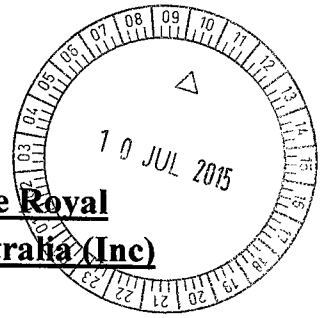


**Submission for the Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc)**



Dr Ina Carrick

Thursday 9th July 2015

In late 2009 I was asked by the RSPCA to inspect horses on a property in Greenough based on reports that the animals in question were malnourished.

I attended the property with an RSPCA inspector that had come from Perth. We found that the horses on the property were severely malnourished with an average body condition score of 1.

One of the horses had a chronic laceration to the hindlimb and another horse, a mini pony stallion, had been tethered to a piece of metal by an old rope.

The owner of the horses was not present at the first inspection however ended up being confronted by the RSPCA inspector and police at the second inspection when the horses were confiscated by the RSPCA. The owner was an elderly lady with obvious mental problems manifested by erratic behaviour, inability to answer questions, constant talking to herself and her living standards and arrangements.

Three of the horses were given to a local horse person residing in Geraldton who agreed to look after them. I believe that the RSPCA decided to help out with some if not all of the costs involved with the continued veterinary care and feeding of those horses.

The miniature stallion, I believe, was taken to Perth to be castrated and rehomed, although I am not entirely sure what happened in the end with this horse.

The lady owner of the horses ended up being prosecuted by the RSPCA and the case went to court in April 2010.

I had been informed by the RSPCA that they wished for me to be present at the court hearing as their expert witness. The court date was set for the end of April 2010 a time for which I had booked a holiday to Darwin for my first wedding anniversary. I informed the RSPCA lawyers of my plans and that I had already booked the flights and my holiday. I also queried whether there was need for me to appear as an expert witness as the photos of the severely emaciated horses would likely be enough proof for a conviction. Furthermore the obvious compromised mental capacity of the owner rendered her in no way fit to be looking after any animal especially 4 horses. The RSPCA replied that they still wanted my opinion for this case heard in court, so I organised to appear via video link from Darwin courthouse. When I suggested this solution, they replied that they still wanted me to be physically present at the court hearing as "this would make more of an impact than the video link". I refused to agree to this and ended up being subpoenaed to court by the RSPCA. I interrupted my holiday to fly back to Perth and missed my first wedding anniversary. The RSPCA paid for my return flights to Broome and fuel costs to drive from Perth to Geraldton and back. It is my belief to this day, that this money was a complete waste for the following reasons

1. They could have used several other veterinarians, including their own, to document the evidence seen on photos and to show that only dietary prohibition alone could have caused such an emaciated state as seen on those horses.
2. There was extensive photo evidence of the state of horses at the time of the confiscation leaving no doubt that cruelty was taking place on that property. In fact photos were shown so much so that the judge eventually said "we get the point, there is no need to show us anymore photos"
3. If the RSPCA wished for my opinion specifically, I could have very easily appeared via videolink, which would have carried no cost to the RSPCA at all. There was no reason for me to be at the Geraldton Courthouse in person, especially in such a small and clear cut case such as this one.

It is my firm opinion that the RSPCA and their lawyers wasted money on a totally unnecessary procedure. My presence was pure formality and had no impact on the outcome of this case whatsoever. There were two RSPCA lawyers present at the court hearing at the time, which left me absolutely flabbergasted. I had the impression that they were trying to make this case more than what it actually was. They left me feeling like I was in an episode of law & order rather than the Geraldton Courthouse. This was not a case of malicious cruelty or even blatant, indifferent neglect. It was a case of a mentally incapacitated elderly lady not being able to care for her animals and as such she just had to have them legally

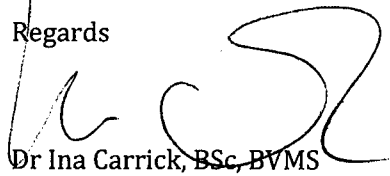
removed and cared for by someone else. However, the RSPCA spared no expense at following through in the prosecution of this person.

I welcome the inquiry into the RPSCA's spending as I feel like donations were heavily wasted in this case purely to obtain the most severe penalty possible for publicity for the RSPCA.

I would welcome to be given the opportunity to appear in front of the committee.

Thank you very much.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ina Carrick', written over the printed name.

Dr Ina Carrick, BSc, BVMS