

Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

1876 – 1892

Other Names: • Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Details

The Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in Brisbane in 1876. The society was run by a management committee consisting of the Governor of Queensland and other leading citizens. The aim of the society was to prevent, where possible, cruelty to animals by enforcing the rules of the organisation and by procuring further legislation to achieve this aim. It extended its activities to include the welfare of neglected and ill-treated children and later the care of neglected aged people. The society dropped the word 'Animals' from the title in 1892.

In 1876 the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was founded in Brisbane. The newly formed committee received guidance from the New South Wales branch of the society in the form of practical advice, copies of rules and by-laws, posters, labels and a copy of the NSW Act for the prevention of cruelty to animals. However the new society did not last due to a lack of public interest and therefore funds. In August 1883 the society was revived and Mr Marlowe was installed as Inspector. At the year ending September 1884 he had given Brisbane people 350 cautions for ill-treatment of animals.

A statement in the society's 1888 annual report referred to the apparent need for an organisation to check and prevent cruelty to children. By 1892, the Society's ninth year of operation, a children's department was well established, with ten children being removed from cruel and immoral surroundings, and 130 warnings given by Inspectors, affecting the welfare of 222 children.

The Society dropped the word 'Animals' from its title in 1892, as it had widened its activities to include neglected and ill-treated children and later the care of neglected aged people. It also provided vocational guidance for children with disabilities and care for people with emotional disabilities. Public appeals of the Society were made to "all friends of children and animals" to extend their practical sympathy.

Richard Francis Woodcraft, a former member of the Queensland Police Force, became associated with the Queensland Society of the Prevention of Cruelty in his retirement. Woodcraft served as secretary and as an inspector for the society for over 30 years.

The national organisation of SPCA

The first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Australia was formed in Victoria in 1871. On July 4th a public meeting was arranged by the Society for the Promotion of Public Morality to discuss the carefree colonial attitude towards animals. The main concern of people who attended the public meeting was the ill treatment of horses.

The establishment of more SPCA Societies soon followed. They were:

- Tasmania in 1872
- New South Wales in 1873
- South Australia in 1875
- Queensland in 1883
- Western Australia in 1892

In 1923 the Societies were given the Royal Warrant and they became known as the Royal Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The RSPCA was formed in the Australian Capital Territory in 1955 followed by the Northern Territory in 1965.

In the mid-1960s an informal meeting of all Societies occurred. They agreed to meet once every two years, on a rotational basis, to discuss mutual problems. By 1980 it became obvious that the RSPCA movement had to become a national organisation to speak with one voice on policy matters and to offer advice to the Federal government on national animal welfare issues.

In May 1980 the eight RSPCAs met in Melbourne and agreed unanimously to form a properly constituted national Society. The name RSPCA Australia was adopted and the first meeting of RSPCA Australia was held in February 1981.

The foundation membership of RSPCA Australia was limited to the existing eight RSPCA Societies, being VIC, ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA, Tas and WA.

In 1998, RSPCA Northern Territory decided to resign its membership of RSPCA Australia. RSPCA Darwin Regional Branch applied and was accepted as a member Society of RSPCA Australia to replace RSPCA NT. The constitution of the national body was changed accordingly.

More info

Chronology

- **Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1876 – 1892)**
 - Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (1892 - 1955)

Resources

- [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#), Queenslander, 25 August 1883
- [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#), Queenslander, 7 October 1876

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