organisation as a place to work

Cons: Bullying, favouritism from CEO who has no leadership skills and low in relation to ethical behaviour. just wants to pass the buck and blame everyone else. I'm surprised that the board are not asking more questions.

8 November 2016

“Bully central”

Negative outlook. Disapproves of CEO.

I worked at Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia

Pros

Get to see puppies and some people are nice. Its embarrassing that i'm struggling to fill the 20 word minimum for 'Pros'.

Cons

This is for the RSPCA NSW specific office. The worst place I have ever worked. Countless cases of malicious behaviour and bullying with nothing getting done by HR or management. Submitted multiple anonymous complaints about my manager and then was confronted by her about the complaints. Lots of gossip. They will change your job role to try and get rid of you. Never given an ounce of positive feedback. One manager bullied out 7 people in under 2 years and nothing has been done. No concern for the animals just about making money. CEO does nothing when complaints are sent to him except send them on to other people in the organisation (even if you are writing to complain about said person).

Advice to Management: Sort your management out. Hire skilled employees not those who have just been there the longest. Employ those who will bring a positive nature to the office.

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Former employee, animal attendant at Yagoona, 1 August 2016

“They have a long way to go (ex animal attendant)”

Doesn't recommend. Neutral outlook. Disapproves of CEO

I worked at Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia full-time for more than a year

Pros: Caring for the animals, foster care system, I really can not think of anything else

Cons: It ts very emotionally draining. Animals were deemed unadoptable for the most pathetic reasons, and put into the "too hard basket" It came to a point where we weren't animal attendants, we were just kennel cleaners, because we had absolutely no say or chance in changing managements perspective on what they chose to put to sleep. Dogs were highly medicated with anti anxiety pills instead of having their behaviour managed, and then failed on behaviour assessments because they couldn't cope after months of being in a kennel. They should have gone to foster care. The foster care network is so important, yet at that stage it wasnt highly used. How can you assess an animal for how they would deal in a household when its been living in a kennel for close to 24 hours a day, averaging close to a month, with 15 or so other animals stressing right next to them? I was diagnosed with PTSD after leaving. I have worked in animal rescue , pounds and shelters before and nothing was as bad as this.

Advice to Management: Support your animal attendants, use the networks you have, re think your behaviour assessments.

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1 August 2016

RSPCA NSW

Not recommended. Negative outlook.

I worked at Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia

Pros: The animals The work is rewarding in itself, though very emotionally demanding Get to meet some kind-hearted people. No 2 days are the same

Cons: RSPCA NSW is the most negligent company I've ever worked for, in regards to looking after staff welfare. They expect so much of their staff, which includes killing animals or holding animals

while they die, and offer very little support or appreciation in return. They operate much more like a business than a not-for-profit.

Advice to Management: Their management needs to listen more closely to their staff.

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**Reviews of RSPCA NSW displayed on Seek.com as at 5 October 2025. Note none are recent.**

[https://www.seek.com.au/companies/rspca-new-south-wales-796756/reviews?mode=sentiment\\_reviews&sentiment\\_name=workload&sentiment\\_type=positive](https://www.seek.com.au/companies/rspca-new-south-wales-796756/reviews?mode=sentiment_reviews&sentiment_name=workload&sentiment_type=positive)

3.0

Administration Assistant

Oct 2017

Loved it but management has a lot to answer for

The good things People are nice but too many chiefs

The challenges Trying to get managers to listen

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4.0

Accountant

Sep 2017

1 to 2 years in the role, current employee

Pleasant

The good things relaxed environment. no corporate red tape

The challenges old school systems. change management

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5.0

Animal Attendant

Mar 2017

Very grateful to have been part of the company

The good things Team work and support

The challenges Working outdoors in challenging weather

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4.0

Volunteer

Feb 2016

5 to 6 years in the role, current employee

Challenging but very rewarding work.

The good things Rewarding, fun, eye opening and empowering.

The challenges Management, hours and availability

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5.0

Volunteer office assistant,

Oct 2015

Great to be surrounded by warm hearts.

The good things Feel relax with animal at office

The challenges Dealing with animal.

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5.0

animal attendant

Oct 2015

Less than 1 year in the role, former employee

the best job I've had

The good thingsvery supportive team members, and you work with animals every day

The challenges can get very busy and overcrowded

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4.0

Animal attendant

Sep 2015

1 to 2 years in the role, former employee

great opportunity to work with animals but not good pay

The good thingsgetting the opportunity to work with less fortunate animals and care for them and rehome them. also all the cute puppies and kittens were always a bonus!

The challengesDoing behavior assessments is always challenging as you always want all the animals to pass and go to a forever home but unfortunately that is not always the case.

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4.0

Senior Animal Attendant

Sep 2015

7 to 8 years in the role, current employee

It's not all playing with puppies and cuddling kittens... there is some of that but it's mostly cleaning up after them... its dirty work but very rewarding =)

The good thingsSeeing animals come back from terrible circumstances and go to a great home. Learn a lot about animals

The challengesSeeing animals in terrible condition due to human ignorance, neglect, and abuse.

Working with animals who don't know about public holidays and still require care rain, hail or heat wave. And, of course, euthanasia.

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3.0

Animal attendant and customer care officer

Sep 2015

3 to 4 years in the role, former employee

A great experience with many good days but unfortunately there are many more days that push you to your limit

The good thingsLike minded people, knowledgeable staff, great if you love animals

The challenges Stressful environment, heartbreaking, low pay and long hours

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**Note: Indeed.com and Glassdoor.com currently require users to sign up to see reviews. I didn't and consequently haven't included reviews that are currently on their sites. However, if the Committee chooses to do so, I am sure they will provide useful insights. All three sites will no doubt provide a government committee with whatever information sought from their past and present records.**

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## 4. The Inspectorate

RSPCA NSW receives the vast majority of government funding to operate its inspectorate and it is the RSPCA NSW inspectorate which has generated the vast majority of complaints and controversy.

In the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate Annual Report 2023-24 detailing complaints dealt with by the Inspectorate about the Inspectorate and their outcomes, curiously no complaints were found to be substantiated: (See <https://www.rspcansw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/RSPCA-NSW-Inspectorate-Annual-Report-2023-2024-Amended-Appendix-1-Submitted-22-10-2024-Redacted.pdf> )

This finding is, dare I say, questionable. It is now pretty commonly accepted in animal welfare circles and in advice given in several animal welfare related Facebook pages that if one needs to report a case of animal cruelty or neglect, one should first call the Animal Welfare League NSW, even though AWL is much smaller and it operates in a very limited area compared to RSPCA NSW. This is because RSPCA NSW has a reputation of failing to respond or, if they finally do, only after many phone calls. - in some cases only when it is too late.

Stories of RSPCA NSW's non-attendance abound. Yet the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate Annual Report records for the last financial year "Of the 17,436 complaints received, RSPCA NSW investigated 17,093 complaints (an average of 65.7 jobs per day)." (ibid)

When RSPCA NSW do respond, they will usually fail to prosecute even in clear cases of abuse or neglect. The Inspectorate report only 96 criminal prosecutions during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Prosecution can be a lengthy and expensive exercise which RSPCA seem reluctant to undertake except many claim in cases which have been described as "easy pickings".

So we should treat cautiously the RSPCA NSW claim that there were no substantiated complaints about the inspectorate. However, it would be reasonable to assume that if one had a complaint against the inspectorate, it could be seen as a wasted exercise in making the complaint to the inspectorate, especially in light of its apparent dismissal of the complaints they do receive. So any hard evidence of the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate's performance is scant and only emerges when dramatic cases of RSPCA's failures receive media attention.

I scarcely need mention the recent widely publicised scandal in which RSPCA NSW reportedly told inspectorate staff not to respond to complaints while animals were left to die. The Telegraph claims to have seen RSPCA NSW internal documents showing that cruelty jobs actioned by RSPCA NSW dropped from 1,500 in April and May to fewer than 500 in June. The Telegraph interviewed several people who had made reports to RSPCA NSW. In one case of terrible neglect on a rural property, the person making the report said the RSPCA had failed to turn up on several occasions. The desperate informant said "The RSPCA already know about the situation and have done nothing for weeks and weeks...". However, the RSPCA said they had no record of the complaint and denied there had been an instruction to essentially 'down tools'. Yet an AWL spokesperson said AWL had been inundated with requests for help during this period. Also it just so happened that RSPCA NSW had closed its online reporting function. The evidence mounts. (See E. Pike, Animals 'left to starve in RSPCA standoff', The Daily Telegraph, 5 September, 2025, P. 6)

There is simply too much smoke for there to be no fire. I think RSPCA records and statements by RSPCA NSW management need to be treated with considerable scepticism. The RSPCA whistleblower who reported the instruction to "down tools" said the intention was to leverage more

money from the government. One hopes the government doesn't fall for this disgraceful and incredibly cruel ploy by this supposed animal welfare charity.

In the industrial farming sector where animal abuse can be on an industrial scale RSPCA seem even more reluctant to intervene. One could ask why. Many animal welfare groups have tried desperately to get RSPCA to inspect farming or abattoir operations following reports of terrible animal abuse. Only when these small groups expose themselves to prosecution by infiltrating these establishments, filming the practices and publicly releasing that footage will RSPCA respond. The now infamous case of Wally's Piggery is notable for several reasons. I will reproduce a quotation from one agency investigating cruelty in farming practices, The Farm Transparency Project:

"Hidden cameras installed at the feedlot operated by former pig farmer Wally Perenc, near Yass NSW, have shone new light on the animal cruelty charges mysteriously withdrawn in 2014 by RSPCA NSW, and bolstered calls for the RSPCA to be stripped of its jurisdiction over farm animal cruelty.

The new footage depicts adolescent calves bellowing in anguish as their young horns are ripped off without pain relief, not 100 metres from the now defunct piggery made infamous by 2012 covert footage. Numerous animals are seen suffering from eye infections, respiratory issues and even blindness, while others lie dead or dying.

Speaking to another man helping him, Wally can be heard discussing the older footage and the resulting case against him: "*Here, f\*\*ken greenies come, video everything, showing how... killing pigs, with a hammer... went everywhere, all over the country. Our lawyer say, I just can't help you, I just can't help you... get f\*\*ked you can't help me! ... But then I come to court, fella come, he was the prosecutor... come to me he says Wally, I heard you're in a bit of trouble... I was killing pigs before, and I f\*\*ken bribed them all!*" (See <https://www.farmtransparency.org/facilities/a6de9-wallys-feedlot> )

I believe the bribery investigations were being investigated but to the best of my knowledge there has been no resolution and Wally Perenc is now able to operate a new venture perpetuating animal cruelty on another species under the nose of the RSPCA.

Another incident of mass animal cruelty in an industrial farming operation was that of Lakeside Hens. I will quote the description from the Facebook page of a group, NSW Hen Rescue, which attempted a rescue in the absence of any help from RSPCA or the police:

*"On June 21st 2018 NSW Hen Rescue, Legion DX Sydney and concerned members of the community attended a Lakesland egg farm where **thousands of hens were being starved and dehydrated to death** by farmer Shaun Stone. It had been reported to the authorities 10 days earlier, yet **no action had been taken by the RSPCA**. On the 19th June NSW Hen Rescue received anonymous footage showing the conditions had got worse and we launched a social media pressure campaign alongside Legion DX Sydney. The RSPCA finally attended, but when it became clear **the RSPCA and police were not going to help the suffering hens** many of whom could not stand to get to food or water, we attempted a rescue. Police finally attended, not to assist with the emergency rescue, but to tackle rescuers, knocking dying hens from their arms, whilst **the RSPCA looked on, one inspector (Inspector Genders) clapping with glee.**"*

(See: NSW Hen Rescue Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NSWHenRescue/videos/2124469210914703/> )

Many such cases can be cited. The point to be made here is RSPCA is not doing the job they are being funded to do. The owners of industrial farming operations where huge numbers of animals are subjected to illegal cruelty can feel safe to continue the abuse while RSPCA fails to carry out unannounced spot checks on their own initiative but won't even attend when such abuse is reported to

them - that is of course after that abuse becomes widely publicised. Only then will they make some pretence of performing their job. Needless to say the small animal welfare groups or concerned individuals are left to do the job that RSPCA is meant to be doing. However, in doing so, those involved are then facing prosecution for their interventions and their legal bills can soar into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Something is badly amiss with the policing of animal welfare in New South Wales.

It is probably unnecessary to mention the recent Brumby RSPCA NSW scandal which is now common knowledge and already investigated by a parliamentary committee.. However, it is too significant to ignore in this current enquiry. In investigating allegations of an illegal knackery near Wagga Wagga RSPCA NSW inspectors reported essentially 'nothing to see here' having failed to notice the carcasses of 500 horses on the property they visited 3 times! RSPCA CEO Steve Coleman said inspectors accepted the word of the owner of the illegal knackery. One must pose the question: Is it in the job description of RSPCA inspectors to rely on the word of alleged perpetrators of animal abuse when sent to a job? One can only wonder on whose behalf is RSPCA NSW operating: the animal abusers, particularly those operating a business of some kind, or the animals it purports to protect and for which it receives multi-million dollars every year from a gullible public and the government.

If RSPCA NSW isn't doing their job properly, the only other option is AWL NSW which is Sydney based and tiny by comparison. Rural NSW where animal neglect can be widespread would not be covered. It is a big issue because of the vast number of rural animals that could be being totally overlooked.

An anomaly exists as to the protection of Australia's wildlife.. They come under NSW National Parks, an organisation not suited to handling the issues surrounding the welfare of animals. For example hundreds of thousands kangaroos are deliberately killed in NSW alone every year. According to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water 508,671 kangaroos and wallaroos were 'harvested' in NSW alone in 2023 (See <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/kangaroo-statistics-states-2022.pdf>) and those figures according to kangaroo support groups are under reported. Kangaroos can be killed cruelly and immature joeys often left to try to survive without their mothers. It is a strange situation when deliberate kangaroo slaughter is scarcely monitored and cruelty overlooked to a national icon Australia is all too willing to exploit.

I am conscious of the fact that successive governments have relied on the ACOs to carry out the job of policing animal welfare on their behalf no doubt because it is convenient. It is one area of government responsibility they don't have to take on themselves. It has seemed a reasonable solution given that the two ACOs are seen as the experts in the area. However, clearly this model has failed and, while the transition may seem difficult, it is time for government to take the reins. At the heart of the issue is the simple fact that the government should not be making private charitable organisations responsible for enforcing criminal laws. There has been much discussion in government circles about setting up an independent statutory body that would be responsible for enforcing animal welfare laws in NSW. The time for discussion has passed. The situation is critical. It is time to take the first steps in creating such a body and that body, I would suggest, should also be responsible for the welfare of native animals, Until that body is able to begin operations, I would support the establishment of a specialist animal welfare unit within the NSW Police Force as soon as possible. This unit would be able to perform at least the most critical duties until the new body can take full responsibility for policing animal welfare.