

**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

---

Partially  
Confidential

## Submission to the Parliament of New South Wales

RE: Systemic Failures and Unethical Practices in Animal Shelter Operations

### 1. Background

I have over two decades of professional experience in animal welfare, shelter management, and companion animal behaviour. My background includes extensive hands-on work with companion animals, wildlife, and animals with disabilities, as well as postgraduate qualifications across multiple relevant fields. I am submitting this evidence as a former employee and long-term advocate who has witnessed serious and ongoing systemic failings within the shelter sector.

### 2. Observed Practices and Concerns

Throughout my professional roles in various shelter and welfare facilities, I repeatedly witnessed patterns of practice that are inconsistent with humane, ethical, and scientifically informed animal welfare principles. These included:

- **Automatic euthanasia of senior animals:** Animals over approximately seven years of age were routinely euthanised at the time of surrender on the stated basis that the public “wants an investment in an animal.” Age alone was treated as justification for euthanasia, without individual assessment or consideration of health or adoptability.
- **Euthanasia based on colour or appearance:** Black- or white-coated animals were frequently euthanised because they were deemed “hard to home.” This occurred even where animals were healthy, behaviourally sound, and available space existed for rehoming.
- **Fraudulent or misleading documentation:** On multiple occasions, I observed animals euthanised on apparent medical grounds with documents later shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, or inconsistent with veterinary findings.
- **Misclassification to expedite euthanasia:** Some animals presented as strays were recorded as owner surrenders, allowing immediate euthanasia without the mandatory holding period. Similarly, some native animals were incorrectly classified as feral species to justify destruction.
- **Euthanasia for space or convenience:** I have personally witnessed animals euthanised due to shelter capacity issues rather than welfare need. This included animals with manageable or non-painful conditions such as cerebellar hypoplasia—conditions that research and lived experience demonstrate are compatible with good quality of life.
- **Mishandling and rough treatment:** I have seen animals thrown, dragged, or roughly placed into cages, resulting in injuries or significant distress.
- **Deceptive communication with the public:** Owners surrendering pets were frequently told their animals would be rehomed, despite staff knowing they would be euthanised

shortly after intake. In one instance, prospective adopters wishing to adopt two bonded dogs were denied an extra hour to gather a small shortfall in fees (approximately \$12). One of the two dogs was subsequently euthanised.

- **Falsified intake records for underage animals:** Very young kittens and puppies were often deliberately misclassified as *owner surrenders* rather than *strays*. This practice appeared intended to bypass mandatory holding or care requirements, allowing immediate euthanasia rather than providing hand-rearing or foster care.
- **Euthanasia during the statutory holding period:** I directly observed instances where animals were euthanised prior to the legal holding period elapsing, contrary to the protections afforded under relevant animal welfare legislation.
- **Neglect leading to preventable deaths:** I witnessed entire litters of kittens suffering and dying from preventable causes, including severe diarrhoea that was left untreated until it caused fatal intestinal obstruction. In other cases, animals developed gangrene due to prolonged neglect and lack of veterinary attention.
- **Unauthorised microchipping:** I witnessed staff performing microchipping procedures without holding the legally required NSW Government authorisation or accreditation. This raises significant concerns about legality, animal safety, and record accuracy within shelter systems.
- **Lack of behavioural knowledge leading to unnecessary euthanasia:** Many staff lacked even basic understanding of animal body language, stress responses, or rehabilitative behavioural approaches. As a result, animals suitable for rehoming were routinely labelled as “aggressive” or “unsuitable” and euthanised unnecessarily.

### 3. Ethical and Legal Concerns

These practices raise significant ethical and legal issues, including:

- Breach of duty of care obligations under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW)*.
- Misleading conduct and lack of informed consent for owners surrendering animals.
- Failure to comply with accepted shelter medicine and animal welfare standards.
- Lack of independent oversight, resulting in organisational cultures that normalise inhumane practices.

### 4. Systemic Contributing Factors

The systemic nature of these issues appears linked to:

- Absence of external accountability for euthanasia decisions and reporting.

- Institutional pressure for intake and capacity management, resulting in convenience-based euthanasia.
- Lack of transparency in how medical and behavioural assessments are conducted or recorded.
- Deficient training and supervision in humane handling, behaviour assessment, and species identification.
- Public misinformation regarding the true outcomes of surrendered animals.

## **5. Recommendations**

I respectfully urge the NSW Parliament to consider reforms including:

1. Establishment of an independent oversight body to monitor and audit all shelter euthanasia practices and data.
2. Mandatory public reporting of euthanasia statistics, including reasons and age/condition breakdowns.
3. Introduction of standardised, evidence-based assessment protocols before any euthanasia decision.
4. Strengthened protections for whistleblowers and staff who report unethical practices.
5. Mandatory training in species-appropriate care, humane handling, and disability-inclusive assessment.
6. A statutory requirement for truthful communication with surrendering owners and adopters.

## **6. Conclusion**

These observations are not isolated incidents but reflect a pattern of systemic failure and cultural acceptance of inhumane practices. Animals were treated as disposable rather than sentient beings deserving of care and dignity. Staff who questioned or resisted these practices were often discouraged or marginalised.

This submission is made in good faith, motivated by a commitment to transparency, reform, and genuine animal welfare. I urge Parliament to act to ensure that no animal is needlessly killed or mistreated under the guise of “shelter” care, and that the public can have confidence that surrendered or rescued animals are treated with compassion and integrity.