

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 March 2017 1:08 PM
To: RSPCA Victoria Inquiry
Subject: Submission

Re: Inquiry into RSPCA.

The RSPCA Mission Statement is "to improve the welfare of animals through leadership, collaboration with stakeholders, and the provision of quality services"

- Collaboration with stakeholders - FAIL. As Secretary of the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Victoria, I contacted them after a Cavalier was used in media releases in relation to a rescue from a "Puppy Farm". As we have a large network of members willing to work with and rehabilitate traumatized dogs and a long list of people looking for older dogs to join their families, the club offered to help with the rehabilitation and rehoming of any Cavaliers among the rescued dogs, first by phone (very rudely dismissed) and then in writing (letter completely ignored). It appears that the RSPCA is not really interested in collaborating with stakeholders. The RSPCA's own Constitution under Section 67, Powers and Duties of the Board 6.c.(ii): effect affiliations with any other body which has similar objectives, either within Victoria or elsewhere, upon such terms as it seems fit. As evidenced above, the RSPCA has been notorious for its unwillingness to work with specific Breed Club Rescues or with Dogs Victoria to achieve a working relationship which ensures 'best outcome' for the animals who come into their 'care'. In fact they conduct themselves via lobbying to politicians, in a way that penalises Dogs Vic members by contributing to the creation of oppressive and unworkable legislation with no exemptions for the responsible bodies ie DogsVic and its members.
- When the RSPCA do a seizure where pedigree dogs are involved, they seize show dogs in full coat, or in show condition, whilst leaving old and desexed ones behind highlighting an inconsistent approach, surely, if one dog is at risk, then all dogs at that location are at risk.
- Improve the welfare of animals through leadership - FAIL. High kill rates at the RSPCA are totally unacceptable. Puppies with parvo (very treatable) are euthanized rather than being treated and given a chance of life. Other animals are euthanized for "behavioural issues" after being assessed using the RSPCA's questionable temperament testing. Often these dogs have come from home situations and are reacting to an unfamiliar and noisy kennel environment. As I said above there are many individuals who would be happy to take these dogs into their homes to rehabilitate and assess in a more natural environment. Again no collaboration with stakeholders.
- RSPCA use their own Charter to decide whether to prosecute. Their Charter is not related to the work they perform when they are acting as enforcers of POCTA. They forget that they are acting for the crown, not the RSPCA. They forget that according to their Statement of Purpose 4.1.5 "Providing relief programs to assist people within the community who are experiencing adverse circumstances to enable them to care for or manage their animals" Unfortunately RSPCA inspectors are aggressive and prefer to prosecute rather than assist those experiencing hardship even "targeting" the elderly, isolated, mentally ill and/or severely financially compromised people.
- Membership of the RSPCA is declining Australia wide 979 in 2016, down from 1 111 in 2014 whilst DogsVic has a membership base in excess of 10 000 with 280 affiliated clubs. DogsVic are "here to stay". Dogs Vic is probably the biggest lobbying group in Victoria. Unfortunately, the RSPCA chooses not to work in collaboration with this large group of stakeholders.
- DogsVic and its members make significant contributions to canine research for specific health issues while the RSPCA makes no contribution to research whatsoever! Whilst making no contributions themselves, the RSPCA feels it is acceptable to launch continued attacks against Dogs Vic members, stating we are breeding animals that are 'riddled with health problems' ie Brachycephalic breeds and short legged breeds. This is hypocrisy at its very worst.

- There is no accountability where the RSPCA are concerned, they are answerable to no one, even in the area of prosecutions. No checks and balances exist and anybody finding themselves having to deal with the RSPCA have nowhere to turn for help ie an ombudsman or something similar.
- Recently the RSPCA held a "kennel cleanout" and was selling all animals for \$29 or for smaller animals Free. Surely this only encourages "impulse buying", the reason the RSPCA advocates the cessation of pet shops selling puppies.
- the RSPCA receives considerable funding from the Victorian Government. A total of \$6 250 000 over the past two years, \$3 000 000 of which was to be used to establish a Task Force to deal with Puppy Farms. It is very rare to hear that the RSPCA has shut down a puppy farm which makes one wonder what has happened to this money. Again, lack of accountability makes it possible for the RSPCA to use this money for any purpose they choose.
- The RSPCA holds "Charity" status and as such is supposed to be a Not For Profit Charity. With so many business arms how can this status be maintained.
- Not so long ago there was a widely publicized seizure of horses which had been suffering from neglect. There had been several requests from neighbours for the RSPCA to intervene in the weeks prior to the seizure. There was no intervention until it was almost too late. Animal cruelty at its very worst.
- The RSPCA has morphed, over recent times into an ANIMAL ACTIVIST organization that appears to work hand in hand with other Animal Activist organizations rather than an Animal Welfare organization.
- The RSPCA promotes and carries out the neutering of dogs at or before three months of age. This is animal cruelty at its very worst. Research has proven that dogs should remain entire until at least twelve months of age to ensure correct growth - hormones tell the bones when to stop growing. Early desexing leads to incorrect development of the skeleton and joints leading to malformation, pain and quite often early onset arthritis.

Kind regards,

Trish Fernleigh
Life Member Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of Victoria