

**student
information
kit**



For all creatures great and small.

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the history of the **RSPCA**

What can be more melancholy than the sight of the long row of horses in the night cabs? Most of them broken down with age, or crippled by injuries and ill-usage, often marked with scars or bruises, lamed and screwed, brought out under cover of the dark, and worked by men who hire the use of them at so much an hour. These, then, we say are real wrongs.

Extract from *Man's Duty to the Lower Animals*, 1885

The Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals was established in Melbourne in 1871. A group of about 40 people met in the Assembly Hall in Collins St, Melbourne, to discuss ways of preventing crimes against animals. The following year the Society began hearing complaints about animal cruelty. People found guilty of cruelty were fined and warned not to offend again.

One of the most common complaints attended to by the Society was the overloading of horse-drawn cabs. In those days the law allowed seven people to be placed in a cab (which is a lot for one horse to pull). Some cab drivers would load more, making the work of the horses even harder.

In an essay published in 1888, readers were challenged to:

. . . think of the over-driven, over-burdened beasts you see in the streets every day. Remember the accounts which the newspapers occasionally give of the cattle driven to the city for market, left unfed, unsheltered, unwatered in our sweltering summer heat for days together. Do not forget that stage driver who made a horse with a broken leg go fifteen miles over a bush road, dragged on by the other horses while he lashed and cursed the helpless beast. Recall, too the

particulars of that drinking bout in the kitchen of a country inn, when a party of men and women roasted a cat alive for fun, while they sat drinking away the hours of a rainy holiday.

Extract from 'The Present Duty' An Essay by Firenze 1888

In 1881 the name of the Society was changed to 'Society for the Protection of Animals', later becoming 'The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' in 1956.

about the **RSPCA**

community support

The RSPCA is a non-government organisation that depends on the support of people in the community to continue its work. People can offer their support by:

- becoming RSPCA members
- sponsoring the Society
- buying homewares, gifts and animal care products
- bequeathing money and gifts
- participating in special events
- making donations
- purchasing products endorsed by the RSPCA.



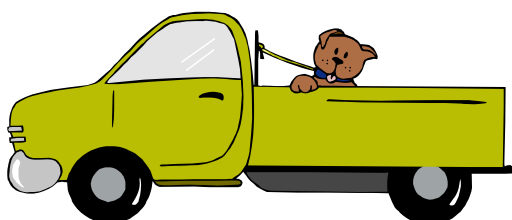
The community is kept informed about animal welfare issues through campaigns, newsletters and media events.

changing the law

The RSPCA encourages governments to take better care of animals by improving existing laws or making new ones. Some laws that the RSPCA has lobbied for successfully include:

- the compulsory registration of cats
- the banning of the docking of tails on dogs
- ensuring that dogs on tray trucks and utilities are tethered.

The greater the number of RSPCA members, the greater the chance that governments will take action on behalf of animals.



inspectors

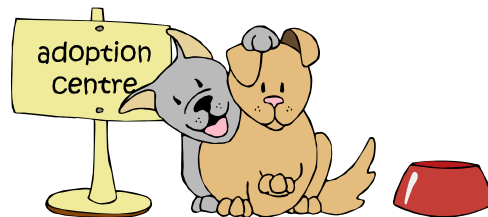
Each year RSPCA Inspectors investigate ten thousand cruelty cases and rescue two thousand animals that are in danger. When a cruelty complaint is received, Inspectors visit the animals, check their condition and ensure their owners know how to provide proper care.

Under the Victorian law, Inspectors may exercise their authority to charge the owners with cruelty.

animal shelters

Shelters provide homes for lost and unwanted animals. Each year about 40 thousand animals find their way into one of the RSPCA's shelters, where they are given food, water, medicine, exercise, warm beds and protection from the weather. Sick and injured wildlife are cared for until they are well enough to return to the wild. Healthy animals that are not collected by their owners are put up for adoption. RSPCA shelter staff can give you lots of great information if you are thinking about getting a pet.

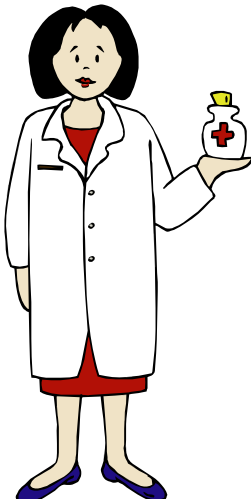
All animals sold by the RSPCA are desexed, microchipped and fully vaccinated.



vet clinics

The RSPCA operates vet clinics in Burwood East and Pearcedale. RSPCA vets and nurses not only provide expert care for animals that are lost, unwanted or suffering from cruelty, they also look after sick and injured wildlife, farm animals and pets that belong to members of the public.

In order to reduce the number of unwanted animals in Victoria, RSPCA vets desex thousands of animals each year.



branches and volunteers

Over one thousand volunteers give their time and energy to the RSPCA. Volunteers work at the Society's headquarters in Burwood East or in districts throughout Victoria. Country Victorians who support the RSPCA are encouraged to assist our shelters and shops or to take on leadership positions in their local area.

What do volunteers do?

- organize RSPCA approved events (such as Million Paws Walk)
- conduct approved RSPCA fundraising drives
- promote animal welfare campaigns
- assist in shelters
- Assist in retail outlets.



Each week the RSPCA receives two thousand hours of voluntary assistance.

education

RSPCA Education develops responsible and caring behaviour towards animals by providing exciting learning experiences for people of all ages. Education programs are conducted throughout Victoria and in the Education Centre at Burwood East.

The Education team uses a selection of friendly animals, hands-on learning materials and new technologies to explain the needs of animals and the challenges of animal welfare.



duck hunting: help the RSPCA kill the sport

During the duck hunting season, hundreds of thousands of birds are shot. Some die immediately, while others are wounded, brought to ground (or water), retrieved then killed by having their necks wrung. Many ducks are wounded then left to suffer slow, painful deaths.

Most hunters use shotguns to shoot ducks. Shotguns fire clouds of pellets, some of which might strike a duck. If only a few pellets make contact, a duck might be wounded but not killed. This causes unnecessary and often severe suffering.

Duck hunters sometimes mistake protected birds for ones they are allowed to kill. Every year, many endangered birds are killed or injured.

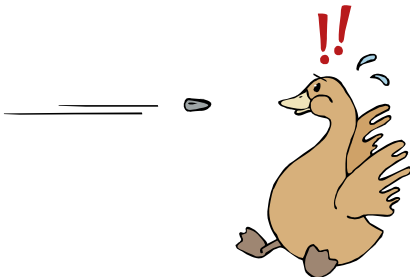
Another problem caused by duck hunting is the amount of pollution that builds up in lakes and rivers. Shotgun pellets are made of lead, which is toxic.

Most of the pellets fall into the water, where they threaten the health of fish, turtles, water birds and frogs.



Duck hunting is banned in New South Wales. The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee noted, 'The level of pain and suffering through cruelty in duck hunting is unreasonably high and . . . it is unnecessary and unjustifiable in circumstances where the activity is undertaken to satisfy a sporting urge.'

The RSPCA opposes the recreational hunting of ducks because of the high level of cruelty involved.



cat desexing: our problem is multiplying

Every year the RSPCA receives thousands of unwanted or abandoned cats and kittens. If more cats were desexed the number of unwanted animals would be a lot less.

Cats can be desexed from two months of age.

Desexed cats:

- live longer
- enjoy good health
- are usually more affectionate
- don't go looking for mates
- are not visited by other cats
- are less inclined to wander or fight.



dogs die in hot cars

Dogs are often left inside cars while their owners are shopping, visiting friends or completing errands. Unfortunately, the insides of cars become very hot when the weather is warm or the sun is out. As the temperature rises the dogs begin to show signs of heat stress, including panting, barking or whining. If the dogs cannot escape they may drool or vomit before they suffer convulsions or unconsciousness. On hot days, dogs left in cars can die in as few as six minutes.

The RSPCA urges people not leave their dogs inside cars.

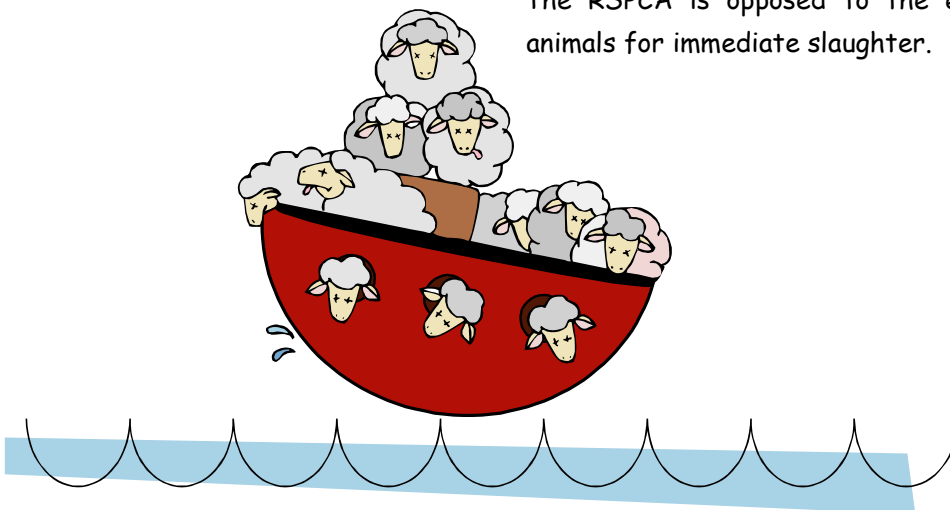


livestock export

Every year millions of live sheep, goats, pigs and cattle are shipped from Australia to ports in Asia. Many of these animals are slaughtered for food shortly after they arrive at their destination. Sea voyages take up to three weeks, during which some animals starve, suffer infections, experience stress or die from crippling injuries. Animals are kept in crowded conditions and stand or lie in their own waste.

Approximately five million sheep are sent to the Middle East each year. Between the time a sheep leaves the farm and its eventual slaughter it will be transported by road or rail to a sea port, kept in holding pens for up to ten days, shipped overseas then held in pens once again. The process may take 11 weeks. During the sea voyage the animals are crowded together, typically three per square metre.

The RSPCA is opposed to the export of live animals for immediate slaughter.



help the RSPCA get hens out of cages

Many eggs come from hens that live in crowded cages. The hens have no room to stretch their wings or preen their feathers. They cannot make a nest, forage for food or dustbathe. Their muscles and bones are weak and they suffer stress and frustration. The cages are 40cm high and the floor space allowed for each bird is smaller than an A4 sheet of paper.

You can help stop this type of farming by buying eggs that come from hens that are able to move freely. Look for the RSPCA logo on egg cartons.

