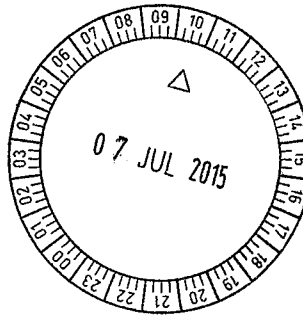


2 July 2015



Ms Samantha Parsons
Select Committee into the Operations of
The Royal Society for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc)
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Dear Ms Parsons

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

The RSPCA WA provides an important service to the community of Western Australia and, as I understand it, does so almost entirely with funds raised from the general public via fundraising appeals, donations and bequests.

That a charitable organisation is able to achieve as much as the RSPCA WA does with only half a million dollars support from the State Government is quite remarkable.

I would like to make specific comment on the inquiry's terms of reference which are to inquire into the operations of the RSPCA (WA) including the examination of the RSPCA's:

- funding from government;
- objectives; and
- use of its powers.

Funding from Government

From financial and other information in the 2014 annual report, it can be determined that a State Government grant of \$500,000 was used to support the activities of the RSPCA WA Inspectors enforcing the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*. While I am sure this state government support is welcome, it comes nowhere near the support of around \$3 million annually required to run the Inspectorate and carry out other activities on behalf of the people of WA.

I am sure most West Australians would see the RSPCA WA as an essential community organisation. They would further be surprised to discover that its operations are almost solely funded by the public with the government's investment being a mere drop in the ocean. I believe the government should increase its financial support for the RSPCA WA.

Objectives

The RSPCA aims to prevent cruelty to animals and to prosecute those who inflict cruelty to animals. The vast majority of West Australians would be in support of these aims.

As well, I believe the RSPCA's support of farming should be applauded. This sets the RSPCA apart from animal activist groups that do not support our farmers. Like most people,

the RSPCA supports farming while wanting to see the animals involved treated fairly and humanely.

Use of Powers

Information in the annual report also shows that the RSPCA WA Inspectors investigated more than 6,100 cruelty complaints involving over 11,000 animals during the previous financial year.

That only a small portion of those complaints end in prosecution is a clear indication that prosecution is seen as a last resort. Further, all prosecutions undertaken have been successful. The Inspectors are required to enforce the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* and this Act together with the work of the Inspectors accurately reflects community views on animal welfare and animal cruelty. However, the Act is now 13 years old and could be reviewed.

I expect that controversy will often arise around prosecutions of people who are cruel to animals but the 100% success rate of the RSPCA Inspectors shows that each time they got it right.

I would like to see the WA Government increase its support for the RSPCA WA and to strengthen the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* under which the Inspectors carry out their duties.

Yours sincerely

Maurice Swanson
Chief Executive