

Reporting Animal Cruelty or Neglect

Thankfully, acts of extreme cruelty towards animals are rare in Tasmania. The overwhelming majority of animal welfare complaints in Tasmania are the result of neglect and/or ignorance.

If you see any of the welfare problems listed below, or anything else you think might be a welfare problem, report it to the RSPCA – see the contact details below.

Confidentiality

If you make a report, it is entirely your choice whether you give your name. If you make a report anonymously, it will not be possible to report back to you on any investigation.

What should you report?

While there can be many different kinds of animal welfare issues, the most common in Tasmania are:

- **Failure to provide appropriate nutrition.** Affected animals may look unhealthily skinny. Please bear in mind that elderly livestock and horses can look quite skinny yet be healthy.
- **Failure to provide basic health care.** This means an animal that is flyblown, is severely lame, is scouring badly or has any other obvious health problem that is not being treated.
- **Failure to treat disease or injury.** This includes an animal that has an untreated broken leg, has advanced cancer, is a “downer” (i.e. cannot stand) and any case of high mortalities.
- **Failure to provide clean water.**
- **Failure to provide adequate shelter.** This includes prolonged tethering in the open in adverse weather conditions.
- **Obesity and a lack of exercise.**
- **Overstocking/hoarding.**
- **Overgrown fleeces on sheep or angora goats.** But please note that a few breeds shed their fleeces naturally and they can look a mess over the weeks it takes for all the fleece to shed;
- **Dog attacks on, in particular, sheep and goats.** Note: Dog attacks on animals, or other dogs, should be reported directly to your local council

The type of information that would help

- **The precise location of the issue.** Some rural properties are extensive, so the more detail you can give as to where the affected animals are would help greatly.
- In such cases, a GPS location is ideal but, if that is not possible, the name of the road and the distance from a landmark would be sufficient.
- **The extent of the welfare issue.** Essentially, whether it needs immediate attention or whether it can be looked at the next time an inspector is in the area.
- **A photo.** If you can safely and legally take a photo and email or text it, it would help in assessing the situation and assigning a priority to your report.

What NOT to do

Gathering evidence for a prosecution is a highly-specialised task and usually requires legal authority. It should only be done by people trained in evidence-gathering.

You should not go onto the property.

What happens when you report?

Your report is assigned a priority based on the information you provide. If the animal is not in immediate danger, other more urgent reports may take priority.

Decisions about how to handle a report are based on the seriousness of the welfare issue as well as any past dealings with the people or property reported.

In ensuring the welfare problem is resolved, inspectors will visit properties and require changes to be made by the responsible owner, lessee or manager. Where necessary inspectors will organise for veterinary intervention, removal of animals, or even euthanising of animals in extreme distress. Depending on the particular circumstances, inspectors may issue an infringement notice (i.e. a fine) or initiate a prosecution.

To report animal cruelty

RSPCA Tasmania Inspectorate

Phone: 1300 139 947

Email: reportit@rspcatas.org.au