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Abstract

The effectiveness of a targeted subsidised desexing and identification program on pound admission, euthanasia and reclamation of dogs in Bathurst Regional Council

Euthanasia and wastage of healthy dogs is a serious issue in Australia. The proportion of dogs that become unwanted and end up in pounds and shelters is greater than the demand for these dogs, and so routine euthanasia results in the death of thousands of animals. Funded subsidised desexing and identification programs such as the RSPCA’s Community Animal Welfare Scheme (CAWS) are a favoured approach by governments and organisations to encourage owners to desex their pets. These programs aim to decrease the proportion of reproducing dogs that are potentially contributing to the unwanted dog population, however there is very little evidence to demonstrate that these programs are successful at decreasing shelter intake and euthanasia. Other methods of population control apart from desexing strategies have not been investigated, such as microchipping dogs to increase reclamation. There have been some similar trends observed between different desexing programs and their effectiveness at decreasing shelter intake and euthanasia, although results have been varied. Programs differ in their strategy and how they may work in a community and so findings for one program cannot be assumed for all areas. There is a need for more research in this field particularly in an Australian context and on the effectiveness of other methods of population control such as microchipping.
Full Paper

Part 1 – literature review: subsidised desexing programs and their efficacy on reducing euthanasia of dogs in pounds and shelters

Introduction

An excess supply of puppies and dogs are surrendered to pounds and shelters without the financial capability or available space to care for them all (RSPCA Australia, 2016). There are often serious welfare implications for dogs during their stay in a shelter or pound, as not only are many euthanased, they are also at risk of developing acute or chronic stress responses as evidence by physiological indicators and behaviour (Diesel, 2011). As well as animal welfare, the unwanted dog problem also affects the wellbeing shelter and pound staff as they are exposed to routine euthanasia of healthy animals (Baran et al., 2009; Reeve et al., 2005).

To try and combat the unwanted dog problem and reduce the number of dogs admitted to and euthanised in pounds and shelters, funded desexing programs are the most popular approach (White et al., 2010). Despite this there has been little research and minimal evidence to demonstrate these programs are successful in reducing dog euthanasia in communities. The few published studies that have analysed these programs have been limited in scope, thus no long-term trends have been published regarding desexing programs and their impact on intake and euthanasia rates. These studies are based on American programs and show a variety of results, however overall they shared similar trends that demonstrated that these programs can be successful in reducing admission and euthanasia of animals in shelters and pounds (Miller et al., 2014; Scarlett et al., 2002; White et al., 2010).

In Australia there is currently a serious unwanted dog problem that results in the needless euthanasia of thousands of healthy dogs that were unable to be rehomed and so programs such as RSPCA’s CAWS aim to reduce admittance and euthanasia by controlling the dog problem with desexing surgery and identification of animals through microchipping.

Despite the promotion of these programs to reduce euthanasia, there have been no studies to assess the efficacy of Australian programs and the role microchipping in helping reduce pound admittance and euthanasia. To address this gap in the literature, we aim to analyse trends in admission, reclaim and euthanasia rates at Bathurst Pound before and after the implementation of a targeted, subsidized, desexing and identification program. It is expected that admission rates and euthanasia rates will have decreased from desexing dogs and reclaim rates will increase as more dogs have been microchipped and identified.

Desexing Programs

Dogs that are admitted to shelters and pounds must endure undial conditions, causing stress and trauma to many dogs (Beerda et al., 1997; Hennessy et al., 2001). Dogs that have been relinquished by their owners may experience separation anxiety whilst strays that have been caught and brought in are likely to feel stress and fear from that process (Beerda et al., 1997). For most dogs the shelter or pound is an unfamiliar and novel environment in which they are handled by strangers and exposed to other stressors, such as dogs that may be acting aggressively and loud noises such as barking (Hennessy et al., 2001; Tuber et al., 1999). Dogs are likely to be confined for most hours of the day and experience social isolation (Tuber et al., 1999). As a result of the stressful nature of the shelter and pound environment, dogs in care are at risk of developing acute or chronic stress responses physically or in their behaviour (Beerda et al., 1997). Due to financial and resource constraints in many pounds and shelters, adoptable dogs that are unable to be rehomed are euthanised which contributes to the wastage of healthy animals (Marston et al., 2004).

To try address the unwanted dog problem of dogs, governments, organisations and charities fund programs with different approaches to reduce admission and euthanasia of dogs in pounds and shelters. Efforts generally include raising awareness of the number of dogs that need to be adopted from pounds and shelters, promoting the adoption of these dogs rather than buying from other sources, however the main focus is on offering desexing procedures to pet owners for free or at a subsidised cost (Miller et al., 2014; Scarlett and Johnston, 2012; White et al., 2010). Whilst desexing is the most widely promoted approach to try decrease pound and shelter intake, there has been very little research to support the effectiveness of these programs despite the costs involved in funding them (White et al., 2010). The evaluation of desexing programs is mostly limited to American research by White et al. 2010, Scarlett and Johnston 2012, and Miller et al. 2014. Their research showed varying results between the effectiveness of different desexing programs, but overall showed some similar trends in their success. Desexing programs differ between communities in how they are funded, their geographic demographics, who they are targeting and their method of doing so, but are similar in centering their efforts around increasing the number of desexed animals in a population to try reduce euthanasia (White et al., 2010).
A study conducted by White et al. (2010) investigated the impact of two different programs on cat and dog intake and euthanasia in two different cities. These programs were based in New Hampshire and Austin and both used intake and euthanasia data from their local shelters compared against the number of animals desexed every year to assess the effectiveness of each program. The New Hampshire program had two separate components: an adopter’s initiative that allowed people that have adopted an intact animal to have it desexed at a subsidised cost, and a low-income program which was available to residents receiving support from public assistance programs and offered desexing and immunisations for a subsidised price at participatingvet clinics. The New Hampshire’s Animal Population Control Program began in 1994, and so its impact was analysed by comparing intake and euthanasia data from 1983 before the program was implemented up to 2005. The number of surgeries performed were also compared between the adopter’s initiative and low-income program from 1995 to 2005.

In comparison, the Austin program did not offer an adopter’s initiative but instead offered completely free desexing, rabies vaccinations and registration in targeted areas. Zip codes were targeted for program participation based on their relatively high shelter intake, limited vet facilities, and low average household incomes compared to other zip codes. The program began in 2000, however unlike the New Hampshire program, intake and euthanasia data from the seven targeted program zip codes were compared with data from non-program areas from 2000-2007.

Both of these programs were analysed by White et al. (2010) to estimate the relationship between the number of desexing surgeries that had been performed and the shelter intake and euthanasia numbers. The analysis also looked at human demographic data for both programs to ensure that the trend couldn’t be attributed to a change in human population. They found no significant decrease in dog intake or euthanasia rates in New Hampshire after the onset of the program, however there were significant results for the Austin program which showed a lower rate of increased intake and euthanasia in program areas compared to non-program. Both programs showed a significant decrease for cat intake and euthanasia. It was also noted that the New Hampshire adopter’s initiative was more successful than the low-income program with 32,152 and 18,410 surgeries performed respectively between 1995 and 2005. This suggests that pet owners adopting an intact animal are more likely to utilize subsidized desexing than low-income pet owners. This could be because low-income earners may have other reasons for not wanting to desex their animals apart from the cost, such as negative perceptions of desexing, wanting to breed their animals or inconvenience.

Scarlett and Johnston (2012) aimed to assess the effect of opening a subsidised desexing clinic on the intake and euthanasia on cats and dogs at the only community shelter in Transylvania Country, North Carolina. They also looked at the number of service calls and complaints to animal control to detect any change in the burden of unwanted animals.

The clinic offered desexing and rabies vaccinations to pet owners and allowed them to pay what they could afford, and did not have any specific income requirements in place for residents to be able to utilize the subsidized services. The clinic records kept on each animal seen to, which included their age, sex, the date of their desexing surgery, whether it had previously seen a vet, if it needed a rabies vaccination, whether it had a previous litter and at surgery it was recorded whether the animal was pregnant or in oestrus. This data would ideally allow for some insight into the community’s pet population dynamics and the proportion of pets that were reproducing and contributing to the population. They found through the survey data that significantly more female cats were pregnant or had had previous litters than female dogs. The clinic opened at the beginning of 2005 and so Scarlett and Johnston (2012) analysed data from before (2001-2004) and after (2005-2008) the opening of the clinic. They found that before the clinic opened there was a minimum of 202 canine surgeries and a maximum of 314 canine surgeries per year. Following the opening of the clinic, these numbers increased to a minimum of 395 canine surgeries and 622 canine surgeries per year. Scarlett and Johnston (2012) found no significant change in dog intake and euthanasia after the clinic opened, however the number of cats admitted and euthanised per year decreased significantly. This could be related to the results showing a higher proportion of reproducing female cats were seen to than reproducing female dogs. The number of calls and complaints to animal control also decreased and levelled off significantly, indicating that the opening of the free clinic did have an impact on decreasing the burden of the unwanted animal populations.

A study conducted by Miller at al. (2014) differed in their approach by first identifying high risk areas for shelter admission and then targeting them for intervention with a desexing program. Their study was conducted in Portland and they used shelter intake data from 2010 from four of the primary shelters that were part of the Animal Shelter Alliance of Portland (ASAP) to map hot spots of areas with the highest rates of relinquishment and stray intake.
They looked at data on species, intake type, age, breed, sex, whether they were desexed or not and the location of where they came from for each animal to determine areas that would benefit most from the intervention. Within the intervention area, pet owners were offered services including desexing surgery, behaviour training and vaccinations at no cost between January 2012 – June 2013 at ASAP organisations. These services were advertised by over 60 different outreach tools, including postcards, mailers and presentations at local school to raise awareness of the program and the benefits of desexing. Outreach methods were mainly focused on targeting cat owners. There was thorough tracking of data on shelter intake, desexing surgery and the type and amount of outreach success, which were reviewed on a monthly basis. They found that of these, 35 tools enabled at least one animal to be serviced at the clinic. The results also showed that mailers were the most successful outreach tool for cats, however recommendations from friends and family were the most effective tool for dogs. The analysis on shelter data also included four control areas which were selected based on having a similar shelter intake, human population, number of households and median incomes to the intervention area. Only data for dogs classed as pitbull-type dogs were analysed as this was the most common breed type admitted to shelters. Their analysis showed that there was a significant reduction of owned cats admitted to shelters but no link was found for pit-bull type dogs. They found that a targeted approach to high risk communities significantly improved their ability to provide the resources necessary to help reduce high shelter admission rates.

White et al. (2010) and Scarlett and Johnston (2012) were retrospective studies and hence were lacking some useful data that would have been important for valid analysis of the impact of each initiative on shelter intake and euthanasia.

White et al. (2010) were unable to obtain important data on factors required for conclusive results on the impact of these programs. There was no data available for analysis on the background rates of desexing before and after the initiation of either program which makes it difficult to determine the true impact of desexing. Additionally, the total pet population in targeted areas for either program were unknown and so the proportion of animals being reached by these programs could not be established.

Scarlett and Johnston (2012) also had some limitations. The clinic was opened in 2005 and Scarlett and Johnston (2012) were only able to analyse data from 2001-2008, which allowed for less than 4 years of data from before and then after the clinic opened for analysis. This short study time makes it difficult to assess long term impacts or make a statistically significant conclusion on its effectiveness.

Miller et al. (2014) may have also had skewed results. Their outreach strategies were mainly targeting cat owners which could have been an important factor in the insignificant results found for dogs, and only looking at pitbull-type dogs could have been an invalid measure of the impact of this intervention on the entire dog population. Miller et al. (2014) focused on the impact of an intervention program on pound admittance, however they did not look at effects of the program on euthanasia in their study (Miller et al. 2014)

These three studies conducted on American funded neutering programs all demonstrated that cat populations are more receptive to desexing intervention strategies than canine populations and more conclusive evidence is still needed for dog populations. Most programs also lacked an evaluation component, which Miller et al. (2014) demonstrated is crucial for determining the success of these programs and whether the funding is helping alleviate the euthanasia problem. More research is needed, particularly over a longer time frame as Frank’s (2004) model predicted that increasing desexing in an area is unlikely to show the true benefits of its impact until decades afterwards. It is important for these studies to have extensive data so that the analysis is valid, such as background desexing rates and human and pet demographics. These are important to assess whether overall desexing rates are increased or whether owners are taking advantage of low cost programs instead of paying standard rates for their veterinarian to do so, and whether changes in the pet population are due to desexing rather than changes in the human population. Miller et al. (2014) also showed that a more targeted approach at intervention is likely to have more success.

There is a strong need for further research on the effectiveness of desexing programs over a longer period of and also an evaluation of these programs in Australia where the euthanasia of dogs is also a serious identified problem.
The Australian Dog Problem

Shelter Admission and Euthanasia

In Australia, dogs are the most popular companion animal with a total population estimated at 4.8 million in 2016 and almost two in five households owning a dog. This is a relatively large population, with around 20 dogs to every 100 people. Since 2013, the dog population increased by around 600,000 dogs. (Animal Medicines Australia, 2016). One model forecasting the dog population expects that by 2026, the dog population will reach 5.8 million and the number of households owning dogs will increase from 2.8 million to 3.8 million in this time (Baguley, 2011).

The pet industry encourages consumerism of companion animals which contributes to the oversupply of animals and excess abandoned in pounds and shelters (McGreevy and Bennett, 2010). Millions of puppies are produced each year by pet store suppliers, commercial breeders and private owners to meet public demand, however many owners later abandon these dogs when they become inconvenient or no longer suit the owner’s needs (Frank, 2004). An excess number of dogs are surrendered to pounds and shelters which contributes to the high euthanasia rates in Australia (Instone and Sweeney, 2014).

There is a lack of precise data documenting the total number of homeless dogs in Australia and so shelter intake and euthanasia rates are often the best measure of pet overpopulation. This the not the most accurate measure, however it is currently the best tool to estimate the scope of the problem (White et al., 2010).

During the period of 2015-2016, the RSPCA cared for 45,256 dogs in total, of which 12.98% were recorded to have been euthanized (RSPCA Australia, 2016). It is unclear what proportion of these dogs were healthy and adoptable, however this only represents a fraction of the numbers of dogs cared for and euthanised in pounds and shelters as it is not a legal requirement to release euthanasia data and so exact figures are unknown. It has been reported that in a year more than 250,000 cats and dogs are euthanised in Australia (Browne, 2010; Instone and Sweeney, 2014).

Reports have shown through analysis of participating council pound data that euthanasia is the most common outcome for dogs in rural regions (Office of Local Government, 2013). Rural populations generally admit more stray dogs per 1000 population of humans and have relatively lower reclamation rates, which occurs when an owner retrieves their dog that had been admitted to a pound or shelter by the council or by the owner themselves (Office of Local Government, 2013).

With tens of thousands of dogs being unnecessarily put down each year, pound and shelter staff can be negatively affected by this (Reeve et al., 2005; Rogelberg et al., 2007b). Pound and shelter staff that must be exposed to daily routine euthanasia of healthy dogs are at risk of experiencing compassion fatigue, stress and higher rates of burnout in the workplace (Clancy and Rowan, 2003; Fowler et al., 2016). This has the potential to contribute to conditions such as depression, which not only has obvious detrimental impacts to the individual affected but can also be problematic for pound and shelter facilities that are at risk of losing workers due to this (Rogelberg et al., 2007a). In addition to the psychological wellbeing of humans, communities with a high number of stray dogs are at risk of physical injury from dog bites and dog-related automobile accidents (Frank, 2004).

Economic Impacts

The unwanted dog problem also has an impact on Australia’s economy. There are many expenses relating to animal management services which include staff salaries, pound maintenance, operating expenses and animal control services. Most pounds and shelters are limited by financial restrictions and rely on funding and grants. In the period of 2003-2004, the estimated expenditure of animal management services was $82.76 million, with NSW contributing 24% of this despite only managing 15% of Australia’s unwanted pet population (BIS Shrapnel Global Marketing Intelligence and Forecasting 2006). The expenses for animal management services exceeds the revenue produced and are also comparatively greater in rural areas, with regional and rural councils exceeding revenue by $9.4 million whilst urban councils went over by only $3.1 million. (BIS Shrapnel Global Marketing Intelligence and Forecasting 2006). It can be expected that by reducing the unwanted dog problem, dog populations and the resources, expenditure and economic loss required for their management can be decreased.
Population Control

Desexing

To reduce euthanasia in pounds and shelters, it would be most effective to reduce canine admissions in the first place (Miller et al. 2014). The unwanted dog problem in Australia is caused by a combination of the overproduction of dogs and the inability of owners to retain them, therefore it follows that desexing would reduce the number of dogs that could have been born and potentially abandoned and euthanised in a pound or shelter. A mathematical population model created by Frank 2004 found that if almost half of pet owners that did not desex their pets chose to desex their animals, a community could eliminate the need for euthanasia. It would not have an immediate impact as this would require all those animals to be desexed at the one time which is unrealistic, and it would also take several decades to establish a new death rate. Benefits of increasing the desexing rate could only be seen over time but would be the most efficient method in the long term at reducing euthanasia (Frank, 2004). Despite the many benefits of desexing there are many owners that choose not to or are unable to desex their animals due to a desire to breed their animals, negative attitudes towards desexing or financial constraints (D’Orisie et al., 2017). Since 2013, Australia’s overall desexing rate has been stable despite increasing promotion of its benefits and encouragement from veterinarians (Animal Medicines Australia, 2016). The Pet Ownership Report of 2016 found that owners that were more likely to take their animal to a vet, and hence utilize desexing procedures, were those living in urban regions and receiving higher incomes. It also highlighted that dogs were less likely to see a vet at all if they are living in a regional area (Animal Medicines Australia, 2016). This suggests that rural regions are at a greater risk of having a larger proportion of the dog population intact and would be ideal for targeted intervention with desexing programs.

Identification

The importance of microchipping in reducing dog euthanasia in pounds and shelter has not been investigated and there has not been any research to determine its role. Records from rural city Bathurst pound showed that 77% of dogs admitted were not microchipped, and dogs that were microchipped were fourteen times more likely to be reclaimed (Prendergast, 2007). The holding period for microchipped dogs is two weeks compared to one week for un-microchipped dogs, giving them more time to be reclaimed or rehomed (Companion Animal Act 1998). There is a lack of published research on whether increasing microchipping of dogs in an area has any impact on pound and shelter admissions and outcomes, and should be evaluated in programs such as RSPCA’s CAWS that do microchip pets as they desex them.

Future Research

As previously discussed, the euthanasia of dogs is a serious issue in Australia and needs to be addressed. There are many funded programs to encourage owners to desex their pets however there is a lack of strong evidence to suggest these programs are successful, particularly in an Australian setting. Scarlett and Johnston (2012) and Miller et al. (2014) both demonstrated that targeting areas of high risk for intervention strategies is the most effective way to reach animals at increased risk of becoming unwanted and euthanised.

This study aims to assess the impact of a long standing desexing and identification program that targets low income earners in rural city Bathurst.

In addition to assessing the effectiveness of an Australian targeted, subsidized desexing program, reclamation rates should also be assessed alongside intake and euthanasia measures. Reclamation is an important measure, as increased microchipping is likely to increase reclamation rates and hence decrease euthanasia rates. It is expected that the desexing services that have been provided at a subsidised cost in Bathurst since the program began in 2003 will have had an impact on the number of dogs admitted to and euthanised in Bathurst pound. It is hypothesised that increasing the number of dogs microchipped through the program will result in more dogs being reclaimed from Bathurst Pound.
Conclusion

The unwanted dog problem in Australia is a serious and recognised problem which has been attempted to be addressed through a number of different approaches, mainly focusing on providing subsidized desexing to communities to encourage owners to desex their pets and prevent unwanted litters. Despite the huge financial implications of funding these programs, there is a lack of strong evidence to suggest these programs have any significant impact on reducing the number of dogs entering pounds and being euthanised unnecessarily. Previous studies based in America have shown a range of different results that suggest these programs may be effective, particularly in cats, but further research is needed for dogs. Some areas are also more burdened by the unwanted dog problem, with higher shelter intake and euthanasia rates. Previous research has found that an intervention program is more likely to be effective if it is targeting the areas where the problem is greater.

By analyzing the Bathurst program and Bathurst pound records we will be able to determine any trends over the 16 year period produced by implementing a program targeting rural low income earners with a significant unwanted dog problem. Additionally, we will assess whether microchipping is also a viable approach in helping control the unwanted dog problem by increasing reclamation and therefore reducing euthanasia. This study will enable charities to plan to most effective interventions to address the unwanted dog population.

Part 2 – The effectiveness of a targeted subsidised desexing and identification program on pound admission, euthanasia and reclamation of dogs in Bathurst Regional Council

Hypotheses and Objective of the Study

Hypothesis 1: That RSPCA targeted, subsidised desexing and identification dog programs in Bathurst have reduced the number of dogs admitted to Bathurst pound.

Hypothesis 1a: That RSPCA targeted, subsidised desexing and identification dog programs have reduced euthanasia rates in Bathurst pound.

Hypothesis 2: That RSPCA targeted, subsidised desexing and identification dog programs in Bathurst have increased the rate of animals reclaimed from Bathurst pound.

Objective:

The RSPCA runs outreach programs for people with low incomes or those who cannot access routine vet services. The Bathurst program has run since 2003, with 1-2 programs and 100-200 animals desexed and identified each year for 13 years. We want to assess the efficacy of the RSPCA targeted desexing and identification programs in decreasing the number of dogs that are admitted to the pound, the number of dogs that are euthanised while in the pound, and whether microchipping has had any significant effect in increasing the number of dogs reclaimed from the pound.

Importance

In Australia there is an excess of puppies and dogs surrendered to pounds and shelters and not a high enough demand to ensure all of these dogs are rehomed (McGreevy and Bennett 2010). This has lead to a significant unwanted dog problem in Australia, which contributes to the euthanasia of healthy dogs. In the period from 2015 to 2016 the RSPCA reported a total of 21.3% dogs received were euthanized when excluding dogs that were reclaimed ("Published Statistics", 2016). This represents only a portion of dog euthanasia in Australia as pounds and shelters are not legally required to publish the number of dogs killed (Instone and Sweeney 2014). This has serious welfare implications for dogs in shelters and pounds as not only are many killed, they are also susceptible to acute or chronic stress responses in behaviour and physiology from their stay in that environment (Diesel 2011). As well as animal welfare, the unwanted dog problem also affects shelter and pound staff as they are exposed to routine euthanasia of healthy animals (Reeve et al. 2005).

Entire dogs that escape properties are also able to breed with stray dogs and contribute to the stray dog population. Stray dogs not only add to animal control measures and use space and resources in pounds and shelters, but also contribute to the disruption of ecosystems and predation on native wildlife including many small, endangered animal species (Young et al., 2011). Although this is not significant in relation to stray or escaped dogs alone, they still do contribute to environmental impacts and is worth consideration.
Additionally, there are also significant economic impacts. Expenses relating to animal management services include salaries, pound management, operating expenses and animal control. These expenses exceed the related revenue, which is primarily sourced from animal registration and owner fines (BIS Shrapnel Global Marketing Intelligence and Forecasting 2006).

This study hopes to determine whether the targeted subsidised desexing identification programs in Bathurst have had a significant effect on reducing admission rates and euthanasia rates, and increasing reclaim rates. If the results reinforce my hypotheses, we can focus on implementing more of these programs and continue to research how to make them as effective as possible. This includes making important decisions on resource allocation or expanding the resources available for these programs. If there shows to be no significant impact, alternative programs or methods will be encouraged to be researched further.

This research can help find if these programs assist in alleviating the unwanted dog problem by decreasing the number of dogs admitted to and/or killed in pounds and shelters through desexing, as well as increasing the number of dogs reclaimed by identification via microchipping. This would have positive implications for dog welfare as well as the welfare of shelter and pound staff. If these programs are successful in reducing animal control problems in communities, there may also be a decrease in the expenditure on animal management services and a reduction in economic loss to local councils.

Experimental Design

This will be a retrospective study using Bathurst council data on admission rates, euthanasia rates and reclaim rates during the duration of the RSPCA program in Bathurst (2003-2016), and will include three years of data before the program was implemented (2000-2003) to develop a base line. The Bathurst program has run since 2003, with 1-2 programs per year and 100-200 animals desexed and microchipped each year for 13 years. The data from this program has been collected by the RSPCA and we will use information on the number and sex of dogs desexed and identified each year.

Considerations for the data collected include council mergers and changes in record keeping over the 13-year period of the program, which has resulted in some messy data.

Council data and RSPCA data will be collated and cleaned up with Excel. From there trends will be analysed using graphical summaries of data, descriptive statistics and biological conclusions can be made from the analysis. Data analysis is scheduled to be complete by August 2017.

It is expected that RSPCA targeted, subsidised desexing and identification dog programs in Bathurst have reduced the number of dogs admitted, reduced euthanasia and increased the number of animals reclaimed.

References


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Legislation

Companion Animal Act 1998 (NSW)