RSPCA
for all creatures **great** & **small**

2025 - 2026

RSPCA AUSTRALIA
Annual Report



For their support throughout the 2025-2026 financial year, RSPCA Australia would like to thank:

National Nutritional Partner

National Pet Health Partner

National Adoption Partner

Major National Partner

Our thanks also goes to:

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Welcome to RSPCA Australia's 2025-2026 annual report. Over the past year, our work has remained firmly anchored in **our shared purpose: for animals to live better lives**. Across RSPCA Australia and the wider Federation, this purpose guides how we use science, advocacy, education, partnerships and practical action to change attitudes, behaviours, practices and laws.

This annual report reflects the extraordinary breadth and depth of that work. It also demonstrates the importance of RSPCA Australia's national role: bringing together expertise from across the Federation, representing the RSPCA at a national level, supporting our member Societies, and working with governments, industries, researchers, partners and the community to achieve lasting improvements in animal welfare.

This year, we sharpened our national advocacy focus around those areas where coordinated leadership can make a meaningful difference. Our priorities include stronger national action on greyhound racing; implementation of consistent animal welfare standards and guidelines, particularly the Poultry Standards and Guidelines; keeping Australians and their companion animals safe and together during times of crisis; and supporting a coordinated national approach to keeping cats safe at home.

Each of these issues is complex. Progress requires credible evidence, constructive engagement, and the courage to continue advocating – even when change is difficult. It also requires us to listen to the community.

Australians expect animal welfare to be taken seriously, and they want governments, industries and animal welfare organisations to play an active role in protecting animals and improving their lives.

Our advocacy for people and their companion animals recognises the profound importance of the human–animal bond. For people experiencing domestic and family violence, homelessness, financial stress, emergencies and disasters, or unexpected medical treatment, concern for their animal's safety can become a barrier to seeking help.

Recent research that we commissioned has found **overwhelming community agreement about the importance of keeping people and their animals together during times of crisis.** We are therefore advocating for more pet-inclusive accommodation, services and government responses, while highlighting the vital role of emergency boarding, foster care and education programs already delivered by RSPCAs across the country.

We also helped place greyhound welfare more firmly on the national agenda. Through educational resources, media engagement, social media and our *Great and Small Talk* podcast, we continued to raise awareness of the **serious welfare risks inherent in greyhound racing.** We will continue to call for stronger oversight, transparency, accountability and enforceable welfare protections in every jurisdiction, for as long as this industry continues.

For farmed animals, this was a particularly significant year. In March 2026, **we launched the new RSPCA Certified identity, replacing RSPCA Approved.** The new identity provides a clearer expression of the program's purpose while preserving its rigorous, science-informed Standards, certification processes and commitment to improving the lives of farmed animals. RSPCA Certified is also now a registered certification trademark, providing consumers with **stronger assurance in products from farms where animal welfare is prioritised.**

We also progressed an important update to the RSPCA Australia Standard for Meat Chickens. The revised Standard represents a meaningful step forward, including reduced stocking densities, stronger requirements in areas such as lighting, air quality, enrichment, catching and slaughter oversight, and new Enhanced Welfare requirements designed for producers raising slower-growing chicken breeds. Alongside these improvements, we are working with producers and licensees to build consumer awareness of higher-welfare options and support their uptake, **helping translate stronger standards into meaningful change for more chickens.** Together, this work demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the Standards continue to evolve alongside animal welfare science and farming innovation.

Science continues to underpin everything we do. During the year, **we completed a major refresh of the RSPCA Knowledgebase**, rebuilding and migrating more than 725 articles and policies to a faster, more secure and easier-to-use platform. **The Knowledgebase remains one of our most important public resources, helping people access trusted, science-based information** on the welfare and care of animals.

Our annual Animal Welfare Seminar continues this commitment to knowledge-sharing. The 2026 Seminar, *Animal welfare in the digital age*, brought together experts from animal welfare science, animal behaviour, veterinary practice, digital ethics, artificial intelligence and other fields to explore how new technologies can both improve and compromise animal welfare. As technology develops, the RSPCA has an increasingly important role in identifying risks and opportunities and advocating for responsible, ethical and evidence-based approaches.

Our quarterly Animal Welfare Science Update also continued to grow, reaching more than 5,300 subscribers in Australia and overseas. Its success reflects the value of carefully translating new research into concise, credible information that can support policy, teaching, advocacy and practical action.

Strong communication remains essential to achieving change. **Season 5 of the *RSPCA Great and Small Talk* podcast brought audiences into evidence-based conversations** on subjects including safe and happy cat containment, animals on social media, shark nets, horse welfare, animals and the law, and animal sentience. By bringing together RSPCA experts, member Society representatives and external specialists, the podcast helps make complex animal welfare issues accessible to a broad audience.

None of this work happens in isolation. RSPCA Australia is part of a Federation whose member Societies care for and rehome animals, investigate cruelty, educate communities, deliver outreach programs and advocate for reform across every state and territory. Our role is to help strengthen that collective impact through national coordination, partnerships, procurement, shared projects, policy development and advocacy.

I would like to thank our member Societies, staff, volunteers, Board, our strategic partner – RSPCA Pet Insurance, our major partners – Royal Canin, Bravecto and Petbarn, producers, licensees, researchers, supporters, and everyone who has contributed to this work.

Your knowledge, commitment and willingness to collaborate make our progress possible and we couldn't achieve meaningful change for animals without you.

As always, there remains much to do. But **the achievements reflected in this report demonstrate what can be accomplished** when we combine compassion with evidence, courage with collaboration, and ambition with practical action.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue working together to create better lives for animals.



Rich Mussell

Chief Executive Officer
RSPCA Australia





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



As I conclude my third year in the role of Chair, it is a privilege to present RSPCA Australia's 2025-2026 annual report and to reflect upon a year of important progress for our organisation and the wider RSPCA Federation.

RSPCA Australia's Board comprises of volunteer Directors nominated by each state and territory member Society, together with three Independent Directors. This structure brings a valuable range of perspectives and experience to our governance.

I thank my fellow Directors for the time, care and expertise they continue to contribute, and I acknowledge the enormous contribution of volunteers throughout the RSPCA Federation.

Our responsibility as a Board is to provide strategic oversight and support to an organisation that holds a unique and privileged position in Australian animal welfare. That position is the result of many decades of hard work by our predecessors, our current leaders, our staff, and volunteers. **RSPCA Australia must remain credible, effective and sustainable, while supporting a diverse Federation,** whose member Societies work every day to protect and care for animals in their communities.

A significant focus this year has been the development of RSPCA Australia's strategy to 2030. This work positions the national organisation to complement and support the Federation Strategy, while clarifying where RSPCA Australia can add the greatest value through scientific leadership, national coordination and specialist capabilities.

The strategy builds the strength of our capability in animal welfare science, national advocacy, the protection of our shared brand and reputation, effective partnerships, a strong and trusted certification program, Federation collaboration, and sustainable organisational capability. **It gives us a clearer framework for making decisions, allocating resources and measuring the impact of our work for animals.**

The Board also fully supports the work of the President and Chairs committee (PAC) on behalf of the Federation. This forum has strengthened collaboration between state and territory Presidents and Chairs from across the Federation, helping bring **greater alignment to matters of national advocacy, public positioning and risk management.** This has resulted in great successes, including a **new National Brand Strategy blueprint and the adoption of a consistent national Purpose, Vision and Mission**, with work yet to come on nationally scaled community outreach and education programs, and much more. The value of this coordinated approach and the strength that comes from speaking with a clear, united voice cannot be underestimated.

One of the year's most important milestones was the successful completion and launch of the **new RSPCA Pet Insurance strategic partnership**. This partnership will help underpin greater support for our member Societies, as they pursue their animal welfare priorities and deliver essential work in their jurisdictions. It also reflects the value of carefully governed national commercial partnerships that align with the RSPCA's purpose and deliver benefits across the Federation.

The Board has continued to oversee the transformation of the RSPCA's farm animal welfare certification program. **The launch of the new RSPCA Certified brand and certification trademark in March 2026** was a significant achievement in that journey. **The new identity more clearly communicates the purpose and substance of the program**, while retaining its foundation in robust Standards, regular assessments and continuous improvement.

We also welcomed the latest revision of the RSPCA Australia Standard for Meat Chickens. **The updated Standard strengthens requirements across a range of important welfare areas** and, for the first time, includes Enhanced Welfare provisions intended for producers using slower-growing chicken breeds. This is a significant advancement and an example of how science, consultation and practical implementation can work together to improve animal welfare at scale.

Our federated model is both a great strength and an ongoing responsibility. It allows member Societies to remain responsive to local needs, while giving us the opportunity to achieve more through national coordination. We are realising that opportunity through openness, effective governance and a willingness to work together on shared priorities.

The RSPCA brand is one of our most valuable collective assets. It represents compassion, credibility and leadership in animal welfare. Protecting that trust requires all parts of the Federation to maintain high standards of governance, evidence, transparency and accountability. The Board remains committed to ensuring RSPCA Australia provides strong stewardship of the brand and supports greater consistency across the Federation.

I thank our Chief Executive Officer, Rich Mussell, and the RSPCA Australia team for their passion, determination, commitment and professionalism throughout the year. I thank our member Societies for their continued support and for the effectiveness with which they carry out their very important work. And I thank our partners, supporters, researchers, producers, licensees and stakeholders for the expertise and collaboration they have brought to our work.

Most importantly, I thank the Australian community for the trust it continues to place in the RSPCA. That trust is never taken for granted. It is a responsibility we must continue to earn through our actions and through the outcomes we deliver for animals.

As we look toward 2030, the Board remains focused on strengthening RSPCA Australia's foundations, supporting the Federation and ensuring the organisation is equipped to lead positive, evidence-based change. The progress detailed in this report gives us a strong platform from which to continue that work.



Jan Edwards

Chair, RSPCA Australia





OUR BOARD

The RSPCA in Australia is a Federation, with eight autonomous state and territory RSPCAs which are members of the Federal body, RSPCA Australia. Each member Society Board nominates one of its Directors to also sit on the Board of RSPCA Australia. In addition to these eight nominated Directors, an Independent Chair and a number of Independent Directors are appointed.

The Board of RSPCA Australia meets several times a year to oversee the organisation and plan the future direction for RSPCA Australia. All draft new and amended animal welfare policies are referred by the Board of RSPCA Australia to a meeting of members, where they require a unanimous vote in order to be adopted.

Board as of 30 June 2026:



Jan Edwards

Independent Chair



Alexandra Wedutenko

Nominated Director,
RSPCA ACT



Chris Chilcott

Nominated Director,
RSPCA NT



Ian Cowie

Nominated Director,
RSPCA WA



Jane Hanna

Nominated Director,
RSPCA TAS



Jenny Harvey

Nominated Director,
RSPCA SA



Joe Covelli

Nominated Director,
RSPCA VIC



Karen Malzard

Independent Director



Sarah Kahn

Independent Director



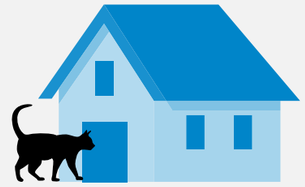
Tony Barnes

Nominated Director,
RSPCA QLD

WHAT WE DO

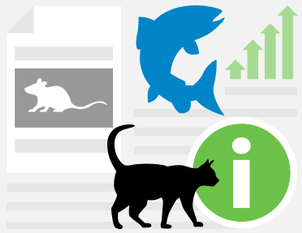
RSPCA Australia is the Federation's leading source of animal welfare science, working with governments, industries and the community to help create better lives for animals across Australia.

The RSPCA member Societies in each state and territory are on the frontline, running operations for the state-based animal rehoming centres while protecting animals in their local communities. Their work includes caring for vulnerable animals, investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty complaints through their Inspectorates, advocating on state-based issues, coordinating outreach programs for vulnerable people and their animal companions, and educating communities about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.



At RSPCA Australia, our work includes but is not limited to:

Sharing up-to-date, science-based animal welfare knowledge and educational resources with governments, industries and the community, including through meetings, provision of briefings on emerging topics, and publishing the RSPCA Knowledgebase, quarterly Science Update and annual Animal Welfare Seminar.



Operating RSPCA Certified, which helps improve the lives of millions of farmed animals through science and evidence-based higher-welfare Standards, supported by a rigorous certification process and on-site assessments to ensure the Standards continue to be met.



Leading procurement and partnership activities for the Federation that help raise awareness of the RSPCA's work, generate valuable funds, and provide essential resources for the animals in our care.



Representing the wider RSPCA Federation at the national level and supporting the RSPCA's vital work caring for and protecting animals, including coordinating our national sponsors for events and initiatives, and coordinating the development and review of RSPCA policies.



Advocating for animals great and small across a wide range of sectors and issues, including companion animals, farmed animals, animals used in sport and entertainment, animals used in research, and wild animals. We also contribute to national discussions, reviews and law reform to help achieve stronger animal welfare outcomes.



SHAPING RSPCA AUSTRALIA'S ADVOCACY GOALS



As part of our strategy to 2030, RSPCA Australia is focusing its national advocacy efforts on the areas where stronger national leadership can make a meaningful and lasting difference for animals. These priorities reflect Australians' expectations: that public policy protects animal welfare, and that animal welfare organisations and governments play an active role in improving animals' lives.

With the majority of Australians considering animal welfare important and wanting to see more government action, our advocacy priorities respond to clear community concern, address urgent and complex welfare challenges, and create opportunities for practical, evidence-based change at a national scale.

This will include a renewed focus on greyhound racing, where serious, ongoing welfare concerns inherent to the industry continue to demand urgent reform. RSPCA Australia will focus on advocating for stronger oversight, greater transparency and accountability, and meaningful action to ensure greyhounds have a good quality of life across their entire lifespan.

RSPCA Australia will also prioritise calling for stronger national leadership to progress the development and implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy with the states and territories. Establishment of the animal group chapters would facilitate the bringing together of key stakeholders under a number of critical areas that currently affect Australia's animals and the community including raising the standards for farm animal welfare, and other important sectors including companion animal and wildlife welfare.

Two new advocacy priorities have also been focused on across the Federation. **Keeping Australians and their companion animals safe** proposes an expansion of specialised community programs for people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence, homelessness or unexpected medical treatment, where concern for a pet's safety can prevent people from seeking help. And, the national **Keeping Cats Safe at Home** proposal takes a One Welfare approach, whereby animal welfare depends on and influences human welfare and environmental sustainability.

Together, these priorities will drive RSPCA Australia's advocacy efforts to achieve practical, nationally consistent change that improves the lives of animals across Australia.

OUR PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION & VALUES

RSPCA Australia's mission, values and principles guide every part of our work and shape the way we advocate, collaborate and care for animals. They reflect our commitment to improving animal welfare through evidence, compassion and practical action, while recognising the important role people, communities, governments and industries all play in creating better outcomes for animals.

Our Purpose

We exist for animals to live better lives.

Our Vision

A world where animals and people live together with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Our Mission

We improve the lives of animals through care and evidence-based welfare advancements that change attitudes, behaviours, practices, and laws.

Our Values

Show Compassion

We recognise the sentience of all animals and are committed to treating them with respect and compassion.

Lead The Way

We lead the way in animal welfare advancements, grounded in evidence, that aim to better the lives of all animals.

Act With Courage

We have the courage to be resolute, push through adversity, and are unwavering in our commitment to all animals.

Seek Positive Outcomes

We celebrate the connection between animals and humans, acknowledging the positive outcomes it brings and its role in creating a more caring society.

Our Objectives

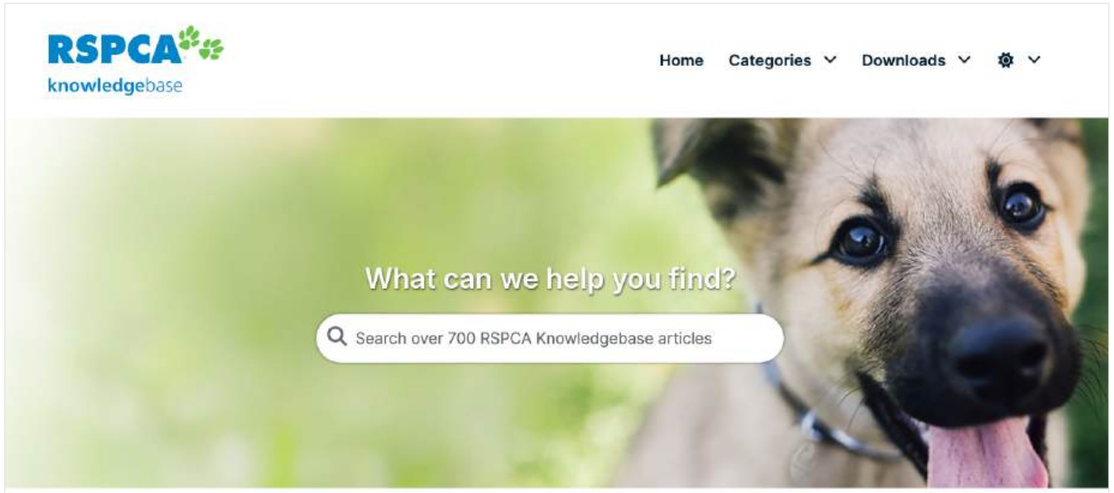
- To prevent cruelty to animals by ensuring the enforcement of existing laws at federal and state level.
- To procure the passage of such amending or new legislation as is necessary for the protection of animals.
- To develop and promote policies for the humane treatment of animals that reflect contemporary values and scientific knowledge.
- To educate the community with regard to the humane treatment of animals.
- To engage with relevant stakeholders to improve animal welfare.
- To sustain an intelligent public opinion regarding animal welfare.
- To operate facilities for the care and protection of animals.

SCIENCE & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

RSPCA is a science and evidence-based organisation; our work is guided by scientific principles and the most current research. This helps us to determine how we can best make meaningful improvements for animal welfare – whether they be farmed animals, companion animals, working animals, animals in the wild, or animals used in research, entertainment, or sport.

An informed, science-based approach is crucial to ensuring that we can fulfil our strategic purpose of making animals' lives better.





KNOWLEDGEBASE REFRESH

In December 2025, the RSPCA Knowledgebase underwent a much-needed refresh, moving from a platform that had been in place since 2018 to a modern, more secure and much faster system. The project was designed to improve performance, strengthen security, bring web platforms together, and create a better experience for staff and content editors.

It was a significant project, involving the migration and rebuilding of more than **730 articles and policies**, representing around **1.25 million words of content**. Each article was rebuilt using a new content block system, with references, links and supporting documents reviewed and updated along the way.

The new Knowledgebase is easier and more enjoyable to use, with a modern design, better mobile responsiveness, dark mode support, and a look and feel that is more closely aligned with the RSPCA website. A new search engine, improved performance through caching, and clearer navigation also make it easier for users to find the information they need.

The update also introduced a range of useful new tools, including content dashboards, article feedback and issue reporting, version control, review tracking, editor notes, authorship records, and comprehensive reporting. Together, these features give content owners better visibility over content quality and make the platform easier to maintain over time.

Overall, the KB v3.0 refresh has delivered a stronger, future-ready platform that is faster, easier to manage, and better able to support staff, subject matter experts and users. It also strengthens governance, improves quality assurance, and helps ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation's knowledge resources.

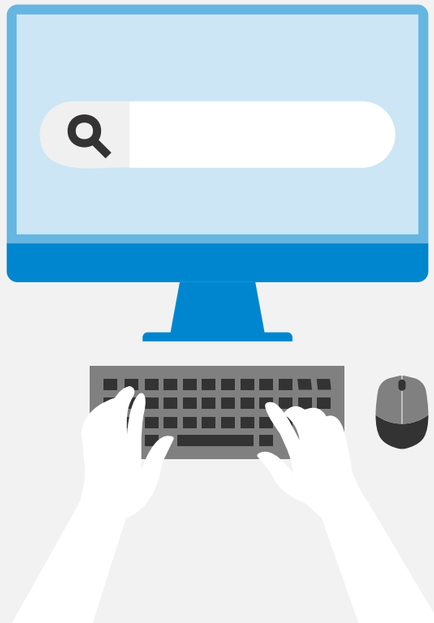
KNOWLEDGEBASE STATISTICS

11
NEW ARTICLES THIS YEAR

134
UPDATED ARTICLES THIS YEAR

733
KNOWLEDGEBASE ARTICLES TOTAL

1,285,861
KNOWLEDGEBASE VIEWS THIS YEAR



SOME OF THE NEW ARTICLES WE PUBLISHED THIS YEAR:

- How can science help improve horse welfare and human safety?
- How can I train my pet to feel comfortable in a transport carrier?
- What can be done about wildlife vehicle collisions?
- What should I know about owning a greyhound?
- What are virtual fencing and virtual herding and do they affect animal welfare?
- What are the animal welfare issues associated with feeding wildlife?
- How can I create low-cost DIY enrichment for my cat or dog?
- How do we protect human safety and magpie welfare during spring?

THE FIVE ARTICLES VOTED 'MOST HELPFUL' THIS YEAR:

1. What should I feed my dog?
2. What is the most humane way to euthanase aquarium fish?
3. What is the most humane way to kill a fish intended for eating?
4. What should I feed my cat?
5. What should I feed my kitten?

THE FIVE MOST VIEWED ARTICLES THIS YEAR:

1. What is the most humane way to euthanase aquarium fish?
2. What is the most humane way to kill a fish intended for eating?
3. How should backyard chickens be euthanased when this is necessary?
4. What should I feed my dog?
5. What should I feed my puppy?

FEEDBACK FROM OUR READERS:

"The information is very useful. I had to look at more than one site. Thank you!"

"Perfect information, exactly what I was looking for."

"Another excellent article full of extremely useful info. Great many thanks for posting it!"

"Very helpful a lot of your suggestions I hadn't thought of but now reading your article it's given me things to think about."

"Very interesting article as I did not know that the male chicks were killed it never even entered my head. You learn something new every day."

"As RSPCA's a trusted organisation I feel confident with their advice as to what to feed my dog."

"Was doing a School Assessed Coursework about this and it gave me the information that I needed and it was clear cut and precise the website is also up to date so I know it is reliable."



2026 ANIMAL WELFARE SEMINAR: 'ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE DIGITAL AGE'

In February, we hosted our 31st annual Animal Welfare Seminar, continuing the RSPCA's proud history of bringing together some of the leading minds in animal welfare science, for purposeful and thought-provoking discussions with the shared goal of improving animal welfare.

This year's topic was *Animal welfare in the digital age*, an especially timely subject given just how rapidly innovations in technology are developing and expanding across the globe. The Seminar explored how digital technology is being used to improve and safeguard animal welfare, and how risks can be identified and mitigated for the best outcomes as the digital age continues to expand and progress.

This year we had 1,296 registrations and 616 participants attend the live seminar, with many of those registered opting to view the recordings later through the Seminar resource hub. Participants gained insights from a range of experts across diverse technological and academic backgrounds, including AI and digital ethics, animal behaviour and welfare, veterinarians, the CSIRO, wildlife science, and the Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition. Topics included: *Ethical implementation of digital technology in farmed animal industries, Virtual fencing – the good, the bad and the ugly, Improving the lives of zoo animals with digital technology, Use of drones in marine mammal research* and much more.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with comments including:

"Professionally organised and run event. Great selection of speakers and array of topics. Will definitely attend in the future."; "Excellent quality of presenters and presentations, relevant to current times. Thank you!"; "An annual event that I look forward to. They vary interest-wise based on theme, but each theme has been sensible and interesting. The AI topic was excellent and packed with info not seen elsewhere."; "Fabulous variety of Seminars from excellent presenters with a wide range of most interesting topics."

Much-appreciated constructive feedback was also received on further topics for discussion, more chances for Q&A and a request for an in-person seminar. Thank you to everyone that participated, from the fantastic speakers to the invested participants and everyone behind the scenes who brought the seminar to life.

As digital technology continues to develop, understanding its potential to both support and compromise animal welfare is becoming an important new area of focus for animal welfare science. By developing our knowledge in this emerging field, we can better identify risks and opportunities, so we can advocate for responsible, ethical and evidence-based use of emerging technology in ways that protect and improve the lives of animals. Our annual Seminars are recorded and available to view on the Seminar Resource Hub.

Planning is already underway on the 2027 Seminar *Ripples and waves: Human behaviour shaping the lives of animals*, to be held online on February 24th and 25th – save the date!

RSPCA SCIENCE UPDATE

Every quarter, RSPCA Australia's Science and Policy team produces the Animal Welfare Science Update. The Science Update provides informative summaries of some of the most relevant and interesting scientific papers and reports on animal welfare published in the previous few months.

Our Animal Welfare Science Update now has 5,357 subscribers both in Australia and overseas, a significant increase from last year's total of 4,890 and a strong example of the growing interest in animal welfare science across a range of disciplines and communities. Our subscribers are made up of industry, government, researchers, NGOs, and members of the public interested in a variety of animal welfare issues.

A recent survey of Science Update readers showed just how valued the publication is by people who work within animal welfare academia or industry, through to members of the public who care deeply about animal welfare. Readers told us they read the Science Update to help them keep up with the latest animal welfare research, discover papers they may otherwise have missed, and access concise, credible summaries they can use in their own work, teaching and advocacy. Many also described it as a trusted resource they share with colleagues, students and community networks, extending its impact well beyond the initial reader. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and included constructive suggestions, such as improving readability, refreshing the format, drawing clearer links to real-world applications, policy, and legislation where relevant, and continuing to provide balanced, thoughtful summaries of research quality and relevance.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR READERS:

> *"I think the Science Update is a valuable publication that certainly is very informative to those who work directly with animals."*

> *"Being informed and being able to trust the source."*

> *"It keeps me informed of things I may not know about otherwise."*

> *"Brings the science to me. Very informative without having to commit a lot of time to reading and easy to digest."*

> *"It is one of my go to sources to stay informed and to be able to share it with colleagues."*

> *"Highlights areas of animal welfare of interest to myself and my students."*

Just some of the topics covered in this year's Science Updates:

- How post-adoption support can benefit dogs and owners today and boost adoption success in the future
- Scratch that! Challenging the assumption that cat scratching is caused by stress
- What is behind the slow uptake of slow-growing broilers?
- Buddy-up: Social support reduces signs of stress in pigs participating in research studies
- Exploring the complexities of cat population management
- How pain impacts playtime: Exploring the impact of painful husbandry procedures on play in calves
- Replacing confusion with clarity: A "Replacement Checklist" aims to reduce animal use in research
- It's just not funny: Animal content in social media propagates suffering
- Learnings from a decade of wildlife admissions to an RSPCA Wildlife Hospital
- Outdoor cats adapt to indoor life, but their owners struggle with the transition
- An assessment protocol for off-track welfare of racehorses
- Bearded dragons prefer enriched environments over a standard one
- Rams have unique vocal signatures that convey emotional information
- Welfare toolboxes for Europe's most farmed fish species
- Rodeo calves experience negative welfare prior to entering the arena
- Tourist perceptions of wildlife-based tourism

RESEARCH AND PRESENTATIONS

Our Science and Policy team does tremendous work behind the scenes, contributing to the development and publication of important peer-reviewed research, delivering presentations at universities and events, attending Parliamentary inquiries and participating in panel discussions at conferences to ensure the latest animal-welfare knowledge is communicated as widely and accurately as possible. Some highlights from this year include:

Policies and Position papers

The RSPCA Australia Science and Policy team are responsible for coordinating the review of RSPCA policy in consultation with all RSPCA member Societies to ensure consensus on the final policy statements.

By facilitating the work of the Federation wide Animal Welfare Policy Working Group, the Science and Policy team provide summaries of up-to-date science and evidence to inform the review of policy statements. Reviewing emerging issues in animal welfare is a key component of the role of RSPCA Australia to identify where there is need for new policy statements or position papers to be developed.

This year, we completed a review of:

- Policy C
- Policy update on Virtual Fencing
- Policy update on New Technologies

Working and Advisory Groups

RSPCA Working Groups

- Advocacy Working Group
- Animal Welfare Policy Working Group
- Science and Policy

Informal

- Cat Management Advocacy Working Group
- Cat Management Discussion Group
- Community Outreach Advocacy Working Group
- Greyhound Advocacy Working Group
- Greyhound Discussion Group

External Committees and Working Groups

- AAWCS Industry Standards Review Committee
- Australian Animal Welfare Industry Standards & Guidelines for Pigs Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Australian Beef Sustainability Framework Consultative Committee
- Australian Pork Sustainability Framework Reference Group
- CorLink Accreditation (animal welfare module) Advisory Council
- End mulesing working group
- International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW)
- International Collaborative on Extreme Conformations in Dogs (ICECDogs)
- International Rodeo Animal Advocacy Discussion Group
- National Animal Welfare RD&E Steering Committee
- National Rodeo Animal Advocacy Discussion Group
- NHRMC Animal Welfare Committee
- Processing Standards and Guidelines Standards Advisory Group

Presentations

- Deakin Law - Strengthening Legal Protection for Dairy Cows and Calves – presented on the development of the RSPCA Dairy Standard
- RSPCA Vic webinar - Help or harm - harnessing emerging technologies – presented on virtual fencing
- Four presentations to candidates sitting ANZCVS animal welfare membership examinations
- ANZCVS Science week 2025 - Expert opinion on psychological trauma in dogs: Beliefs, causes, and clinical signs
- Affect-EVO training school workshop. Affect-EVO is an EU funded consortium that aims to deepen understanding of the emotional lives of animals and includes both research and capacity building (AFFECT-EVO | COST Action CA23106 – An Evolutionary View to Understanding Affective States across Species). We were invited to present by this group at a workshop on communicating with the general public about animal emotions and welfare.
- ANZCCART 2025 - Animal sentience – evidence, assessment, and application to the research environment
- ISAE China regional conference - Expert opinion on psychological trauma in dogs: Beliefs, causes, and clinical signs
- World Conference on Farm Animal Welfare - Behaviour, stress, & resilience of fish in the aquacultural environment

Publications

- StrayCare Metro: Evaluation of a Targeted Cat Desexing Program to Manage Free-Roaming Cats. Ma GC, Zito S, Kennedy BPA. Animals (Basel). 2026 Apr 16;16(8):1216. doi: 10.3390/ani16081216. PMID: 42071981 Free PMC article.
- Understanding Australian Cat Caregiver Motivations and Reactions to Behaviour-Change Messaging on Cat Containment: Insights for Campaign Design. Ma GC, Speedy KL, David P, Gates MC, Littlewood KE, Zito S. Animals (Basel). 2026 Mar 3;16(5):784. doi: 10.3390/ani16050784. PMID: 41828992 Free PMC article.
- Keeping Cats Safe at Home (KCSAH): Lessons Learned from a Human Behaviour Change Campaign to Reduce the Impacts of Free-Roaming Domestic Cats. Ma GC, Gates MC, Littlewood KE, Zito S, Kennedy BPA. Animals (Basel). 2025 Dec 10;15(24):3554. doi: 10.3390/ani15243554. PMID: 41463838 Free PMC article.
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- Animals and society: Striking the right balance through ethology. Preface for the special issue of the 57th congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology Descovich, K., Daros, R., de Paula Vieira, A., Bernardino, T., Taylor, P. (2025). Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 293, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2025.106842.

Submissions and Inquiries

- 24 submissions including 7 joint with or on behalf of member Societies
- NSW game and feral animal legislation inquiry – with RSPCA NSW
- WA Greyhound racing inquiry – with RSPCA WA

Other important work

Ensuring international frameworks align with animal welfare - contributions to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

RSPCA Australia works to improve the lives of animals not only here in Australia, but wherever international standards can influence how animals are cared for, handled and protected. A key part of this work is contributing to the development of international animal welfare standards through the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), where Australia is represented by the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer as the Australian Government's delegate. These standards play an important role in guiding how animals are transported, slaughtered and farmed, and in supporting stronger welfare protections across WOAH's 183 member countries.

In the last year, RSPCA Australia has provided detailed, evidence-based comments to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to help inform Australia's submission on proposed updates to three important WOAH chapters that influence welfare during transport, disaster management, and emergency killing. This was a significant opportunity to ensure the welfare needs of animals were clearly represented in Australia's international advocacy. Encouragingly, much of RSPCA Australia's feedback was incorporated into the submission sent by Australia to WOAH, reflecting the value of constructive engagement with government and the importance of keeping animal welfare at the centre of global standard setting.

RSPCA AUSTRALIA SYBIL EMSLIE ANIMAL LAW SCHOLARSHIP

The $1,000 annual Scholarship celebrates the life-long dedication and advocacy that Sybil Emslie provided to the care and protection of animals in Australia. When Sybil passed away a decade ago, her family believed that establishing an animal law scholarship was the most fitting way to honour her life: her devotion to animals, her compassion, and her unwavering desire to protect them from harm. Since its inception, the scholarship has helped to support many students, researchers and legal professionals to carry out valuable work on a variety of animal welfare issues. Importantly, it has brought much needed attention to animal welfare issues and supported projects and activities that may not otherwise attract funding. The scholarship aims to support the work of an animal law student or lawyer who has a strong academic record and a commitment to animal law, demonstrated through active and substantial engagement with animal law and animal protection organisations and initiatives.

The 2025 winner of the Sybil Emslie Animal Law Scholarship was South Australian based law lecturer, Taylor Jobling, to assist in supporting her work to advance animal law. Having recently completed a Master of Research (Law) degree and commencing a doctorate in 2026, Taylor was selected from a pool of high calibre applicants and accorded the scholarship based on her passion for animals, her contribution to animal welfare and her prospects in animal law research and practice.

In 2024, Taylor presented research at the Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference which centred on the *Family Law Act 1975's* lack of reference to animals within its provisions, and how pets are dealt with in the family courts as property to be divided upon a relationship breakdown. Her presentation critiqued how the law currently operates and suggested how it should change to reflect the importance pets have in Australian



households as sentient beings and family members. Taylor's work has contributed to the advancement of animal protection in Australia through purposeful research and law reform advocacy. Congratulations, Taylor.

VETERINARY STUDENT PLACEMENTS

RSPCA Australia's veterinary student placement gives final-year veterinary students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of animal welfare beyond clinical practice. Working with the Science and Policy team, students undertake evidence-based research and writing on selected welfare topics, including developing or reviewing RSPCA Knowledgebase articles for the public. This helps students interpret scientific literature, communicate complex welfare issues clearly and contribute to trusted resources that support better outcomes for animals.

Students are also able to observe a range of meetings, to hear first-hand the planning and advocacy work of different members of the science team and the RSPCA Federation. These may include Science and Policy team meetings, national policy discussions, communications meetings, stakeholder meetings and introductions to work across farm animal welfare, companion animal welfare, public education and campaigns. Through this experience, students learn how scientific evidence informs RSPCA policy positions, law reform, public education, advocacy priorities and engagement with governments, industries and the broader RSPCA Federation.

The program highlights the broader role veterinarians can play in animal welfare science, advocacy, policy development, public communication and systemic change, helping students build confidence in evidence-based communication and understand how veterinary knowledge can improve animals' lives at a national level.

ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNS



The RSPCA advocates for the welfare of animals across a range of industries, environments, and issues. We regularly mobilise our hundreds of thousands of supporters to join us in driving meaningful and effective change that will positively impact animals, as well as advocating to government and industry stakeholders to influence social and political change.

Our work to protect the welfare of animals is ongoing, and it's thanks to the community's support that we've been able to work on so many different and complex issues over the past year.

STRONGER NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ANIMAL WELFARE

The RSPCA continued to advocate for stronger national leadership on animal welfare, including renewed investment in the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy and stronger federal leadership to drive nationally consistent Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines, including the long-delayed implementation of industry-specific Standards and Guidelines, such as the recently reviewed Poultry Standards and Guidelines.

The fragmented approach to animal welfare laws and protections in Australia is a pressing and ongoing issue obstructing better welfare across a range of animal welfare issues. Sustained advocacy to close this gap is critical to ensuring animals receive consistent protections no matter where they are in Australia, and that governments, industries, and communities have a clear, contemporary framework for improving animal welfare outcomes.



PUTTING GREYHOUND WELFARE FIRMLY ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA

While greyhound racing has always been a key issue across the RSPCA and our member Societies, greyhound racing has now become a new advocacy priority for RSPCA Australia, in response to the significant and ongoing welfare concerns inherent to the industry. These include but are not limited to, the overbreeding and oversupply of dogs, injuries and deaths during racing and training, inadequate housing and socialisation, and the uncertain fate of greyhounds who are no longer used to race.

Through media engagement, educational resources, social media posts, and a dedicated podcast episode (our most downloaded episode of season 4), we sought to increase public understanding of these systematic issues while continuing to advocate for governments and industry regulators to strengthen oversight, improve transparency, and implement compulsory animal welfare standards that must be adopted and enforced.

As long as greyhound racing is allowed to continue, the RSPCA remains committed to securing stronger welfare protections for greyhounds throughout their entire lives, because these intelligent, social animals deserve to live safe, healthy lives beyond the racing industry.





KEEPING AUSTRALIANS AND THEIR COMPANION ANIMALS SAFE

The RSPCA's new advocacy priority: *Keeping Australians and their Companion Animals Safe* recognises the importance of keeping companion animals and their owners together to preserve the human-animal bond, which brings significant health, social, and economic benefits. Many people experiencing domestic and family violence, homelessness, financial stress, or health challenges often delay seeking help or are forced to make impossible choices because safe, pet-inclusive accommodation options are limited. Recognising this urgent need, and the limited support currently available, RSPCA Australia has committed to help close this gap by advocating for more pet-inclusive crisis support across Australia, so that no companion animal, or the person who cares for them, is left behind. The proposal also includes an education program to help veterinarians, animal welfare inspectors and other frontline workers identify and respond to animal abuse in the domestic violence context, which would enable earlier risk identification and support faster, safer pathways out of harm for victim-survivors.

There is widespread community support for the priority, with research commissioned by RSPCA Australia showing that 98% of Australians agree keeping people and their pets together in times of crisis is important, and a further 96% agreeing that options should be explored to support people and their pets to stay together.

KEEPING CATS SAFE AT HOME AND SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE CAT GUARDIANSHIP

RSPCA Australia continued to advocate for a humane, evidence-based national approach to cat management that keeps cats safe at home, protects wildlife, and supports responsible guardianship. With around one third of Australian households caring for cats, this is an important national issue for animal welfare, conservation and community wellbeing.

This year, RSPCA Australia strengthened its call for Australian Government funding to deliver a coordinated national program that builds on the success of RSPCA NSW's Keeping Cats Safe at Home program. This national expansion would combine targeted desexing, microchipping and education with support for voluntary cat containment, helping more caregivers keep their cats safely within their property while reducing the risks associated with roaming and lessening the impact of cat predation on native wildlife.

RSPCA Australia also promoted responsible cat guardianship as an essential part of improving outcomes for cats, wildlife and communities, through educational articles, social media posts, and a dedicated podcast episode. This included supporting caregivers to keep cats safely contained, whether indoors, in secure outdoor spaces or through cat-friendly containment options, while ensuring cats have enriching home environments that meet their behavioural and emotional needs. By helping people understand what cats need to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives, the RSPCA's education and advocacy efforts are helping to support cats and their caregivers achieve better welfare outcomes.



STRENGTHENING FARMED ANIMAL WELFARE

For farmed animals, RSPCA Australia maintained focus on securing lasting reform where the scale of animal suffering is significant. We continued to push for the full implementation of the national Poultry Standards and Guidelines through public education and campaign activity calling on governments to move from endorsement to action.

This included highlighting that millions of birds still suffering while waiting for improvements, such as the millions of layer hens that will live an entire lifetime in cages while waiting for the phase-out of barren battery cages, turkeys in need of enrichment, meaningful water access for ducks, and improved minimum regulations for all chickens farmed for meat.

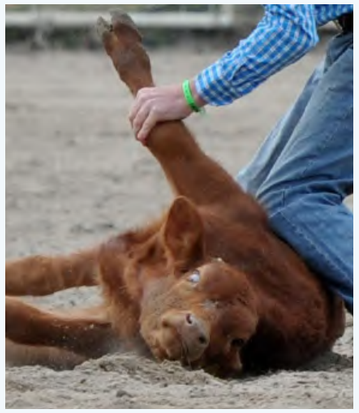
We also continued to advocate for a phase-out of mulesing and support the transition away from live sheep export by sea, following the legislated end date of 1 May 2028. The RSPCA welcomed the increase in Australian Government support to help sheep producers and supply chains transition away from this cruel and unfixable trade.



STANDING UP FOR ANIMALS USED IN RODEOS

The RSPCA's advocacy work highlighting serious animal welfare impacts with rodeos, particularly calves used in calf roping, continued this year. We have continued with our long-standing opposition to rodeos and rodeo schools due to the inherent risk of pain, injury, suffering and distress to the animals involved and we know this is a concern our supporters share.

A key focus has been strengthening our advocacy by promoting new scientific research which found that the rodeo environment itself can negatively affect calf welfare before roping events even begin. We highlighted key welfare impacts through media releases, public communications, and an episode of the RSPCA podcast Great & Small Talk (pre-recorded to be released later this year), emphasising the growing body of evidence supporting the need for stronger welfare protections for animals in rodeos, especially bucking horses.



EDUCATION, COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT



PODCAST SEASON 5

RSPCA's Great and Small Talk returned in 2026 with Season 5, bringing listeners more thoughtful, evidence-based conversations about the issues affecting animals across Australia, while adding some new and interesting topics into the mix.

Building on the momentum of the podcast's Season 4 rebrand, this season continued our endeavour to grow awareness and engagement with our listeners, while solidifying **Great and Small Talk** as RSPCA Australia's official podcast, championing better lives for animals through evidence, expertise, and powerful conversations. The podcast continued with host Brian Daly, whose warm, knowledgeable style brings the right balance of accessibility and expertise. A refreshed upload and promotion schedule helped keep listeners engaged across the year, combining 12 new pre-recorded episodes with selected reshares of some of our most popular conversations to extend the life and impact of our existing content.

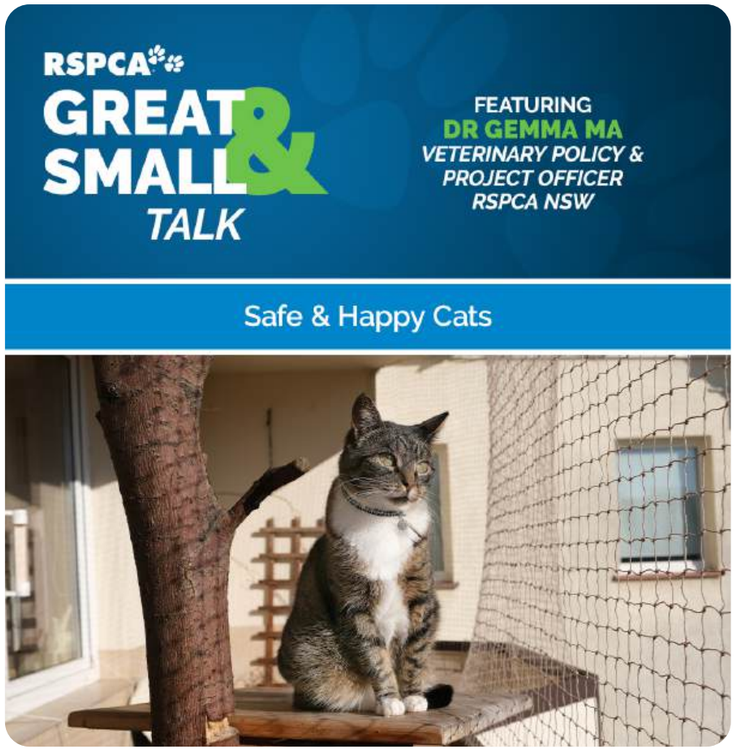
Across the season, listeners were invited into a wide range of timely and important conversations, from safe and happy cats, animals on social media and animal sentience, to rescuing animals during disasters, shark nets and shark safety, animals and the law, RSPCA's legacy with ambassador Peter Alexander, horse welfare, and more. The season also featured a diverse mix of expert voices, including RSPCA experts, member society representatives and external specialists, giving each episode a conversational feel while keeping it grounded in real-world animal welfare experience.

The top performing episodes for the financial year have been:

1. **Greyhound Racing**
2. **Cat Management**
3. **Stories from the Inspectorate**
4. **Animals Caught in Domestic Violence**

Click on images or headings to view the episodes!

The podcast episodes will continue to be released through the remainder of 2026 and can be found on our website or across various podcast host sites, so keep your eyes and ears out for upcoming episodes — and be sure to listen, share, and join the conversation.













RSPCA CERTIFIED

RSPCA Certified (formerly the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme) works to improve the quality of life for Australia's farmed animals. Established in 1996, the certification is just one of the ways RSPCA works to make a meaningful impact to help farmed animals live better lives. RSPCA Certified works with producers and licensees to encourage the changes that lead to a future of higher-welfare farming as the norm, not the exception. Today, the RSPCA's farm animal certification logo is recognised by Australians as meaning animals have been raised with consideration of their welfare. The Scheme is highly regarded as a driver of tangible improvements to farmed animal welfare.

RSPCA Certified operates as a certification program and legal trademark, underpinned by strict, animal-specific Standards that go beyond minimum legal requirements in Australia. The scheme is underpinned by a rigorous certification process involving comprehensive assessments by trained RSPCA Assessors to ensure the Standards and practices on farm and throughout the supply chain continue to be met. It's been an eventful year for the team at RSPCA Certified and there are many exciting developments to share.

REBRAND

The transition from RSPCA Approved to RSPCA Certified is one part of a broader, multi-year Transformation Program that commenced in March 2024 following Board approval of the integrated improvement plan. The Transformation Program was designed to strengthen the structure, operations and future impact of RSPCA's farm animal welfare certification, with the new name and brand identity providing a clearer reflection of the program's purpose and direction.

In March 2026, the new RSPCA Certified brand identity was launched. Formerly RSPCA Approved, the refreshed brand reflects the same trusted certification, built on robust Standards, regular assessments and a commitment to improving farmed animal welfare across Australia. The new brand is a clearer way for consumers to know that the products they're choosing come from farms where animal welfare is a priority. While the logo and identity have changed, the certification's strong commitment to improving the lives of Australia's farmed animals remains the same.

- Australia's leading, independent farm animal certification
- Underpinned by science-informed, higher-welfare Standards developed by the RSPCA's Science and Policy team that go beyond what's legally required
- Certification backed by regular, rigorous assessments to ensure conformance to the Standards
- Ongoing improvements as animal welfare science and farming innovations develop
- Dedicated to a better quality of life for farmed animals

As part of the rebrand, RSPCA Certified is a registered certification trademark. Certified trademarks are assessed thoroughly by the ACCC to meet the certification requirements, meaning Australians have more reason to trust the robustness and integrity of the program.

RSPCA CERTIFIED



RSPCA AUSTRALIA STANDARD FOR MEAT CHICKENS

The RSPCA Australia Standards exist solely to improve farm animal welfare. Developed by the RSPCA's Science and Policy team, they are detailed and focus on providing better conditions for farmed animals by delivering higher standards of handling, husbandry, stunning and slaughter, and informed by independence, science and transparency.

With continuous improvement in mind, a formal review of each animal specific Standard is conducted approximately every five years to ensure they are progressively evolving and continuing to incorporate relevant animal welfare science and farming innovations.

During 2025-26, RSPCA Australia progressed the review of the RSPCA Australia Standard for Meat Chickens. Building on work that commenced in 2024, the review followed RSPCA's established standards development and review process and was informed by scientific evidence, stakeholder consultation and consideration of developments in industry practice and animal welfare. The review included engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to gather feedback and help inform the development of the revised Standard, released in July 2026.

Representing a meaningful step forward in the welfare of meat chickens in Australia, the revised RSPCA Australia Standard introduces major changes to reduce stocking density, provide variable light intensity and phase out electrical waterbath stunning that must be met by 1 January 2031, alongside stronger requirements for chick transport, air quality, lighting, catching, staff training and slaughter oversight. Importantly, it includes 'Enhanced Welfare' requirements which provide a clear option for those wanting to take a meaningful step towards improving meat chicken welfare and raise slower growing chicken breeds in conditions that reflect the evidence of what supports better meat chicken welfare. The 'Enhanced Welfare' section of the Standard is a significant new inclusion for demonstrating a clear pathway, indicating the type of improvements the RSPCA wants to see the industry invest in for the future. Not only does the slower growing breed make a considerable difference to the welfare of the chickens, but the Enhanced Welfare section also requires more space for birds to move, better provision of platforms and perches, natural light, longer rest periods, access to the outdoors, reduced disturbances for the birds with fewer 'pick ups' for slaughter (otherwise known as thinning) and only allows the use of controlled atmospheric stunning – currently the most humane option for stunning of meat chickens prior to slaughter.

LICENSEE FEATURE

RSPCA Certified works with brands, restaurants and retailers to modify their systems and transition chain of custody sourcing to make higher-welfare food more accessible to Australians, making a tangible difference to the lives of millions of farmed animals in Australia each year.

Foodland

Foodland Supermarkets have been servicing South Australians for over 60 years, and with 92 stores has established itself as an iconic brand in the South Australian retail sector. Foodland has the highest state market share for independent supermarket operators in Australia, so the move to sourcing RSPCA Certified chicken is a big deal for South Australians looking for greater accessibility of chicken raised to a higher-welfare standard.

Foodland was the first Licensee to feature the new RSPCA Certified logo in-store and in catalogues, helping make higher-welfare choices more visible to customers. This represents an exciting step forward for RSPCA Certified as the new brand begins to appear on shelves.

Betty's Burgers

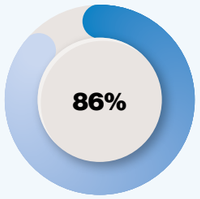
Betty's Burgers is a classic Australian burger restaurant with a casual, beach aesthetic reflective of its origins in Noosa. Since its establishment in 2014, Betty's has expanded to provide guests all around Australia with the unique Betty's, Noosa-inspired beach experience. The Betty's team are dedicated to sourcing fresh, local ingredients, and by sourcing RSPCA Certified chicken they are showing their customers that they prioritise the welfare of farmed animals.

In June 2026, Betty's Burgers officially commenced sourcing RSPCA Certified chicken, with the RSPCA Certified logo appearing in their restaurants around Australia. With more than 60 outlets nationally, this step means more people can access higher welfare food from one of the most frequented quick service restaurants in the country.

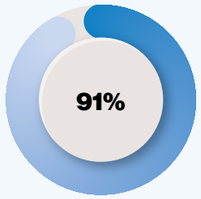
PUBLIC AWARENESS

The RSPCA regularly conducts research through independent, reputable research providers to gain better understanding of public sentiment and help shape our goals related to awareness and education and inform our communications about the certification and farmed animal welfare.

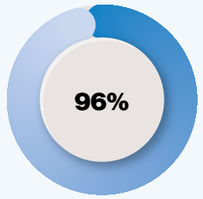
In September 2025, research conducted by McCrindle showed that 87% of Australians were familiar with the RSPCA's higher-welfare certification. This continues the growing awareness of the Scheme, and consumer demand for food raised to a higher-welfare standard.



Would be likely to buy a product certified by the scheme



Look for information about how an animal-based product was farmed on packaging



Believe animal welfare is an important consideration when purchasing food products at the supermarket

CERTIFICATION BODY

Key to RSPCA Certified is a stringent and multi-layered process for ongoing certification which involves RSPCA Assessors and Certification Team members to form the Certification Body. RSPCA Assessors conduct on-site assessments against the requirements in the relevant RSPCA Australia Standard, and as an additional layer, the Certification Team reviews these findings to issue a Certificate of Conformity or address any non-conformances found. This multi-layered process reflects best practice for certification.

Once a Producer achieves certification, it doesn't end there. To verify ongoing conformance, RSPCA Certified Producers are subject to regular assessments conducted by RSPCA Assessors on farm, during transport, and at slaughter. Paramount to the certification, these assessments include evaluation of documents, records and management practices, place significant importance on evidence of appropriate animal husbandry and handling practices and may be scheduled in advance or conducted unannounced.

In 2025, the Certification Body conducted 826 assessments including on-site, chain of custody, and documentation assessments. Crucial to the success of the certification, these results reflect the collaborative work of the dedicated farmers and producers committed to improving the welfare of Australia's farmed animals by farming to the hundreds of requirements in the RSPCA Australia Standards.

In the 2025-26 financial year, the RSPCA Certification Body worked with:

535 individual farms
516 meat chicken farms – of which 146 are free range
10 pig farms – all free range
1 layer hen/egg farms – free range
122 Chain of Custody businesses
12 turkey farms – of which 3 are free range
24 abattoirs

STATISTICS

TOTAL

764,940,028 animals farmed to the Standard in 2025-26

535	farms included in scope	19	abattoir assessments	65	Chain of Custody assessments
709	farm assessments	45	process assessments	7	Producer document reviews

Animals since 1996

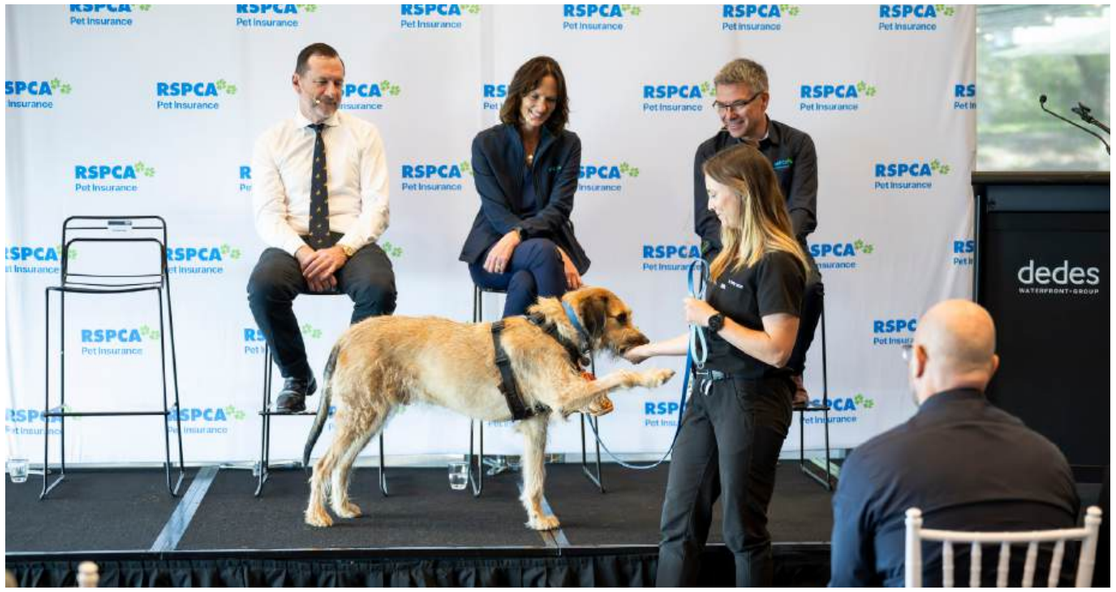
meat chickens	6,580,612,699
salmon	36,193,730
turkeys	4,024,746
layer hens	2,543,864
pigs	1,982,799

Animals in 2025-26

meat chickens	764,242,589
turkeys	412,380
layer hens	171,890
pigs	113,169

RSPCA PET INSURANCE





THE NEW RSPCA PET INSURANCE IS HERE!

The new RSPCA Pet insurance launched in April this year, bringing RSPCA's commitment to animal welfare into a new space, helping more pets and the people who care for them.

Through a new strategic partnership with Pacific International Insurance, the RSPCA is helping Australian pet owners take care of their beloved pets, while the partnership generates even greater support for the RSPCA's work to improve the lives of animals across Australia.

Following an extensive and competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, RSPCA Australia entered into a multi-year strategic partnership with Pacific International Insurance to deliver RSPCA Pet Insurance.

Pet insurance can play a vital role in providing the best possible care and treatment for the companions that share your home. The new RSPCA Pet Insurance was developed with input from RSPCA veterinarians and is informed by more than 150 years of the RSPCA's experience caring for animals and advocating for their protection.

The strategic partnership gives the RSPCA a direct role in shaping the insurance offered carrying its name, combining the RSPCA's animal welfare expertise with Pacific's experience in underwriting, pricing, product design and service.

This collaborative approach is designed to deliver better outcomes for companion animals and the people who care for them.

With flexible cover and clear, straightforward choices, RSPCA Pet Insurance is designed to help people select an option that suits the needs of their animals and their own circumstances. Making pet insurance easy to understand and access, to help more people feel confident and able to seek veterinary care for their animals when they might need it.

CENTRED AROUND ANIMAL WELFARE

As always, animal welfare remains at the heart of everything we do at the RSPCA, and the new strategic partnership is no exception. RSPCA now has a more active role in RSPCA Pet Insurance, including participation in board-level decision making. This involvement will help ensure animal welfare remains central, while ongoing financial contributions will strengthen the RSPCA's capacity to care for animals through our many and diverse programs and services, and advocate for lasting improvements to their welfare.

Whether you've never held or considered pet insurance before, you've been with a different brand or you've been with RSPCA Pet Insurance previously – you can now come home to the RSPCA.

For more information, visit rspcapetinsurance.org.au

SUPPORTING THE FEDERATION

RSPCA Australia supports the wider RSPCA Federation in their life-saving work rehoming animals, investigating animal cruelty, community outreach, advocating for legislative change, and caring for animals who have no one else. This includes providing support and coordination for national events and marketing initiatives, managing relationships with our valued national corporate partners, leading national procurement activities, and distributing funds raised at the national or international level. Here's what we achieved together this year.



APPRECIATING OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our national partners, their staff, customers, and the wider business community. It is thanks to their generosity that we can continue doing our work, and we thank you sincerely for being on this journey with us.



Our national corporate partners help us deliver meaningful animal welfare outcomes across Australia through funding, product donations, services and shared expertise that support our animal care centres. This year we also saw significant growth in the support for community outreach initiatives. This enabled RSPCA teams to assist vulnerable communities and improve the welfare of animals and their guardians facing hardship.

Royal Canin, our National Nutritional Partner, continued its outstanding support to the RSPCA, donating over 232 tonnes of pet food across the Federation to feed all the cats and dogs in our care. Their support also included over 89 tonnes of cat and dog food for our community outreach programs. Royal Canin also sponsored National Adoption Month and Give to Get Them Home, supporting vital fundraising and awareness efforts, while continuing its commitment to sustainability through **TerraCycle**, with 2 tonnes of pet food packaging recycled across RSPCA animal care centres.

MSD Animal Health, our National Health Partner, continued to play a significant role in advancing animal welfare outcomes across Australia. By providing access to essential vaccines, parasiticides and preventative care products, including Bravecto, MSD helped protect the health and wellbeing of thousands of animals across the RSPCA network. This support gave these animals the best possible chance of recovery, rehabilitation and rehoming. MSD's commitment also extended to key national campaigns, including National Adoption Month and Give to Get Them Home, helping raise awareness, engage supporters and deliver positive outcomes for animals in need.

Our partnership with **Petbarn and the Petbarn Foundation** continued to deliver meaningful outcomes for animals and communities across Australia. Through support for adoption initiatives and national campaigns, including Tree of Hope and Domestic Violence Awareness Month, funds were raised to help deliver vital animal welfare services, adoption, and community support programs. During the year, 4,932 cats and kittens found loving homes through dedicated Petbarn stores, supporting the RSPCA's rehoming efforts nationwide.

We would like to extend a special thank you to **Peter Alexander** for their continued commitment to improving the lives of animals in need. As a National Matching Partner for Give to Get Them Home, Peter Alexander helped amplify the generosity of our supporters by matching donations made on the day. They also ran a dedicated one-day fundraising campaign, donating a sizeable contribution from every pair of pyjamas sold. Through the support of their customers and team, this campaign raised valuable funds to help provide care, shelter and hope to vulnerable animals across Australia.

The KONG Company continued its valued support of RSPCA member Societies, providing enrichment toys to help improve the engagement and wellbeing of animals in RSPCA care. KONG's ongoing commitment helps provide animals with more stability and positive experiences while they wait for their new home.

This year, **we welcomed Alsco and Elite as our new Corporate Supporters**. With Alsco, a National Kennel Sponsor, who also donated in-kind towels and blankets, and Elite providing high-quality cat litter to use in our animal care facilities nationally, their support helps ensure animals receive the essential care they need, setting them up for success in their journey to finding a new home.

NATIONAL EVENTS

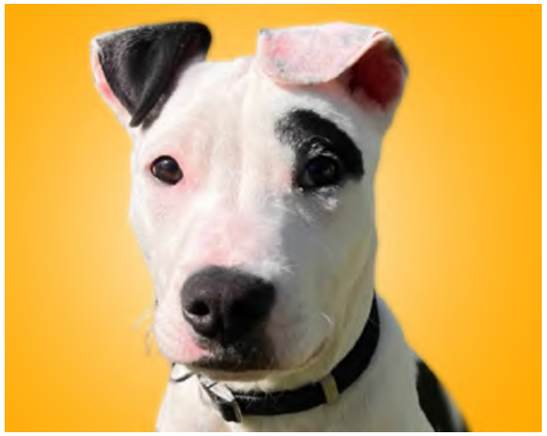
Corporate partnerships played a vital role in delivering impactful national campaigns throughout the year, bringing together member Societies, partners and supporters around shared animal welfare priorities.



National Adoption Month

National Adoption Month marked a new chapter for the RSPCA, following on from Million Paws Walk with a nationwide focus on promoting pet adoption and helping more animals find loving homes. Supported by **Royal Canin** and **MSD Animal Health**, the campaign raised awareness of adoption and **resulted in 1,414 cats and dogs being adopted nationally during March.**

Through this **100 Reasons to Adopt** initiative, Royal Canin and MSD helped encourage more Australians to consider welcoming an animal awaiting adoption. Campaign visibility was further enhanced through **support from Hoyts**, whose national cinema advertising helped extend the reach of the adoption message to audiences across Australia.



Give to Get Them Home

Give to Get Them Home delivered a **record-breaking result, raising more than $3.6 million**, surpassing the $3.4 million target. With the support of National Matching Partners **Royal Canin**, **Peter Alexander** and **MSD Animal Health**, donations were matched, helping supporters double their impact.

The funds raised will help provide essential care for more than 18,000 animals, including veterinary treatments such as microchipping, vaccination and desexing, helping give animals the best possible chance of finding loving homes.

Together, these campaigns demonstrated the power of national partnerships to turn corporate support into tangible outcomes for animals.



WORKPLACE GIVING

Our refreshed Animal Heroes Workplace Giving program continued to grow this year, connecting employees across Australia with the RSPCA's mission to protect and care for animals in need.

A total of 109 organisations supported the RSPCA through workplace giving, demonstrating the power of regular employee contributions to create lasting change for animals. This ongoing support provides a reliable source of funding that helps sustain animal welfare programs and services throughout the year.

We extend our sincere thanks to the many organisations and employees who supported Animal Heroes, including The Good Guys, Costco, ANZ, Hoyts, Australia Post, Deloitte and King & Wood Mallesons, for their commitment to improving the lives of animals across Australia.

Across partnerships, campaigns and workplace giving, this year highlighted the value of collaboration between businesses, employees, supporters and the RSPCA Federation. Together, these partnerships are helping create a better future for animals by supporting prevention, protection, rehabilitation and rehoming efforts across Australia.

NEWS FROM THE FEDERATION

INSPECTORATE 2-UP MODEL RECRUITMENT

In February 2026, RSPCA Victoria began recruiting new animal cruelty Inspectors as the organisation transitioned to a new two-up operating model. Under the model, Inspectors attend animal cruelty investigations in pairs, strengthening the safety and support available to frontline authorised officers while they respond to reports of animal cruelty across the state.

Successful candidates completed a six-week on-site induction at RSPCA Victoria's headquarters, followed by expert field training alongside experienced senior Inspectors before receiving their official authorisation. The expanded team and new operating model will help strengthen RSPCA Victoria's capacity to respond to animal welfare concerns while supporting the safety of the people working on the frontline to protect animals.

ANGEL'S SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE

This year, RSPCA Northern Territory gave Angel a second chance after she was surrendered when her family could no longer afford the urgent veterinary treatment she needed. Her family had sought help after noticing blood in her urine, and vets discovered a bladder stone the size of a tennis ball. They initially tried medication, but when her symptoms returned, the cost of life-saving surgery was beyond what they could afford.

After Angel came into RSPCA NT's care, the veterinary team successfully performed delicate surgery to remove the enormous stone. With treatment and recovery, Angel was given the chance to heal and find a new home.

Angel's story highlights the difficult decisions families can face when unexpected veterinary costs arise, particularly during ongoing cost-of-living pressures. It also demonstrates the important role of RSPCA NT's veterinary services in providing surrendered animals with the treatment, care and second chance they need.



EXPANSION OF VICTORIA'S OP SHOP NETWORK

This year, RSPCA Victoria expanded its Op Shop network, opening five new stores across the state since October 2025, with further growth planned over the next three years.

The stores offer local communities access to quality pre-loved fashion, homewares and other goods, while providing another way for people to support RSPCA Victoria's work. Funds raised through the Op Shop network help provide care and support for some of Victoria's most vulnerable animals, turning donated goods and community purchases into a meaningful contribution to animal welfare.

The continued expansion of the network is creating more opportunities for Victorians to support animals in need while promoting the reuse of quality goods and strengthening RSPCA Victoria's connection with communities across the state.

100 YEARS OF PROTECTING ANIMALS

This year, RSPCA Queensland celebrated 100 years since the introduction of the *Animals Protection Act 1925*, landmark legislation that first granted RSPCA Inspectors the legal powers to investigate animal cruelty and enforce animal welfare laws across the state.

Over the past century, RSPCA Inspectors have played a vital role in protecting Queensland's most vulnerable animals. Since 2001 alone, the organisation has responded to more than 342,000 animal welfare reports, with Inspectors now investigating around 13,000 cruelty complaints each year. Today, more than 30 Inspectors travel over 53,000 kilometres across Queensland every month, responding to animals in need in communities large and small.

The centenary recognised a century of progress in animal welfare while reaffirming RSPCA Queensland's ongoing commitment to protecting animals, strengthening welfare laws and advocating for a kinder future for all animals.

KEEPING CATS SAFE AT HOME PROJECT

RSPCA NSW's Keeping Cats Safe at Home (KCSAH) project was a human behaviour change campaign assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust. By desexing strays and encouraging people to desex, microchip, register and safely contain their cats, the project aimed to improve welfare outcomes for both cats and wildlife.

When beginning the project, RSPCA NSW implemented a holistic approach to protection alongside local governments, veterinarians, wildlife organisations and cat caregivers throughout the state.

Now well into the project's expanded second phase, RSPCA NSW works alongside 30 local governments – a huge increase from the 11 councils involved in the project's debut. Phase two has also seen more than 9,570 cats desexed and a further 4,923 microchipped in FY25/26 alone.

Every pet guardian assisted and cat desexed helps take pressure off pounds and neighbourhoods that would otherwise have to manage stray colonies themselves. With more cats receiving vital treatment and more carers being supported than ever before, the KCSAH campaign is an incredible reminder of how collaboration builds brighter futures for people, wildlife and our feline friends alike.

KEEPING PETS AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

This year, RSPCA Queensland continued to support people escaping domestic and family violence through its Pets in Crisis program. In 2025–26, the program helped **170 pets and their owners**, providing support to **98 dogs, 66 cats and six birds**. Services included veterinary checks, vaccinations, desexing, microchipping, behaviour support and up to 28 days of emergency accommodation for each animal.

With 90% of pets reunited with their families, the program helps ensure people are not forced to choose between their own safety and the wellbeing of their companion animals. It demonstrates the important role RSPCA Queensland plays in supporting both people and pets during times of crisis.

HEALTHY PET DAY

This year, RSPCA ACT held its first Healthy Pet Day, providing free veterinary checks, vaccinations, microchipping, parasite prevention, grooming, pet food and behavioural advice to around 40 low-income pet owners. The initiative was designed to help people experiencing financial hardship access preventative care and support for their companion animals.

For many of the pet owners who attended, Healthy Pet Day provided access to care, treatment and advice they may otherwise never have sought due to cost. The success of the event highlighted the importance of accessible preventative veterinary care and the role it can play in keeping pets healthy, supported and safely in their homes.

The initiative reflects RSPCA ACT's commitment to supporting both animals and the people who care for them, helping remove financial barriers to essential pet care and strengthening the bond between pets and their families.

RSPCA ACT

CINNAMON AND NUTMEG OVERCOME ADVERSITY TOGETHER

This year, RSPCA ACT cared for two remarkable kittens, Cinnamon and Nutmeg, who captured the hearts of the community after undergoing life-changing surgery. Between them, three of their four eyes needed to be removed, but despite their difficult start, the pair adapted remarkably well to life with limited vision.



Their recovery revealed an extraordinary bond. The kitten with one remaining eye would help their sibling bury their business in the litter tray, bring them toys to play with and stay close by their side. Their story was a beautiful example of the resilience of animals and the bonds they can form with one another.

Cinnamon and Nutmeg's journey received widespread media attention, including coverage on Channel 10 news, in newspapers and across radio, helping raise awareness of the care and rehabilitation provided by RSPCA ACT and inspiring the community with the kittens' remarkable resilience.

ADVOCATING FOR A TRANSITION AWAY FROM GREYHOUND RACING

This year, RSPCA South Australia called for a planned phase-out of greyhound racing, following ongoing animal welfare concerns and the findings of a State Government Inquiry into the industry. Despite recommendations for reform, South Australia recorded the nation's highest rate of greyhound deaths and major injuries in 2025.

In May 2026, RSPCA SA formally called on the State Government to commit to a managed transition away from greyhound racing, prioritising the welfare and rehoming of affected dogs. RSPCA SA continues to advocate for evidence-based reform and a future where greyhounds can live safe and fulfilling lives beyond racing.

RSPCA South Australia

A NEW ERA FOR PETS AND THEIR PEOPLE IN TASMANIAN RENTALS

This year, RSPCA Tasmania welcomed a significant milestone in its long-standing advocacy for pets in rental housing, with Tasmania's new pets in rentals legislation coming into effect on 20 March 2026.

The Residential Tenancy Amendment (Pets) Act 2025 ends blanket 'no pets' policies, introducing a fairer and more transparent process for tenants seeking to keep companion animals in their rental homes. While landlords retain important protections, they can no longer refuse a pet without reasonable grounds and appropriate consideration through the new process.

For RSPCA Tasmania, the reform recognises the vital bond between people and their animals and addresses a significant animal welfare issue. Housing insecurity is a major contributor to pet surrender, with families sometimes facing the heartbreaking choice between keeping their companion animal and securing a home.

The changes will help more people and pets stay together, reduce pressure on animal shelters and contribute to a more pet-inclusive rental system across Tasmania. This milestone is also a testament to the power of sustained advocacy and collaboration.

RSPCA Tasmania is grateful to the supporters, advocates and politicians who stood alongside us throughout this journey and helped turn years of dedicated advocacy and work into real meaningful change for tenants and their animals across Tasmania.

RSPCA Tasmania

AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP FINDS A FOREVER HOME

This year, RSPCA Western Australia captured hearts across the country with the story of two inseparable companions, Russel the goose and Kevin the peacock. Surrendered together from the same property, the pair were initially housed separately while settling into the shelter. It quickly became clear that the arrangement wasn't working. Russel became distressed, honking constantly, while Kevin paced restlessly in his enclosure.

When staff reunited them, the change was immediate. Calm, content and inseparable once again, Russel and Kevin spent every moment side by side, eating, exploring and keeping each other company. Their remarkable bond prompted RSPCA WA to make the decision that they would only be adopted together.

After winning over thousands of supporters through social media, the pair found their perfect forever home, where they will continue their lives together. Their story is a heartwarming reminder that the bonds animals form can be just as meaningful as our own, and that recognising those relationships can make all the difference in helping animals thrive.



RSPCA Western Australia

FINANCIALS

RSPCA Australia receives and distributes donations from the community and other fundraising income to RSPCA member Societies.

A small proportion of revenue comes from royalties through arrangements with corporate partners, which forms part of our distribution to member Societies. RSPCA member Societies in each state and territory deliver animal care services including adoptions and inspectorates.

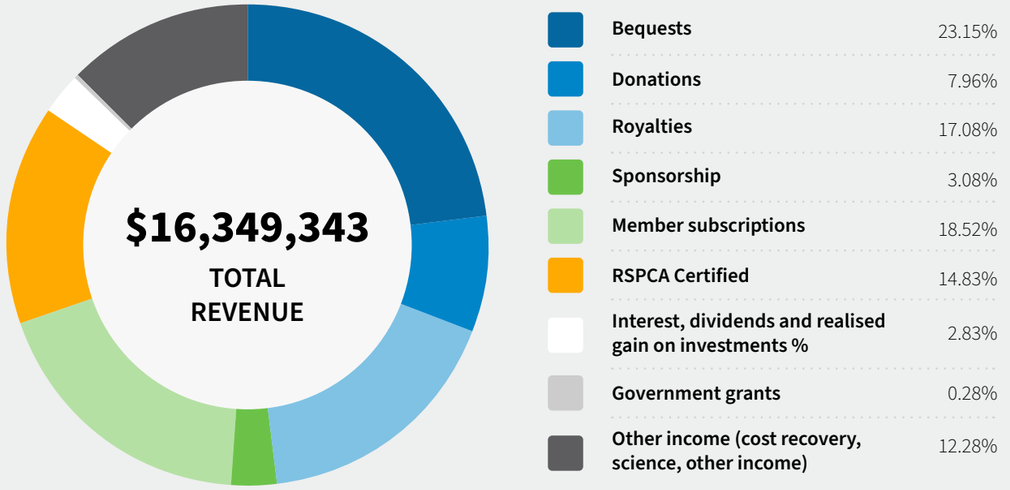
All income generated by RSPCA Certified goes towards the cost of running the operations, including certification, marketing, and operational costs. Donations to the RSPCA do not fund RSPCA Certified and any surplus generated by the program is invested back into further development.

RSPCA Australia's full audited financial statements can be found on the ACNC website.

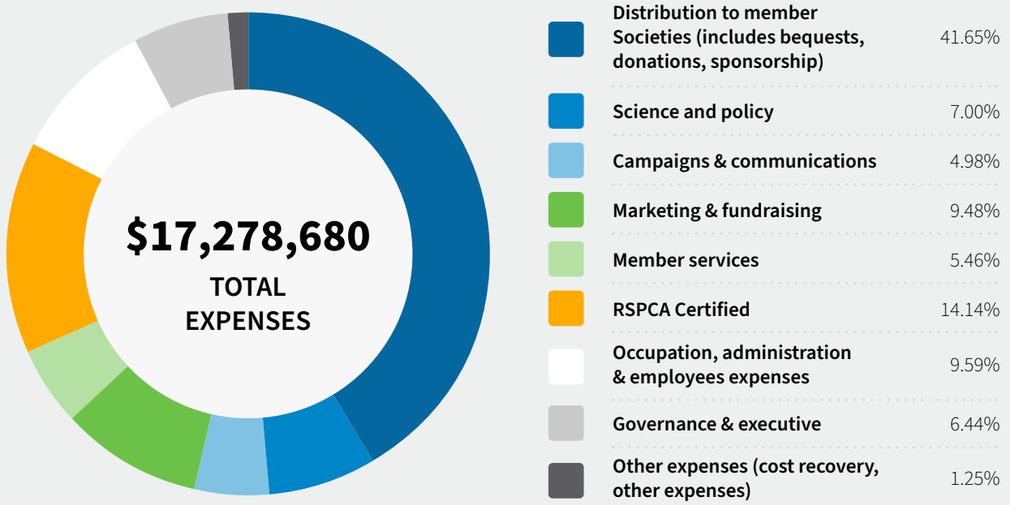


KEY AREAS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

RSPCA AUSTRALIA REVENUE:



RSPCA AUSTRALIA EXPENDITURE:



Thank you for your support ...

RSPCA

for all creatures **great** & **small**

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