

# RSPCA report on animal outcomes from our shelters, care and adoption centres

2013-14

The RSPCA is Australia's oldest, largest and most trusted animal welfare organisation. With this privileged position comes great responsibility. This year we received<sup>1</sup> 127,304 animals in our animal shelters and adoption centres across the country.

We are pleased to report that over the past 10 years we have adopted out, reunited with their owners and released into the wild 672,243 animals, including 387,631 dogs/puppies and 222,916 cats/kittens.

Adoption and reclaim rates nationally have been steadily climbing each year and significant improvements in the outcomes for cats and dogs (including kittens and puppies) have been achieved. This can be attributed to the introduction of new approaches and programs to increase the number of animals adopted and reunited with their owners. This includes:

- **Extensive promotion of the wonderful animals we have available for adoption** through [www.adoptapet.com.au](http://www.adoptapet.com.au), social media, local events and traditional media.
- **Increasing community awareness and support for adopting animals** from shelters and rescue groups through programs such as *Happy Endings*.
- **Additional proactive and creative adoption initiatives** including the *Big Love* promotion for large dogs, Valentine's Day promotions, promotions focusing on senior animals and cats including adopting a mum and kitten or two kittens together, new adoption centres in shopping precincts and pet retail adoption partners.
- **Working with rescue groups** to extend the reach of adoption initiatives.
- **Providing services to reunite lost pets with their owners.**
- **Provision of community and shelter-based desexing schemes** to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and unwanted animals including initiatives targeting owners of pets experiencing financial hardship.
- **Expansion of foster care networks** to cater for greater numbers of animals. Animals cared for in foster homes include pregnant animals, those with young litters, orphaned kittens and puppies, seniors, those with special needs, those recovering from surgery, those needing to build their confidence or requiring behavioural training in a home setting and those that don't cope well in a shelter environment.
- **Dedicated behavioural trainers** that put in place behavioural modification and management plans for animals requiring specialist support and who provide post adoption behavioural classes.
- **Improvements in clinical veterinary care** including isolation facilities and processes, in shelter disease management and surgical rehabilitation.
- **Adoption follow up** with new owners to ensure pets are settling into their new homes and owners are provided with additional information and referral to appropriate telephone or on-site support services.
- **Community information, awareness raising and education** targeting responsible pet ownership and working with local councils, strata committees and landlords to encourage support for pet ownership.
- **Monitoring current research and investment in Australian-based research** in order to ensure evidence-based approaches to animal welfare.
- **Passionate staff and volunteers** who work tirelessly for the animals in their care.

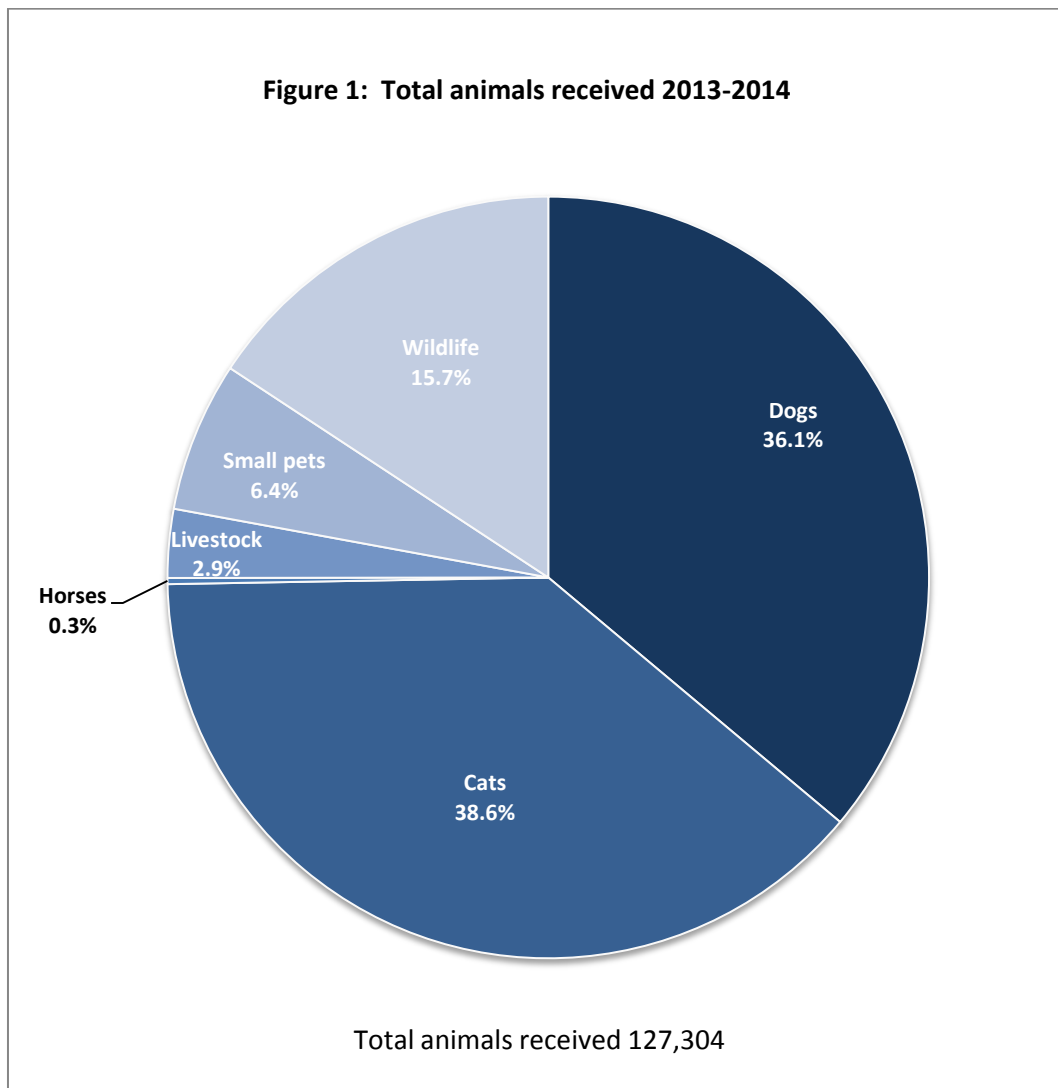
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<sup>1</sup> Received throughout this report refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2013-2014 financial year.

## All animals

In 2013-14, the RSPCA cared for 127,304 animals - 45,954 dogs, 49,166 cats, 330 horses, 3,709 livestock, 8,109 small pets such as mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, fish and ferrets, and 20,036 wildlife such as wombats, kangaroos, possums and reptiles (see Figure 1).

This was a small increase (0.50%) from 2012-13 when we received<sup>1</sup> 126,673 animals.



### Footnotes:

The total number of animals coming into the care of the RSPCA can be influenced by many factors including the number of local council animal management (pound) contracts the RSPCA holds in any one year.

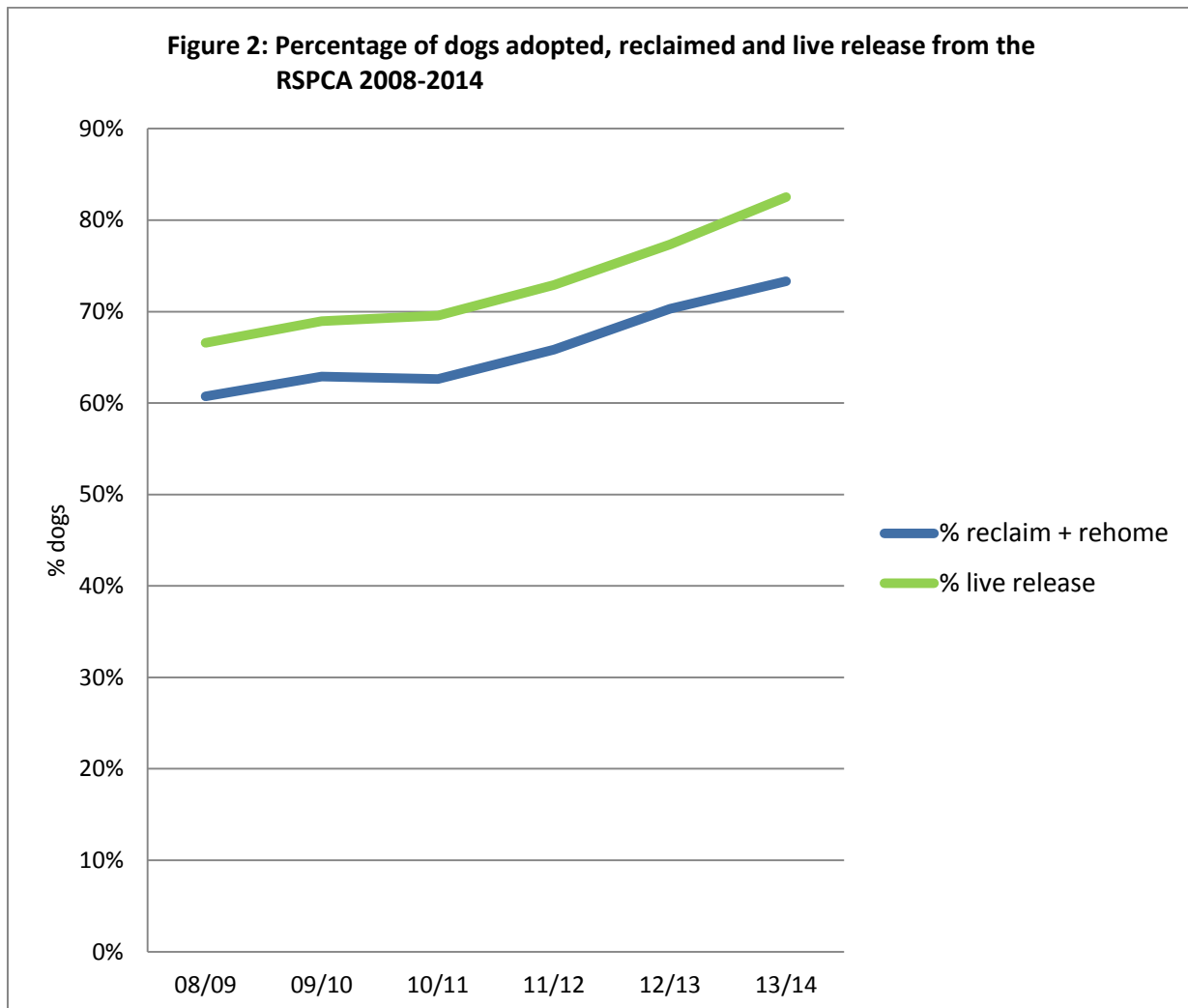
From 2011/12, there is a drop in the reported number of dogs and cats received by RSPCA NSW due to NSW Government reporting requirements. RSPCA NSW data does not include animals that are being cared for as part of a local council animal management contract. NSW local council animal management data can be viewed at <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/>

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## Dogs

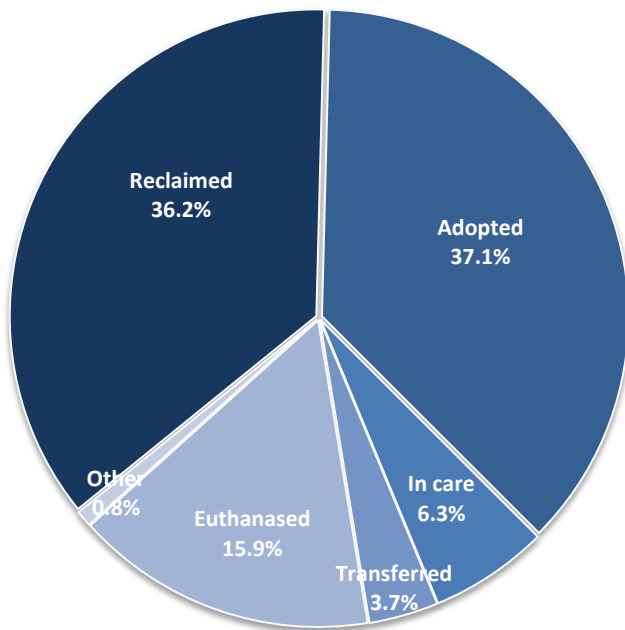
During 2013-14 the RSPCA received<sup>1</sup> 45,954 dogs and achieved the highest adoption/reunited with owners rate to date with 73.32% of dogs being adopted or reunited with their owners (see figures 2, 3 and 4).

An additional measure for monitoring change over time is the live release rate (LRR). The 2013-2014 LRR for dogs was 82.53%, which is an increase of 5.19% compared to the previous year. The LRR is the percentage of dogs that were adopted, reclaimed by their owner or transferred to a rescue group or other non-RSPCA facility as a percentage of the total number of dogs received (not including those currently in care or categorised as 'other' ) for the 2013-2014 financial year.



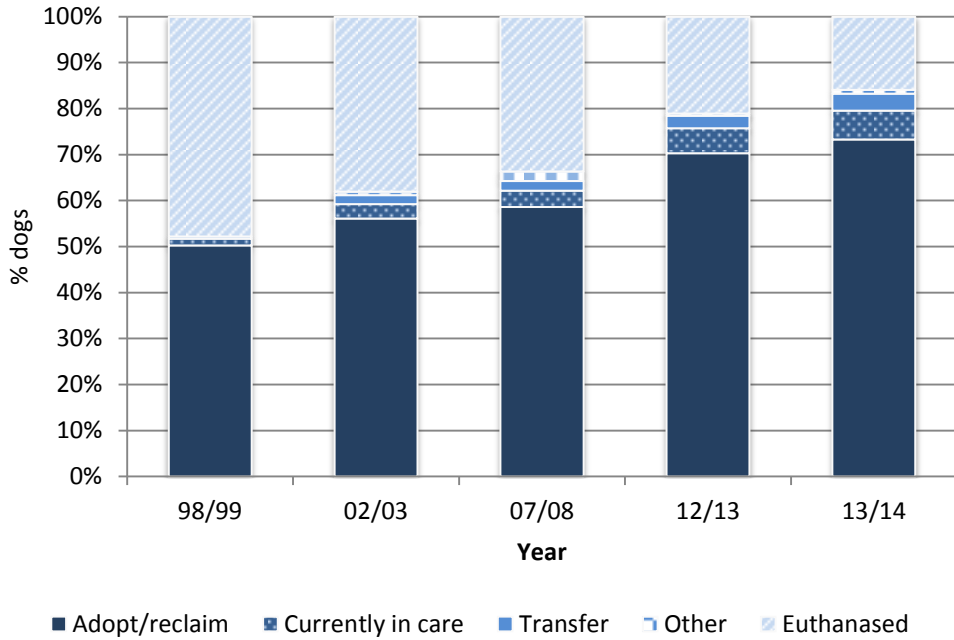
<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2013-2014 financial year.

**Figure 3: Outcomes for dogs 2013-14**



Total dogs received 45,954

**Figure 4: Outcomes for dogs selected years 1998-2014**

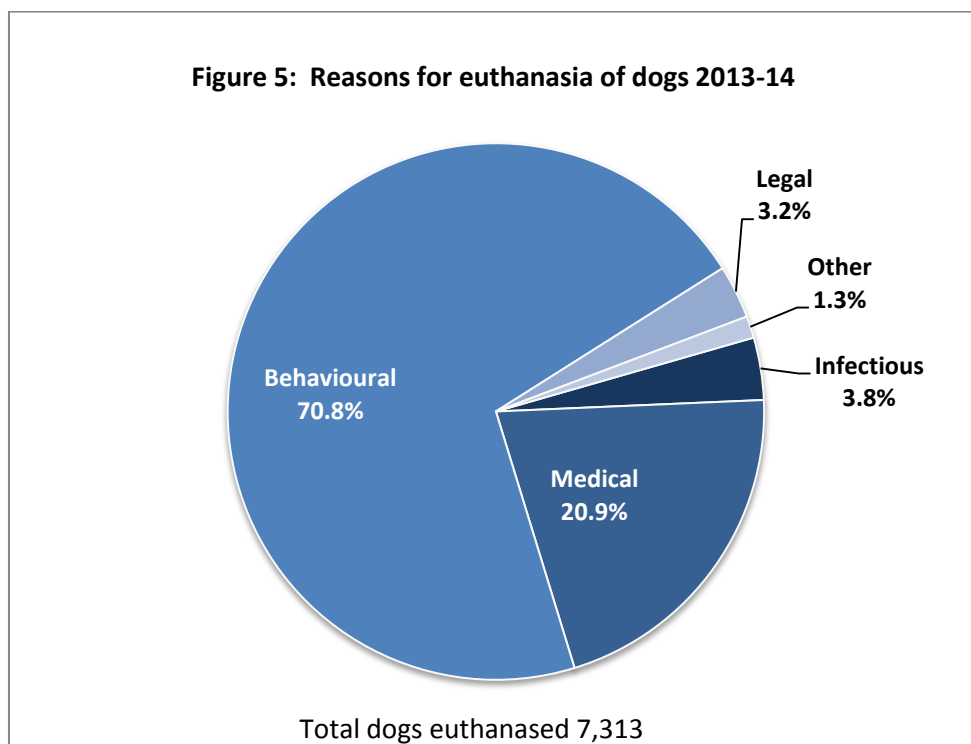


Many more owners reclaim lost dogs from the RSPCA than they do lost cats (16,653, 36.2% of dogs compared to 2,330, 4.7% of cats). The increased use of microchip identification of dogs supports reuniting lost dogs with their owner.

This increase in adoption and reuniting with owners is the result of our proactive tracing services, promotional, care, and rehabilitation activities leading to a decrease in euthanasia.

Sadly, 15.9% (7,313) of dogs/puppies were still humanely euthanased (see figure 5). We remain focused on adopting all animals that are suitable for adoption.

Of dogs euthanased, the majority of cases are because of severe behavioural issues (70.8%). This includes aggression and severe anxiety that the RSPCA is not able to or has not been able to treat through behavioural modification programs. Such issues can compromise the dog's welfare and quality of life and can be a safety risk to adults and children.



## Cats

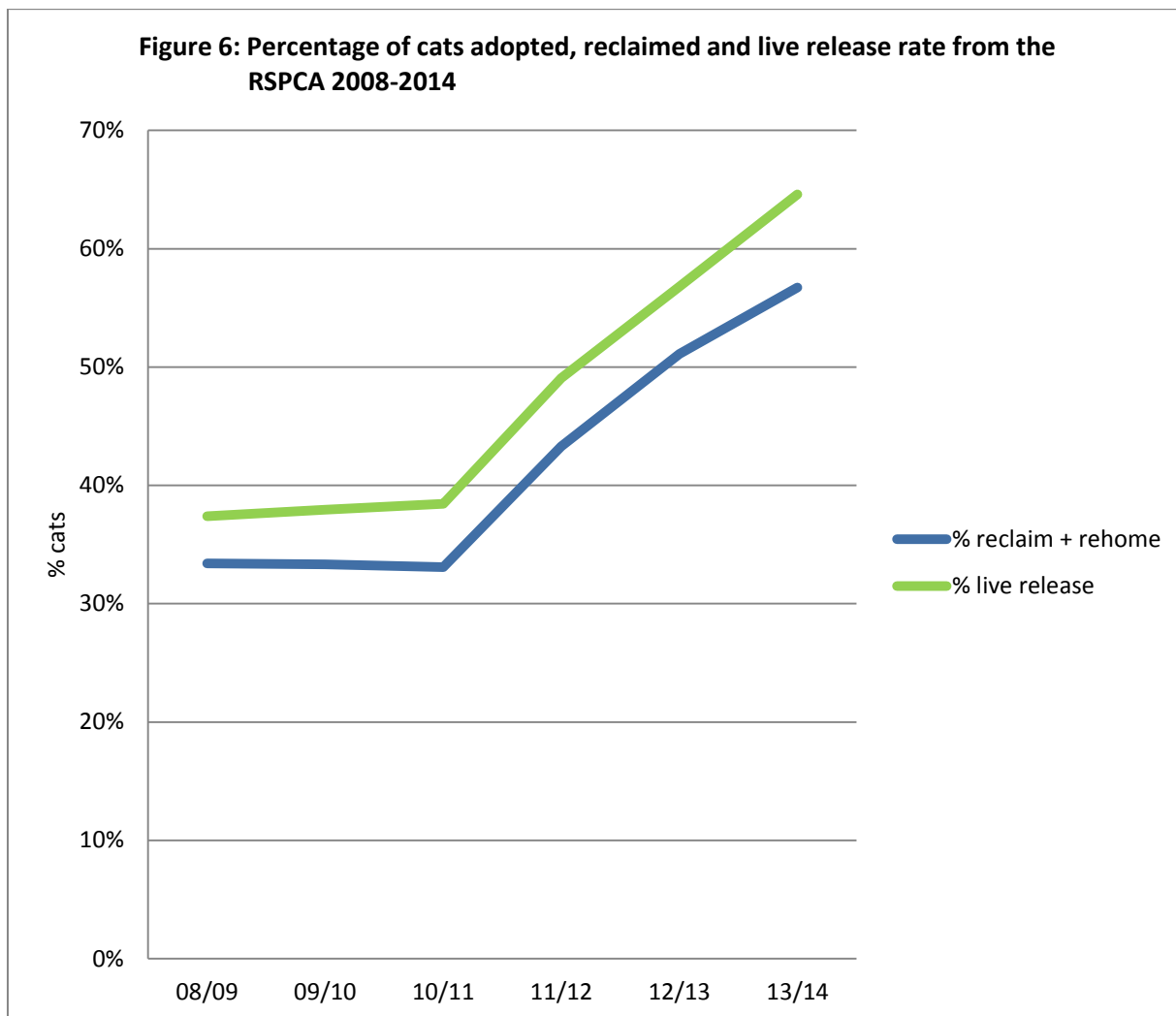
More cats and kittens have been adopted by the RSPCA and reclaimed by their owners this year than in any previous year 56.73% (27,890) reflecting the success of new adoption approaches and programs (see figures 6, 7 and 8).

There has been an increase of 3,903 in the number of cats and kittens adopted by the RSPCA and reclaimed by their owners this year when compared to 2012-13.

An additional measure for monitoring change over time is the live release rate (LRR). The 2013-2014 live release rate for cats and kittens was 64.60% which is an increase of 7.79% compared to last year. The LRR is the percentage of cats that were adopted, reclaimed by their owner or transferred to a rescue group or other non-RSPCA facility as a percentage of the total number of cats received<sup>1</sup> (not including those currently in care or categorised as 'other' ) for the 2013-2014 financial year.

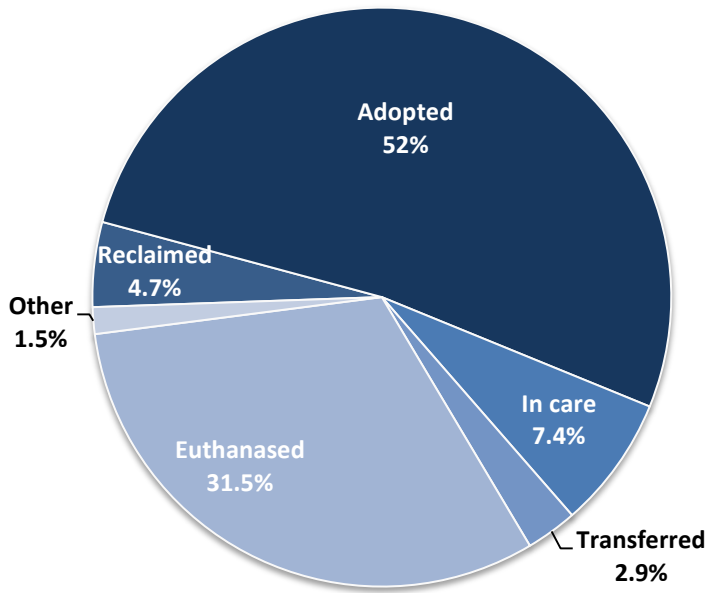
This increase in adoptions has resulted in the lowest euthanasia rate to date. Unfortunately, 31.5% (15,491) of cats/kittens were still humanely euthanased (see figure 9).

With the increasing uptake of microchip identification for cats, we are hopeful to see an increase in the number of lost cats that are reunited with their owners over the coming years.



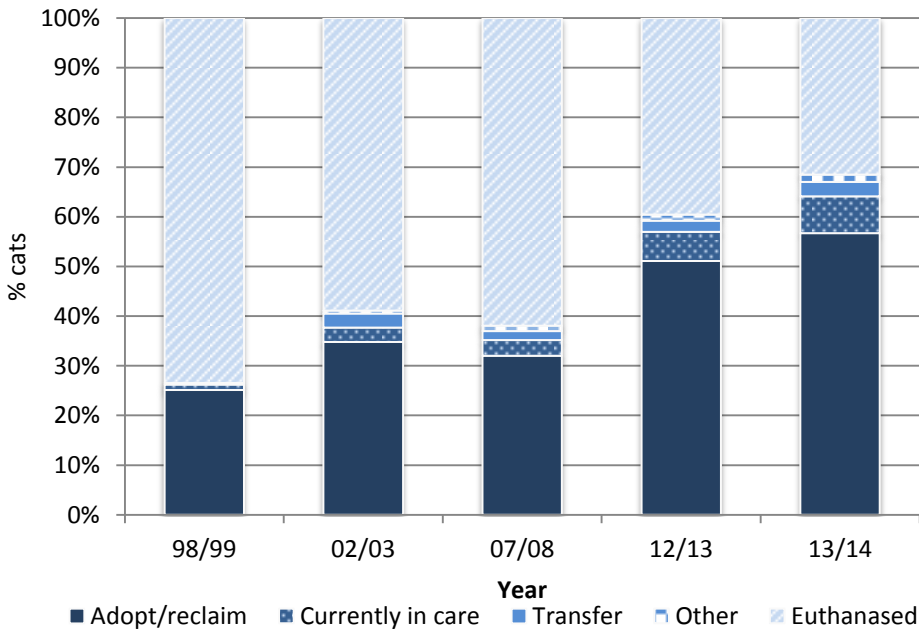
<sup>1</sup> Received refers to all animals in RSPCA facilities during the 2013-2014 financial year.

**Figure 7: Outcomes for cats 2013-14**

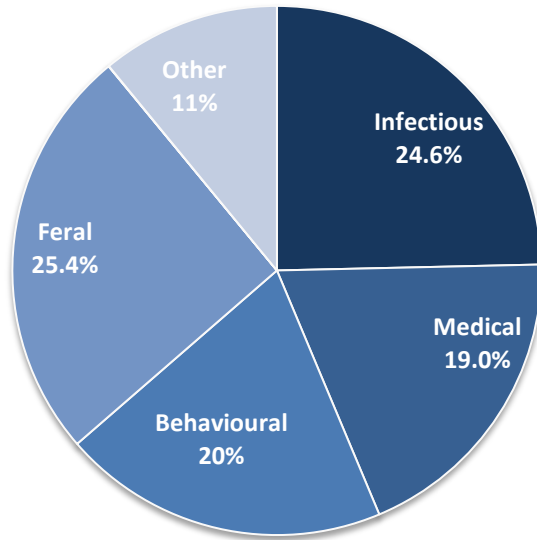


Total cats received 49,166

**Figure 8: Outcomes for cats selected years 1998-2014**



**Figure 9: Reasons for euthanasia of cats 2013-14**



Total cats euthanased 15,491

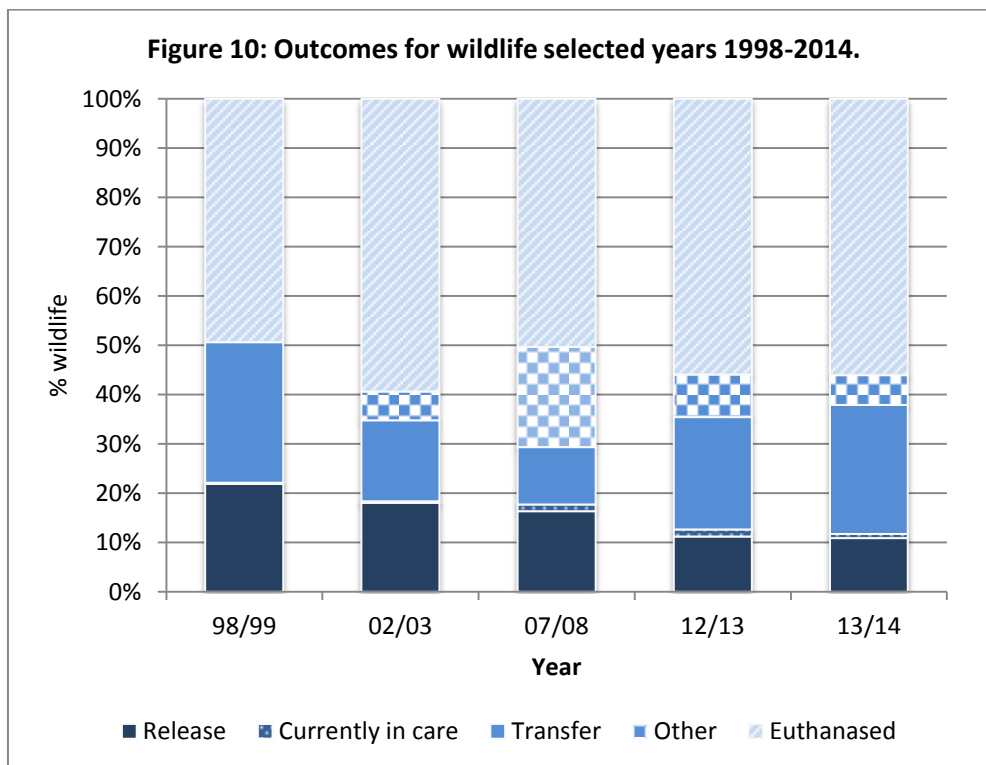


## Wildlife

The number of wildlife presented to the RSPCA has significantly increased since 1998/99 (8,310 animals in 1998/99 to 20,036 animals in 2013/14).

Usually, wildlife (native and introduced) is presented to the RSPCA by members of the community and private veterinary clinics because they have been injured or orphaned. RSPCA ACT and RSPCA QLD operate specialist wildlife clinics and receive, treat, rehabilitate and re-release wildlife.

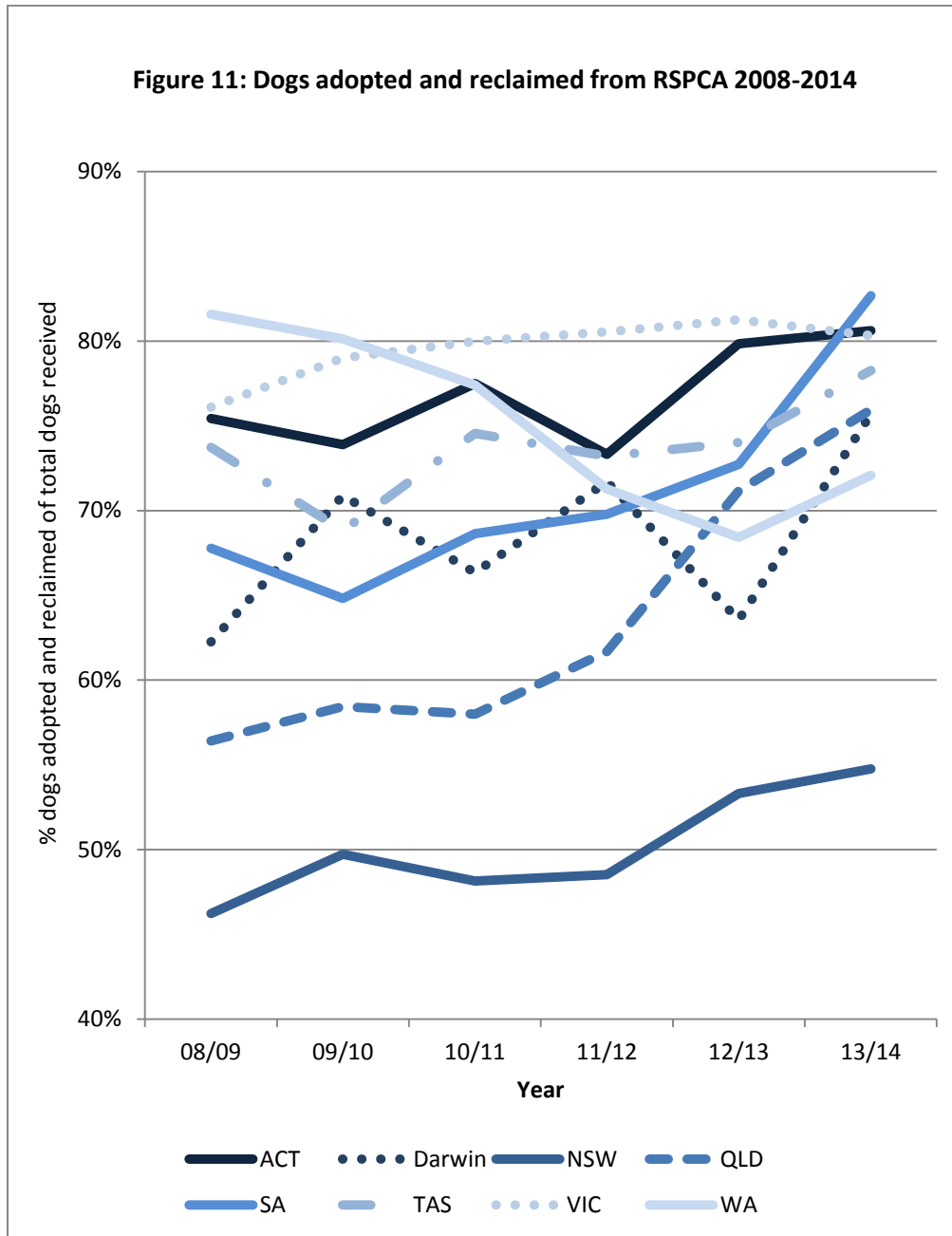
In 2013-14, the RSPCA re-released 10.9% (2,180) of wildlife received<sup>1</sup> following treatment and rehabilitation and transferred 5,242 (26.2%) to specialist groups or other non-RSPCA facilities. Unfortunately, many of the injuries can cause significant pain and suffering and/or compromise survival in the wild and the RSPCA plays an important role relieving this suffering through humane euthanasia. In 2013-14, 56% of all wildlife received was humanely euthanased (see figure 10).



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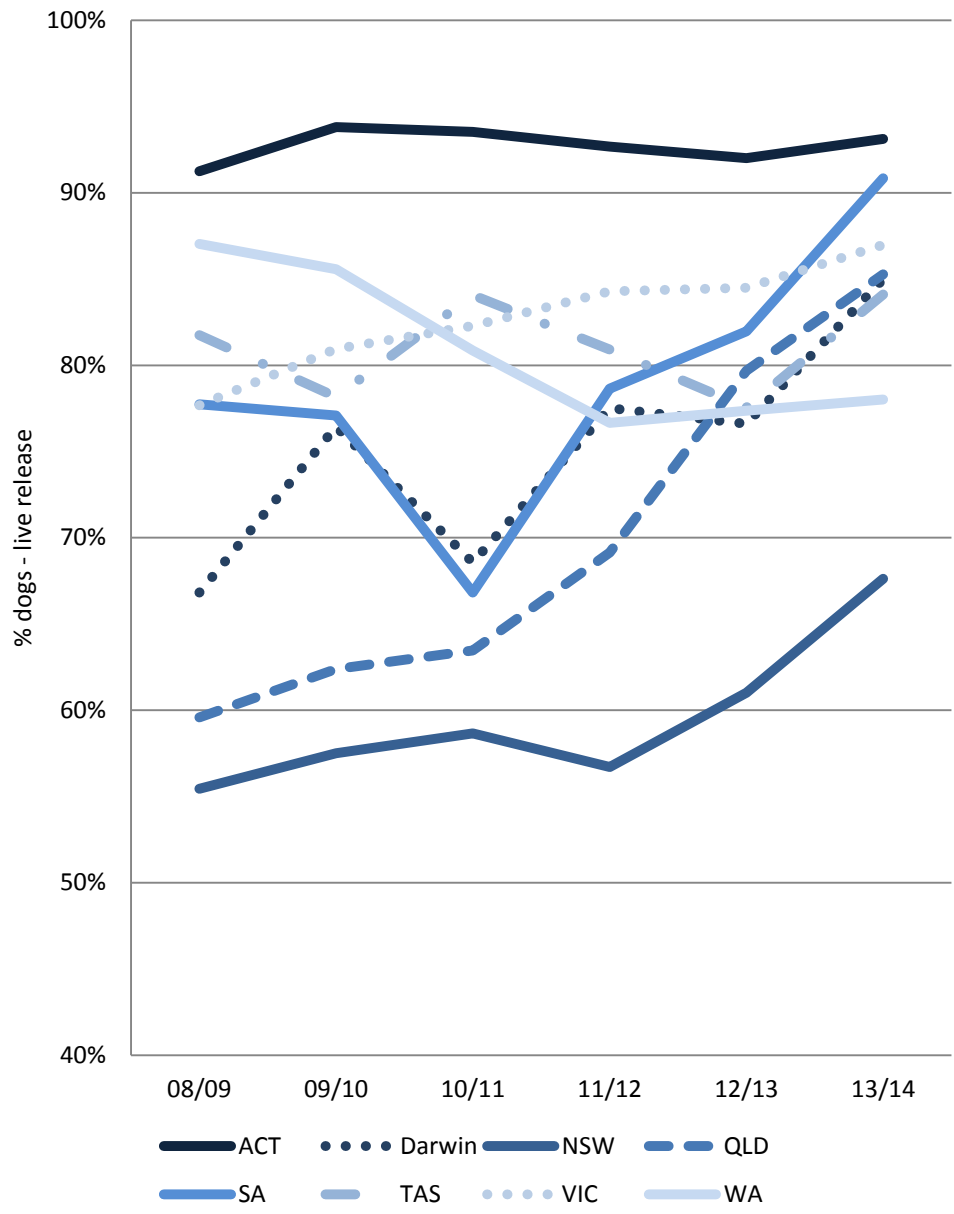
## Trends by state/territory RSPCA

Dog adoption and reclaim by owner rates by state are shown in figure 11 and live release rate by state in figure 12.

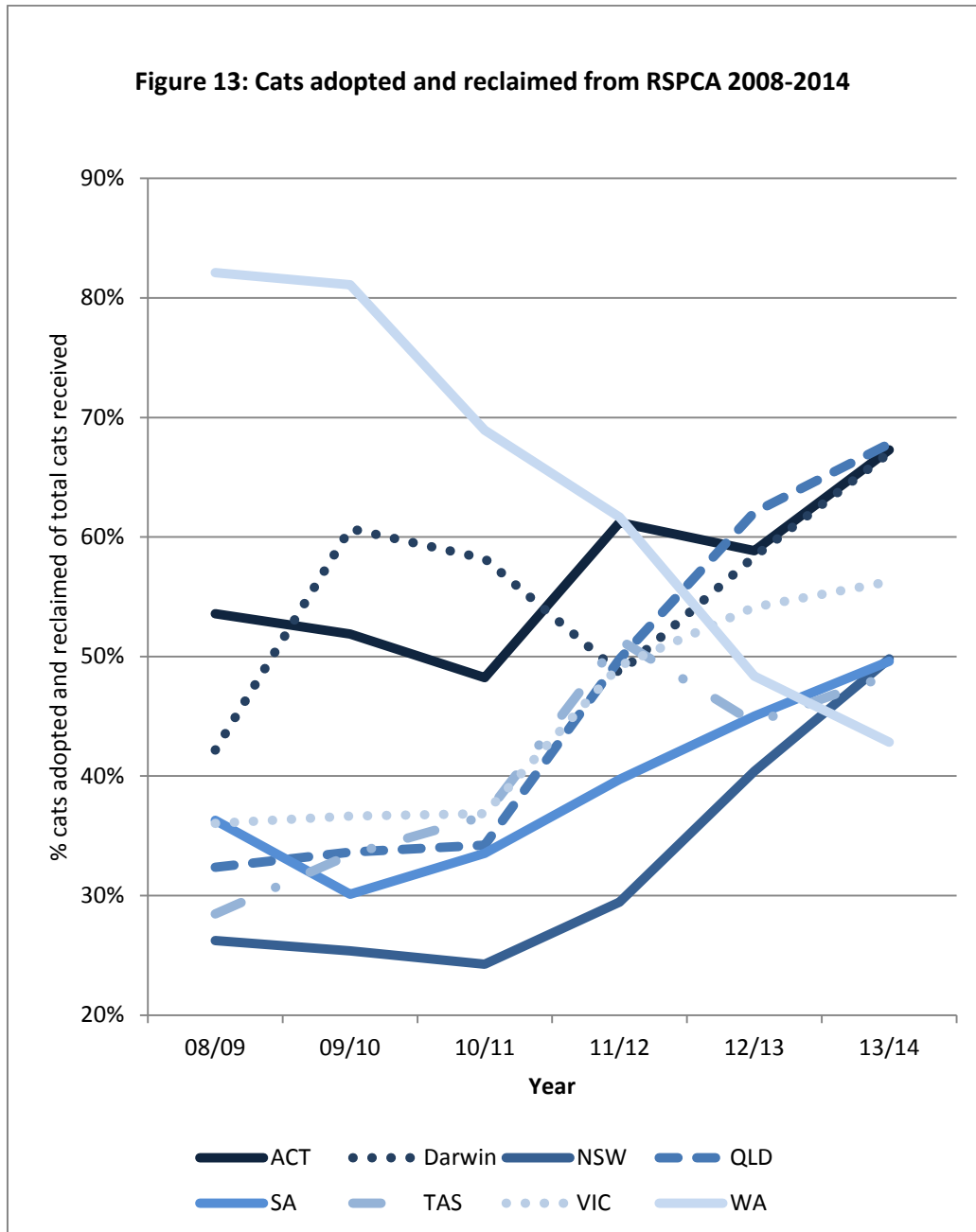


Some RSPCA facilities may have a larger proportion of animals currently in long-term care which can influence the adoption and reclaim rate.

**Figure 12: Dogs - live release rate from RSPCA 2008-2014**

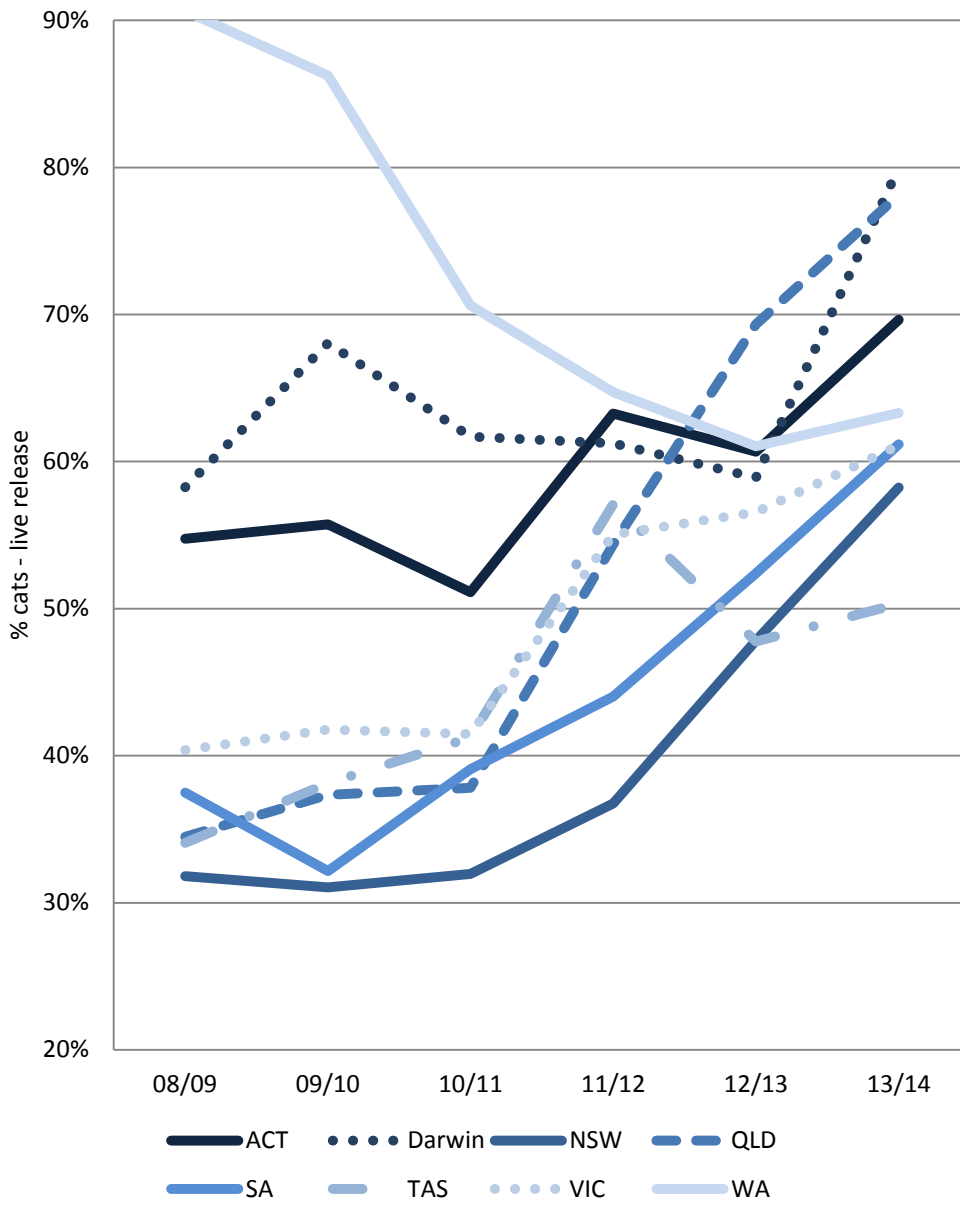


Cat adoption and reclaim by owner rates by state are shown in figure 13 and live release rate by state in figure 14.



Some RSPCA facilities may have a larger proportion of animals currently in long-term care which can influence the adoption and reclaim rate.

Figure 14: Cats - live release rate from RSPCA 2008-2014



## **Cruelty complaints**

The RSPCA's 98 Inspectors are authorised by the various State/Territory Governments to enforce animal welfare legislation (except in the NT where enforcement is the sole responsibility of the Territory Government).

In 2013-14, RSPCA Inspectors investigated 58, 591 complaints of cruelty reported by members of the public, the majority of which were in relation to dog, cat, horse and livestock welfare. This is an increase of 8,730 (17.5%) from the previous year. In addition, RSPCA Inspectors revisited 10,115 complaints/incidents.

This year, the RSPCA laid 904 charges and finalised 236 prosecutions of which 230 were successful. The majority of prosecutions were in relation to bird and dog welfare.