



**ANNUAL REPORT
2020-21**

For your support throughout the 2020–2021 financial year, RSPCA Australia would like to thank:

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 **Bendigo Bank**

Cover image: A layer hen explores the outdoor range. This image comes from a farm that has participated in the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme for 15 years.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

**I'M SO PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT TO YOU,
RSPCA AUSTRALIA'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2020–21
FINANCIAL YEAR.**

**WHILE RSPCA AUSTRALIA HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY PRODUCED
A FORMAL ANNUAL REPORT, THIS YEAR WE HAVE CHOSEN TO
DO SO IN ORDER TO SHARE OUR PROGRESS, SUCCESSES AND
CHALLENGES WITH OUR MANY SUPPORTERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.**

Producing this report has provided a valuable opportunity for reflection, one that is all too rare in our fast-paced work. There's no doubt that this year has been tough for everyone, including the charity sector — but our results reflect our determination to continue our vital work. That has only been possible thanks to the ongoing support of the community, which has not faltered in these hard times.

It's also a chance for us to showcase the extraordinary breadth and depth of our work. And what better time to do this than 2021, the 150th year of the RSPCA in Australia, the 40th year of RSPCA Australia and the 25th year of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.

For those who may not be familiar with the structure of our organisation, RSPCA Australia is the national body of the RSPCA federation in Australia. We work closely with RSPCA member Societies in each state and territory who run animal rehoming shelters, investigate and prosecute animal cruelty complaints, and educate the community on animal welfare and responsible pet ownership. At RSPCA Australia, we focus on animal welfare science, advocacy, achieving change in government and industry practice, and — importantly — coordinating and supporting the work of our members, who make up the RSPCA federation.

For me, the aspects of our work that stand out the most when we reflect on the past year include the incredible range of issues and species that we deal with, and the many different channels through which we work to achieve change. Many readers would be aware of the more high-profile tasks we work on — issues that have quite rightly found their way into the public and media eye. However, an enormous amount of our work is behind the scenes, working with industries and governments to address important animal welfare issues before they reach this crisis point.

“For me, the aspects of our work that stand out the most when we reflect on the past year include the incredible range of issues and species that we deal with, and the many different channels through which we work to achieve change.”

Among these many channels, one that is most notable is the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, through which we continue to work with dedicated farmers and forward-thinking brands to raise the bar for farm animal welfare in Australia. In 2020, 585 million animals benefitted from higher welfare conditions thanks to the Scheme and its detailed animal welfare Standards. 525 farms participated in the Scheme, with 1,231 assessments conducted on these farms. There are now 36 brands sourcing RSPCA Approved products with more than 1,000 products available.

We also continue to fight on issues we know the community cares about, such as live animal exports and the use of whips in horse racing.

Our push to end the use of barren battery cages for layer hens has been a particular focus for us this year, with national standards for poultry welfare under review and the draft Standards finally including a phase out of battery cages. As many of our supporters will know, this has been a lengthy process and our advocacy on this issue goes back decades. It is truly a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our team, that we are now so close to seeing battery cages gone for good.

Our Science and Policy team continues to ensure that RSPCA Australia is the leading source of animal welfare knowledge in the nation. Our Knowledgebase was viewed nearly 5.5 million times over the course of this year, providing the community with accessible and evidence-based animal welfare advice on more than 650 different topics. Our team also produced landmark reports this year, examining the pre-pubertal desexing of cats and animal welfare regulation in slaughtering establishments, for example.

Like many others, we’ve all had to adapt this year and work remotely. Fortunately, before the pandemic struck, we’d already gone to great lengths to adjust our IT structures and workplace processes — so to a great extent, we were able to shift to remote working with minimal disruption, although managing our rigorous RSPCA Approved Farming

Scheme assessment process was a particularly complex challenge that we had to overcome. Together with our state and territory member Societies, we worked hard to ensure animal welfare has remained a priority throughout the pandemic, including by ensuring that veterinary care, animal care and other animal welfare activities are considered essential. We’ve also steadily and consistently provided accessible science-based advice about the impact of the pandemic on the animals around us and to answer the concerns of worried members of the community.

Our work would not be possible without a dedicated and passionate team. I thank our volunteer Directors for their diligent oversight of our strategy and resources, and I warmly acknowledge all the amazing people I get to work with every day. At the end of 2020, we had the privilege to recognise a number of our Directors and staff with service milestone awards, ranging from 5 years through to 20 years of service! And in 2021, our Chief Science and Strategy Officer Dr Bidda Jones not only clocked up 25 years with the RSPCA, but was recognised as a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her significant service to animal welfare science and advocacy. Bidda has been a driving force in the development of RSPCA’s science and policy work and so we were heartened to see this recognition ensuring animal welfare rightly featured in the Queen’s Birthday Honours this year.

On behalf of our team, to everyone who makes our work possible — including our member Societies who support us, our corporate partners, government and industry stakeholders, our donors and our staff — we say thank you, and we look forward to working with you again, in this year and beyond.



Richard Mussell
CEO



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

THE CHALLENGES OF 2020–21 AFFECTED PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD. FOR US AT RSPCA AUSTRALIA, KEEPING ON WITH OUR ESSENTIAL WORK IN PREVENTING CRUELTY AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF ANIMALS HAD TO BE MAINTAINED.

As Chair of an organisation that is at the front line of advancing animal welfare knowledge and achieving real and meaningful change in the way animals are treated, I am proud to say, despite the challenges, we stayed focussed on our purpose and achieved real gains for millions of animals this year. This was made possible through the dedication and flexibility of our many supporters, members and staff.

In much the same way as the COVID-19 pandemic changed our operations in the RSPCA Australia national office, the RSPCA Australia Board had to adapt the way we work in order to face these challenges. I commend our members for their flexibility and willingness to embrace remote meetings, shifting timetables, video conference calls, and the many other changes this period has brought.

Throughout the period of our previous Strategic Plan (2016–20), we've seen significant achievements in improving the welfare of animals and changing the way that animals are treated across various industries. This includes millions of animals benefitting from higher welfare standards on farm, as well as legislative change in areas like puppy farms, cosmetic testing and captive dolphin breeding. We've also seen meaningful progress in areas where the RSPCA has campaigned for years, as the number of live sheep exported from Australia reached a historic low and a phase out of battery cages was finally included in new draft national standards.

“The development of a new Strategic Plan was also the chance to undertake a ‘strategic refresh’, and critically evaluate how best we can help improve the lives of animals, including those that would benefit from greater emphasis, such as native animals.”

A focus of the Board this year has been the development of a new Strategic Plan that will build upon this progress and guide RSPCA Australia’s operations into the future. My thanks to everyone who contributed to the new Plan including RSPCA Australia staff, our Directors, member Society staff, donors, supporters, as well as a number of valued external stakeholders. In building this new plan we have undertaken an extensive process of internal and external consultation. This has provided valuable insights into perceptions about our organisation as well as helping generate new ideas about opportunities to further animal welfare.

This important information has contributed towards building a strong and effective Strategic Plan and will also help guide our decision-making as we work to achieve our priorities. The development of a new Strategic Plan was also the chance to undertake a ‘strategic refresh’, and critically evaluate how best we can help improve the lives of animals, including those that would benefit from greater emphasis, such as native animals.

With this revitalised plan also comes a refreshed strategic purpose, with a clear and simple message: to make animals’ lives better. The new Strategic Plan has four key pillars: leading animal welfare thinking, advocating for animals, increasing our effectiveness, and ensuring our sustainability. Over the period of the Plan, our Directors will support the CEO and the team at RSPCA Australia as they undertake a wide variety of activities to help make these four pillars a reality.

It’s important to also acknowledge the essential role RSPCA Australia has in supporting the RSPCA member Societies in each state and territory. An example is our leadership of national procurement activities that has secured vital products and services while saving our member Societies thousands of dollars (dollars that can now be spent on the care and protection of animals); retaining and growing major corporate partnerships; and helping foster coordination and communication throughout the pandemic.

In this, the 150th year of the RSPCA in Australia, and the 40th year of RSPCA Australia, I am confident that we remain well-placed to make animals’ lives better, with the support of our member Societies, our team and the community.



Dr Richard Russell
Chair

OUR BOARD

THE RSPCA IN AUSTRALIA IS A FEDERATION, WITH EIGHT AUTONOMOUS STATE AND TERRITORY RSPCAS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL BODY, RSPCA AUSTRALIA. EACH OF THESE NINE ENTITIES IS GOVERNED BY A BOARD. THE BOARD OF RSPCA AUSTRALIA COMPRISES ONE NOMINATED DIRECTOR FROM EACH OF THE EIGHT MEMBER SOCIETIES, PLUS THREE INDEPENDENT RECRUITED DIRECTORS.

This year we also commemorated a number of important milestones for our Directors, including Dr Richard Russell (5 years’ service), Jill Bottrall (5 years’ service), Deborah Hambleton (5 years’ service), Danny Moore (5 years’ service), and Eileen Thumpkin (15 years’ service). We also thank Sheree Sellick for 10 years’ service, initially as a Director and now on our Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Dr Richard Russell	Independent Chair
Ms Jill Bottrall	Nominated Director
Mr Bernie Delaney	Nominated Director
Ms Alexandra Garrott	Nominated Director
Ms Deborah Hambleton	Independent Director
Mr Danny Moore	Nominated Director
Dr Ian Roth	Nominated Director
Mr Darren Smith	Nominated Director
Ms Eileen Thumpkin	Nominated Director
Ms Alexandra Wedutenko	Nominated Director
Mr Mark McKenzie (part year)	Independent Director
Mr Ian Thompson (part year)	Independent Director



The RSPCA Australia board. Photograph was taken before the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions.



COMMEMORATING 150 YEARS OF THE RSPCA IN AUSTRALIA

IN 2021, WE COMMEMORATE THE 150TH YEAR OF THE RSPCA IN AUSTRALIA.

The RSPCA's history in Australia dates back to 1871, when a public meeting to discuss the ill treatment of horses in Victoria led to the formation of Australia's first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. So, while the RSPCA today is often associated with companion animals such as dogs and cats, in fact, our work was founded upon preventing cruelty and neglect of working animals and farm animals.

Following the establishment of the Society in Victoria, other states and territories soon followed.



From the 1920s, these SPCAs were given the Royal Warrant, each becoming known as a Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Since its initial movement in 1871, the RSPCA has fought relentlessly against animal cruelty. As a result, we have witnessed dramatic and positive change in the way that animals are viewed and treated within our society, and subsequently we continue to see incremental change in legislation governing animal welfare that reflects this.

The RSPCA is an organisation created by the community at the grassroots level and driven by strong community support. Without public backing, the RSPCA would struggle to accomplish its mission; and without the services and advocacy of the RSPCA, the future for millions of Australian animals would look very bleak indeed.

In 2021, the RSPCA has grown to become one of Australia’s most established, loved and trusted charities. We make a difference to the lives of millions of Australian animals every year, through care in our shelters and our work with farming sectors as well as community outreach and advocacy.

While the occasion of our 150th year in operation is a valuable opportunity for reflection, we also recognise there is much more to be done to prevent animal cruelty and improve the lives of animals. It’s a chance to consider what we’ve been able to achieve, but we also use this juncture to look forward to the future and to what comes next.



MARKING THE OCCASION OF 150 YEARS OF THE RSPCA IN AUSTRALIA

To commemorate this tremendous milestone and reflect on the breadth of our work, we’ve joined forces with a number of national partners, including some well-known Australian brands. This includes releasing a limited-edition series of coins, produced by the Royal Australian Mint; a series of stamps to commemorate the anniversary, in partnership with Australia Post; and, an animal-themed version of the iconic The Australian Women’s Weekly cake and party food cookbook.

Want to find out more? Visit 150.rspca.org.au



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF RSPCA AUSTRALIA

**WHILE THE RSPCA MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA MARKS 150 YEARS IN 2021,
THE RSPCA AUSTRALIA NATIONAL OFFICE CELEBRATES ITS 40TH YEAR.**

In 1965, an informal meeting of the existing RSPCA Societies in the eight states and territories of Australia took place in Melbourne. From this, the Societies agreed to meet once every two years, on a rotational basis, to discuss mutual problems and interests.

In 1980, the eight Societies met in Melbourne and agreed to formally create a national Society to speak with one voice on behalf of the RSPCA on policy matters, and to offer advice to the Federal Government on national animal welfare issues. Following this, the first meeting of RSPCA Australia was held in 1981.

RSPCA Australia, as the federation's national body, is the leading source of science-based animal welfare knowledge, which informs the organisation's work and policies. This expertise also guides our work with governments and industries to progress animal welfare across a range of issues. RSPCA Australia supports the wider RSPCA federation in their vital work. We also run the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, which works directly with farmers and retailers to improve the lives of hundreds of millions of farm animals every year.





WHAT WE DO

- 🐾 Provide science-based animal welfare knowledge, including the RSPCA Knowledgebase, quarterly Science Update and annual Animal Welfare Seminar.
- 🐾 Advocate for the welfare of animals across a range of sectors, environments and issues, including companion animals, farm animals, animals in sport and entertainment, animals in research and testing, and wild animals.
- 🐾 Provide advice and work with industry and governments to improve animal welfare standards and industry practice.
- 🐾 Act on animal welfare issues the community cares about, mobilising our supporters to advocate to governments and industries to prioritise and improve animal welfare.
- 🐾 Operate the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, improving the lives of millions of farm animals by implementing detailed higher welfare Standards and a rigorous certification process which includes on-farm assessments.
- 🐾 Develop and provide valuable advice for businesses and consumers about higher welfare food and consumer expectations.
- 🐾 Support the wider RSPCA federation in their important work caring for and protecting animals, including coordinating national events and initiatives.

RSPCA AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PLAN 2016–20

OUR 2016–20 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS WERE:

1

Lead animal welfare knowledge through the use of science-based evidence

2

Inform, engage and influence the community to care for and protect individual animals

3

Embed animal welfare in government policy and legislation

4

Achieve animal welfare improvements through changes in the practices of animal industries and individual businesses

5

Increase the market share of humane food

6

Support the RSPCA federation in working together to achieve its purpose

AND JUST A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE IN THAT TIME ...

**ANIMAL WELFARE
STANDARDS AND
GUIDELINES PROCESS**

NOW INDEPENDENT AND
SCIENCE-BASED

**LONG-HAUL LIVE
SHEEP EXPORT**

NORTHERN SUMMER BAN

**INSPECTOR-GENERAL
OF LIVE ANIMAL
EXPORTS**

APPOINTED

**REGULATED
STANDARDS**

FOR PET MEAT

**PUPPY FARM
LEGISLATION**

IMPLEMENTED IN A
MAJORITY OF STATES

**BEST PRACTICE
DOMESTIC
CAT MANAGEMENT**

OUR REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS
IMPLEMENTED IN SEVERAL
JURISDICTIONS

**INCREASED PUBLIC
AWARENESS OF
FARM ANIMAL
ISSUES**

70% OF CONSUMERS
CONSIDER ANIMAL WELFARE

**IMPROVED FARMING
CONDITIONS**

FOR BILLIONS OF HENS, PIGS, MEAT
CHICKENS, TURKEYS AND SALMON,
THROUGH THE RSPCA APPROVED
FARMING SCHEME

**RACEHORSE WHIP
RULES TIGHTENED**

AND LANDMARK
RESEARCH PUBLISHED

**A PHASE OUT
OF BARREN
BATTERY CAGES**

PROPOSED IN THE FINAL DRAFT
OF THE AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL
WELFARE STANDARDS AND
GUIDELINES FOR POULTRY

**PROVIDED
SCIENCE-BASED
ANIMAL WELFARE
KNOWLEDGE**

TO COUNTLESS AUSTRALIANS

**SUPPORTED THE
RSPCA FEDERATION**

WITH CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS,
NATIONAL PROCUREMENT,
AND THROUGHOUT THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LEADING ANIMAL WELFARE KNOWLEDGE

ANIMAL WELFARE SCIENCE IS ABOUT USING SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES AND RESEARCH TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF OUR ACTIONS ON ANIMALS, BE THEY COMPANION ANIMALS, FARM ANIMALS, WORKING ANIMALS, ANIMALS USED IN RESEARCH, TEACHING, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT, OR ANIMALS IN THE WILD.

The importance of science in influencing Government decisions and policies has increased and so has the RSPCA's role in this process. RSPCA Australia uses scientific research and evidence of best practice to inform our policies, positions and campaigns.

The RSPCA Knowledgebase is Australia's most trusted source of animal welfare science, advice and information. **We have more than 650 articles on a wide range of animal welfare topics, and this year we added**

27 new articles and updated 219 existing ones. Our resources cover pet care, training and nutrition, farm animal welfare, wildlife, animal welfare legislation, information about the COVID-19 pandemic, and much more. Knowledgebase articles were viewed nearly 5.5 million times this year and continues to be cited and shared by media, governments and other animal welfare organisations as an authoritative source of animal welfare information, all informed by the latest peer-reviewed science.

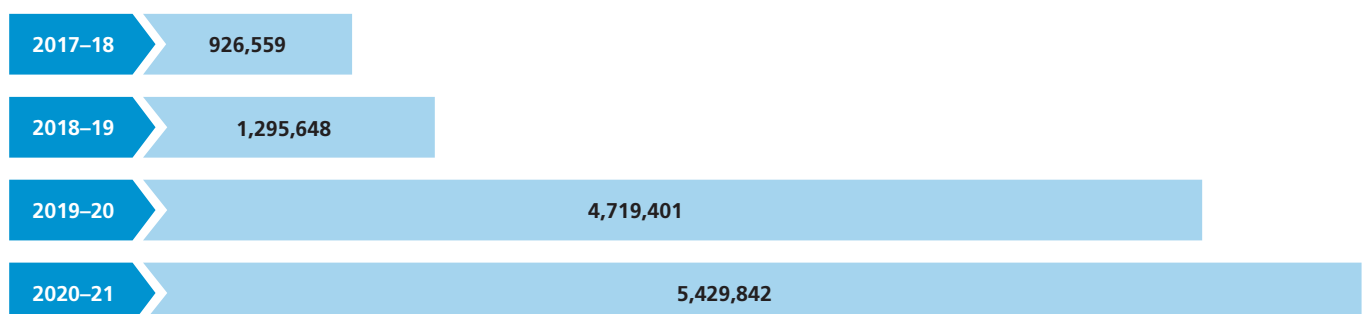
THE TOP 5 KNOWLEDGEBASE ARTICLES THIS YEAR:

- What should I feed my puppy?
- My cat is being aggressive towards my other cat, what should I do?
- What should I feed my guinea pigs?
- Why is my cat urinating inappropriately?
- What is the most humane way to kill pest rats and mice?

JUST A FEW OF THE NEW ARTICLES WE PUBLISHED THIS YEAR:

- What are the welfare issues with managing peri-urban kangaroos?
- What can I do if I suspect a problem with my pet's food or treats?
- Why is environmental enrichment important for turkeys?
- What is the RSPCA's view on breeding dolphins in captivity?

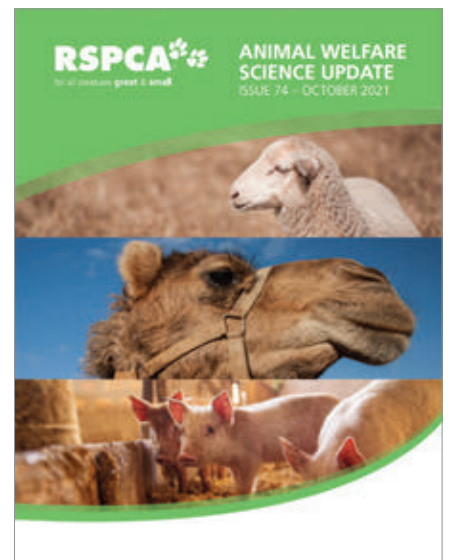
Knowledgebase views:



Our Animal Welfare Seminar is an annual event bringing together leading experts in animal welfare research from Australia and around the world. Each year features a different theme and provides a forum to explore pressing animal welfare issues through diverse perspectives. **Held online for the first time this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Animal Welfare Seminar ‘Feline Futures’ focused on the future of humane domestic cat management in Australia.** Almost 500 people attended the seminar, with an average feedback rating of 9/10 by attendees. We’re currently planning next year’s online seminar, to be held 16–17 February and which will explore animal welfare in a changing climate.

Managing Australia’s population of unwanted cats remains a crucial issue for all RSPCAs and the wider community. To this end, this year, we released a new, detailed report outlining the case for desexing cats before puberty as a safe, effective and better practice for individual cats and for reducing the overall population. The report summarises the significant body of scientific evidence to support pre-pubertal desexing, with key recommendations to help make this standard practice for all cats (whether privately owned or in the care of a shelter, pound or cat rehoming organisation).

Of course, over the year, we continued to produce the quarterly Science Update, a round-up of the most relevant scientific papers in the past quarter, with over 1,400 subscribers. **In 2020–21, this included research on thoroughbred welfare, behavioural assessments of dogs in shelters, reducing the impact of zoo visitors on captive little penguins, the provision of open water for farmed ducks, free farrowing systems for sows, whip use in horse racing, the impact of climate change on wildlife and much more.**



EDUCATION

Every year, RSPCA Australia offers scholarships to encourage students to take an active interest in animal welfare issues, to support animal welfare research that might not otherwise attract funding, and to promote the objectives of the RSPCA within the research community. This year's winners were:

- The Sybil Emslie Animal Law Scholarship — Ashleigh Best, for her outstanding contribution to the development of animal law in Australia
- The Alan White Scholarship — Carmen Glanville, for her project 'Identifying the human psychological and behavioural predictors of dog welfare in the home environment'
- The Hugh Wirth Humane Animal Production Scholarship — Sandra Ospina Rios, for her project 'Does maternal contact via cow-calf suckling systems moderate the impact of disbudding on dairy calves?'

We were also delighted to host a number of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine final year students who helped contribute to the work of the Science and Policy team.

RESEARCH

We contribute to the development and publication of important peer-reviewed animal welfare research. In 2020–21, this included:

- Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ, Littlewood KE, McLean AN, McGreevy PD, Jones B, Wilkins C (2020) The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including human–animal interactions in assessments of animal welfare. *Animals* 10, 1870.
- McLeod L, Evans D, Jones B, Paterson M, Zito S (2020) Understanding the relationship between intention and cat containment behaviour: A case study of kitten and cat adopters from RSPCA Queensland. *Animals* 10, 1214.
- Tong L, Stewart M, Johnson I, Appleyard R, Wilson B, James O, Johnson C, McGreevy P (2020) A comparative neuro-histological assessment of gluteal skin thickness and cutaneous nociceptor distribution in horses and humans. *Animals* 10(11), 2094.
- Baptista J, Blache D, Cox-Witton K, Craddock N, Dalziel T, de Graaff N, Fernandes J, Green R, Jenkins H, Kahn S, Kelly D, Lauber M, Maloney S, Peachey B, Rodger I, Skuse J, Tilbrook A, Walker F, Wall K, Zito S (2021). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the welfare of animals in Australia. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* 7, 619287.

PRESENTATIONS

Our Science and Policy team also frequently delivers presentations and participates in panel discussions, ensuring the latest animal welfare knowledge is communicated as widely as possible. Some highlights from this year include:

- Lecture to University of Wollongong law students on the legal protection of animals used in sport and entertainment, focused on rodeos and whips in horse racing
- Lecture to University of Melbourne on poultry welfare in Australia
- Panel discussion at Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference
- Presentation to University of Melbourne legal students about animal law
- Presentation to University of Wollongong legal students about live exports
- Presentation to Lewis & Clark Law School (Portland, Oregon) about live exports
- Paper delivered to the Annual Agribusiness Law conference on animal welfare legislation applying to the livestock sector and risks
- Presentation to meeting of Animal Care Australia representatives about the RSPCA and our approach to policy development.



INFORMING, ENGAGING AND INFLUENCING THE COMMUNITY

WE WORK HARD TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY ABOUT GOOD ANIMAL WELFARE AND MOBILISE OUR SUPPORTERS TO TAKE ACTION ON THE IMPORTANT ISSUES THEY CARE ABOUT. OUR SCIENCE-BASED APPROACH HELPS US IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE THE IMPROVEMENTS WE'RE SEEKING, AND POSITIVELY CHANGE THE WAY THE COMMUNITY FEELS ABOUT ANIMALS AND ANIMAL WELFARE.

Just a few among the wide variety of issues we've been involved with this year ...

We've helped to draw attention to the plight of dogs with exaggerated features

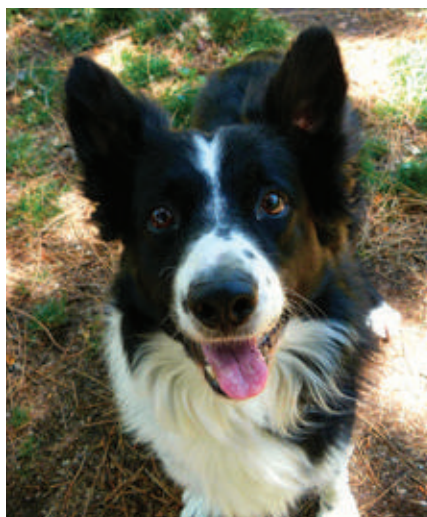
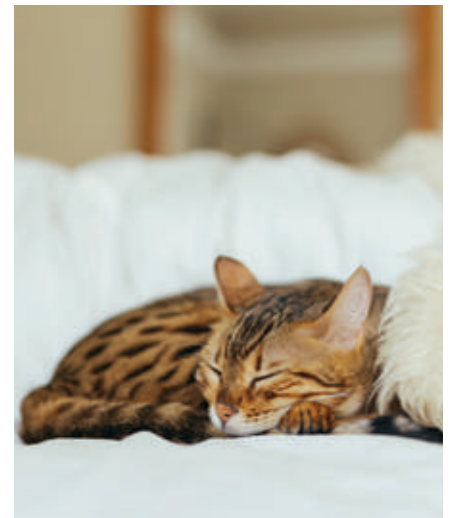
like flat-faced (brachycephalic) bulldogs and pugs who have tremendous difficulty breathing. Our Love is Blind campaign, in collaboration with the Australian Veterinary Association, aims to change the way these dogs are bred with a focus on their health and welfare above looks. This year we reached over 150,000 people on social media with this important information about the health and welfare of these animals.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in different ways.

This year, in collaboration with state and territory RSPCAs, we developed and published advice on how the pandemic affects our pets, how to care for animals during the pandemic, and how to ensure that the animals around us are cared for and protected during these uncertain times.

Pronged dog collars are a painful method of dog training that are illegal to import into Australia.

But, sadly, they're still legal to use on dogs in nearly every state, and they're still being imported despite being illegal. We continued to advocate against these cruel devices, and when the Australian Border Force announced an alarming spike in imports, we worked with them to issue a warning to the community through a media statement and social media activity.



The community increasingly understands that cats are safest and happiest at home.

Keeping your cat safe at home reduces the risk of them getting sick or injured by cars, dogs or other cats – and cats can be healthy and happy at home as long as their needs are met. This financial year began with the launch of a brand new interactive Safe and Happy Cats microsite – www.safeandhappycats.com.au – which lets cat owners know about how they can keep their feline friend safe and happy at home, and was accessed over 7,500 times.

WE PROVIDED ADVICE TO CONSUMERS AND BUSINESS SO THEY'RE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT WHAT GOOD FARM ANIMAL WELFARE LOOKS LIKE, AND THEY KNOW HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT HIGHER WELFARE FARMING.



Understanding the different housing systems for farm animals can be complex and challenging. **To help, we researched and published a table comparing housing systems for pigs on Australian farms.** This expanded on existing resources we've developed that compare the various different layer hen and meat chicken housing systems

Cheeky Chooks, our completely free, educational online game

about farming and caring for egg-laying hens has been downloaded by more than 259,000 people and has amassed a loyal following. Created for 8–13-year-olds, Cheeky Chooks teaches kids about the quirky, unique personalities of hens. There are easy links to the Australian curriculum and classroom activity materials available for educators. In 2020–21, we worked with the developers, Trilum Studios, on the latest update, which included improved game play, changing seasons and more educational content.



Early in 2020, the RSPCA launched the second season of the RSPCA Humane Food Podcast.

In the successful first season, host Brian Daly spoke with RSPCA staff, industry, RSPCA Approved brands and leading experts in their fields on a range of topics, including meat chicken welfare, bobby calf welfare, pig welfare and slaughter. The second season included experts on topics that ranged from male chick culling in the egg industry and how this can be changed, to the use of antibiotics in farming and more. By the end of this year, the RSPCA Humane Food Podcast had 5,000 downloads.

“With around 10 million hens still in barren battery cages and half of Australia’s eggs going into food service and manufacturing, it’s more important than ever to showcase brands that are sourcing cage-free eggs.”



With around 10 million hens still in barren battery cages and half of Australia's eggs going into food service and manufacturing, it's more important than ever to showcase brands that are sourcing cage-free eggs. **These brands are proving every day that they are able to have a successful and profitable business which promotes good animal welfare, and that it's possible to produce affordable and safe cage-free eggs on a large scale.**



In partnership with The Australian Women's Weekly, November 2020 saw the launch of

The Kind Cook: Kid-friendly recipes using RSPCA Approved ingredients helping adults teach kids about where food comes from and why we should all care about farm animals.



We posted regular content on the RSPCA Approved website – 24 articles in total – reaching out to a wide network of readers and subscribers about the brands and farmers we work with, highlighting key farm animal welfare issues, advocating for higher welfare farming and advising Australians on how they can support better farm animal welfare.

In 2020–21, we continued to support businesses choosing cage-free eggs, and provide resources for Australians wanting to choose cage-free eggs in the manufactured products they buy and when dining out. Our Cage Free & Proud directory grew to list 89 brands that have made the switch, or have committed, to source cage-free eggs. Hundreds of cafés and restaurants sourcing cage-free eggs are also listed on our Choose Wisely directory, making it easier for Australians to support businesses choosing cage-free eggs when they are dining out. Nearly 3,000 individuals took the RSPCA's cage-free pledge as well. Throughout the year, we worked with brands to encourage them to go cage free and to make public commitments to doing so.



EMBEDDING ANIMAL WELFARE IN POLICY AND LEGISLATION

OFTEN, THE BEST WAY TO SUSTAIN IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LIVES OF ANIMALS IS TO ACHIEVE POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGE. MUCH OF THE TIME, IT'S GOVERNMENT WHO IS BEST PLACED TO SAFEGUARD ANIMAL WELFARE – AND ADVOCACY FROM ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE RSPCA AND THE ANIMAL-LOVING COMMUNITY HELPS ACHIEVE THIS.



SAYING BYE BYE TO BATTERY CAGES

Despite more than 40 years of advocacy to end the use of barren battery cages in Australia, they remain in use for the majority (around 10 million) of Australia's layer hens, and so this continued to be the key advocacy topic for RSPCA Australia this year. Our opposition to the use of barren 'conventional' or battery cages on welfare grounds is firmly based in science and has been reinforced by multiple independent scientific reviews.

The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry have been under review since 2015. This has been a long, slow, and frustrating process, but this year, there has been significant progress.

We recently saw the report of the independent panel – tasked by state and territory Agriculture Ministers to finalise the draft standards – made public, and it's pleasing to see that the draft standards include a phase out of barren battery cages. This is a significant win for the community who have said loud and clear that battery cages should go, and a sign that the independent panel has listened to the science, which overwhelmingly says that good layer hen welfare can't be achieved in a barren battery cage.

At the time of writing, all that remains is for state and territory Agriculture Ministers to endorse the draft and enact the Standards into legislation. We will continue to intensify our efforts because we're so close to finally seeing these cruel, barren wire cages gone for good.



CALLING OUT LIVE EXPORT REGULATORY FAILURE

Live animal export poses unacceptable animal welfare risks, and over the course of this year, we continued our work to protect the animals impacted by this cruel, risky and unnecessary trade.

This year, we updated and relaunched our 'Timeline of Tragedy', using an engaging and interactive new platform to record and report upon the many disasters that have plagued this industry throughout its dark history in Australia.

Key to raising awareness of the risks of live animal export is also calling out regulatory failures whenever we see them. This year, we saw disturbing reports of breaches of live export regulation in Jordan and Indonesia involving Australian cattle, and regrettably, a plan to re-open the live sheep trade to Saudi Arabia.

However, we were instrumental in establishing a government review of long-haul live cattle exports by bringing the horrific conditions to the attention of the Minister for Agriculture. Live sheep exports have fallen to an all-time low – from over 1.8 million in 2016–17 to just over 600,000 in 2020–21. That's still 600,000 too many but it's heartening to see these numbers moving in the right direction.

Public pressure on the Federal Government to end this unnecessary and risky trade continues to grow, and every day we get closer to achieving our goal and helping protect Australia's animals from this cruel fate.

MAKING HISTORY ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Working hard here in Australia and with our counterparts overseas, RSPCA Australia helped ensure that animal welfare will have its own chapter in the proposed UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement. This is the first time in history that animal welfare will be recognised in an Australian trade agreement. In addition to some positive animal welfare commitments (such as combatting antimicrobial resistance) that have been incorporated, there's a lot more that can and should be done.

RSPCA Australia also attended joint sessions with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and industry stakeholders to discuss concerns around recognising animal welfare in the European Union Free Trade Agreement. A letter was sent to Trade and Agriculture Ministers calling for Australia to support animal welfare being recognised in the EU FTA – as negotiations continue, the RSPCA will be there to ensure animal welfare is on the agenda.

SPOTLIGHT ON ANIMAL WELFARE AT SLAUGHTER

The regulation of animal welfare in slaughtering establishments impacts upon the lives of millions of farm animals every year. To help raise public awareness of this issue and highlight to government regulators the much-needed improvements, we published a detailed report into animal welfare regulation in abattoirs, poultry processors and knackeries. It identifies gaps in current regulation and makes recommendations that will help inform the current ongoing Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines Advisory Groups for Livestock at Processing Establishments development process.

To accompany the report, we launched an interactive map that allows the public to compare, for the first time, the way governments regulate animal welfare in abattoirs, knackeries and poultry processors across the country – a move that will support our work in continuing to push for more consistent and improved minimum standards for animal welfare in Australia. Check it out at scorecard.rspca.org.au/map.

These were both significant pieces of work. For this online tool, animal welfare in slaughtering establishment is just the beginning – now that the platform has been created, we intend to use it to allow the public to compare where Australian states and territories sit on a range of animal welfare topics.



WE'VE ALSO HELPED ACHIEVE...

- A recommendation from the Agvet Chemicals Regulatory Review Panel to include a humaneness assessment in labelling of pesticides.
- An end to the breeding and keeping of cetaceans (including dolphins) in NSW except for conservation purposes.

RSPCA Australia has been represented on the following government committees and working groups

Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines

Australian Maritime Safety Authority Livestock Advisory Committee

Cosmetic Testing Ban Implementation Advisory Group

Kangaroo Island Feral Cat Eradication Steering Committee

Kangaroo Island Feral Pig Eradication Steering Committee

Live Export Animal Welfare Working Group

National Feral Cat Taskforce

National Horse Traceability Working Group

Pet Food Review Working Group

WA Biodiversity Science Institute Feral Cat Advisory Panel



WORKING TOWARDS CHANGES IN INDUSTRY PRACTICE

ANIMAL WELFARE IMPROVEMENTS CAN BE ACHIEVED MORE QUICKLY WHEN INDUSTRIES STEP UP TO MEET PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS, RATHER THAN WAITING FOR GOVERNMENT TO ENACT CHANGE UPON THEM.

That’s why we advocate for improvements across a range of industries, including for farm animals, companion animals, animals in sport and entertainment, and animals in research. We do this through direct engagement, mobilising our supporters, and encouraging community action (including behavioural changes) to support progress.



AN END IN SIGHT FOR WHIPS IN HORSE RACING

This year we’ve seen long-overdue progress within the horse racing industry on the use of the whip, led by a push from Racing Victoria to phase the whip out completely.

More than ever, we know that whips don’t make races faster, fairer or safer. We also know that whips have the potential to cause localised trauma and tissue damage to horses. A ground-breaking study released in November 2020 found horses have a similar capacity to feel pain as humans do. An independent poll commissioned by the RSPCA in Victoria found 69% of Victorians feel that horses should not be whipped in the normal course of a race, and 71% of Victorians who attend or bet on horse races would be undeterred if whips were banned and would continue to participate in horse racing events and activities.

Whips have long been defended by the racing industry as a way to make racing fairer and safer. But we now know that that’s not true. A landmark study from the UK published in October 2020 compared 126 “whipping-permitted” and “whipping-free” races in the UK and found no difference in movement on course, interference on course, incidents related to jockey behaviour, or race finishing times.

In addition to advocating for an end to the use of the whip, we continue to raise concerns about other animal welfare issues in horse racing, including the fate of horses who can no longer race. We do this through a number of avenues including our participation on the Thoroughbred Aftercare Welfare Working Group.

A RENEWED FOCUS ON MULESING

In Australia, sheep raised for wool are commonly subjected to a painful procedure called mulesing, where flaps of skin from around a lamb’s breech and tail are cut off using sharp shears to reduce the risk of flystrike.

Despite high-profile global campaigns in the past, progress towards ending mulesing has been slow. This year, we began stepping up our efforts and engaging with wool industry representative groups, to seek a transition away from mulesing towards breeding flystrike-resistant sheep. In the meantime, we continue to see increased use of pain relief post-mulesing and a strong demand for non-mulesed wool.

PROGRESS TOWARDS ENDING COSMETIC TESTING ON ANIMALS

This year we saw the introduction of a Voluntary Industry Code of Practice to support the Australian 'ban' on testing cosmetics on animals.

WORKING TO ENCOURAGE CHANGE ACROSS FARMING INDUSTRIES

While 87% of Australia's meat chickens are now raised in accordance with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, thanks largely to the support of major retailers, there is every reason for the industry to continue on a path of continuous improvement to address welfare issues in meat chicken farming. To help support this work, we published *Meat chickens: Challenges and priorities for good animal welfare*, which highlights the key animal welfare challenges for the meat chicken industry and sets out what we see as the priorities that will need to be addressed in the future, to make sure community expectations are met and meat chickens grown in Australia continue to have a good quality of life.

We contributed to the development and review of a number of industry sustainability frameworks, including for the dairy, sheep (meat and wool) and beef cattle sectors, ensuring that animal welfare indicators are a key part of these industry's sustainability goals.

We engaged with financial institutions and investors regarding development of animal welfare commitments within their environmental, social and corporate governance frameworks.

We've been talking with dairy industry representative groups and dairy farmers to seek improvements for animal welfare for bobby calves (newborn calves that are less than 30 days old who are not with their mothers).



We're engaging with farm animal industry representative groups, regarding the uptake of available pain relief options for painful husbandry procedures. Uptake is increasing, but we still need to see more transparency from industry about how these procedures are performed.

We've advocated to the feedlot industry about the importance of providing shade for cattle – and in good news, we've seen an industry commitment to provide shade for all cattle in feedlots by 2026.

We've been talking with the pig industry to seek improvements for pig welfare and push for the development of Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Pigs to be prioritised. We also produced information on environmental enrichment and free-farrowing systems for pigs to support our discussions with industry and retailers.

We provided extensive comments on the World Organization for Animal Health draft chapters on animal welfare in laying hen production systems and animal welfare at slaughter via the Australian government's stakeholder consultation process, as well as through our membership of the International Coalition for Animal Welfare.

RSPCA Australia has been represented on the following industry committees and working groups

The Animal Welfare Collaborative Advisory Panel

Australian Beef Sustainability Framework Consultative Committee

Australian Meat Industry Council Industry Animal Welfare Standards Committee

Dairy Industry Sustainability Consultative Forum

Dairy Moving Forward (DMF) Animal Husbandry Steering Group

National Animal Welfare Research Development & Extension Strategy Steering Committee (observer)

Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching Animal Research Openness Agreement

Standards Australia committee for the Australian Standard for the training and use of privately contracted security and detection dogs

Thoroughbred Aftercare Welfare Working Group

INCREASING THE MARKET SHARE OF HUMANE FOOD

THE RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME IS AUSTRALIA'S LEADING INDEPENDENT CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOCUSED ON ANIMAL WELFARE.

We work closely with farmers to make a positive impact on the lives of Australia's most intensively farmed animals. More than 3 billion hens, pigs, chickens, turkeys and salmon have benefitted from higher welfare conditions since the Scheme began 25 years ago.

Take a look at what the Scheme means for animals and the journey we've been on for the past 25 years — which has only been possible because caring Australians, when choosing eggs, meat and fish, have chosen higher welfare — visit rspcaapproved.org.au/impact.



OUR IMPACT

Animals raised under the Scheme in 2020

86,771

LAYER HENS



88,705

PIGS



579,768,325

MEAT CHICKENS

200,784

TURKEYS



5,537,394

FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON



OUR DETAILED STANDARDS

Developed and reviewed by RSPCA Australia's science team, the RSPCA Standards are informed by animal welfare science, RSPCA policy, leading farming practices in Australia and overseas, and take into account the commercial realities associated with farming. They are created with the aim of meeting the needs of animals while also being commercially achievable. This means that the Scheme can work with large scale producers and improve the lives of a greater number of animals while also setting participating farms on a path of continuous improvement.

Our Standards are detailed and have a focus on welfare. There's an average of 370 specific requirements under the Standards that need to be met for a product to be RSPCA Approved.

TOTAL 585,681,979

OUR REGULAR ASSESSMENTS

Frequency of assessments and attention to detail are key to making sure the RSPCA Standards are upheld. RSPCA Approved farms are visited by an RSPCA Assessor 2–4 times a year. The Assessor will then provide their report to the RSPCA Certification Body for review, evaluation and a final certification decision.

1,231 assessments of farms, including 4,592 poultry shed assessments were conducted in 2020

14 assessments were conducted at salmon sites between May 2019 – April 2020.*

*Generally, RSPCA assessments are recorded as a calendar year but due to the nature of salmon farming, assessments are recorded from May through to April the following year.

OUR WORK WITH BRANDS

Our work encouraging food companies and brands to support a better future for Australia’s farm animals has led to the Scheme currently working with 36 forward-thinking brands sourcing RSPCA Approved products, and altogether more than 1,000 products available with the RSPCA Approved certification. These products can be found in all three major supermarkets, independent grocers and many well-known restaurant chains.



CORPORATE COMMITMENTS TO HIGHER WELFARE FOOD

COVID-19 has made it a challenging year for Australian companies as well, including those focused on food, and whilst many were on the road to making commitments to source higher welfare food (such as choosing cage-free eggs), some have had to stall their plans whilst staff were re-directed to focus on pandemic management. However, our team continues to engage with brands on farm animal welfare commitments, assisting them with the transitions with the hope that public communications will follow once businesses are operating as normal.

We have also progressed our work with larger retailers to see continuous improvement – for example Coles and Woolworths continue to build their public facing farm animal welfare policy information and report on their performance.

This year, we held **128 meetings** with various food companies to discuss farm animal welfare – in particular, ways they can continually improve and source higher welfare food.

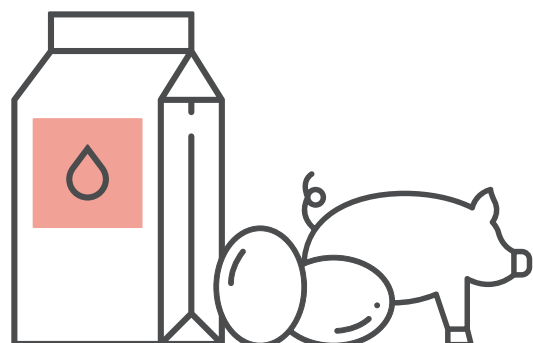
PROVIDING ADVICE ON SOURCING RESPONSIBLY

This year, we developed and released a suite of new resources designed to help Australian businesses make ethical choices and do their bit to improve animal welfare throughout their supply chains.

The responsible sourcing guides are publicly available and offer detailed guidance to organisations that source animal-based products – ensuring they’re able to make responsible decisions and promote good animal welfare.

The suite of resources includes **21 different species-specific guides**, that cover animals as diverse as layer hens, crustaceans and dairy cattle, as well as guidance on how to develop an animal welfare policy and define key procurement goals.

Visit www.rspca.org.au/responsible-sourcing to learn more.



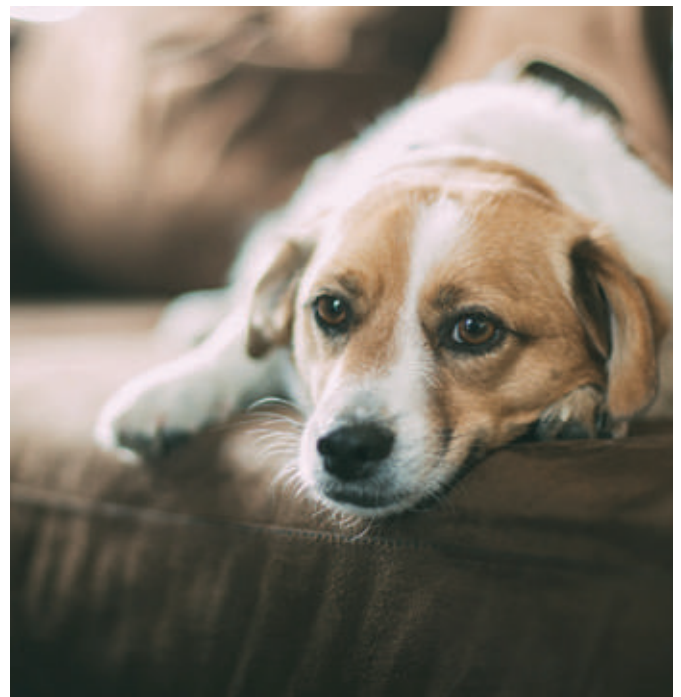
SUPPORTING THE FEDERATION

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PART OF OUR ROLE IS SUPPORTING RSPCA MEMBER SOCIETIES IN THEIR VITAL WORK.

This includes coordinating national events and marketing initiatives, managing corporate partnerships, coordinating policy development and implementation, leading national procurement activities, and distributing funds raised at the national or international level.

In 2020–21, we supported state and territory RSPCAs by:

- Leading the review and development of nationally consistent policy through the Animal Welfare Policy Review Committee, including:
 - Position Paper B5 — Managing farm animals during drought
 - Position Paper C1 — Adopting animals for work purposes
 - Policy D — Animals in Research and Teaching
 - Position Paper GP1 — Animal welfare legislation
- Coordinating a range of working groups across fundraising, communications, science and policy, animal operations and veterinary care, and administration, including specifically to share information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Collating and coordinating annual statistics on animal outcomes, which are available on the RSPCA Australia website.
- Leading national procurement activities, saving over \$4.9 million this year – including in the areas of animal health (vaccines, medications and consumables), insurance and telecommunications.
- Working together on joint submissions to government inquiries and reviews, including a joint submission with RSPCA NSW on the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods, and a joint submission with RSPCA Tasmania on the commercial use of wallabies.



APPRECIATING OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS

Our national partnerships are crucial to the work we do, and we couldn't do it without their support. An important aspect of our work this year, as always, has been to continually deliver greater value and emphasise the benefits of our relationships, to strengthen and build upon these partnerships.

Some highlights from this year include:

- We welcomed Elanco on board as RSPCA's official National Pet Health Partner. Makers of Seresto and Advocate, Elanco supplies a complete range of pet health products for animals in RSPCA shelters to keep them free from fleas, ticks, worms and other parasites.
- We coordinated a #HappyTales digital adoption campaign with our National Nutritional Partner Hill's Pet Nutrition to promote the benefits of animal adoption.
- Samsung supported Million Paws Walk 2021 by sponsoring a 'Log Your Steps' competition, providing prizes for some of our most engaged fundraisers.
- We secured various sponsorships and prizes for Million Paws Walk from our corporate partners, including from national partners KONG and Oh Crap Dog Poop Bags.
- We secured grant funding from the Petbarn Foundation for support of foster care, as well as helping senior animals find their forever homes.

Our warm thanks to Peter Alexander as a major supporter, using his profile and business to generate funds for the RSPCA, for example, by selling seasonal fundraising chocolates and donating the proceeds. This has also included stepping up to be one of our first national matching partners in our annual Give To Get Them Home fundraising appeal, personally matching every dollar donated and helping amplify the benefit of contributions made by the community.

Over the course of the year, we also welcomed 11 new corporate organisations into our workplace giving program, giving their employees the chance to donate to the RSPCA directly from their pay.

During the devastating bushfire crisis of 2019–2020, thousands of Australians generously supported the RSPCA to help protect animals impacted by emergencies like this.

Much of these funds have already been used to deliver urgent services for animals on the ground; but equally, we have always been very mindful that our work will continue for many months and years to come, to keep caring for and protecting animals well into the future.

With funds received by RSPCA Australia, including some very generous donations from corporates and from overseas, we have allocated these funds to state and territory RSPCAs to support the delivery of a number of important initiatives. These projects will protect Australian animals now and into the future – whether it's upgrading wildlife care facilities, creating specific capabilities to rescue, triage and treat animals affected by bushfires, or working collaboratively with other partners to help address the needs and gaps we've identified.

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. Revenue was down on the previous financial year, as the 2019–20 year included donations from the community to respond to bushfires.

A surplus of \$201k was achieved for the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme. Any surpluses in the Scheme are invested back into further development of the Scheme. Income from the Scheme is not used to fund other RSPCA activity, and donations to the RSPCA do not fund the Scheme. Income listed here under 'RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme' encompasses all income associated with the Scheme,

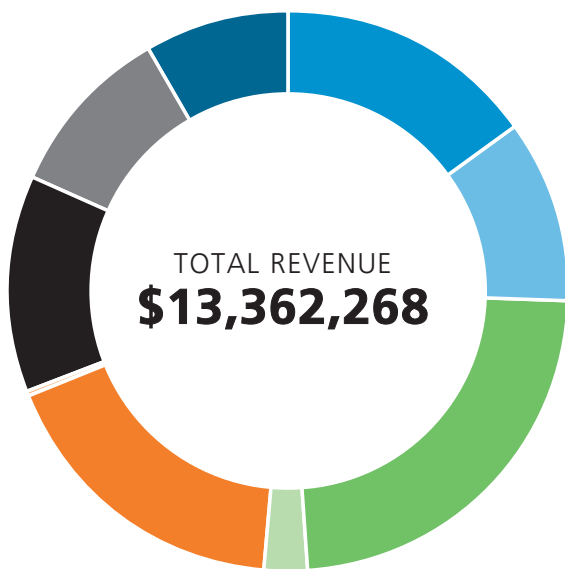
including licensing fees paid by brands that source from RSPCA Approved farms and market their product with the RSPCA Approved logo.

A total surplus of \$2.17m was achieved, with \$1.2m of this attributed to a realised gain on investments, due to RSPCA Australia liquidating its investment portfolio at year end in order to move to a new investment manager in July 2021. Federal government COVID-19 support payments accounted for 4.1% of income received.

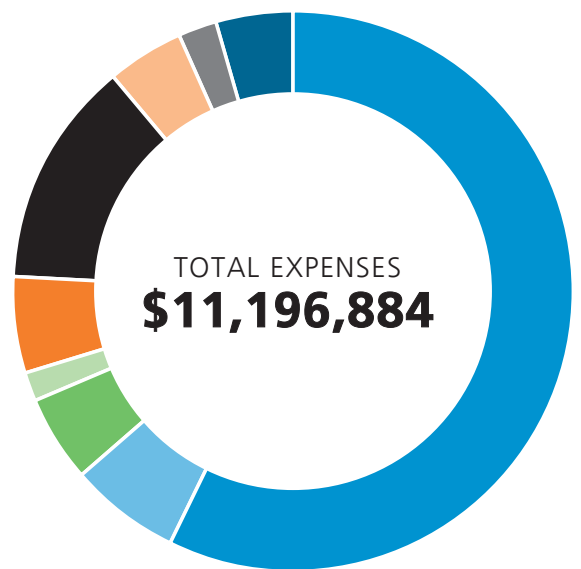
Expenditure on science and policy, and on campaigns and communications, illustrate RSPCA Australia's focus on these areas.

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

KEY AREAS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE 2020-21



● Royalties	15.2%
● Bequests	10.4%
● Donations	23.5%
● Sponsorship	2.3%
● Member subscriptions	17.5%
● Government grants	0.3%
● RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme	12.6%
● Interest, dividends and realised gain on investments	9.9%
● Other income	8.4%



● Distribution to member Societies	57.2%
● Science and policy	6.4%
● Campaigns and communications	5.1%
● Marketing and fundraising	1.7%
● Governance and executive	5.5%
● RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme	13.2%
● Occupation, administration and employee expenses	4.4%
● Member services	2.3%
● Other expenses	4.2%

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ONGOING SUPPORT**





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