

RSPCA Australia National Statistics 2020-2021

The RSPCA is an independent, community-based charity that provides animal care and protection services across the country.

As a federated organisation, the RSPCA's Member Societies in each state and territory run animal rehoming shelters, investigate and prosecute animal cruelty complaints, and educate the community on animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.

The RSPCA's mission is to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection and advocate for new legislation where required.

RSPCA Member Societies in states and territories work to enforce animal cruelty laws in their jurisdictions. They also operate animal care and adoption facilities and seek to raise community awareness of animal welfare issues.

The RSPCA receives thousands of animals every year in every state and territory in Australia. Annual statistics on the numbers of animals received, reclaimed or rehomed are compiled on a national basis by RSPCA Australia. The following statistics cover the 2020 to 2021 financial year and give details on the receipt and placement of animals by each state and territory RSPCA during that period. The statistics also include the number of cruelty complaints received by the RSPCA Inspectorate and prosecutions undertaken.

Detailed information is provided in the following tables:

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Table 1: Animals received¹ nationally by the RSPCA for the 2020-2021 financial year

	Number of animals
Total animals received:	103,057
Dogs	
Reclaimed	8,478
Rehomed	8,011
Currently in Care ²	2,024
Transferred ³	1,196
Euthanased	2,502
Other	100
Total dogs	22,311
Cats	
Reclaimed	2,519
Rehomed	26,227
Currently in Care ²	3,499
Transferred ³	1,007
Euthanased	8,604
Other	716
Total cats	42,572
Other animals⁴	
Reclaimed	3,473
Rehomed	4,404
Currently in Care ²	1,501
Transferred ³	6,673
Euthanased	20,577
Other	1,546
Total other animals	38,174

¹ Received refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2020-2021

² Currently in Care: animals remaining in shelter at end of financial year including foster care

³ Transferred: animals transferred to another RSPCA facility or non-RSPCA facility such as pound, welfare or rescue group

⁴ Including: horses, small animals, livestock, and wildlife

Table 2: Comparison of animals received nationally by the RSPCA over the past 5 years

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	% Change from previous year
Dogs						
Reclaimed/rehomed/other	39,007	34,709	29,555	24,606	19,809	-19.50
Euthanased	5,763	5,577	4,308	3,466	2,502	-27.81
Total dogs received	44,770	40,286	33,863	28,072	22,311	-20.52
Cats						
Reclaimed/rehomed/other	39,349	40,401	39,430	35,650	33,968	-4.72
Euthanased	14,563	12,610	11,740	9,714	8,604	-11.43
Total cats received	53,912	53,011	51,170	45,364	42,572	-6.15
Other Animals						
Reclaimed/rehomed/other	20,619	20,709	19,572	19,010	17,597	-7.43
Euthanased	16,571	18,651	19,541	20,084	20,577	2.45
Total other animals received	37,190	39,360	39,113	39,094	38,174	-2.35
Total animals	135,883	132,657	124,146	112,530	103,057	-8.42

Table 3: Reasons for euthanasia of dogs and cats by each RSPCA Society for the 2020-2021 financial year

	State/Territory RSPCA								Total
	ACT	Darwin ¹	NSW ²	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	
Dogs									
Infectious	2	7	5	10	3	0	2	0	29
Medical	11	8	213	226	48	13	107	35	661
Behavioural	9	3	872	462	81	6	196	36	1,665
Legal	0	0	64	48	9	0	19	2	142
Other	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Total dogs euthanased	22	18	1,156	749	141	19	324	73	2,502
Cats									
Infectious	9	2	494	390	38	1	258	1	1,193
Medical	100	4	1,025	797	212	33	365	49	2,585
Behavioural	21	0	723	250	191	147	210	0	1,542
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	129	0	1,671	113	245	1	1,087	38	3,284
Total cats euthanased	259	6	3,913	1,550	686	182	1,920	88	8,604

¹ Data not available for NT - data from Darwin Regional Branch only.

² Councils are responsible for the management of stray companion animals. RSPCA NSW operates animal management facility contracts for some councils, and council animals are included in the figures.

Table 4: Animals received¹ by each RSPCA Society for the 2020-2021 financial year

	State/Territory RSPCA								Total
	ACT	Darwin	NSW ⁵	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	
Dogs									
Reclaimed	260	7	2,304	2,993	829	13	1,950	122	8,478
Rehomed	256	280	2,205	2,995	943	70	1,030	232	8,011
Currently in Care ²	39	50	742	591	159	7	271	165	2,024
Transferred ³	38	18	467	69	179	0	304	121	1,196
Euthanased	22	18	1,156	749	141	19	324	73	2,502
Other	2	4	26	27	6	0	30	5	100
Total dogs	617	377	6,900	7,424	2,257	109	3,909	718	22,311
Last year's total	726	401	8,798	9,729	2,213	123	5,395	687	28,072
Percent change ⁴	-15.01	-5.99	-21.57	-23.69	1.99	-11.38	-27.54	4.51	-20.52
Cats									
Reclaimed	170	1	583	845	222	53	608	37	2,519
Rehomed	1,111	322	7,451	7,488	3,681	609	5,129	436	26,227
Currently in Care ²	146	42	936	826	482	114	883	70	3,499
Transferred ³	25	12	250	120	48	1	471	80	1,007
Euthanased	259	6	3,913	1,550	686	182	1,920	88	8,604
Other	55	2	266	154	132	12	80	15	716
Total cats	1,766	385	13,399	10,983	5,251	971	9,091	726	42,572
Last year's total	1,549	378	14,559	11,033	5,536	939	10,657	713	45,364
Percent change ⁴	14.01	1.85	-7.97	-0.45	-5.15	3.41	-14.69	1.82	-6.15
Horses									
Reclaimed	0	0	13	5	0	0	3	2	23
Rehomed	0	0	30	33	1	5	24	7	100
Currently in Care ²	0	0	76	29	17	2	29	1	154
Transferred ³	0	0	9	0	5	0	6	0	20
Euthanased	0	0	36	5	1	1	6	1	50
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total horses	0	0	165	72	24	8	68	11	348
Last year's total	2	0	119	131	21	7	80	11	371
Percent change ⁴	-100.00	0.00	38.66	-45.04	14.29	14.29	-15.00	0.00	-6.20
Livestock									
Reclaimed	8	0	10	63	9	0	50	2	142
Rehomed	48	0	277	195	91	2	269	89	971
Currently in Care ²	0	0	36	61	5	1	29	12	144
Transferred ³	2	0	32	258	50	0	53	12	407
Euthanased	11	0	900	322	8	0	57	17	1,315
Other	1	0	14	27	2	1	2	3	50
Total livestock	70	0	1,269	926	165	4	460	135	3,029
Last year's total	65	12	593	910	101	9	389	192	2,271
Percent change ⁴	7.69	-100.00	114.00	1.76	63.37	-55.56	18.25	-29.69	33.38

Wildlife									
Released	16	0	3	2,723	107	0	201	8	3,058
Currently in Care ²	1	0	16	357	6	0	29	0	409
Transferred ³	74	0	170	5,298	104	0	368	4	6,018
Euthanased	145	0	378	16,728	53	0	596	6	17,906
Other	17	0	24	1,140	0	0	82	2	1,265
Total wildlife	253	0	591	26,246	270	0	1,276	20	28,656
Last year's total	372	0	504	26,304	324	2	1,328	9	28,843
Percent change ⁴	-31.99	0.00	17.26	-0.22	-16.67	-100.00	-3.92	100.00	-0.65
Other Animals									
Reclaimed	19	0	138	10	23	4	52	4	250
Rehomed	261	4	929	647	625	116	574	177	3,333
Currently in Care ²	17	0	131	352	57	40	152	45	794
Transferred ³	4	0	38	116	56	0	13	1	228
Euthanased	37	0	630	468	37	28	78	28	1,306
Other	4	0	81	45	28	5	47	20	230
Total other animals	342	4	1,947	1,638	826	193	916	275	6,141
Last year's total	493	20	2,236	3,194	398	116	943	209	7,609
Percent change ⁴	-30.63	-80.00	-12.92	-48.72	107.54	66.38	-2.86	31.58	-19.29
Total animals received	3,048	766	24,271	47,289	8,793	1,285	15,720	1,885	103,057
Last year's total	3,207	811	26,809	51,301	8,593	1,196	18,792	1,821	112,530
Percent change ⁴	-4.96	-5.55	-9.47	-7.82	2.33	7.44	-16.35	3.51	-8.42

¹ Received refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2019-2020 financial year.

² Currently in Care: animals remaining in shelter at end of financial year including foster care.

³ Transferred: animals transferred to another RSPCA facility or non-RSPCA facility such as pound, welfare or rescue group.

⁴ Percentage change in 2019-20 from previous year.

⁵ RSPCA NSW includes Council animals this year.

Livestock

- Cattle
- Chickens
- Ducks
- Geese
- Goats
- Bantam Hens
- Pigs
- Roosters
- Sheep
- Donkeys
- Turkeys

Wildlife

- A wide variety of native birds
- Magpies
- Galahs
- Lizards
- Possums
- Kookaburras
- Water birds
- Turtles
- Koalas
- Kangaroos and Wallabies

Other animals

- Budgerigars
- Doves
- Ferrets
- Guinea pigs
- Mice
- Pigeons
- Rabbits
- Rats
- Tame ducks and chickens

Table 5: Cruelty complaints and prosecutions by state/territory RSPCA for the 2020-2021 financial year

The different states and territories have separate animal welfare statutes, all of which seek to prohibit animal cruelty and promote animal welfare within their respective jurisdictions. While the fundamental objectives of the different state and territory laws are largely the same, the manner in which each statute seeks to implement these objectives varies considerably.

	State/Territory RSPCA ¹							Total
	ACT	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	
Cruelty complaints								
Investigated	1,133	13,838	17,137	4,398	2,034	10,745	6,637	55,922
Cruelty prosecutions								
Prosecutions finalised	0	92	238	21	6	53	16	426
Successful prosecutions ²	0	86	238	16	6	53	14	413
Charges laid	11	541	2798	29	21	324	88	3812
People charged	2	104	237	35	7	81	26	492
Cases pending	3	64	169	48	7	123	16	430
Routine inspections	0	201	0	6	21	28	1	257

¹ RSPCA Darwin does not have the right to enforce animal welfare legislation in NT - enforcement is the sole responsibility of the NT Government

² Facts proved in relation to principal charges

Examples of the types of establishments routinely inspected by the RSPCA:

- Abattoirs
- Aquariums
- Breeding establishments
- Circuses
- Feedlots
- Guard dog firms
- Intensive farms
- Kennels
- Livestock vessels
- Markets
- Pet shops
- Poultry farms
- Pounds
- Riding schools
- Rodeos
- Saleyards
- Scientific establishments
- Shelters
- Shows
- Tourist parks
- Zoos

Table 6: Cruelty complaints and prosecutions nationally over the past 6 years

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Complaints ¹	62,563	55,405	57,092	57,982	73,997	73,301
Prosecutions ²	264	340	370	376	359	426

¹ Total of both complaints investigated & complaints revisited (when interpreting this number please note that some complaints would have been visited more than once)

² Finalised prosecutions