

**Submission
No 13**

**INQUIRY INTO 2021 INQUIRY INTO THE APPROVED
CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS UNDER THE
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1979**

Organisation: Cat Protection Society of NSW Inc
Date Received: 28 February 2022

NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Inquiry into charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act

Submission from the Cat Protection Society of NSW

Cat Protection completed the online survey, and we reiterate those comments here.

We note the approved charitable organisations (AWL NSW and RSPCA NSW) each make brief reference to their inspectorate functions in their annual reports, however, there is little detail in either report.

There is a lack of data on the number and type of activities (eg nature of non-compliance; species) and actions taken (eg desk review; site visit; referral to police or other agency) and outcomes; number of inquiries/complaints followed through (which might reflect unmet demand and capacity constraints); and a lack of analytical data which might reveal trends, gaps and emerging issues.

While the AWL report notes that complaints generally related to acts of omission (neglect) rather than deliberate cruelty, and the RSPCA's report refers to its Intensive Breeding Taskforce, neither report presents a broad picture of compliance with POCTAA, nor detailed data or analysis that might identify areas of need, or areas where animal welfare has improved.

In fairness, these are charitable organisations that aren't fully funded for their compliance activities and reporting. Inspectorate services are necessarily expensive: they're labour intensive, require highly trained staff, involve transport and veterinary costs, as well as timely, high-level administrative and legal support. Both organisations have a remit beyond monitoring compliance with POCTAA and thus face competing demands for internal funds allocation.

It deeply concerns us that law enforcement of animal welfare is highly dependent on charitable donations; it sends a message that these laws are not as important as other laws. Even people who don't care much about animals should be concerned by this: there are proven links between animal cruelty and violence to people; animal neglect can be a signal of a person in crisis. Still, we should all care, and be concerned, because animals are sentient and deserve our protection.

For the sake of animals, and people, our communities deserve to see increased funding of animal welfare law compliance, and with that, increased data collection and analysis so that issues can be better identified and managed.

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