

## RSPCA report on animal outcomes from our shelters, care and adoption centres

2024-25

The RSPCA is Australia's oldest, largest and most trusted animal welfare organisation. This year we received <sup>1</sup> 77,464 animals across shelters and adoption centres nationwide.

We are pleased to report that over the past 10 years we have helped 588,844 animals by rehoming them, reuniting them with their owners or releasing wildlife back into the wild. This includes 213,405 dogs and puppies, and 279,350 cats and kittens who were rehomed or reunited with their owners.

RSPCA teams all over the country work hard year on year to help animals find a new home. This includes introducing new approaches and programs to increase the number of animals rehomed and reunited with their owners, as well as programs to address overpopulation and reduce the number of animals in the community needing to enter our shelters. These include highly visible public initiatives, as well as substantial work behind-the-scenes, such as:

- **Extensive promotion of the wonderful animals we have available for adoption** through [www.adoptapet.com.au](http://www.adoptapet.com.au), social media events, promotions around special occasions or focusing on certain groups of animals (such as senior animals, or mother cats and kittens together), and adoption centres in shopping precincts and with the RSPCA National Adoption Partner Petbarn.
- **Increasing community awareness of and support for the value of adopting animals** from shelters and rescue groups more broadly, including through media stories and events.
- **Working with smaller rescue groups** to extend the reach of adoption initiatives.
- **Providing services to reunite lost companion animals with their owners.**
- **Providing community and shelter-based desexing schemes** to reduce the number of unwanted litters born, including initiatives reaching pet owners experiencing financial hardship.
- **Expanding foster care networks** to care for more animals and those who have special needs. Animals cared for in foster homes may include pregnant animals, those with young litters, orphaned kittens and puppies, seniors, those recovering from surgery, those needing to build their confidence or requiring behavioural training in a home setting, those who don't cope well in a shelter environment and those with other special needs.
- **Dedicated behavioural trainers** who put in place behavioural modification and management plans for animals requiring specialist support, and who also provide post-adoption behaviour classes.
- **Advances in clinical veterinary care** including isolation facilities and improved processes in shelter disease management and surgical rehabilitation.
- **Adoption follow-up** with new owners to ensure animals are settling into their new homes and owners are provided with additional information and referral to appropriate telephone or on-site support services.
- **Community information, awareness raising and education** about responsible pet ownership and working with local government, strata organisations and property owners to encourage support for pet ownership.
- **Monitoring current research and investment in Australian-based research** to ensure evidence-based approaches to animal welfare.
- **Passionate staff and volunteers** who work tirelessly for the animals in their care.

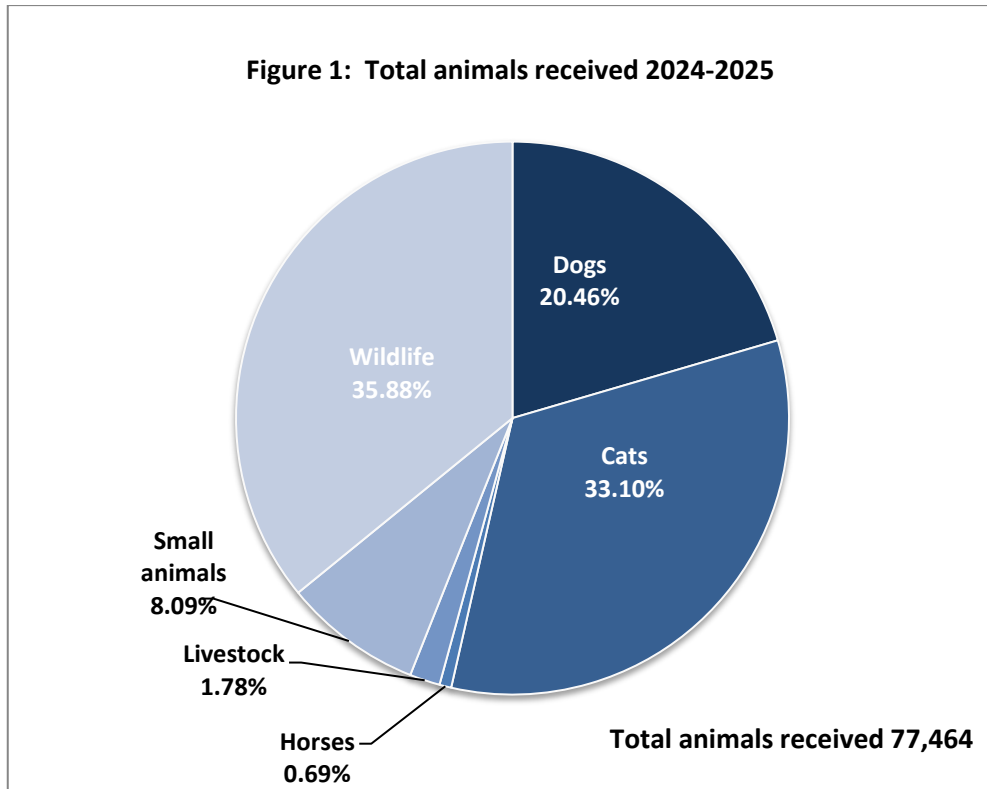
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<sup>1</sup> "Received" is used throughout this report to refer to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2024-25 financial year.

## All animals

In 2024-25, the RSPCA cared for 77,464 animals including 15,852 dogs, 25,639 cats, 537 horses, 1,375 livestock, 6,267 small animals (such as mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, fish and ferrets) and 27,794 native and introduced wild animals (such as wombats, kangaroos, possums and reptiles) (see Figure 1).

This was a decrease of 4,205 animals (5.15%) from 2024-25 when we received<sup>1</sup> 81,669 animals.



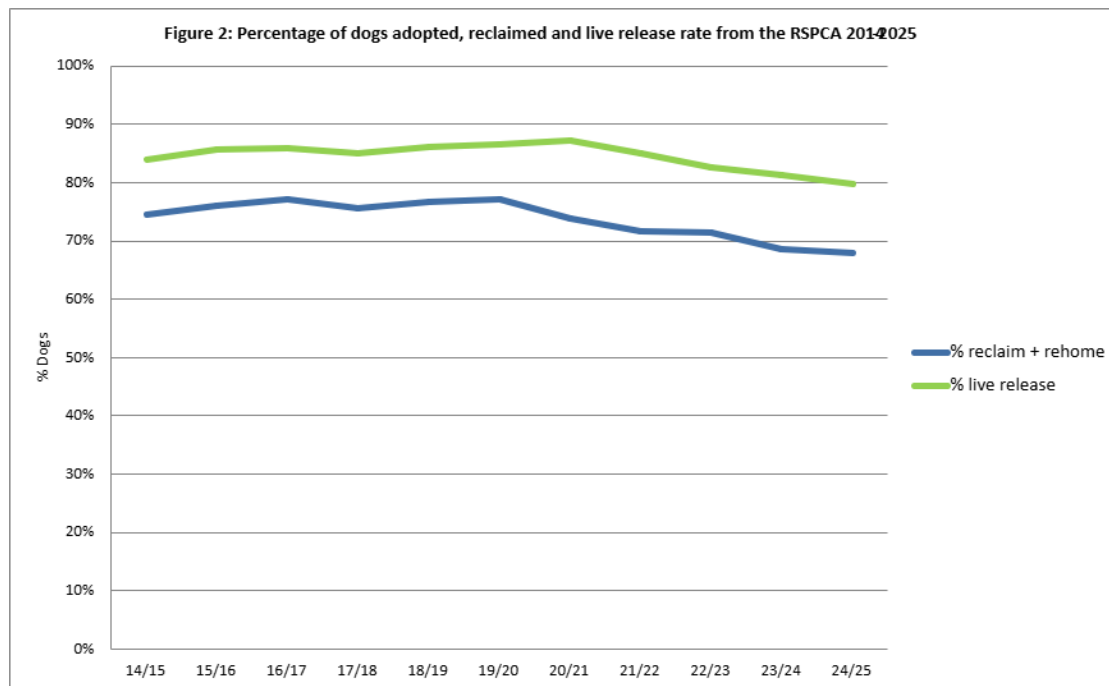
Note: The total number of animals coming into the care of the RSPCA can be influenced by many factors: for example, the number of local council animal management (pound) contracts the RSPCA might manage in any one year.

<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2024-25 financial year.

## Dogs

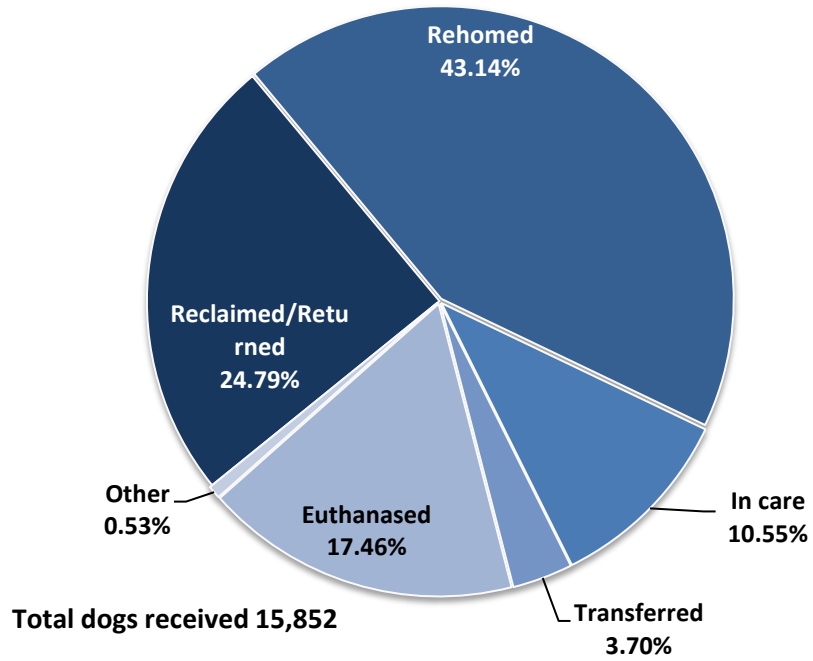
During the 2024-25 financial year, the RSPCA received<sup>1</sup> 15,852 dogs. Of these, 67.93% of dogs were rehomed or reunited with their owners (see figures 2, 3 and 4).

One measure that is used for monitoring shelter outcomes over time is the live release rate (LRR). The LRR is the percentage of dogs who were adopted, reclaimed by their owner or transferred to a rescue group or other non-RSPCA facility as a percentage of the total number of dogs received (not including those currently in care or categorised as 'other') for the 2024-2025 financial year. The 2024-25 LRR for dogs was 79.87%, which was a decrease of 1.37% compared to the previous year.

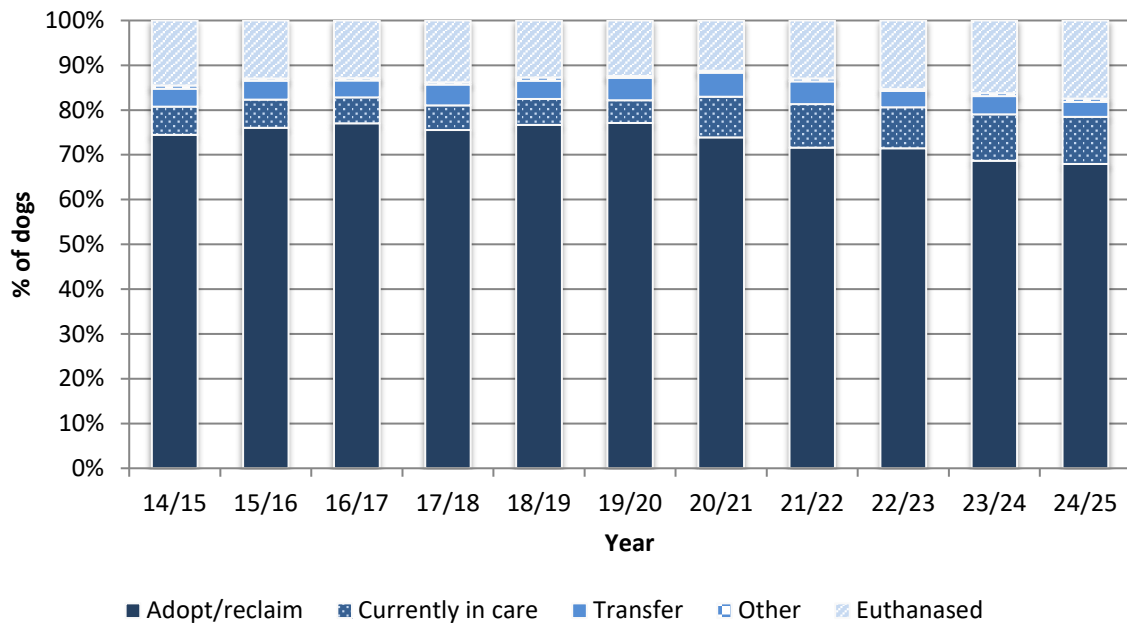


<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all dogs in RSPCA facilities during the 2024-2025 financial year.

**Figure 3: Outcomes for dogs 2024-2025**



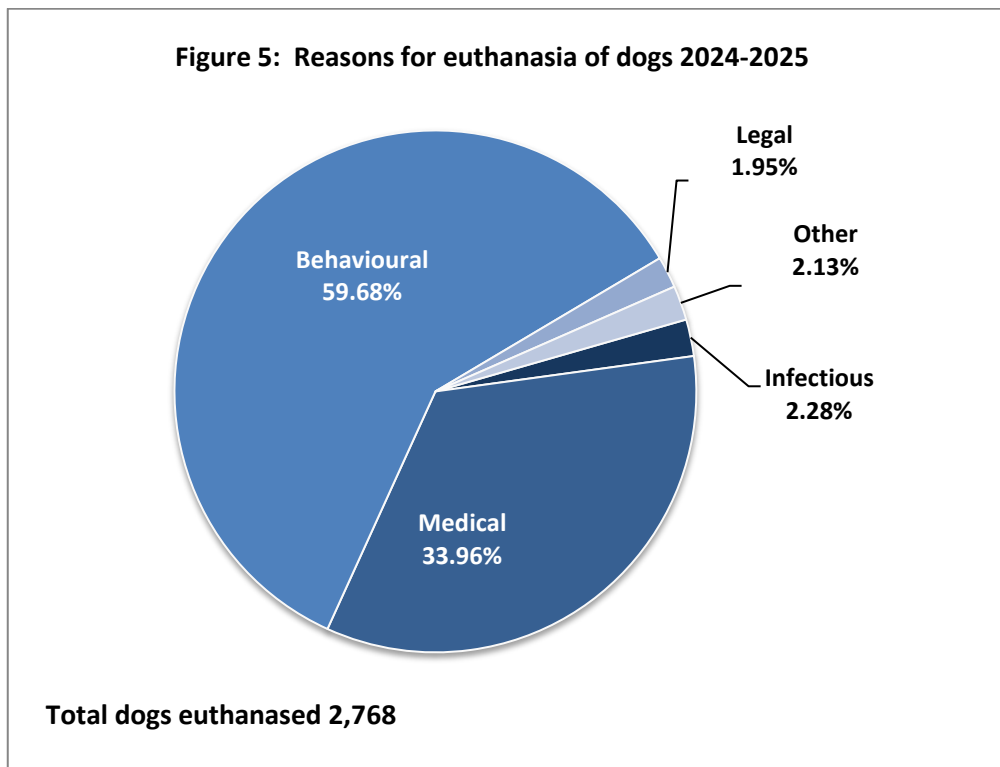
**Figure 4: Outcomes for dogs selected years 2014-2025**



Many more owners reclaim lost dogs from the RSPCA than they do lost cats (3,930 or 24.79% of dogs compared to just 1,360 or 5.3% of cats).

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts to rehome dogs and help return them to their families, 17.46% (2,768) of dogs/puppies were euthanased (see Figure 5). We remain focused on rehoming all animals who are suitable for rehoming.

Of the dogs euthanased, the majority of cases were due to severe behavioural issues which made them unsuitable for rehoming (59.68%). These included aggression and severe anxiety that the RSPCA was not able to successfully treat through behavioural modification programs. Such issues can compromise the dog's welfare and quality of life, as well as being a safety risk to adults, children and other animals in the community.

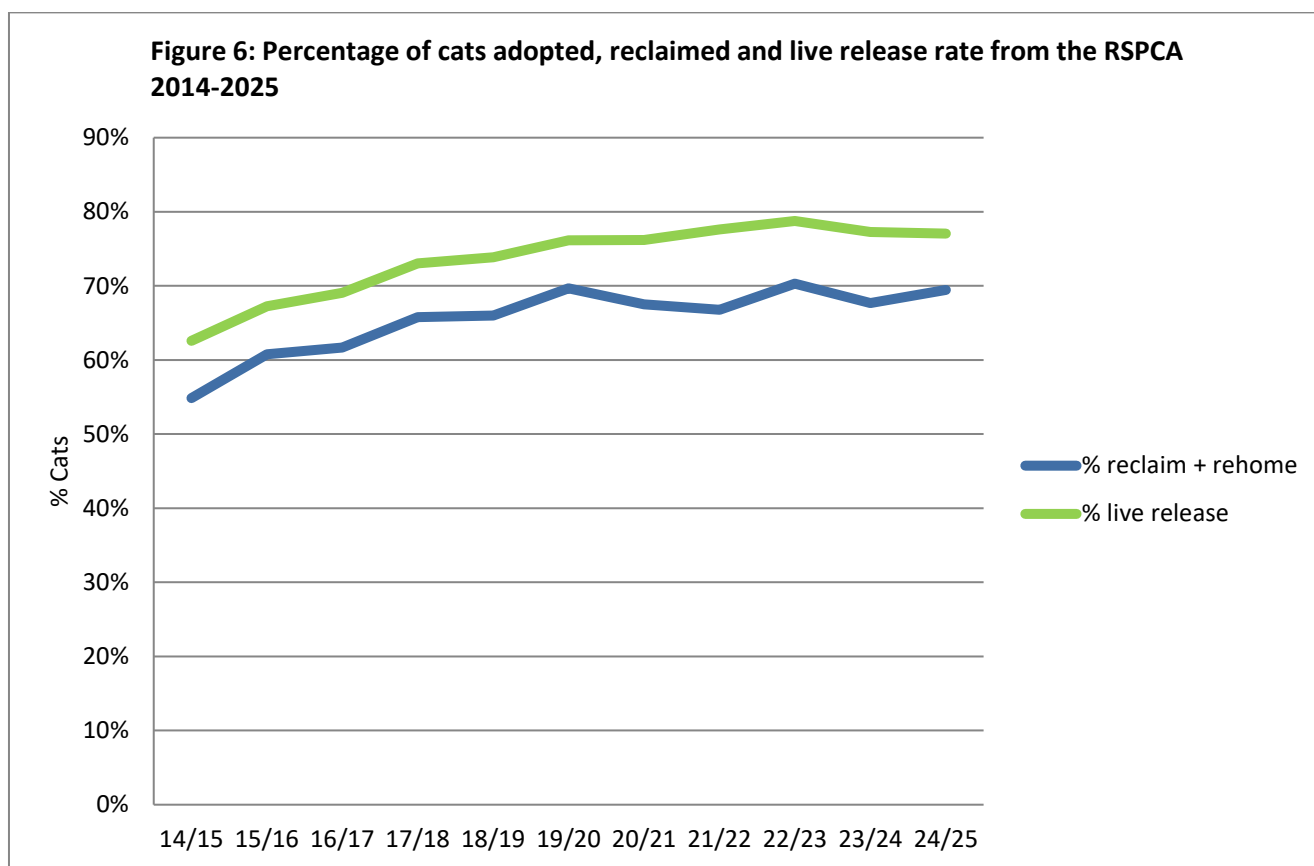


## Cats

The RSPCA received 25,639 cats in 2024-25, which is 33.1% of all animals (see figures 6, 7 and 8). The proportion of cats who were reclaimed by their owners this year was 3.82% (979 cats).

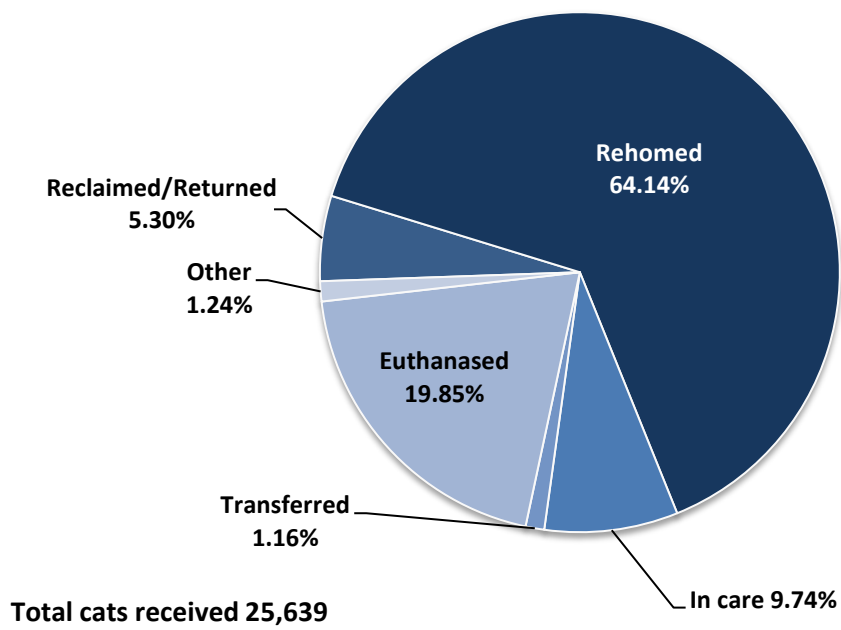
One measure that is used for monitoring shelter outcomes over time is the live release rate (LRR). The LRR is the percentage of cats who were rehomed, reclaimed by their owner or transferred to a rescue group or other non-RSPCA facility as a percentage of the total number of cats received<sup>1</sup> (not including those currently in care or categorised as 'other') for the 2024-25 financial year. The 2024-25 live release rate for cats and kittens was 77.05%.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts to rehome cats and help return them to their families, 5,089 (19.85%) of cats/kittens were euthanased (see Figure 9).

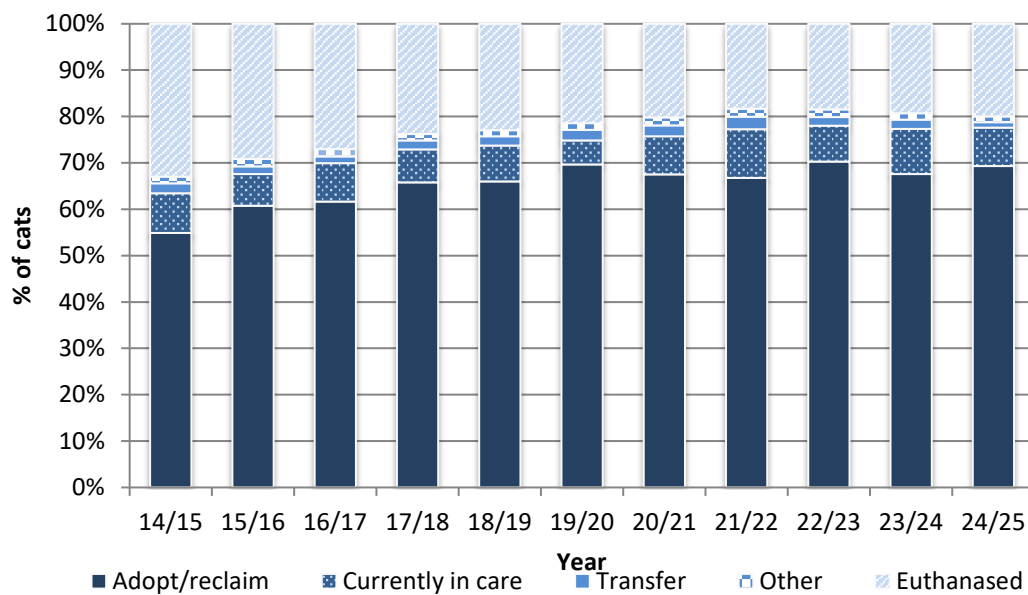


<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all cats in RSPCA facilities during the 2024-25 financial year.

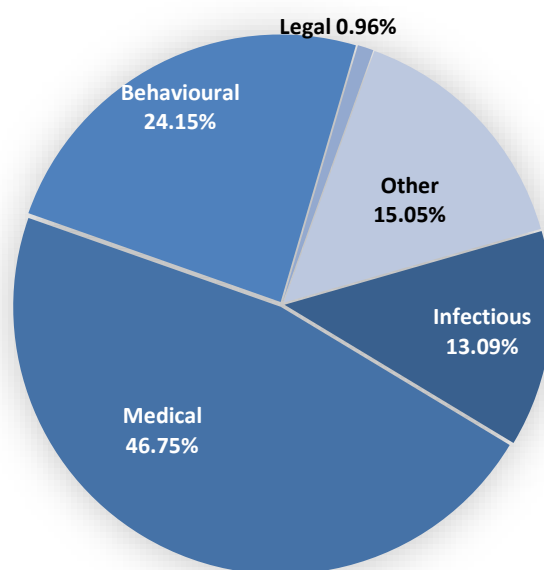
**Figure 7: Outcomes for cats 2024-2025**



**Figure 8: Outcomes for cats selected years 2014-2025**



**Figure 9: Reasons for euthanasia of cats 2024-2025**



**Total cats euthanased 5,089**

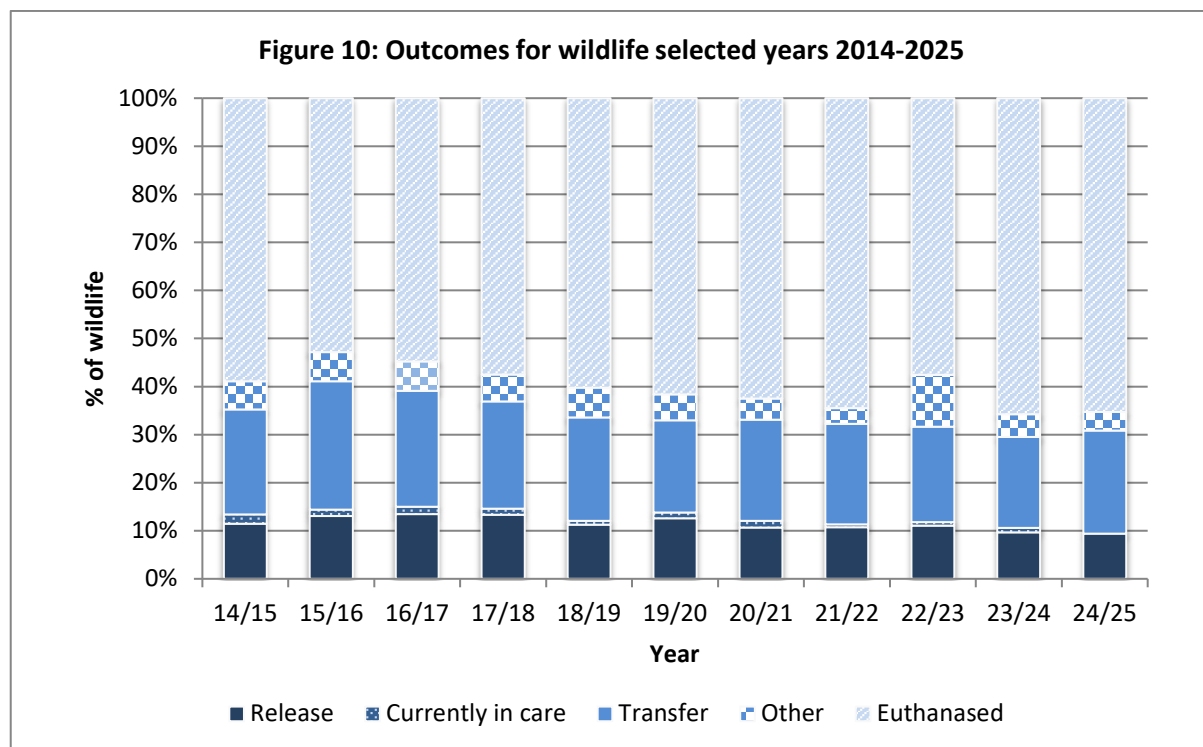


## Wildlife

The number of wildlife presented to the RSPCA has significantly increased over the last two decades. (8,374 animals in 1998-99 to 27,794 animals in 2024-25).

Usually, wild animals (native and introduced) are presented to the RSPCA by members of the community and private veterinary clinics because the animals have been injured or orphaned. In particular, RSPCA Queensland operates specialist wildlife clinics and receive, treat, rehabilitate and re-release wildlife.

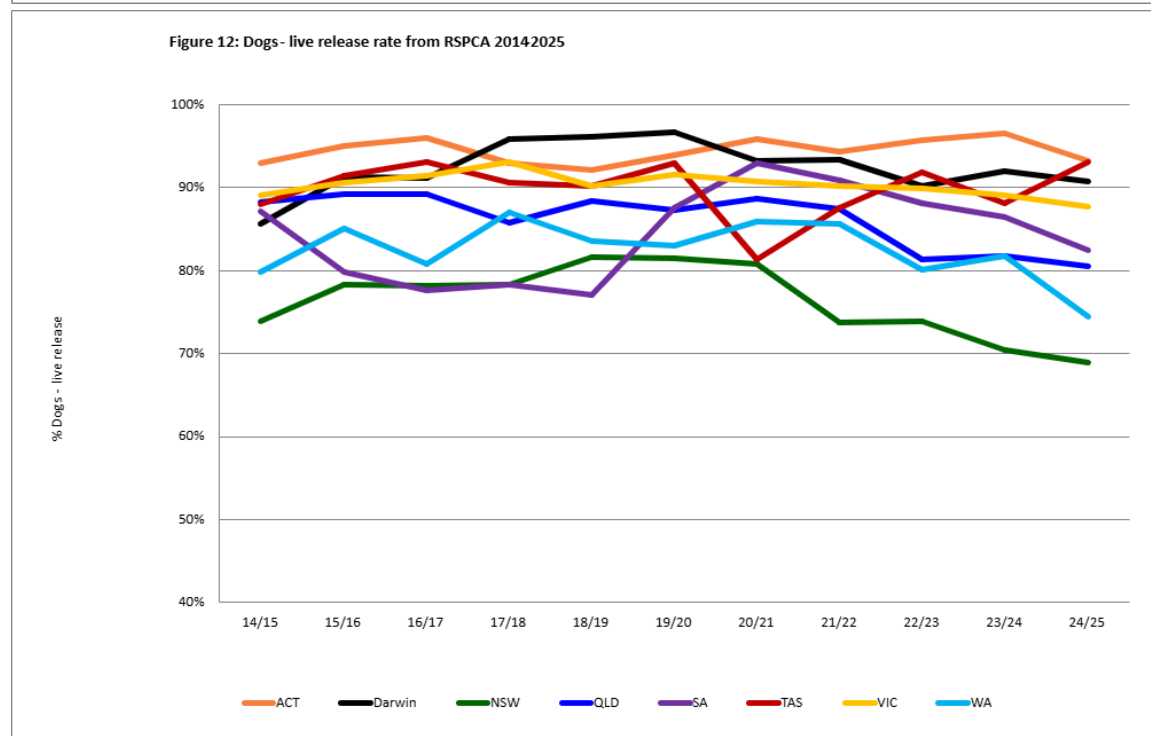
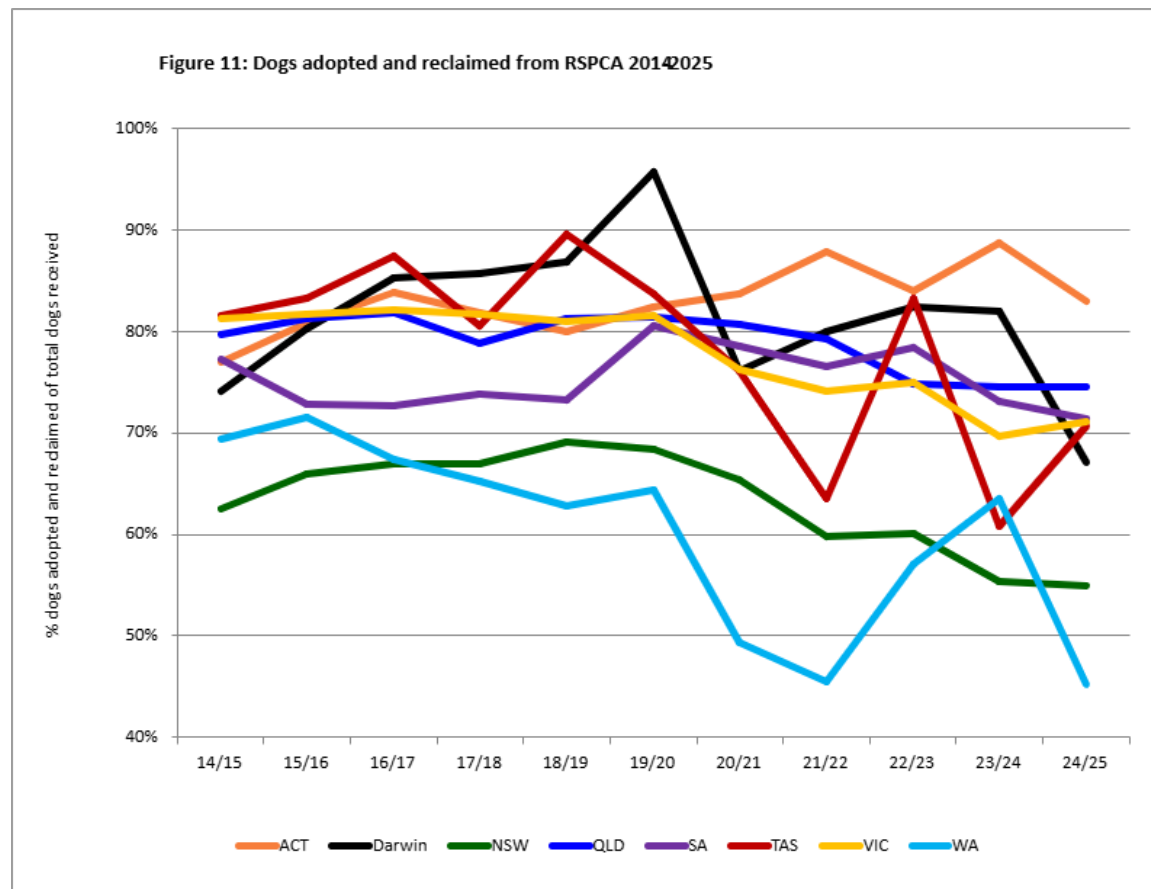
In 2024-25, the RSPCA re-released 9.3% (2,595) of wildlife received<sup>1</sup> following treatment and rehabilitation and transferred 5,912 (21.3%) to specialist groups or other non-RSPCA facilities. Unfortunately, many of the animals' injuries can cause significant pain and suffering and/or compromise their survival in the wild. Therefore, the RSPCA performs a difficult but valuable role relieving the suffering of injured wildlife through euthanasia. In 2024-25, 64.8% of all wild animals received were euthanased (see Figure 10).



<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all wildlife in RSPCA facilities during the 2024-25 financial year.

## Trends by state and territory RSPCA

Dog rehoming and reclaim by owner rates by state are shown in Figure 11 and live release rate by state in Figure 12.

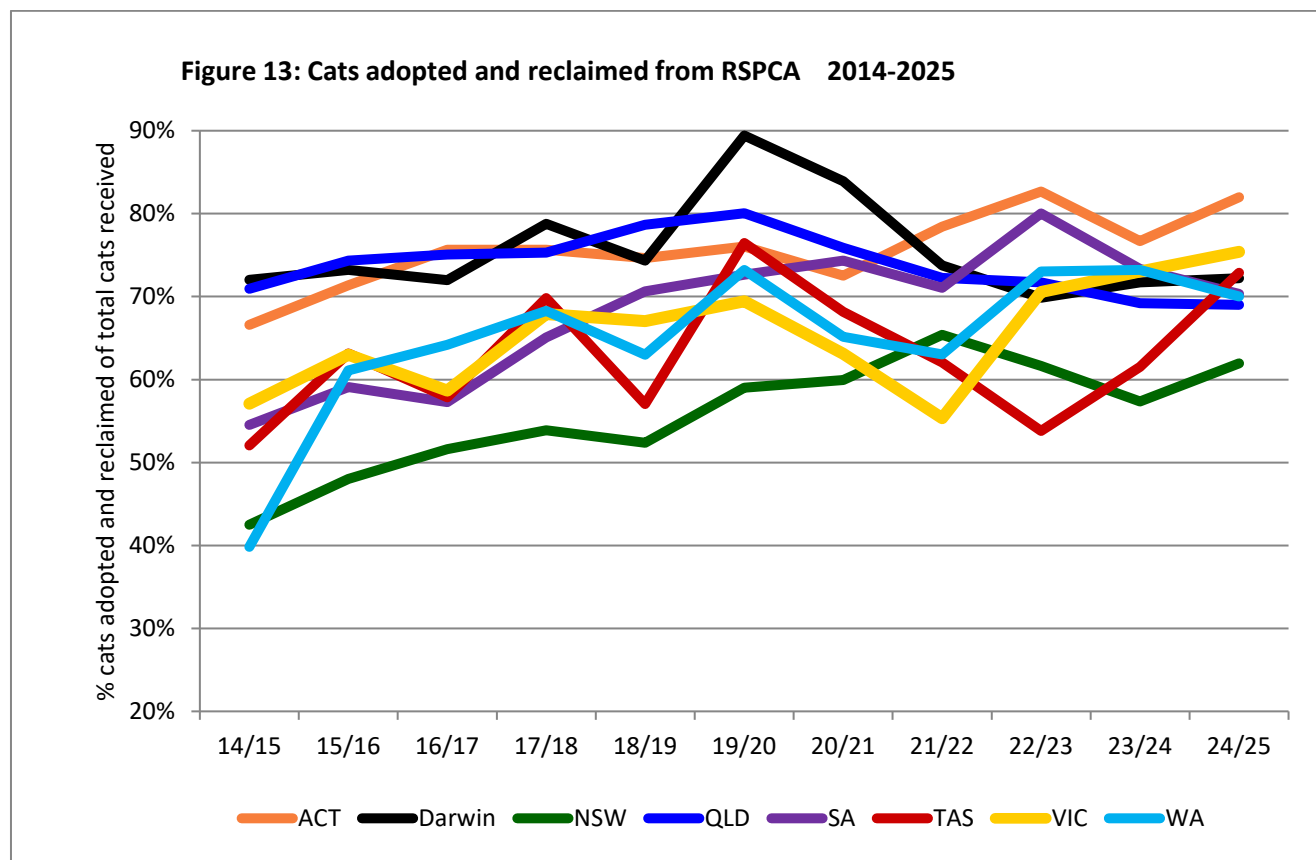


<sup>1</sup> Note: Some RSPCA facilities may have a larger proportion of animals currently in long-term care which can influence the adoption and reclaim rate.

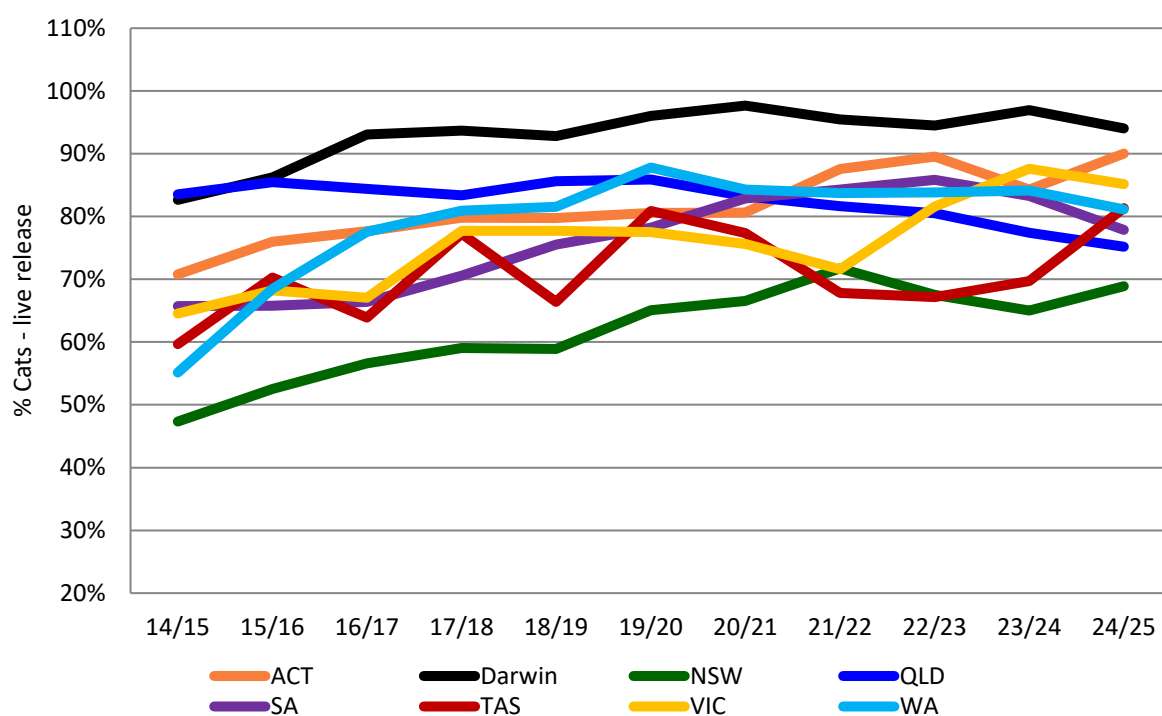
<sup>1</sup> RSPCA NSW numbers do not include Council animals for FY 2011-2014.

Cat rehoming and reclaim by owner rates by state are shown in Figure 13 and live release rate by state in Figure 14.

Note: Some RSPCA facilities may have a larger proportion of animals currently in long-term care which can influence the adoption and reclaim rate.



**Figure 14: Cats - live release rate from RSPCA 2014-2025**



## Cruelty complaints

In addition to the RSPCA's adoption and advocacy work, the RSPCA's Inspectors are authorised by state and territory governments to enforce animal welfare legislation (except in the Northern Territory, where enforcement is the sole responsibility of the NT Government).

In 2024-25, RSPCA Inspectors investigated 55,772 complaints of cruelty reported by members of the public, the majority of which were in relation to dog, cat, horse and livestock welfare. This is a decrease of 1,197 from the previous year. In addition, RSPCA Inspectors revisited 11,465 complaints/incidents.

This year, the RSPCA laid 1,608 charges and finalised 381 prosecutions of which 264 were successful.

END OF REPORT