

Submission  
No 47

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

**Organisation:** Animal Care Australia Inc

**Date Received:** 19 December 2025

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19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Legislative Council, Portfolio Committee 4

Email:

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

Animal Care Australia (ACA) would like to thank Portfolio Committee 4 for providing us with the opportunity to provide feedback for this Inquiry, and we look forward to the opportunity to provide testimony at this Inquiry.

Animal Care Australia is a national incorporated association established to lobby for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

At previous Inquiries into the approved charitable organisations Animal Care Australia has made recommendations that the government enhance the accountability and transparency of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals NSW (RSPCA) and the Animal Welfare League (AWL). It is extremely disappointing that those recommendations or even their intent has remained relatively unheeded since 2019.

As you would be aware amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals have only captured pre-existing modes of accountability without taking the opportunity to place the responsibility of the organisations and authorised officers who are charged with enforcing legislation on behalf of the NSW Government WITH the NSW government where it belongs!

Therefore:

- Animal Care Australia now calls for the significant funding provided to the RSPCA, be ceased and provided to the Animal Welfare League instead. Animal Care Australia supports the model used by the AWL and we support the organisation.
- An Animal Welfare Commission be legislated and instilled to oversee ALL animal-welfare related matters.
- Animal Care Australia highlights the operational model followed by the AWL should be adopted as part of the Animal Welfare Commissions training, and ethos for an inspectorate and animal welfare officers.

It is imperative that all future Inquiries require that the charitable organisations must specifically and separately detail all income/expenses and operational activities attributed to their statutory inspectorate functions during the reporting period.

Animal Care Australia would welcome the Committee seek clarification as to why this Inquiry was scheduled before the necessary reports outlined in the Terms of Reference were publicly available, and one is still not available.

This submission can be publicly listed.

We request the opportunity of providing testimony at this Inquiry.

On behalf of the Animal Care Australia Committee.

Kind regards,

Michael Donnelly  
President

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



## 2025 Inquiry into the operation of the approved charitable organisations



**Submission approved: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

Cover image: [ChatGPT](#)

### **Animal Care Australia Inc**

*This submission has been developed in consultation with a range of members of Animal Care Australia.*

*This submission provides a broad perspective across all species of pets and companion animals.*

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## Background

Animal Care Australia Inc. (ACA) represents the interests of all hobbyist and pet animal keepers nationally. Our members are comprised of most major animal keeping representative bodies including those representing dogs, cats, birds, horses, small mammals, reptiles, fish, insects and exhibited animals. Our Advisory Group members also work in the rescue, training, veterinary, care and rehabilitation sectors.

## Opening statement

At the time of providing this submission Animal Care Australia notes the lack of a Financial Report publicly released by the Animal Welfare League (AWL). It is equally noted the Australian Charities & Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) website indicates the Report is not required to be lodged until March 2026.

The Reports by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) are not due to be lodged with the ACNC until December 2025, and yet ironically were lodged on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2025 – just one week after the original closing date of this Inquiry.

These documents are vital in order to respond to the Terms of Reference of this Inquiry and a closing date for submissions and/or the announcement of this Inquiry should not be determined until after the release of the reports by the charitable organisations.

This is clearly an issue that requires addressing by Portfolio Committee 4, given this Inquiry is meant to be an annual Inquiry – at least until the election of the 58th Parliament of NSW. Moving forward, it is certainly convenient that a lack of Reports publicly posted denies stakeholders and the public the ability to provide feedback or criticism of the charitable organisations.

## Position Statement

**Animal Care Australia does not support the use of charitable organisations for the enforcement of animal welfare acts throughout Australia.**

Over the last five or so years community support for the use of the RSPCA as an enforcement agency has continued to decline. Accordingly, governments must take note of this and meet the community expectation that animal welfare is prioritised to a higher importance than that provided by previous decades of government.

In this environment where a lack of social values and respect for life is decreasing and the prevalence of violence (including against animals) is increasing it is a requirement of all governments to take ownership of their responsibility and directly employ the necessary personnel to ensure the safety, welfare and care of our animals is being upheld by all of the community.

This means the creation and implementation of an Animal Welfare Commission and an inspectorate that is directly employed by, trained and held accountable to the Office of the Animal Welfare Commissioner. <sup>1</sup>

### Terms of Reference

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW annually inquire into and report on the operation of the charitable organisations approved under s 34B of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, and in particular:

(a) the matters contained in the annual reports of the approved charitable organisations, including their financial statements

(b) the exercise by the approved charitable organisations of their compliance and enforcement functions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, and

(c) any other related matters.

2. That the committee commence its annual inquiry following the publication of the annual reports of the approved charitable organisations and report by the end of the financial year.

### A History Lesson

Animal Care Australia supports and will continue to support an annual Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.

Animal Care Australia has provided submissions and testimony at all of the following Inquiries:

❖ **2019-2020 – Legislative Select Committee into Animal Cruelty Laws in NSW <sup>2</sup>**

This Inquiry was predominantly focused on the proposal to introduce a fully independent office of animal rights and an inspectorate established within the NSW Police Force. The proposal was opposed by Animal Care Australia as it was our contention the proposal was too extreme and animal rights and ideologically driven.

It is noted that one of the recommendations from this Inquiry was to establish an annual Inquiry – which was NOT SUPPORTED by the then Coalition Government.

Ten of the Recommendations from that Inquiry all designed to implement greater accountability, transparency and improvement of animal welfare outcomes were all simply ‘NOTED’ with four ‘NOT SUPPORTED’.

Retrospectively – the simple NOTING with no support from the Government is reflected in the continued submissions and testimony of latter Inquiries.

<sup>1</sup> [Animal Care Australia’s Animal Welfare Commission](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Legislative Select Committee into Animal Cruelty Laws in NSW](#)

It is not lost on Animal Care Australia that while we opposed an ‘Animal Police Squad’ – also not supported by the Government - the ensuing years saw the RSPCA Inspectorate become a policing squad in both appearance (uniform) and with a greater emphasis on intimidation (née enforcement) rather than education.

❖ **2021-2022 – Portfolio Committee 4 - Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.**<sup>3</sup>

This Inquiry resulted in five main Recommendations – effectively repeating those from the previous Inquiry. The more prominent the greater need for accountability and transparency from the approved charitable organisations (ACO’s).

Four of the five Recommendations were ‘supported’ or ‘supported in principle’ by the Government with the recommendation for mandating standardised reporting formats and requirements of information to be included in the ACO’s Financial and Annual Reports only being ‘Noted’ – yet again.

All five of the Recommendations were also all passed off to be included within the ‘Draft Animal Welfare Bill’ for further consideration and action.

Note: The Draft Animal Welfare Bill was later dropped by the latest Government – despite having had an Inquiry into its importance and the needs and expectations of the Bill. <sup>4</sup>

❖ **2023-2024 – Portfolio Committee 4 - Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979** <sup>5</sup>

This Inquiry resulted in seven Recommendations. Once again with five of the seven calling on the Government to take a stronger stance on oversight of the ACO’s including requiring standardised formats for reporting. The seventh recommendation called for the Government to consider the recommendations from all of the previous Inquiries as part of their consideration for an Office of Animal Welfare. All seven were either ‘supported’ or ‘supported in principle’.

Animal Care Australia notes this Government introduced the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Transparency and Fit and Proper Persons) Bill 2024. <sup>6</sup>

Animal Care Australia supports the additional requirement of the ACO annual reports to include details about their GIPA requests, Ombudsman activity, and any MOUs or service level agreements with Government but this still does not go far enough to mandate the reporting of the information stakeholders require in order to accurately assess the effectiveness of the ACO’s under POCTAA and still ignores the primary recommendations from the previous Inquiries.

<sup>3</sup> [2021-2022 – Portfolio Committee 4 - Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Animal welfare policy in New South Wales](#)

<sup>5</sup> [2023-2024 Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment \(Transparency and Fit and Proper Persons\) Bill 2024](#)

Ironically, that Bill implemented the provisions for a Court to determine whether a person is a fit and proper person to own animals and did nothing to require the ACO's to report on how they assess and determine whether those making the decisions to euthanise animals are suitably experienced (ie: fit and proper). As we have heard in testimony at previous Inquiries, there are serious questions being voiced regarding the behavioural testing of animals and even the killing of animals with 'treatable diseases.'

### What have we learned?

The past six years has continually shown that the Governments (plural) have been reluctant to actively guarantee the ACO's meet the expectations of stakeholders, including the community and the Inquiry Committees' recommendations, or it could be concluded that the budgetary implications of moving away from utilising ACO's for enforcement outweigh the need for and importance of ensuring the animal welfare needs of animals in NSW.

Very little has changed in this time and it has reached the point where we can no longer continue to blame the 'behaviour of the naughty child' and instead need to look at the parent body that is supposed to be controlling that behaviour.

If an MOU doesn't provide provisions for a government to act or take control then throw out the MOU and take over the situation completely. History shows that this IS what needs to occur.

Or are the ACO's that untouchable? One certainly behaves like it believes it can do whatever it wants without any consequences.

### Clearly money talks.

State budgets have continually underfunded animal welfare for far too long.

When the government as part of an election pitch throws a substantial increase – albeit a one-off- the ACO that received the predominant amount has since publicly continued to expect that same level of funding. In fact, in December 2023 the RSPCA submitted a funding request proposal that not only expected that level of funding - but they also wanted more.

They provided the Government with three options for funding to cover financial years 2025 through 2028. <sup>7</sup>

Option 1 totaling \$100M; Option 2 \$118.2M; and Option 3 \$130.6M with a 'bonus' thrown in requirement of an additional \$22M to upgrade their three existing shelters at the time (Orange, Nowra & Queanbeyan).

Notably in the same financial year (24/25) that they wanted shelter funding, they actually closed the Orange and Queanbeyan facilities.

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<sup>7</sup> [RSPCA NSW 2024 State Budget NPP - Business Case798](#)

***“To achieve the greatest long-term impact, we must redirect our limited resources\* toward prevention-focused, community-based services that stop cruelty and welfare concerns before they occur, while keeping pets safe, healthy, and in caring homes” - Steve Coleman CEO <sup>8</sup>***

\* Limited resources = assets totaling \$142 million – RSPCA Financial Report 2025.<sup>9</sup>

## Response to the Terms of Reference

### RSPCA Reports <sup>10</sup>

In reviewing the Financial Report, Animal Care Australia makes the following findings:

1. RSPCA NSW grants income was \$7.7 million in FY23, \$27.7 million in FY24, and \$17.9 million in FY25.
2. Total profit/<loss> was \$1.6, \$9.0 and <\$3.2> million respectively for FY23, FY24 and FY25.
3. As RSPCA NSW holds assets totaling \$142 million, a loss of \$3.2 million is of no concern.
4. The \$12.2 million reduction in profit from \$9.0 to a loss of \$3.2 million is largely due to the reduction in government grants of \$9.8 million.
5. The claim by RSPCA NSW that extra funding to match FY24 levels is needed is NOT supported by the financial statements.
6. RSPCA NSW has continued to reduce services in the period since FY23 despite receiving substantially larger government grants.

In order to enhance Finding 5 above, Animal Care Australia has drawn comparisons covering the period of financial years 2022 through 2025.

### Financials

	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Grants</b>	2.99M	7.7M	27.7M	17.9M
<b>Salaries/wages</b>	32.44M	35.15M	40.8M	44M
	Super: 2.9M	Super: 3.37M	Super: 4M	Super: 4.5M
<b>Animal related expenses</b>	3.77M	4.12M	6.2M	6.3M
<b>Fundraising expenses</b>	3.7M	4.29 M	7.75M	4.45M

<sup>8</sup> [Notice of Upcoming Closure – RSPCA NSW Central West Shelter](#)

<sup>9</sup> [RSPCA Financial Report 2025.](#)

<sup>10</sup> [RSPCA Financial & Annual Reports](#)

**NB:** The Financial Reports continually fail to separate the Inspectorate wages and superannuation expenses from those of the Executive and remaining paid staff.

**Notable interest:** RSPCA spent more on *fundraising expenses* than it did on the *animal related expenses* – with the 1.85M exception in FY25.

According to the FY24 reports: 13082 animals entered their care in that 12-month period. That equates to a spending of only \$474 per animal. (Including food, shelter, vet costs and euthanasia?) An overwhelming difference to the charges and costs applied to the owners of animals when charged with an offence or when they attempt to regain ownership of animals seized. (Often in the thousands to tens of thousands).

### Enforcement

		2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Inspectorate</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>40</b>
	- in field	33		50	39
	- awaiting approval	2		3	1
- <b>complaints against</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>
o <b>findings</b>	- unsubstantiated,	22	19	22	22
	- substantiated – no action taken.	1			1 ^^
	- not RSPCA jurisdiction			1	
	- to Ombudsman				1 ^^^^
<b>Cruelty complaints</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>14088</b>	<b>14420</b>	<b>17436</b>	<b>17946</b>
- <b>Intelligence only</b>	(no owner identified)	366	331	208	992
- <b>Referrals to:</b>	NSW Police (urgent or no RSPCA coverage)	156	129	112	71
- <b>Referrals to:</b>	AWL NSW	21	53	16	??
	Other agencies (no RSPCA jurisdiction)	32	24	7	170 (AWL included?)
- <b>Investigated</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>13085</b>	<b>13883</b>	<b>17093</b>	<b>16713</b>
	revisits	3793	4797	6596	??
- <b>Inspections</b>	<b>Routine total</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>53 **</b>
	- on registered breeders*	415	210	90	
	- on pet shops ^		225 ^		
	Penalty Infringements	67	111	84	127
<i>Continued</i>		<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
- <b>Prosecutions</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>156</b>
- <b>initiated</b>	for offences	418	420	407	?

	- defendants				211
	- animals affected	801	517	1928	3650
- <b>finalised</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>69</b>
	by plea	46	38	28	49
	guilty in absentia	15	12	12	16
	withdrawn	2	4	4	3
	Mental Health Act	1	2	3	0
	actual Court hearing				1
- <b>ongoing</b>		43	48	48	17(j) or 87

\* Interesting stat, as the report also states that the ShelterMate software used cannot differentiate between complaints or routine inspections

\*\* report stated on breakdown of inspections citing the AnimalOS software cannot differentiate between complaints or routine inspections.

# The Department of Primary Industries has continually stated it provides funding for the purpose of educating about animal welfare – yet the numbers of investigations where education material was supplied are missing?

^ Query this number. Are pet shops routinely inspected? If yes, the math does not equate. If no, why not and why were there no pet shops inspected in the previous year.

^^ 1 substantiated (officer counselled and ordered to do some training by Chief Inspector, no further action taken

^^^ Ombudsman ordered Inspector to contact complainant with no further action taken after completion.

### Taken directly from the 2025 Inspectorate Report: <sup>11</sup>

***(j) details of the outcome of proceedings for offences referred to in the immediately previous report that had not been finally determined by the date of the previous report:***

*As noted above, RSPCA NSW had 226 active prosecutions during the reporting period. Seventy (70) of those were commenced prior to 2024/25 and are detailed in Appendix 1 – Prosecution Results 2024/2025.*

*Of the 70 prosecutions that had not been finally determined by the date of the previous report, 53 had been finalised by 30 June 2025, while **17 were still ongoing.***

*Of the 53 prosecutions finalised:*

- 35 were determined following a plea of guilty,
- 5 were determined with a finding of guilt after hearing,
- 5 were heard and determined in the accused's absence pursuant to section 190 or 196 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 (NSW),
- 1 was withdrawn, and
- 7 were dealt with pursuant to section 14 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 (NSW).

*Of the 53 prosecutions finalised, nine involved appeals by the defendant to the District Court*

<sup>11</sup> [RSPCA Inspectorate Annual Report 2024/25](#)

**IMPORTANT:** The above Report does not appear to align with the previous reports publicised. Animal Care Australia intends to review these statistics prior to the Inquiry sitting and will, where appropriate, provide further analysis either in a Supplementary Submission or in testimony (should we be invited to testify). (See Appendix 1 for a side-by-side look at the statistics)

In the meantime, Animal Care Australia strongly recommends the Committee review several years' worth of data to determine the facts.

### Taken from the Annual Report:



**It is important to call in to question the potential differences in the above numbers versus those cited from Inspectorate Report.**

Again, Animal Care Australia will look at this in more detail and where appropriate provide further comment in the future.

If we are to take the 2024/25 Inspectorate Report as accurate – it strongly highlights the RSPCA managed to commence, investigate, prosecute MORE cases, and finalise prosecutions of older cases with less Inspectors and less funding from the government than the previous financial year.

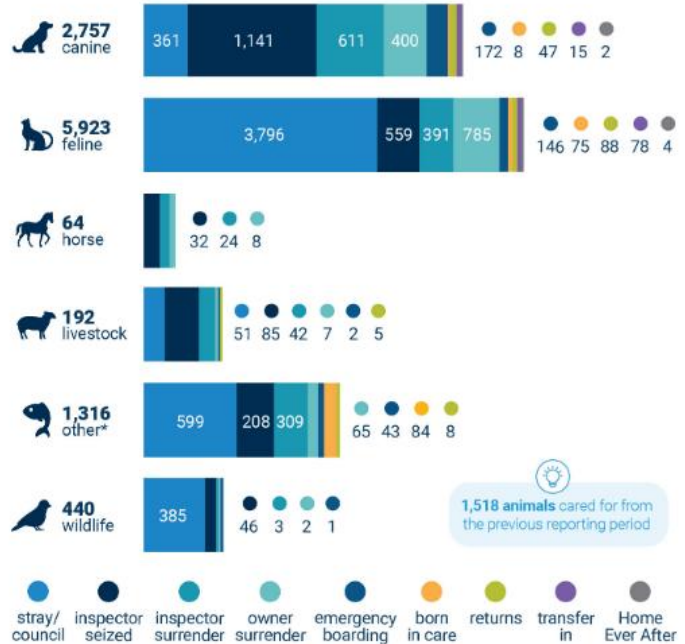
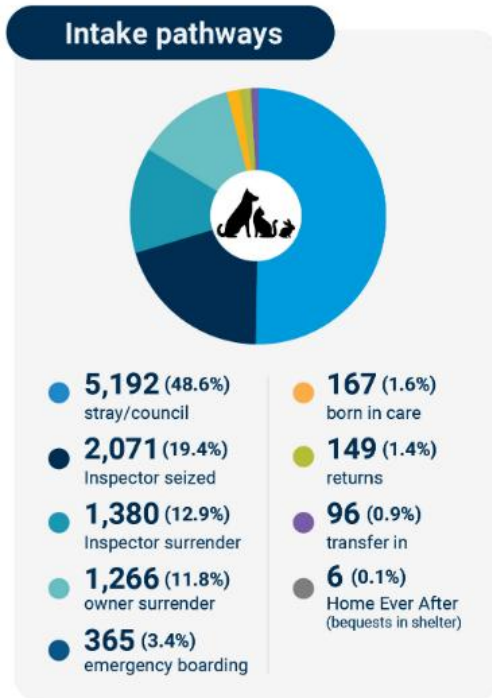
**This rebuts the claims being made by their CEO in media interviews.**

### Annual Stats

	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Staff</b>	537	560	511	<b>549</b>
<b>Volunteers</b>	3014	984	1694	<b>2094</b>
<b>Shelters</b>	6	5	5	<b>4</b>
<b>Veterinary hospitals</b>	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour/rehab centres</b>	2	2	2	<b>2</b>

**Further from the Annual Report:**

and **12,210** animals in our shelters



\*Includes rodents, guinea pigs, ferrets, rabbits, fish, birds and non-native

## STRAY ANIMAL INTAKE

**RSPCA NSW is not an animal impound facility.**

We are a charitable organisation with a mission to prevent cruelty to animals and promote their care and protection.

If you have found a lost or roaming animal, please take it directly to your local council facility.

Under NSW law, local councils are responsible for managing stray animals, including accepting lost pets, arranging collection, and reuniting them with their owners.

**Not sure who your local council is?**

Scan the QR code and enter your address to find your local council.

Abandoning an animal is an offence under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.

Do the right thing and make sure the animal is safely taken to your local council.

In relation to the above graphic and statistics, Animal Care Australia draws your attention to the numbers relating to strays/council animals. These animals are transferred to respective Council facilities as soon as possible. In fact, the RSPCA has been encouraging the public not to deliver/surrender strays at their facilities and demanding they be taken directly to Councils.

It is our contention that those numbers are simply filler to make the figures look better for the organisation and most importantly justification for their fundraising. Remember the Annual Reports are most likely to be read by those donating.

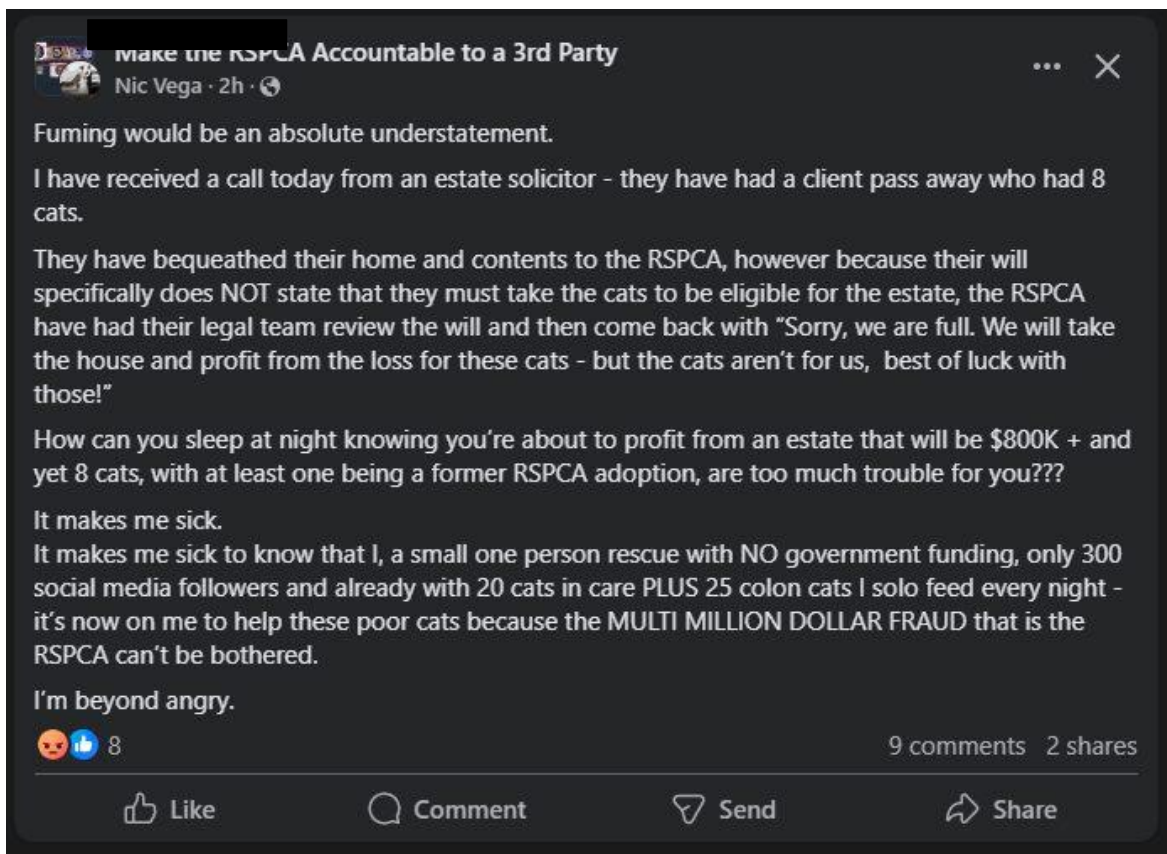
Regardless of the fact those animals made their way into the RSPCA facilities, they would not have held those 5192 strays for any significant time. It is our opinion these should not be used to prop up their clear downsizing of actual shelter operations. In fact, according to our assessment the actual number of animals should be 7018, of which 3451 were sourced via Inspectorate seizure/surrender.

### Shelter versus enforcement


Animal Care Australia continues to follow the many stories now consistently highlighted by the ever growing disheartened and angry community, towards the ethos change of the RSPCA from sheltering animals to only enforcing the most winnable enforcement cases.

Animal Care Australia has little doubt members of the Portfolio Committee will be aware of the most outstanding and discussed case in the past year – that of the elderly gentlemen who resided in the Campbelltown area. He was a cat lover, rescuer and sadly passed leaving behind his estate and thirteen cats on his estate.

The RSPCA was one of beneficiaries of the estate – which they willingly accepted. Almost immediately five of the cats were rescued and rehomed by cat rescues. The remaining eight cats, however, had a very different story. At first the RSPCA wanted nothing to do with them. One can only surmise it was because they fell into the ‘stray/surrender’ category.



With their owner deceased there was no one to prosecute and eight cats would have cost them more money to shelter and potentially re-home.



**Meow and Forever Cat Rescue and TACC Rescue - The Aftercare Collective** — 🧐 feeling determined in Campbelltown, NSW.

21h · 🌐

⋮

🔴 URGENT CALL FOR SUPPORT UPDATE – DECEASED ESTATE CATS 🔴

UPDATE 17/6/25 - 10am: We are absolutely blown away by the positive ((pawwwsitive?!?) response we have had to our call for help! Thank you so much!

We have edited/removed the items from our Amazon Wishlist that we no longer need because of your EPIC responses, however we are still in need of cat litter and cat dry food!

We are NOT stuck on the type or brand of these items and welcome anything, the ones in our Wishlist is simply some examples.

Soon we will be doing a shout out for short-term, experienced foster carers to help us remove SOME of the cats from the home to try and get a stronger temperament assessment on the cats and will also be passing on some of your amazing donations to these carers in support as well.

[Meow and Forever Cat Rescue](#) , in collaboration with [TACC Rescue - The Aftercare Collective](#), is currently working on a heartbreaking deceased estate case in the Campbelltown region – where 8 beloved cats 🐱🐱🐱🐱🐱🐱🐱🐱 have been left behind with no clear plan for their future.

Despite the estate being left to a large national animal charity, they have so far refused responsibility for the cats, leaving small, community-run rescues to shoulder the burden. These cats now rely entirely on us — and YOU — to step up 🙏🙏

*(Appendix 2 to highlights the level of support the cats required – provided by rescues)*

It was not until the local media<sup>12</sup> and community pressure became too loud to ignore that the RSPCA spoke out – but implied they still were unlikely to assist – despite accepting the financial benefits of the estate.

<sup>12</sup> [Macarthur Advocate article](#)

*“RSPCA NSW is committed to exploring every possible strategy to ensure the remaining cats can enjoy good quality of life. Our animal care team is meeting with a member of the rescue group this week to review the cats' behavioural needs and rehoming options, one of which involves the cats continuing their adoption journey at an RSPCA NSW shelter. However, no decision has been made regarding the cats at this time,” said an RSPCA NSW spokesperson.*



And if you think it's only dogs and cats that they are refusing to care for – think again.

*“The RSPCA also didn't want her, allegedly telling the person who picked her up and started feeding her again, that she wasn't in bad enough condition to seize.”*

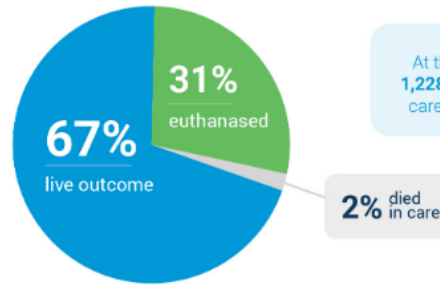
Source: [Facebook profile](#)

The same organisation that stated horses don't have a foaling season, believe this horse is not in a bad enough condition to be seized –

simply because they knew the horse would go to a rescue and that rescue would bear the costs of rehabilitation for the animal. There is no other logical excuse.

## Welfare outcomes

RSPCA NSW provides refuge for animals from diverse circumstances, from family pets and injured strays to those rescued from cruelty or neglect. Wherever possible, we focus on rehabilitation and rehoming, including animals with complex medical or behavioural needs. In cases where recovery isn't possible, we make compassionate and considered decisions to prevent ongoing suffering.



At the time of reporting  
1,228 animals were still in care awaiting outcomes

### Non-live outcomes by animal type

 893 canine

 1,870 feline

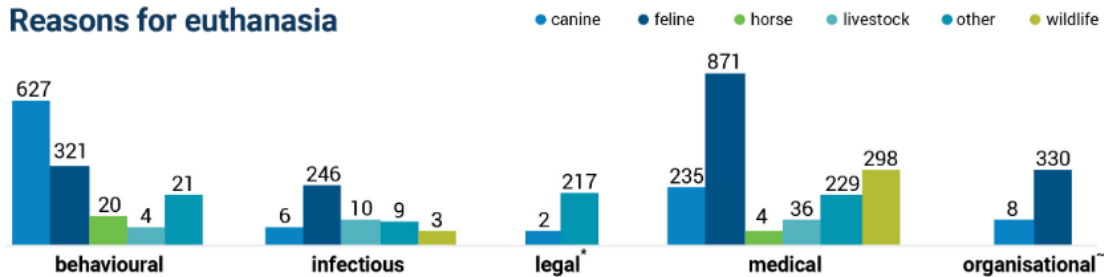
 26 horse

 52 livestock

 522 other

 312 wildlife

## Reasons for euthanasia



<sup>\*</sup>Deemed dangerous or menacing by local council <sup>~</sup>Unweaned or too young to survive without their mother

Without stepping into the area of expertise held by the Professional Dog Trainers of Australia and other professional animal trainers, behaviourists and even rescues, this graph needs attention drawn to it.

Firstly, these figures are not anything the RSPCA should be proud of. They are continuously called out for their lack of knowledge, expertise in care and training of their officers – and these numbers prove that beyond a doubt.

- ✘ “behavioural” is misleading, as for many years the testing performed to decide the fate of animals in RSPCA care has been called into question by numerous qualified sources. No effort is provided to re-train or rehabilitate these animals – despite the existence of two behavioural centres.
- ✘ “infectious” is also misleading. Cat flu (as an example) is not necessarily an issue that warrants euthanasia, and a complete shelter kennel/cattery recent rebuild should have had isolation areas built in to cope with infectious diseases that are treatable. Let us not forget the previous year they euthanised a large number of birds who were found to have or likely to have an infectious but fully treatable condition. They clearly paid no attention to that Inquiry.
- ✘ “medical” – without sufficient extra data it is astounding to see so many medical issues were deemed severe enough to euthanise such large numbers of animals. Note: Animal Care Australia has continually called for greater information to be provided on the reporting of animals euthanised.

- ☒ “organisational” – basically explained as anything un-weaned. Why do private rescuers manage to bottle feed neonates and then rehome responsibly and yet a multi-million dollar ‘animal welfare’ organisation cannot?

Especially as they are so proud of their foster carer numbers.

Again, these statistics highlight the new ethos of the RSPCA NSW

- not improving animal welfare
- no shelter care
- cost prioritised over care.

Appendix 3 provides a greater overview of this move away from ‘preventing animal cruelty’ to ‘prosecuting animal cruelty’. Perhaps this organisation should re-brand as the ‘Society for the Prosecution of Cruelty to Animals’. At least that would be more accurate and would determine how much charitable fundraising the public would be prepared to provide, or to participate in a Lottery.



The fact of the matter is the RSPCA have been stating their intention is to move away from the Shelter aspects and focus solely on the prosecuting. That is not reflected in their advertising and public fundraising messaging. Truth in advertising should apply. What people are being told opposed to the actual business of this charity do not correlate.

Animal Care Australia acknowledges this is not necessarily a matter for this Inquiry – however, the question as to whether this charity is meeting all of it’s ‘charitable purposes’ is something that this Inquiry could bring greater awareness to for the purpose of an investigation by the ACNC.

### Animal Welfare League Reports <sup>13</sup>

As outlined in our opening statement, the 2025 Financial Report has not been publicly listed for Animal Care Australia to include as part of our overall feedback. This is disappointing and of minor concern as these reports have been available for previous Inquiries.

As such, the tables below are provided to highlight the performance of the Animal Welfare League, who receive far less funding, operate with far fewer inspectors and yet somehow manage to maintain an ethos that operates with an appropriate response to complaints, animal welfare education and when appropriate, penalty and prosecution.

#### Mobile Vet Truck:

##### 2022:

- ✓ Deployed to Lismore flood emergency in March 2022
- ✓ 3 desexing trips to Dubbo (govt approved desexing in truck)
- ✓ Multiple microchip/vaccinations/health check visits state-wide

##### 2023:

- ✓ Deployed to 2022 Moree flood disaster
- ✓ Multiple trips state-wide for microchip/vaccinations/health check and desexing
- ✓ Government grant 2.5M announced, only 1.9M actually given, to be used over 3 yrs.

##### 2024:

- ✓ Visited 30 towns across NSW

##### 2025:

- ✓ 10 trips covering 33 towns visited
- ✓ 2080 health checks/1783 vaccinations/775 microchips/160 desexings

#### Financials etc

	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Grants (Govt)</b>	114K	346K ^	1.99M	?
<b>Salaries/wages</b>	5.6M	6.1M	7.26M	?
<b>Animal expenses</b>	138K	288K	238K	?

<sup>13</sup> [AWL Annual Report](#)

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	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Staff (Full time equivalent)</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>110</b>
- full time	57			
- part time	15			
- casual	5			
- <b>volunteers</b>			450+	416+
<b>Branches</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>
- Dog training club		1	1	2

^ also election spend 7.6M – (5.5M for Inspectorate, 1.9M for vet truck over 3 yrs)

### Enforcement

		2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Inspectorate</b>	<b>Total:</b>	5	5	5	9 (2 awaiting approval)
	- in Sydney	4	4	4	
	- Regional	1	1	1	
- <b>complaints against AWL</b>	<b>Total:</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
o <b>findings</b>	- unsubstantiated,			<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	- substantiated – warning given			<b>1</b>	
<b>Cruelty complaints</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>1009</b>	<b>1133</b>	<b>1542</b>	<b>3104</b>
- <b>Inspections</b>	attendances	<b>1534</b>	<b>1678</b>	<b>1542</b>	<b>3104</b>
	- revisits			<b>620</b>	<b>1262</b>
	trade/routine inspections	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>456</b>
(under Inspectorate)	ambulance officer			<b>370</b>	<b>372</b>
	animals seized	<b>51</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>184</b>
	animals surrendered	<b>?</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>
	Cautions given			<b>62</b>	<b>215</b>
	Written directions			<b>23</b>	<b>85</b>
	Penalty Infringements	<b>?</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>
- <b>Prosecutions</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

### Standardised reporting is required

A comparison of the data from the RSPCA versus the Animal Welfare League highlights the need for standardised reporting. In fact, the data between different reports from the same organisation do not appear to align.

Terminology used by each organisation is inconsistent. What is an investigation versus an attendance, or a proactive inspection versus a routine visit.

Standardised data collection and reporting requirements must be implemented to ensure all key information from both organisations can be assessed to provide a clearer understanding of the performances of the organisations, but more importantly, how the animal welfare legislation is tracking in NSW.

Without this, it is difficult to ascertain where further education and focus needs to be prioritised.

### Closing statement

It is clear to Animal Care Australia that the Animal Welfare League is capable of achieving much more than the government (or the public) currently fund.

Animal Care Australia supports the ethos and manner in which the Animal Welfare League functions.

That said, Animal Care Australia no longer believes the use of charitable organisations for the purpose of enforcing animal welfare legislation is appropriate.

NSW Government (plural) have had ample warning of the issues with continuing to blindly support these organisations under the guise (excuse) that 'there is no-one else who can do it'. That is simply not true.

That is why Animal Care Australia is calling on the NSW Government to develop and implement an Animal Welfare Commissioner and related office.

At the very least, the people and most importantly the animals of NSW deserve better than what is being provided by the RSPCA, and what is being underfunded to the Animal Welfare League.

It is our strongest recommendation to this Inquiry and to the Government that the implementation of an Animal Welfare Commission is prioritised along with the cancellation of the MOU and any related funding to the RSPCA. Any and all available funding should be provided to the Animal Welfare League to act solely as an interim Inspectorate until all legislation and employment relating to the Animal Welfare Commission is finalised.

It is our intention to recommend the training methods and other initiatives that currently exist with the Animal Welfare League, including their inspectors, is integrated into the Animal Welfare Commission. This will provide the Commissioner with a solid foundation on which to build an inspectorate, and Animal Welfare Officers.

Animal Care Australia thanks the Portfolio Committee 4 for the opportunity to submit to this Inquiry welcomes the opportunity to provide testimony at upcoming hearings. Animal Care Australia welcomes any questions you may have as you continue to finalise this review.

This submission can be publicly listed.

On behalf of the Animal Care Australia Committee,

Michael Donnelly  
President - Animal Care Australia

### Appendix 1: Side-by-side view of RSPCA prosecutions data

Annual Report 2022	Inspectorate Report 2022
Prosecutions initiated = 107 Prosecutions finalised (total) = 111 Prosecutions finalised 2021/22 FY initiated = ?? Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 47 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = ?? Prosecutions outstanding from 2017-2021 = 15	Prosecutions initiated = 107 Prosecutions finalised (total) = ?? Prosecutions finalised 2021/22 FY initiated = 64 Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 47 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 43 Prosecutions outstanding from 2017-2021 = 15

NOTE: above funded with \$14M+ (from Annual Report) – 35 officers

Annual Report 2023	Inspectorate Report 2023
Prosecutions initiated = 108 Prosecutions finalised (total) = ?? Prosecutions finalised 2022/23 FY initiated = 59 Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 49 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 48 Prosecutions outstanding from 2017-2022 = ??	Prosecutions initiated = 107 Prosecutions finalised (total) = ?? Prosecutions finalised 2022/23 FY initiated = 59 Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 49 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 48 Prosecutions outstanding from 2017-2022 = 10

NOTE: no funding amount specified in Annual Report 2023 – 38 officers

Annual Report 2024	Inspectorate Report 2024
Prosecutions initiated = 96 Prosecutions finalised (total) = 94 Prosecutions finalised 2023/24 FY initiated = 48 Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 46 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 60 Prosecutions outstanding from 2020-2023 = ??	Prosecutions initiated = 96 Prosecutions finalised (total) = 94 Prosecutions finalised 2023/24 FY initiated = 48 Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 46 Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 60 Prosecutions outstanding from 2020-2023 = 12

NOTE: above funded with \$22.3M (from Annual Report) – 53 officers

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Annual Report 2025	Inspectorate Report 2025
<p>Prosecutions initiated = 156            Prosecutions finalised (total) = 122            Prosecutions finalised 2024/25 FY initiated = 69            Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 53            Prosecutions outstanding (total) = ??            Prosecutions outstanding from 2020-2024 = ??</p>	<p>Prosecutions initiated = 156            Prosecutions finalised (total) = 122            Prosecutions finalised 2024/25 FY initiated = 69            Prosecutions finalised from previous yrs = 53            Prosecutions outstanding (total) = 104            Prosecutions outstanding from 2020-2024 = 17</p>

NOTE: 2025 Financial Report shows \$11.3M funding for enforcement activities – 40 officers

### Appendix 2: Images detailing the rescue and rehoming of cats from deceased estate.

🛒 Local to Campbelltown? Want to send a Coles/Woolworths/Bunnings click & collect? Please message Meow & Forever Cat Rescue directly to arrange.

🏠 COMFORT ITEMS NEEDED:

- Litter trays and liners
- Plastic or cat bowls 🐾
- Cat beds, towels, soft blankets 🐾
- Toys 🐾 or anything to help them feel safe again 🐾

🚗 VET APPOINTMENTS & TRANSPORT TO NEW HOMES:

These cats were well loved and looked after, but they still need to be vet checked and have their vaccinations brought up to date before they can safely move on to new homes 🐾🐾

We urgently need help with funds to organise and cover the costs of these essential appointments, as well as support with transport to foster or forever homes 🚗

💧 WE ARE STARTING FROM SCRATCH:

Everything from litter trays to blankets is needed to rebuild a clean, safe and comforting space for these cats. Their former bedding, bowls and litter areas were heavily soiled before they were found, and we are having to replace it all. If you can spare any basic cat supplies, we would be so grateful.

👉 DONATE (Tax Deductible over \$2):  
Via TACC DonorBox, using reference "Estate Cats"  
👉 <https://donorbox.org/tacc>

❤️ THANK YOU ❤️

!! WE NEED YOUR HELP !!

- 🌱 Both rescues are at full capacity
- 🐾 Meow & Forever are also feeding 25+ colony cats nightly
- 🏠 We have taken on feeding and caring for the estate cats
- 🕒 We have only ONE MONTH to assess, rehabilitate and rehome them

📖 THE BACKSTORY:

Their owner went to a health appointment and never came home. After a sudden decline, he passed away in ICU ❤️ — and with no family involved, no one knew about the cats for over a week.

They were left scared, confused, using overflowing litter trays, and surviving on scraps 😞

These were once happy, well-loved cats — now they're living in a mess with no beds, no proper bowls, and barely the basics.

This beautiful soul's legacy is far greater than these 8 cats. He was a passionate and long-time cat advocate who worked with strays in the community for years — rescuing, rehoming, and running TNR (trap, neuter, release) programmes for colony cats 🐾🐾

His legacy is his work, his cats, and his beautiful big heart ❤️

🐾 HOW YOU CAN HELP 🐾

🏠 FOOD & LITTER DONATIONS:

📦 Amazon Wishlist:  
<https://www.amazon.com.au/hz/wishlist/ls/94NIADL394R2...>

🛒 Local to Campbelltown? Want to send a Coles/Woolworths/Bunnings click & collect?

❤️ THANK YOU ❤️

🙏 A huge thank you to [Happy Paws Haven Inc](#), who reached out to offer assistance with rehabilitating and rehoming some of the 8 cats in the home. Your support means the world to us and to these cats ❤️

👉 An enormous thank you to everyone who has donated – some of you recognised who this person was and wanted to honour the legacy of someone who gave so much to community animals. Others were moved by the sheer tragedy of this situation.

No matter how or why you donated — thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You are helping us write the next chapter in these cats' lives.



These cats are frightened and grieving, but they are not broken 🐾  
With your help, we can show them the kindness they so desperately need and deserve ❤️

Please donate, share, or contact us to help — every single bit makes a difference 🙏

Let's give these cats the second chance their owner would have wanted for them 🌈

## 2025 Inquiry into the operation of the approved charitable organisations



### Appendix 3: Some RSPCA reported stats over the years (from 2017 – 2025 Annual reports)

Report Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Shelters</b>	?	9	9	9	?	6	5	5	4
<b>Branches</b>	28	24	26	22	?	17 (+ 4 supporter groups)	9 (+10 supporter groups)	17 (branch + supporter groups combined)	13 (branch + supporter groups combined)
<b>Volunteers</b>	2600+	?	3140	1188	2917	3014	984	1694	2094
<b>Vet Hospitals</b>	?	4	?	4	?	3	3	3	3

- Note number of shelters decreases over the years – removal of pound services was the most dramatic change there.
- The number of volunteer branches and supporter groups also decreasing steadily over the years.

### Euthanasia rates (cats/dogs) over the years (from 2017 – 2025 Annual reports)

Report Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Cat intake #	16561	16320	15688	14559	13399	9145	6895	6383	2757
Cat euth %	39%	37%	36.5%	32%	29%	27%	33%	34%	32%
Dog intake #	12703	11553	10075	8798	6900	5087	3877	3925	5922
Dog euth %	20%	17%	16.5%	17%	16.7%	23%	26%	29.7%	31.5%

- Intakes have been getting less and less, yet euthanasia rates do not change by much. Rates have actually increased, which is a big concern when the intake numbers have dropped so drastically. Reasons for lower intake numbers need to be investigated, especially given the RSPCA are actively diverting people wanting to surrender animals to private rescues and council pounds.
- As stated in this submission there is a strong need for a much more comprehensive breakdown of euthanasia reasons. Note that RSPCA are no longer reporting “fractious cat” as a reason.