

To whom it may concern,

The Mingenew Irwin Group (MIG) is one of Western Australia leading locally owned and driven grower/producer groups covering an area of approximately 320,000 hectares with a membership of over 95% (over 200 farm businesses).



Research and development is the group's key activity and with 20 years of project management experience on a national, state and interstate level. MIG has consistently presented a strong research and development program based on its members' needs and has a proven track record with its valued research partners.

MIG members, similarly to the vast majority of producers, pride themselves on managing their stock (sheep, cattle or any other animals) in the most profitable, sustainable and humane way. As such, they understand the need for an organisation such as RSPCA to ensure that animal cruelty is not tolerated in WA (or anywhere else).

However, they disagree with some aspects and we would like to bring forward the following points regarding RSPCA operations in WA on behalf of our members.

a- Its funding from the government

The Mingenew Irwin Group and its members recognise the need for an organisation such as RSPCA in our society to ensure that animal welfare remains high on the priorities list of animal industries. As such, we have no issue with it being funded by the government.

However, RSPCA should not be relying on donations as it could be inclined in adopting the visions of its donors and becoming impartial.

b- Its objectives

The RSPCA has publicly stated positions and active campaigns against numerous animal industries. Yet RSPCA is also in charge of policing these industries.

This constitutes a major conflict of interest.

While RSPCA has the right to lobby against industries, it is clear to us that the policing of these industries should be undertaken by a neutral and independent organisation, not RSPCA.

The objectives of RSPCA should be restricted to animal welfare and not animal liberationist movement. If not, it will not only lose its credibility and become totally irrelevant.

c- The use of its powers.

We feel that RSCPCA strong prosecutory powers, which include some sections of the Animal Welfare Act being non reviewable (not even by the Director General of DAFWA who is in charge of administering the Act), could easily lead to an abuse of power. With no agency in charge of policing RSPCA decisions, this can lead to serious issues.

Prosecutions made by RSPCA should be reviewed and based on strength of evidence in order to avoid unnecessary cases being pursued. This will also create the opportunity for people who cannot afford legal costs to have their say. Additionally, a review would implement some accountability from RSPCA inspectors and ensure that their power is not being overused.