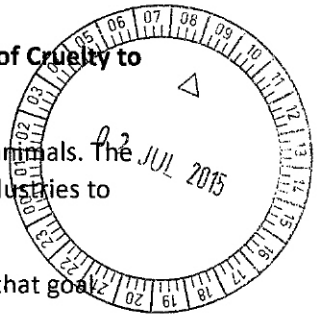


Submission to the Inquiry into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc)



The RSPCA (WA) is a well-respected organisation that has a long history of protecting animals. The RSPCA (WA) is an independent organisation which enables it to bring individuals and industries to account if they mistreat animals.

Its main charter is to prevent cruelty to animals. It needs to be independent to achieve that goal.

Industries that use animals to generate revenue have to balance profits and animal cruelty. This often can lead to cruel practices to increase profits.

Two industries in the media spotlight recently are the live export industry and the greyhound industry. Both of which have a history of animal welfare issues. The RSPCA is ideally placed to hold these industries to minimum standard of animal welfare.

Without the RSPCA (WA) there is no other body who has the necessary skills or resources to monitor animal welfare issues in the state.

Reducing or limiting the funding of the RSPCA (WA) would adversely affect the outcome for animal in this state. A famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi is

"The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

The RSPCA (WA) helps keep this state great in terms of animal welfare.

Farm animals already have far less protection from cruelty than domestic animals. This reduced protection allows for increased profits. Many practices done to farm animals would be illegal if done to our dogs or cats. Reducing funding for the RSPCA (WA) or limiting its charter sends a clear signal to industry that there will be less monitoring of their practices and the outcome would be shocking for farm animals.

Farms are less and less owned by family farmers are more and more by big business. The image of a barn; a happy farmer with his happy farm animals is only for kid's story books. Big business wants to make money. Animal welfare costs money and time. This conflict between profits and animal welfare is a delicate balance. If you remove the monitoring aspect of the RSPCA it will tip the balance in favour of profits and animals will suffer.

Animal-based industries are lobbying governments to create "Ag-gag" laws, designed to stop filming on farms. The RSPCA can't be everywhere, but industry wants to stop people filming cruel conditions. If the RSPCA is not funded that gives industries the go-ahead to drop standards and make more money, which after all is their primary aim.

Rather than having a review of the RSPCA (WA) it would make more sense to review the operations of the greyhound racing industry as other states have done.

The RSPCA (WA) doesn't need less funding it needs more. It is doing a great job with its current resources, don't let business interests overshadow the need to protect our animals and maintain our high standards. We can reframe Gandhi's famous quote for the inquiry.

The greatness of Western Australia can be judged by how we treat our animals, all our animals.

Signed

Neale Blackwood