

Submission
No 43

**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: 16 October 2025

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Submission to the Parliament of New South Wales

RE: Systemic Failures in Animal Welfare Oversight and Victim Treatment

1. Background

I am a qualified animal welfare professional with over 20 years of experience in animal welfare, training, and advocacy. I hold multiple postgraduate qualifications, including seven master's degrees in fields relevant to animal welfare, ethics, and education. I have authored publications, volunteered extensively, and have long been recognised in the community for my dedication to the humane treatment of animals.

2. Context of Events

Several years ago, during a period of personal crisis and domestic violence, I was required to temporarily board my companion animals through what was represented as a welfare service. This was done entirely at my own cost - \$10/day/animal plus I provided all food, bedding, bowls, carriers and toys.

When my animals were returned to me, they exhibited physical injuries and distress. This was confirmed by two veterinarians who saw each animal as an emergency within 22 minutes of leaving the RSPCA. One of them sustained a permanent injury due to rough handling while being medicated by the RSPCA, despite being a compliant animal who had never required restraint for medication previously. Items I had sent with them, including prescription diets and expensive enrichment toys, were not returned – this totalled over \$900.

When I sought to raise concerns about the treatment of my animals, I was subjected to intimidation, harassment, and retaliatory behaviour. My requests for transparency and accountability were met with hostility. I was at one point refused the return of my animals and was denied a support person, even though my disability and related needs had been disclosed. I have involved police and politicians to no avail, even though I am supported by two lawyers, a barrister and numerous disability advocates.

3. Ongoing Harm and Victimisation

Following my attempt to seek justice and accountability, I experienced serious personal harm and ongoing harassment linked to my efforts to speak up,

These traumatic events have had a lasting impact on my health, safety, and ability to continue my animal welfare work.

Despite this, I have continued to advocate for humane, ethical, and transparent animal welfare practices. However, I have faced continued victimisation over the years for attempting to hold those in power to account.

4. Systemic Issues and Failures

My experience reflects broader systemic issues that urgently require review, including:

- Lack of external oversight of animal welfare enforcement and boarding arrangements.
- Inadequate procedural fairness and transparency in complaint-handling processes.
- Failure to provide disability accommodations and trauma-informed support for complainants.
- Conflict of interest and accountability concerns when the same body is responsible for both enforcement and service provision.
- Absence of safeguards for individuals boarding animals during crisis situations such as domestic violence, homelessness, or disability-related hospitalisation.

5. Recommendations

I urge the NSW Parliament to consider the following actions:

- Establish an independent oversight body to investigate complaints of animal mistreatment, especially where they involve vulnerable individuals, or occur in the custody of the RSPCA.
- Mandate trauma-informed and disability-inclusive policies in all agencies and organisations providing animal welfare or boarding services.
- Ensure that victims of institutional harm have safe, external reporting pathways and access to independent advocacy.
- Require transparency and separation of powers between enforcement, care, and complaint-handling functions in animal welfare organisations.
- Introduce legislative protections for individuals who report misconduct, ensuring they are not subjected to retaliation or harassment.

6. Conclusion

This submission is made in the public interest to highlight systemic failures that have caused profound harm to both people and animals. I have lived through years of trauma, professional discrediting, and ongoing fear simply for attempting to stand up for my animals and for ethical standards in welfare practice.

I urge Parliament to ensure that no one else is subjected to similar treatment and that meaningful reforms are enacted to protect both animals and those who care for them.