

ANIMAL WELFARE PRIORITIES TASMANIAN STATE ELECTION 2021



MAKING THEIR VOICES HEARD

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Tasmania (RSPCA) is a not-for-profit non-government organization that cares for, treats, protects, and rehomes animals across the state. We have been working to improve the lives of animals in this state since 1878.

The RSPCA is the only Tasmanian organisation named in animal welfare legislation and we appreciate the continued support of all levels of government.

The community respects our knowledge of animal welfare, which is grounded in science and based on experience. In the 143 years since the RSPCA was established in the state, we have helped thousands of animals in need in all kinds of situations: in homes, backyards, on farms, in the wild and at sporting arenas.

During the past three years, RSPCA has:

- Investigated over 25,000 reports of animal cruelty;
- Provided care for more than 6670 animals; and
- Delivered information to thousands of people on animal welfare, responsible animal care and pet ownership through school, community and online education.

Animals play a central role in the lives of many people. Most Tasmanians, whether they live in suburbia, rural properties, or in regional towns, say animal welfare is important or extremely important to them.

Our role is to act as a conduit for the community's concerns about animal welfare, to ensure those concerns are heard by our state's decision makers.

Clearly, the majority of Tasmanians expect improved animal welfare outcomes should be a high priority for the state government. On that basis, RSPCA is calling on candidates for election to show the people of Tasmania that they care for the welfare of all animals in our community.

Tasmanians want to see new legislation and regulations to better protect all animals. We want to encourage higher welfare food in schools and workplaces. We expect a well-funded and strong inspectorate. Our state government must deliver on these expectations.

The RSPCA is calling on candidates for election - and the next Tasmanian government - to demonstrate that they care about the welfare of animals too.

There is much we can and must do. Your support will make a huge difference to all creatures great and small.



JAN DAVIS
CEO



RSPCA 

TASMANIANS CARE ABOUT THEIR PETS



Tasmania has the highest incidence of pet-ownership in Australia, with 44% of its residents living with at least one dog, 34% living with at least one cat, and 16% living with at least one of each. And that does not take into account those with other pets including guinea pigs, bunnies, birds and chooks, ferrets, horses, rats and mice, sheep and goats, reptiles, alpacas, and fish!

TASMANIANS CARE ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

The RSPCA has identified a number of priorities to improve animal welfare which are the responsibility of the state government, and which have strong community support. We call on all candidates to commit to support these initiatives if elected.

These include:

- A thorough review of our animal welfare legislation
- A strong welfare inspectorate
- Recognising the role of companion animals in all legislation and policy
- Transparency and accountability
- Stamping out puppy farms and on-line pet scams
- Banning recreational duck shooting
- Stronger regulation of greyhound racing
- Stronger regulation of horse racing – in particular, the use of whips
- Phasing out public funding for racing
- Improving animal welfare awareness amongst young people
- Secure funding for cat management programs
- Funding for safe beds programs



A thorough review of our animal welfare legislation

Some amendments to the Animal Welfare Act and related regulations have been made in recent years. However, community attitudes to animal welfare change over time.

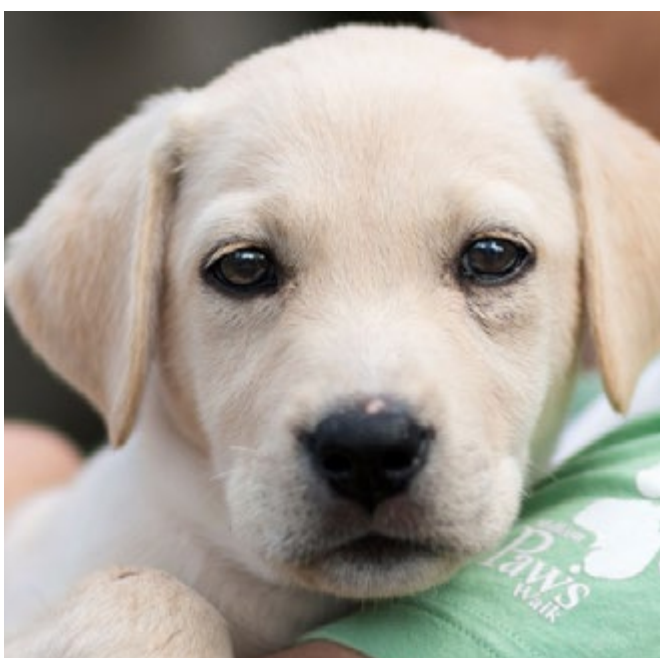
It is important that animal welfare regulations are regularly reviewed to ensure that reflects modern expectations and that the Act is operating as intended. Other jurisdictions have either recently modernised their animal welfare regulations or are in the process of doing this.

It is time for Tasmania to do the same and keep pace.

A strong welfare inspectorate

Governments are charged with providing services required by the community, and there is a clear expectation by the Tasmanian public that much more needs to be done to protect animals in this state.

The RSPCA is calling for a strengthening of the Animal Welfare Inspectorate services in Tasmania. Consideration should be given to having a well-funded, single Tasmanian Animal Welfare Inspectorate ensuring a strong, professional service applying the legislation in a consistent and fair manner across the state.



Recognising the role of companion animals in all legislation and policy

Pets impact decisions made by Tasmanians in many different ways. Issues such as mental health, homelessness and pets in rentals, assistance animals, animal hoarding, and many other social problems are all strongly influenced by human/animal interactions.

Dealing with these issues requires cross-agency collaboration to ensure the best possible outcomes for both people and animals.

The RSPCA is calling on the government to ensure that the importance of companion animals is recognised in all state legislation and policies.



Transparency and accountability

The government administers a range of programs that generate data which can be used to demonstrate compliance with regulation & improvements in animal welfare outcomes. However, community confidence in these programs can only be achieved through open and transparent management of all activities.

The RSPCA is calling on the government to develop and regularly publish comprehensive, evidence-based data-sets across all programs with an animal welfare component.

Stamping out puppy farms and on-line pet scams

Better monitoring and enforcement of regulations is required to ensure the welfare of breeding dogs and puppies.

The RSPCA is calling on the government to establish a Tasmanian Dog Breeder Register for the buying and selling of all dogs and puppies.

This would help prevent the establishment and operation of puppy farms, help stop puppy scammers, and discourage “backyard breeders” with poor animal welfare standards who consider profit over the welfare of their animals.



Banning recreational duck shooting

Every year, thousands of ducks are shot across Tasmania in the name of sport. Some will be killed outright; some will be brought down and killed on retrieval; others will be wounded and suffer prolonged pain before they die.

The RSPCA opposes the recreational shooting of ducks because of the inherent and inevitable pain and suffering caused to its victims. It's time to stop this senseless slaughter.

Recreational duck shooting should be banned in Tasmania, as it is in many other states.



Stronger regulation & greater transparency for greyhound racing

Community expectations are changing, and Tasmanians expect comprehensive regulation covering all greyhound life stages.

There needs to be greater transparency to address what is seen as an inadequate regulatory framework and lack of enforceable standards to protect the welfare of greyhounds.

The RSPCA is calling for immediate implementation of all recommendations of the 2016 Joint Select Committee on Greyhound Racing Inquiry.

Stronger regulation of horse racing

In recent years, the horse racing industry has justifiably been criticised for practices resulting in very poor animal welfare outcomes. From simple requirements like the banning of whips, to more complex ones like full lifetime traceability of racehorses, more action needs to be taken.

If the racing industry is to maintain a social licence, there needs to be stronger and more independent regulation of all aspects of the industry.

As a first step, the RSPCA is calling for the banning of whips. We also expect to see development of a life-time traceability program for all racehorses.



Phasing out public funding for racing

Following a 20 year deed signed at the sale of the TOTE in 2009, Tasmania is the only state which guarantees annual funding for the racing industry. Almost two-thirds of Tasracing's revenue now comes from Tasmanian taxpayers - more than double the subsidy provided in any other Australian state. This amounted to more than \$31million last year – or \$58.68 for every Tasmanian.

The RSPCA believes there is no case for taxpayer subsidy of the racing industry to continue beyond the expiry of the TOTE agreement in 2029. The racing industry needs to be planning for an orderly transition to self-sufficiency at that time.



Secure funding for cat management programs

The Tasmanian Cat Management Plan 2017-2022 is a positive step forward in the management of feral, stray and unowned cats in Tasmania. However, more needs to be done to ensure the success of the Plan.

The RSPCA is calling for an efficient and effective system for the coordination of the management of trapped and surrendered cats across the state. It will also be important to move towards containment of domestic cats, and to provide assistance for desexing programs.

These initiatives require secure long-term funding and partnerships with local councils.

Improving animal welfare awareness amongst young people

Education is the key to creating lasting change. The RSPCA AWARE (Animal Welfare: Awareness, Responsibility and Education) program has been developed to educate young people about animal welfare.

The program is designed to help prevent animal cruelty in the future and provides free curriculum-relevant resources for children, educators and parents.

The RSPCA is seeking support for a co-ordinator to work with Tasmanian schools to integrate the AWARE program across all curriculum areas.



Funding for safe beds programs

Seventy per cent of women fleeing domestic violence also report pet abuse - and it's key reason many victims delay leaving. They fear the animal who has provided love and support when they need it most will be harmed or neglected. When women know their pets will be safe, it allows them to take care of themselves and their children.

The RSPCA is seeking funding to develop and establish a co-ordinated network of safe bed providers & safe bed places for the pets of Tasmanians at risk of family violence.



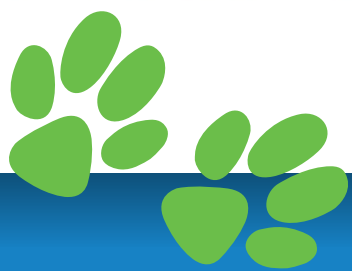
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