



For all creatures great and small.

Media Release

In a wealthy nation, animals still left to die of hunger and thirst

2005-06 statistics released: RSPCA Awareness Week Oct 1-8

On World Animal Day, RSPCA NSW has revealed that most complaints lodged with its NSW Inspectorate during the 2005-06 financial year relate to concerns about animals left to starve or die of thirst.

RSPCA NSW statistics indicate that during 2005-06, the RSPCA's 30 NSW inspectors investigated 11,374 official complaints relating to 21,281 potential offences of animal cruelty. Of those, 6,659 concerns related to animals suffering through lack of food and water.

Announcing RSPCA NSW annual 2005-06 statistics at the annual *Blessing of the Animals* Ceremony today, CEO Bernie Murphy said the Inspectorate's 109 prosecutions in NSW courts during the past financial year involved 130 charges of failure to provide adequate food and water to animals.

"There are still people who live well, yet deprive their animals of fundamental necessities like food and water. To sit by and watch them become skin and bone and in many cases die, is a severe form of cruelty and one the RSPCA will never accept," he said.

"Most complaints are genuine and we thank caring people who take the time to alert our Inspectors to concerns of cruelty. The theme for Awareness Week 2006 is 'It's up to you'. Each one of these people cared enough to make a difference."

Meanwhile, the RSPCA's 'open door' policy of never turning away an animal in need is reflected in a massive **41,017** sick, injured, abused, surrendered and lost animals received from the New South Wales community in 2005-06 – an increase of 1.41%.

During the year RSPCA NSW cared for 22,077 dogs*, 15,277 cats* (more than half of which were unwanted kittens), 925 livestock, 43 horses, 668 wildlife (including one sugar glider), 2,027 'other animals' (including 'pocket pets' eg 298 guinea pigs, 130 mice, 59 rats and 731 rabbits), 138 budgies, 10 sheep, three deer, 18 pigs, two foxes, six fish, one falcon, one koel, two turkeys and one ostrich.

"The RSPCA is unfortunately left with the community's problem and that involves euthanasia, which is very distressing for our caring staff. The euthanasia rate of 19,801 animals (48%) is due to the community's failure to desex, health and veterinary reasons and the RSPCA's refusal to allow unsocialised and aggressive animals into the community. The RSPCA also helps people who struggle with the cost of veterinary care so their old, sick pets can end their days with dignity."

During the past year RSPCA NSW shelters also transferred 1,223 animals from bush to city to find them good homes. Mr Murphy said the figures reflect just a portion of the RSPCA's contribution to the NSW community, which includes animal and human welfare programs to help the elderly, victims of domestic violence and people in rural and remote indigenous communities.

**Despite laws requiring microchipping of cats and dogs, only 1,109 of the 15,277 cats received were microchipped. Of the 9,954 stray cats received, only 308 (3%) were reclaimed. Of the 22,077 dogs received, 7,900 were microchipped. Of the 13,645 stray dogs received, 7,598 were reclaimed (56%)*

****TOP DOG BREEDS RECEIVED by RSPCA SHELTERS in 05/06: 1 - German Shepherd; 2 -Cattle dog; 3 – Maltese; 4 – Kelpie; 5 - Staffordshire Bull Terrier (Staffy)***

RSPCA NSW now has responsibility for 10 NSW council pounds – council animals adopted under RSPCA policies.

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www.rspcansw.org.au