



What we do

RSPCA Tasmania is the state's leading animal welfare organisation. It is dedicated to preventing cruelty to animals and advocating for their care, protection, and well-being. Founded in 1878, the organisation operates under the national RSPCA framework while focusing on Tasmania's unique challenges and opportunities. It works closely with government, industry, and the community to raise awareness and improve animal welfare standards.

A key part of RSPCA Tasmania's work involves **enforcing animal welfare laws**. A team of authorised inspectors responds to reports of cruelty and neglect. These inspectors investigate complaints, rescue animals in distress, and, when necessary, initiate legal proceedings to hold offenders accountable.

With funding to the RSPCA to enforce the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, now set at \$1.5 million, the organisation is in a better position to continue to deliver this vital service. 2025/2026 will be the second year of the sustainable funding model, with three additional inspectors joining the team in 2024/2025. We have also brought the call centre, which manages calls to the **Animal Cruelty Helpline**, back to Tasmania, triaging calls for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and our cases as delineated by our agreement with the department.

Funding for the inspectorate must be indexed so that our improvements can continue without having to suffer the fate of doing more with less year on year. With over 20 cases pending, we have proven that our new organisational and funding model produces greater results.

RSPCA Tasmania operates an animal care centre, offering shelter, rehabilitation, and rehoming services for animals seized by our inspectors. Our adoption programs, veterinary support (through our **microloan programs**), and foster care networks ensure thousands of animals are given a second chance at a better life each year. The organisation also delivers community outreach programs to provide care for those fleeing domestic/family violence or experiencing emergency hospitalisation with companion animals in need of care. Our **Safe Beds** Program relies on the current funding of \$150,000 to continue. We also work in the emergency preparedness space with our project, **READY,PET,GO!** being rolled out to companion animal owners around the state to help prepare for possible evacuation.

As we reduce our reliance on donations and fundraising with a more contemporary fee-for-service model, broadening our income base, we need certainty for financial planning. RSPCA Tasmania is not a government agency despite performing many public duties. Its work is powered by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who share a vision of a world where every animal lives free from suffering.

RSPCA Tasmania also provides expert advice and input into policy reform and legislation to ensure stronger animal protection.

Election Priorities – 2025

Greyhound Racing: End Taxpayer Funding for a Failing Industry

“Societal attitudes towards deliberate cruelty to animals have changed incrementally and very significantly over recent times. One can cite clear and changed attitudes towards whaling, battery hens, greyhound racing, animal slaughtering practices and live sheep exports.”

— Justice Brett, *Bond v Lamprey* (2022)

Australia remains one of only seven countries with a commercial greyhound racing industry — and by far the largest. Globally, the industry is in decline: Macau banned greyhound racing in 2018, and only two U.S. states still permit it. Closer to home, the ACT banned greyhound racing in 2018.

Yet in Tasmania, the government continues funnelling taxpayer dollars into an industry out of step with community values — more than **\$74.6 million over the past 15 years**. This is despite overwhelming public sentiment:

- **82%** of Tasmanians surveyed by RSPCA Tasmania support stronger animal welfare protections in racing.
- **13,519** people signed a petition calling for greyhound racing to be defunded.

It is frequently claimed that trainers and owners “love their dogs.” If so, it’s time they put their money where their mouths are. This industry should stand on its own — **not on the back of taxpayers**.

Government funding and public opinion will determine the future of greyhound racing in Tasmania. We urge all election candidates to **prioritise community values** and commit to **ending public subsidies** for greyhound racing.

Animal Welfare Laws: Reform Now, Not Later

RSPCA Tasmania welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the **Improving Dog Welfare Outcomes in Tasmania** review. However, we are deeply disappointed that the legislative reforms were not tabled before the election was called. This delay risks losing momentum on a **generational opportunity** to make Tasmania a national leader in animal welfare.

Tasmania’s current legislative framework — the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, *Dog Control Act 2000*, and *Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016* — is no longer fit for purpose. The failure of these laws was starkly exposed by the **Tasmanian Labradoodles case**, where the state's largest puppy farm was allowed to operate for years under conditions of extreme neglect.

In early 2023, RSPCA Tasmania laid **70 charges** against the operators for overbreeding under the *Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016*. After a **three-year legal battle**, the puppy farm was permanently closed through a landmark out-of-court agreement in July 2024.

But the real win will come when laws are changed to ensure this never happens again.

RSPCA Tasmania has called for:

- A **cap of 10 breeding bitches per facility**
- A **maximum of four lifetime litters per dog**

These reforms would effectively ban puppy farms and establish the **strongest breeding laws in the country**.

We urge all candidates to commit to **resuming the legislative reform process** as a priority after the election.

Duck Shooting: End an Outdated Practice

Each year, for 12 weeks, Tasmania's wetlands become killing fields. Native ducks — including species that mate for life — are shot for sport. Many are wounded and die slowly from injuries, while non-target species are also at risk.

Despite legislated reporting requirements, there is little transparency around:

- How many ducks are killed
- Which species are affected
- Whether bag limits are respected

In 2023, **1,044 shooters killed 35,716 ducks**. That's a small minority of Tasmanians causing disproportionate harm. A 2025 RSPCA survey shows:

- Only **4%** of respondents had ever participated in duck shooting
- **50%** strongly oppose it
- Only **19%** support duck shooting as a recreational pursuit

Duck shooting is a **marginal activity**, yet it causes widespread and avoidable animal suffering.

We urge all candidates to commit to **ending recreational duck hunting** in Tasmania and making **2025 the final season**.

Pets in Rentals: Remove Unfair Barriers

Tasmania has one of the **highest rates of pet ownership in the world** — and pets are cherished family members for many. Yet under current laws, tenants must seek

permission to keep **any pet**, and landlords can **refuse without giving a reason**, unless the animal is a registered assistance dog.

This forces many people into heartbreaking decisions — choosing between a home and their beloved pet. Every day, RSPCA Tasmania receives calls from people at risk of homelessness due to pet restrictions in rentals.

Legislative reforms to allow pets in rentals **almost passed** in the last term of parliament but were left incomplete when parliament was prorogued.

We call on all candidates to commit to **completing this reform** and ensuring Tasmania joins other states in **fair and compassionate tenancy laws**.

Cat Containment: A Humane and Responsible Policy

A recent RSPCA Tasmania survey found that:

- **72%** of respondents believe containment helps protect wildlife
- **66%** say it reduces injury risk and overpopulation

While some owners raise concerns about cost or impact on quality of life, most cats can adjust to a contained environment if transitioned gradually and provided with proper stimulation and care.

Cat containment not only protects native wildlife — it also improves feline health and longevity. It enables owners to manage their pet's environment more effectively and responsibly.

We ask candidates to **support cat containment laws** for the welfare of animals and the protection of Tasmania's precious environment.

Animal welfare is a **core concern** for many Tasmanians. RSPCA Tasmania calls on all election candidates in 2025 to:

- End public funding for greyhound racing
- Prioritise overdue animal welfare legislation reform
- End recreational duck hunting
- Support fair laws for pet owners in rental housing
- Promote responsible cat ownership through containment policies

These are **achievable, popular, and necessary reforms**. They will position Tasmania as a national leader in animal welfare and reflect the values of a compassionate and progressive society.

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