



# RSPCA NSW AGED CARE

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

**2023**

# RSPCA NSW AGED CARE

## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT REPORT

### 2023

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#### RESEARCH TEAM

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#### DISCLAIMER:

All names in this report, including the names of animals, have been changed to protect the identity of the research participants and their animals.

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# HIGHLIGHTS



The Program generated **\$5.77 of social value** for every \$1 invested.



**84% of clients** were able to keep their companion animals or experienced an improved bond with their animals as a result of the Program; **49% experienced improved social inclusion or decreased isolation.**



**3,604 nights** of temporary accommodation and **\$85,857 of veterinary treatment** coordinated for 292 animals.



Outcomes experienced by clients were estimated to have **generated \$2,049,463 in social value in FY20-21.**

“ I didn't have to worry about my Frankie. Everything essential, the team looked after. It gave me great peace of mind. I will never forget the help I received from RSPCA NSW. [If not for RSPCA NSW, I would have] mental health problems because of my frustration. I would worry more about Frankie than I would about my own health. ”

NANCY  
CLIENT





# RECOMMENDATIONS



## 01

**Increase funding and investigate other methods that will permit an expansion of services** to better meet the current and future demand for RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, with a particular focus being directed towards providing localised support in regional areas.

## 02

Community housing and aged care providers such as retirement and independent living facilities should **consider companion animals as part of an older person's family unit** and include them as such in their planning, services, and accommodation, so that older people are supported to remain together with their pet, ensuring the health and wellbeing of both.

## 03

Doctors, hospitals, social workers, and aged care service providers need to recognise that concern about their animals can cause older people to delay or refuse treatments for themselves. **They should ask about companion animals when supporting older people**, especially when planning in-patient treatments or a move to new accommodation and know where to refer them for animal-specific services such as the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program where these are required.



“ Unless I could find somebody to look after her, I would have had to surrender her. I had nobody else I could give her to or who could look after her for me. So, the gods intervened and decided that I should keep Daisy and so they found RSPCA NSW for me. ”

**CHARLES**  
CLIENT

# BACKGROUND

## Pets can be invaluable companions especially to older people, a group that disproportionately experiences loneliness and social isolation.

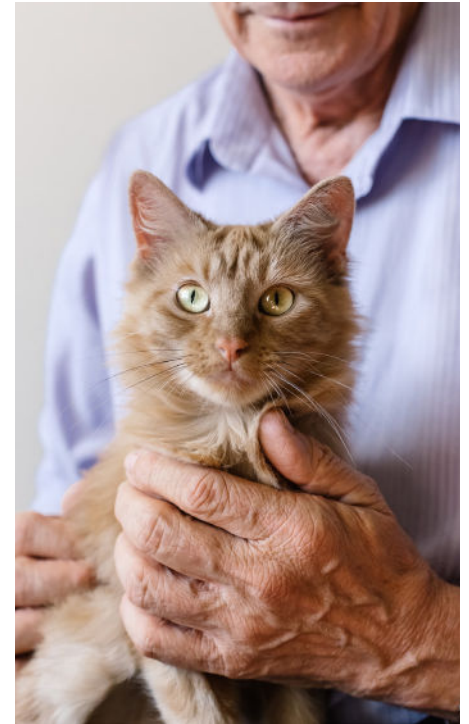
Pet ownership amongst older people is common, with 59% of Australians aged 50-69 and 45% of Australians aged over 70 having pets<sup>1</sup>. Animals provide affection, opportunities to nurture, social support and can act as a buffer against stressors<sup>2</sup>. Having a dog is associated with increased social contact with neighbours, making the dog owner feel cared for and part of a social network. An older person's relationship with their animal companions and the emotional and social support the relationship provides increases as they experience greater physical limitations and have to rely more on others<sup>3,4</sup>.

Animal companionship is associated with positive outcomes for older people especially reduced loneliness, which in older adults is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes including cardiovascular disease, depression and accelerated mortality<sup>3,5</sup>. Pet owners are less likely to experience psychological declines and are more likely to overcome physical and emotional challenges than their peers without animal companions<sup>6</sup>. However, older people can face challenges when caring for their animal companions. Cleaning litter

trays, walking dogs, cleaning food bowls and maintaining long coats all become increasingly difficult as mobility and vision limitations progress, which can contribute to worsening conditions in the home and poor human and animal welfare<sup>7</sup>.

Older pet owners also worry about what will happen to their animals if they are suddenly hospitalised, while pet owners undergoing medical treatment can experience distress and compromise their recovery, even leave hospital prematurely due to concerns about animals left at home<sup>7</sup>. In addition, caring for the pets of elderly pet owners can place extra time, energy and monetary burdens on caregivers that lack appropriate training and resources to also care for their client or loved one's animals.

Despite the challenges faced by older pet owners, giving up their animals is often unthinkable. They are truly valued as family members. Ultimately, the fear of losing their animals or their home can lead to distrust of outsiders and increasing social isolation for older people who are struggling to cope. Despite the central role of animal companions in the lives of many older people, they are



commonly overlooked by social work agencies and health care providers with deleterious outcomes for elderly people and animals alike<sup>8</sup>. This study used social return on investment methodology to understand the social value created by a wholistic program that supports older people and their relationship with their companion animals.

<sup>1</sup>AMA 2016. *Pet Ownership in Australia*. Animal Medicines Australia. Available online:

<https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/report/pet-ownership-in-australia-2016/> (Accessed 25th August 2022)

<sup>2</sup> McConnell, A.R., Paige Lloyd, E. and Humphrey, B.T., 2019. We are family: Viewing pets as family members improves wellbeing. *Anthrozoös*, 32(4), pp.459-470.

<sup>3</sup> Rauktis, M.E. and Hoy-Gerlach, J., 2020. Animal (non-human) companionship for adults aging in place during COVID-19: a critical support, a source of concern and potential for social work responses. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 63(6-7), pp.702-705.

<sup>4</sup> Johansson, M., Ahlström, G. and Jönsson, A.C., 2014. Living with companion animals after stroke: experiences of older people in community and primary care nursing. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 19(12), pp.578-584.

<sup>5</sup> Malcolm, M., Frost, H. and Cowie, J., 2019. Loneliness and social isolation causal association with health-related lifestyle risk in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol. *Systematic reviews*, 8(1), pp.1-8.

<sup>6</sup> Gee, N, Mueller, M & Curl, A 2017, 'Human-Animal Interaction and Older Adults: An Overview', *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 8. pp. 1-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ebenstein, H., & Wortham, J. (2001). The Value of Pets in Geriatric Practice: A Program Example. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 35(2), 99-115. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v35n02\\_07](https://doi.org/10.1300/J083v35n02_07)

<sup>8</sup> Fox, M. and Ray, M., 2019. No pets allowed? Companion animals, older people and residential care. *Medical humanities*, 45(2), pp.1-12.

# RSPCA NSW

## AGED CARE PROGRAM

**RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program supports older people who do not have any support from family or friends to care for their companion animals and continue to live independently in their homes.**

The Program supports the human-animal bond to keep animals together with their caregiver. The health and wellbeing of participating animals is also optimised by providing assistance to access veterinary care.

The Program provides case management, in-home support, transport, grooming, emergency boarding, foster-care and assistance with veterinary treatment. Clients are also supported to access other services such as external boarding kennels, external vets and groomers when required.

Some clients access on-going case management for years. Some require more intermittent support. Relationships between RSPCA NSW case workers and their Aged Care clients can span many years.

Pet owners over 65 years of age (over 50 years if Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander) or those in palliative care are eligible for the Program if they have no support from friends or family. Case management is provided at no cost to clients. Clients pay for subsidised veterinary services and boarding, often using Centre Pay.

Clients either self-refer or are referred by human welfare services, hospitals or the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate.

Assistance was provided to 292 animals belonging to 215 clients in the 2020-21 financial year. Of these, 111 animals (81 clients) accessed emergency boarding or foster care, spending a total of 3,604 days in care. Veterinary treatment was also facilitated for 286 of these animals, worth \$85,856.75 in total.





# MARY & CLEO

**Mary had been receiving assistance via the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program since 2013.**

The team assisted with transporting her cat, Cleo to and from vet consults and boarding whenever Mary went into hospital.

Mary, who is now in her mid-80s outlived both her sons, so Cleo was her only remaining source of companionship. Without the assistance provided by RSPCA NSW, Mary would have had to give up her beloved cat.

Mary always said that when Cleo passed away, she would never get another cat as she feared every day that she would pass away before Cleo, leaving her alone. Unfortunately, after being a part of the RSPCA NSW program for more than 9 years, Cleo passed away in April leaving Mary alone. She was 15 years old.

Mary was always grateful for the assistance she received from the team and to the foster carers that took Cleo into their homes when she was in hospital. As a way of giving back and to gain back some of the companionship she lost when she lost Cleo, Mary signed up to be a Community Programs foster carer.

Mary has now helped foster two cats and is enjoying getting to know the personality of each cat that she welcomes into her home.



*Mary with her first RSPCA NSW Community Programs foster cat*

🗨️ **Our community program is so important in keeping owners and their pets together.**

**Everyone faces challenges and hardships in life but unfortunately with the clients, they are socially isolated and face these challenges alone.**

**It is heart-warming to know we can be there as a form of support, helping keep their small family unit together when all they have is each other. 🗨️**

**RSPCA NSW  
CASE WORKER**

# ABOUT SROI



**Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an evaluation approach based on methodologies used in economics, accounting, and social research<sup>9</sup>. It assesses how change is created by measuring social outcomes as experienced by key stakeholders.**

This approach allows stakeholders, including program participants and partner organisations, to contribute to understanding what changes due to a program and how outcomes are valued.

The SROI approach is built on seven principles:

1. involve stakeholders,
2. understand what changes,
3. value the things that matter,
4. only include what is material,
5. do not overclaim,
6. be transparent,
7. verify the results.

Social value is calculated by using financial proxies to value changes that occur for stakeholders.

SROI also considers what would have happened anyway and change that is attributable to other actors.

For example, for the outcome 'improved mental health and wellbeing' as experienced by clients, we have used the cost of a typical mental health plan (six sessions with a psychologist at \$210 per session) as the financial proxy.

<sup>9</sup> Social Value International. 2009. *The Guide to SROI*. Available online: <https://www.socialvalueint.org/guide-to-sroi> (Accessed 26th August 2022)



# OUR APPROACH

Stakeholders for the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program were identified through interviews with Program staff involved in service design, planning and delivery.

The SROI investigated outcomes for four stakeholder groups:

1. Clients,
2. Animals of clients,
3. RSPCA NSW Inspectors,
4. Animal pounds and shelters.

In-depth interviews were conducted with three clients, eight RSPCA NSW Inspectors and two external stakeholders; one from an aged care service provider, and one from a local council.

Interviews were conducted to understand what changes because

of the Program (including positive, negative, intended and unintended) and who experiences the change (Figure 1).

Client perspectives were also collected via an online survey, which received 45 responses.

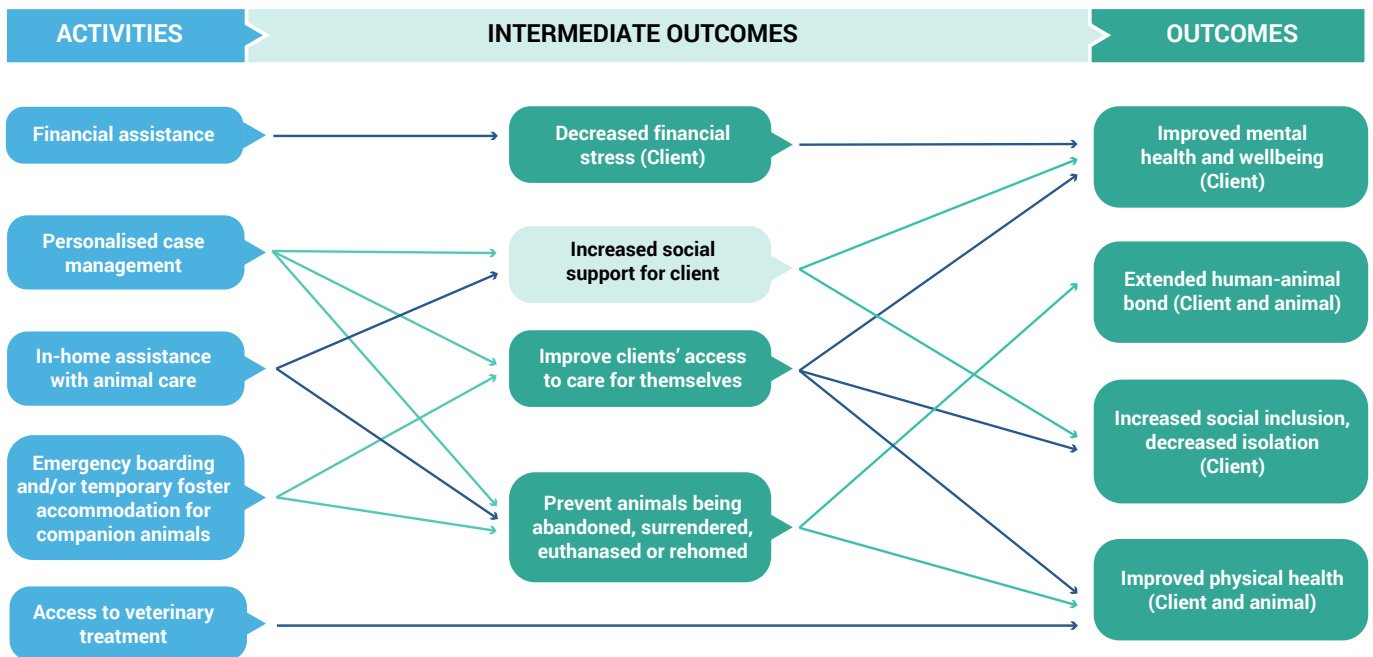


Figure 1: How change is created as a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program



🗨️ If someone offered me a million dollars, I would refuse it. She's like a kid to me, a little baby. 🗨️

**ROBERT**  
CLIENT



| Stakeholder | Number | Outcome   | Value per outcome | Net social value | Total social value |
|-------------|--------|---|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Clients     | 215    | Extended or enhanced human-animal bond          | \$ 3,453          | \$ 1,170,193     | \$ 1,509,532       |
|             |        | Improved mental health and wellbeing            | \$ 1,260          | \$ 75,581        |                    |
|             |        | Increased social inclusion, decreased isolation | \$ 1,412          | \$ 69,014        |                    |
|             |        | Improved access to care for themselves          | \$ 1,378          | \$ 45,922        |                    |
|             |        | Decreased financial stress                      | \$ 1,780          | \$ 142,345       |                    |
|             |        | Improved physical health                        | \$ 648            | \$ 6,478         |                    |



## 2. CLIENT'S ANIMALS

Thanks to the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, client's animals were able to access safe accommodation and veterinary treatment and hence experienced improved safety and physical health. In many instances, assistance provided by the Program meant the difference between that animal being able to continue living with their person or being surrendered to a shelter, or euthanased. Clients' animals also experienced improved

wellbeing as a result of being able to return to their families. Aged Care clients can struggle with routine care of their animals due to their physical limitations. Simple preventative interventions provided by the Program for example regular grooming, and routine health checks at the vet, have profound benefits for the health and wellbeing of the animal.

“ My husband's death left my dog feeling sad, but with the help of RSPCA NSW, I feel supported and the dog's health has been taken care of. ”

**GAIL**  
CLIENT

| Stakeholder      | Number | Outcome   | Value per outcome | Net social value | Total social value |
|------------------|--------|---|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Clients' animals | 292    | Improved wellbeing as a result of preserving or improving the human-animal bond | \$ 957            | \$ 179,823       | \$ 418,983         |
|                  |        | Access to safe accommodation  | \$ 1,750          | \$ 184,812       |                    |
|                  |        | Improved physical health  | \$ 300            | \$ 54,348        |                    |



“ I was able to save my animals' lives. ”

**JOHN**  
CLIENT

### 3. RSPCA NSW INSPECTORATE

Animals that are assisted by the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program might otherwise be referred to the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate for several reasons. Animals might be abandoned at a property without care when a client is admitted to hospital. Animals might also be referred for investigation by the Inspectorate for possible neglect or failure to provide veterinary care. Through the Inspectorate, these cases are investigated and potentially prosecuted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, the animals would be seized and taken into custody, separated from their families and housed in an animal shelter.

The Inspectorate are ideally positioned to offer referral to the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program. Without community assistance programs like the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, taking animals into custody can be the only option available to Inspectors to ensure the safety of the animals involved. Hence, the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate was determined to be an important stakeholder.

In-depth interviews with eight

RSPCA NSW Inspectors were used to determine outcome incidence for RSPCA NSW Inspectors. The Inspectors all noted their frustration and distress that the need for services like those provided by the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program far outstrips the caseload capacity limits of the Program, and as a result the Inspectorate see many cases that are unable to access the important assistance offered through this Program.

Several Inspectors described feelings of moral distress, which has been defined as the experience of painful feelings and psychological disequilibrium that occurs when one is aware of the morally proper decision that needs to be made without being able to make it due to limitations such as a lack of time or available resources<sup>10</sup>. Moral distress and its deleterious effects on health, job performance and wellbeing has been well described amongst care-giving and first responder professions including nursing, occupational therapy, social work, and police<sup>10</sup>. Inspectors described feelings of moral regret when responding to and actioning cases that would be more appropriately managed by a case worker through the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program.

RSPCA NSW Inspectors were



“ [Case managing is] not my job, but we actually do it a lot. It obviously adds to your workload, but it also makes you feel a bit helpless and powerless in what we can do. It’s frustrating and actually upsetting. ”

**RSPCA NSW INSPECTOR**

considered to have experienced two outcomes as a result of the Program:

1. More time available to pursue genuine cruelty offences.
2. Improved mental health.

| Stakeholder            | Number | Outcome  | Value per outcome | Net social value | Total social value |
|------------------------|--------|--|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| RSPCA NSW Inspectorate | 35     | More time available to pursue genuine cruelty offences | \$ 1,638          | \$ 42,654        | \$ 75,464          |
|                        |        | Improved mental health                                 | \$ 1,260          | \$ 32,810        |                    |

<sup>10</sup> Papazoglou, K. and Chopko, B. 2017. The role of moral suffering (moral distress and moral injury) in police compassion fatigue and PTSD: An unexplored topic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, p.1999.

## 4. ANIMAL POUNDS AND SHELTERS

The RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program prevented animals arriving at shelters or pounds by reducing the number of animals abandoned without care or surrendered by their owners.

“ I would not have been able to keep them. ”

**PATRICIA**  
CLIENT



| Stakeholder                | Number | Outcome   | Value per outcome | Net social value | Total social value |
|----------------------------|--------|---|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Animal pounds and shelters | 49     | Decreased work for RSPCA NSW Shelter due to fewer animals surrendered (49 animals; 17% of clients reported their animal would have been rehomed or surrendered)                             | \$ 686            | \$ 18,772        | \$ 45,483          |
|                            | 32     | Decreased work for RSPCA NSW Inspectorate and shelter due to fewer animals abandoned without care (32 animals; 11% of clients reported their animal would have been abandoned without care) | \$ 885            | \$ 26,711        |                    |



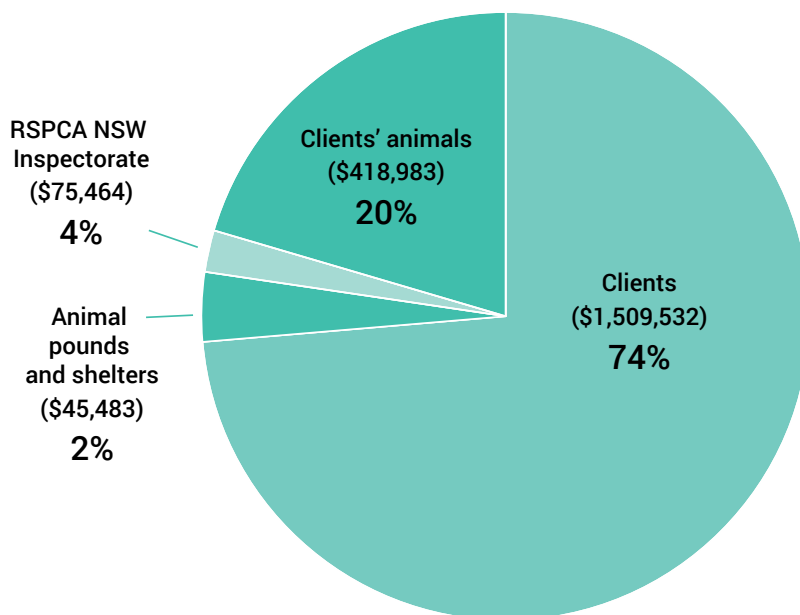
# THE RATIO<sup>†</sup>

| Number of participants | Investment (present value) | Benefits (present value) | Social value per \$1 invested |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 215                    | \$ 354,909                 | \$ 2,049,463             | \$ 5.77                       |

Almost three quarters of the total value generated by the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program in FY2020-21 was experienced by clients (Figure 3).

Outcomes experienced by clients were valued at more than \$1.5 million in total, and an average of \$7,021 per client.

Clients' animals experienced one fifth of the total value created, with the remaining value divided between the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate and animal pounds and shelters.



**Figure 3:** Value of outcomes experienced because of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program by stakeholder group

<sup>†</sup> Refer to Appendix 2 for more detail.

# INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Relationships with companion animals can be much more significant to older people as their physical limitations increase and they become more socially isolated. Pets provide affection, warmth, someone to care for and nurture and a sense of family. They can give an older person a reason to get out of bed in the morning, get out of the house, and connect with their community. Sometimes they can be a person's single reason to stick around.

Despite the central role of pets in their lives, older owners can struggle with some aspects of their animal's care, such as grooming and attending veterinary appointments, and worry about what will happen to their animal companions if they are suddenly hospitalised. A lack of support leads to poor health and welfare outcomes for both animal and owner.

The RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program was established because our shelters and Inspectorate saw this need manifest daily through cruelty and neglect complaints, animals being surrendered, and animals being abandoned at their homes without care when their owners were suddenly taken to hospital.



There is a need for greater collaboration between human and animal services to better care for older people and their animal companions as a family unit. These services need to be drastically expanded, especially outside major urban centres. Companion animals also need to be more routinely included in social work assessments, aged care support planning, medical treatment and discharge planning to

improve health and social outcomes for elderly people with animal companions.

Wholistic programs like the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program keep families together, reducing the burden on animal cruelty enforcement agencies, pounds and shelters and drastically improving the lives of people and animals.

“ People at other ages and stages may have experienced it a little bit with covid lockdown, in that you can be in your pajamas all day if you want if you're working from home. But for older people who have gone through a period of not working or no family around, you can get that sense of day in, day out, it's mundane. But if you're going to go for a walk [with your dog] you have to get changed. You have to feed them, you have to change water and on top of that there is grooming as well. There's a sense of pride in looking after your pet well.” ”

AGED CARE  
SERVICE PROVIDER



“ Well, I won't put a dollar value on it, but I'll put a couple of years on it. I'll say five years on someone's life. [Having their companion animal] extends their life for a good five years at least. ”

AGED CARE  
SERVICE PROVIDER



“ The relief that you hear in their voice when you say “look, you can get help, contact the RSPCA NSW, they'll be able to help you”... It's just that sense you don't feel helpless in the role, that you can have that referral option, for them to seek help if they need it... It makes me feel good that these people who love their animals and their animals are their world to them can get help if they need it. ”

AGED CARE  
SERVICE PROVIDER



“ I felt more secure that my animal was well looked after. This was a big relief. I don't know what I could have done if the Programs hadn't been able to help. ”

ELIZABETH  
CLIENT

“ I give the staff 100 + points. They are wonderful and gave me so much peace of mind about my dog. They made things much easier for me. ”

SHIRLEY  
CLIENT



“ Can you imagine how much it would have cost me at \$50.00 a night instead of \$10 a night. A lot, right? A lot, lot, lot, lot which I couldn't afford. But that's all in the past because we have Daisy back. ”

CHARLES  
CLIENT



“ [Without RSPCA NSW] I would struggle to have arranged to keep my pet while moving into a retirement village. ”

SHERRY  
CLIENT

“ [Without RSPCA NSW] I would have felt helpless. ”

WILLIAM  
CLIENT

“ I have absolute confidence that nothing bad can happen to my Buddy whilst RSPCA NSW are caring for her... ”

RUSSELL  
CLIENT

“ [Without RSPCA NSW] I would have looked after my dog myself, but I would have had to go without to afford her medical treatments. This would be very difficult for me and stressful. ”

SHIRLEY  
CLIENT



# RSPCA NSW AGED CARE

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## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

## EVIDENCING OUTCOMES

Outcomes resulting from participation in the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program for clients, their animals, and for animal pounds and shelters were identified through interviews with clients, human service providers and RSPCA NSW Inspectors. Measurable indicators were identified to quantify the amount of each outcome experienced for each stakeholder group. These indicators were measured using a client questionnaire and RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program case records to determine outcome incidence (Tables 1-4). Additional outcomes experienced by the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate were identified and quantified through interviews with RSPCA NSW Inspectors.

**Table 1:** Outcome incidence experienced by clients of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome                                | Indicator Question  | Indicator Type  | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|--|---|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Extended or enhanced human-animal bond | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My relationship with my animal/s.  | Likert scale    | 28                           | 5                            | 51%                     | 84%               |
|  | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Euthanased, rehomed, surrendered to a shelter or pound.  | Multiple choice | 11                           | 0                            | 24%                     |                   |
|  | What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you as a result of your experience with the RSPCA NSW? What do you think would be different for you now if you had not accessed assistance for your animal/s through RSPCA NSW? | Open-ended      | 6                            | 0                            | 13%                     |                   |



| Outcome                              | Indicator Question  | Indicator Type | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Improved mental health and wellbeing | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? How worried I feel about my animal/s (e.g. their safety, health and/or wellbeing). | Likert scale   | 25                           | 6                            | 42%                     | 40%               |
|                                      | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My sense of wellbeing.   | Likert scale   | 21                           | 9                            | 27%                     |                   |
|                                      | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My mental health.  | Likert scale   | 19                           | 9                            | 22%                     |                   |
|                                      | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My outlook on life.  | Likert scale   | 21                           | 6                            | 33%                     |                   |
|                                      | What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you as a result of your experience with the RSPCA NSW?  | Open-ended     | 1                            | 0                            | 9%                      |                   |

| Outcome  | Indicator Question  | Indicator Type | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|--|---|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Increased social inclusion/<br>decreased isolation | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My sense of being socially connected.  | Likert scale   | 26                           | 6                            | 44%                     | 49%               |
|  | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? How connected I feel to my community.  | Likert scale   | 21                           | 3                            | 40%                     |                   |
|  | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My relationships with friends and family.  | Likert scale   | 12                           | 4                            | 18%                     |                   |
| Decreased financial stress                         | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? How worried I feel about money.  | Likert scale   | 23                           | 7                            | 36%                     | 40%               |
|  | What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you as a result of your experience with the RSPCA NSW? What do you think would be different for you now if you had not accessed assistance for your animal/s through RSPCA NSW? | Open-ended     | 1                            | 0                            | 4%                      |                   |

| Outcome                                | Indicator Question   | Indicator Type | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|--|--|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Improved access to care for themselves | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? How easy it is for me to seek medical or other care for myself (e.g. going to the doctor or hospital, moving into appropriate accommodation). | Likert scale   | 19                           | 1                            | 29%                     | 33%               |
|  | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Other.  | Open-ended     | 2                            | 0                            | 4%                      |                   |
| Improved physical health               | As a result of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program, how have the following things changed for you? My physical health and fitness.   | Likert scale   | 14                           | 7                            | 16%                     | 20%               |
|  | What do you think would be different for you now if you had not accessed assistance for your animal/s through the RSPCA NSW?   | Open-ended     | 2                            | 0                            | 4%                      |                   |



**Table 2:** Outcome incidence experienced by the animals of clients of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome   | Indicator Question   | Indicator Type  | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Improved wellbeing as a result of preserving or improving the human-animal bond | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Euthanased, rehomed, surrendered to a shelter or pound. | Multiple choice | 13                           | 0                            | 24%                     | 41%               |
|   | What do you think would be different for you now if you had not accessed assistance for your animal/s through the RSPCA NSW?         | Open-ended      | 9                            | 0                            | 17%                     |                   |
| Improved physical health  | What kind of assistance did you access for your animal/s? Veterinary treatment.  | Multiple choice | 33                           | 0                            | 61%                     | 67%               |
|   | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Euthanased.   | Multiple choice | 5                            | 0                            | 9%                      |                   |
| Access to safe accommodation  | Number of animals accessing emergency boarding.  | Program data    | 21                           | 0                            | 39%                     | 39%               |

**Table 3:** Outcome incidence experienced by the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate because of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome   | Indicator Question   | Indicator Type | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|---|--|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| More time available to pursue genuine animal cruelty offenses | What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you because of your experience with the RSPCA NSW Community Programs? What do you think would be different for you now if the RSPCA NSW Community Programs were no longer available? | Interview      | 8                            | 0                            | 100%                    | 80%               |
| Improved mental health  | What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you because of your experience with the RSPCA NSW Community Programs? What do you think would be different for you now if the RSPCA NSW Community Programs were no longer available? | Interview      | 8                            | 0                            | 100%                    | 80%               |

**Table 4:** Outcome incidence experienced by animal pounds and shelters because of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome                   | Indicator Question   | Indicator Type  | Number of Responses Positive | Number of Responses Negative | Net Indicator Incidence | Outcome Incidence |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Fewer animals abandoned   | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Abandoned without care.                     | Multiple choice | 6                            | 0                            | 11%                     | 11%               |
| Fewer animals surrendered | What would have happened to your animal/s if RSPCA NSW could not assist you? Surrendered to a pound or shelter, rehomed. | Multiple choice | 9                            | 0                            | 17%                     | 17%               |

## VALUING OUTCOMES

The social value of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program was calculated by assigning financial proxies to represent the social value created by each outcome as experienced by that stakeholder group (Tables 5 to 8). Clients were asked during interviews to state the value of changes experienced. Clients were also asked in the questionnaire "What are the most valuable changes that have happened for you as a result of your experience with RSPCA NSW?"

**Table 5: Valuing outcomes experienced by clients of RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program**

| Outcome   | Proxy Description   | Rationale   | Value          | Source  |
|---|---|---|----------------|---|
| <b>Extended or enhanced human-animal bond</b>         | <p>Contingent valuation.</p> <p>The value of a dog life year for a companion dog with a receptive owner, applied for the difference between the average age of an RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program dog (5 years) and a dog's average life expectancy (13 years)<sup>1</sup>. Based on a value of \$2,400 USD in 2019, converted to present value Australian dollars.</p> | <p>Clients described the depth of the bond they have with their companion animals; a bond that in many cases was particularly strong as being one of few sources of social support. Their relationship with their companion animal was often their most valuable, even their only relationship. They also described the impact that losing this bond would have on their wellbeing.</p>   | <b>\$3,453</b> | Carlson et al, 2019 <sup>2</sup>                  |
| <b>Increased social inclusion/decreased isolation</b> | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The cost of attending a one-hour social or recreational activity once per fortnight for the average length of time a client is supported by the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program (1 year).</p>   | <p>According to clients, participation in the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program increased their social inclusion and decreased their social isolation including increasing their sense of being supported and connected to their community and improved relationships with family and friends. Hence, we use the amount spent on a recreational activity likely to provide a similar benefit as a proxy to represent improved social interactions and social connectedness.</p> | <b>\$1,412</b> | National Disability Insurance Agency <sup>3</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> Inoue, M., Kwan, N.C. and Sugiura, K., 2018. Estimating the life expectancy of companion dogs in Japan using pet cemetery data. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Science*, pp.17-0384.

<sup>2</sup> Carlson, D., Haeder, S., Jenkins-Smith, H., Ripberger, J., Silva, C. and Weimer, D., 2019. Monetizing bowser: A contingent valuation of the statistical value of dog life. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 11(1), pp.131-149.

<sup>3</sup> NDIA. 2021. NDIS Price Guide 2020-21 <https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/2405/download?attachment>



| Outcome                                       | Proxy Description  | Rationale  | Value          | Source  |
|---|--|--|----------------|---|
| <b>Improved mental health and wellbeing</b>   | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The cost of a typical mental health plan of six sessions with a psychologist at \$210 per session.</p>   | <p>Clients experiencing this outcome described being relieved of substantial mental distress around the possibility of having to lose their companion animal or remain in an abusive situation. We consider this mental distress comparable with mild anxiety and hence value this outcome using a typical treatment plan for mild anxiety.</p>  | <b>\$1,260</b> | Australian Psychological Society <sup>4</sup> |
| <b>Decreased financial stress</b>             | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The difference in cost between the emergency boarding rate charged to RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients (\$10/day) and the cost of boarding through a private pet boarding facility (\$50/day) for the average duration an Aged Care client's animal/s were in care (44 days).</p> | <p>Clients experiencing this outcome avoid incurring upfront costs associated with providing safe temporary accommodation for their animals through private boarding facilities. Clients also receive greatly discounted pet boarding through the program. In interviews clients reported the alternative to accessing the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program would be to pay for pet boarding through a private boarding facility or veterinary hospital and that this would typically cost around \$50/day.</p> | <b>\$1,780</b> | Client interviews                             |
| <b>Improved access to care for themselves</b> | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>Aged care support worker for 1hr per fortnight for the average length of time RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients remain involved with the Program (1 year).</p>   | <p>As a result of being able to access assistance with veterinary care, in home care for their animals and emergency boarding clients reported being better able to access care for themselves such as going to the doctor or hospital. Accessing an in-home aged care support worker for one hour per fortnight is considered to provide similar benefits to clients experiencing this outcome.</p>   | <b>\$1,378</b> | Australian Government <sup>5</sup>            |

<sup>4</sup> APS. 2018. APS National Schedule of Recommended Fees. <https://psychology.org.au/getmedia/af30b47d-ef39-49c2-8116-6d20ed1dc828/18aps-2018-19-aps-is-srf-p1-a.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Australian Government. 2021. *My Aged Care: Home care schedule of fees*. <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/sites/default/files/attachments/1-1KJA7U19.pdf>

| Outcome                                | Proxy Description   | Rationale  | Value               | Source                          |
|--|---|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p><b>Improved physical health</b></p> | <p>Observed spending on related goods.<br/>The average amount spent on exercise and fitness per month for individuals in their 70s.</p> | <p>Clients commonly reported experiencing improved physical health as a result of their participation in the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program. We determined that an annual gym membership would provide similar benefits to clients experiencing this outcome.</p> | <p><b>\$648</b></p> | <p>Canstar Blue<sup>6</sup></p> |

<sup>6</sup>Canstar. 2021. *What does the average Australian spend at the gym?* [https://www.canstarblue.com.au/health-beauty/average-gym-cost/#:~:text=Aussies%20spend%20an%20average%20of,lowest%20gym%20costs%20\(%2454\).](https://www.canstarblue.com.au/health-beauty/average-gym-cost/#:~:text=Aussies%20spend%20an%20average%20of,lowest%20gym%20costs%20(%2454).) <sup>8</sup>NDIA. 2022. Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits 2022-23 <https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/4518/download?attachment>

**Table 6:** Valuing outcomes experienced by the animal/s of RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients

| Outcome  | Proxy Description   | Rationale   | Value          | Source   |
|--|---|---|----------------|--|
| <b>Improved wellbeing as a result of preserving or improving the human-animal bond</b> | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The cost of insurance premiums for a typical RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program animal (9-year old Terrier Cross).</p>                                     | <p>We have chosen the cost of insurance to reflect the value placed on ensuring an animal's continued wellbeing by their owner. We consider this to be an outcome that continues for the life of the animal. In addition, this is a relationship that strengthens over time, increasing rather than decreasing as animals age.</p>  | <b>\$957</b>   | Choosi: Pet Insurance. Pet insurance comparison website <sup>7</sup> |
| <b>Access to safe accommodation</b>  | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The cost of private pet boarding for the average number of days an RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program animal remained in care (35 days).</p>               | <p>RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients' animals access safe accommodation either in secure boarding facilities or with foster families. Accessing private pet boarding would provide a similar outcome for these animals hence the cost of private has been used as a proxy. Clients reported through interviews that this would cost around \$50 per day through local boarding kennels or veterinary practices.</p> | <b>\$1,750</b> | Client interviews  |
| <b>Improved physical health</b>  | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The average cost of veterinary treatment per animal that received veterinary treatment while under the care of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program.</p> | <p>Most animals participating in the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program accessed veterinary treatment, whether routine medical care or treatment of injuries or illness and as a result experienced improved physical health. Hence, the average cost of the veterinary treatment provided per animal receiving veterinary treatment through the program was used as the proxy for this outcome.</p>                 | <b>\$300</b>   | RSPCA NSW Community Programs records                                 |

<sup>7</sup>Choosi. 2022. Compare pet insurance <https://www.choosi.com.au/pet-insurance>

**Table 7:** Valuing outcomes experienced by the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate because of RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome  | Proxy Description   | Rationale   | Value          | Source  |
|--|---|---|----------------|---|
| <b>More time available to pursue genuine animal cruelty offences</b> | <p>Time use method.</p> <p>Value of an Inspectors time spent pursuing RSPCA NSW Aged Care Programs cases as cruelty or abandonment cases, based on the average hourly rate for Inspectors of \$35/hr, assuming 3hrs per week in total are spent assisting potential RSPCA NSW Community Programs cases, 30% of which are likely to be related to an elderly person of interest.</p> | <p>In stakeholder interviews, RSPCA NSW Inspectors described taking animals from situations that would ideally be managed by a case worker into protective custody under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 as the only alternative to keep animals safe where cases cannot be referred to the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program. This requires a considerable investment or time and resources that could otherwise be used by the RSPCA NSW Inspectorate to pursue genuine cruelty cases. Hence, we use the value to the Inspectors of getting this time back as a proxy for this outcome.</p> | <b>\$1,638</b> | Client interviews                             |
| <b>Improved mental health</b>  | <p>Observed spending on related goods.</p> <p>The cost of a typical mental health plan of six sessions with a psychologist at \$210 per session.</p>  | <p>Clients experiencing this outcome described being relieved of substantial mental distress around the possibility of having to lose their companion animal. We consider this mental distress comparable with mild anxiety and hence value this outcome using a typical treatment plan for mild anxiety.</p>   | <b>\$1,260</b> | Australian Psychological Society <sup>8</sup> |

<sup>8</sup>APS. 2018. APS National Schedule of Recommended Fees. <https://psychology.org.au/getmedia/af30b47d-ef39-49c2-8116-6d20ed1dc828/18aps-2018-19-aps-is-srf-p1-a.pdf>



**Table 8:** Valuing outcomes experienced by animal pounds and shelters because of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Outcome  | Proxy Description  | Rationale   | Value               | Source                   |
|--|--|---|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <p><b>Fewer animals abandoned without care</b></p>     | <p>Observed spending on related goods</p> <p>Cost to RSPCA NSW of processing an abandoned animal.</p>  | <p>According to interviews with RSPCA NSW Inspectors, animals regularly come into the care of the RSPCA NSW Shelter via the Inspectorate as a result of being abandoned without care. This was also mentioned in interviews with RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients. Costs are incurred by RSPCA NSW for retrieving, sheltering and rehabilitating these animals. Hence, the average costs associated with rehabilitating a typical RSPCA NSW Aged Care client's animal (a small sized adult dog) has been used as the proxy for this outcome.</p> | <p><b>\$885</b></p> | <p>RSPCA NSW records</p> |
| <p><b>Fewer animals surrendered by their owner</b></p> | <p>Observed spending on related goods</p> <p>Cost to RSPCA NSW of processing a surrendered animal.</p> | <p>When asked 'What do you think would be different for you now if you had not accessed assistance for your animal/s through RSPCA NSW?', some RSPCA NSW Aged Care clients responded that their animal would have been surrendered to a pound or shelter. Hence the average cost to RSPCA NSW of processing a surrendered animal from the time of surrender to adoption has been used as a proxy for this outcome.</p>  | <p><b>\$686</b></p> | <p>RSPCA NSW records</p> |

# APPENDIX 2

## INPUTS

The cost of inputs for the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program in financial year 2020-21 was determined through interviews with RSPCA NSW Community Programs staff and examination of Program financial records. Values are based on actual costs for the 2020-2021 financial year (Table 9). Where products and services have been donated or discounted the full market value has been used in the calculation of the SROI.

**Table 9:** Input costs for the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program financial year 2020-21

| Investment           | Value            |
|----------------------|------------------|
| People costs         | <b>\$135,855</b> |
| Non-people costs     | <b>\$48,711</b>  |
| Animal food          | <b>\$2,782</b>   |
| Volunteers           | <b>\$23,398</b>  |
| Veterinary treatment | <b>\$85,857</b>  |
| Animal boarding      | <b>\$22,057</b>  |
| Foster Care          | <b>\$36,250</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>\$354,909</b> |

**Table 10:** Net social value of outcomes experienced by stakeholders of the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program

| Stakeholder (n) | Outcome   | Financial Proxy | Outcome Incidence | Deadweight | Attribution | Displacement | Benefit Period (years) | Drop-Off | Net Social Value <sup>9</sup> |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Clients (215)   | Improved mental health and wellbeing            | \$1,260         | 40%               | 7%         | 25%         | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$75,581                      |
|                 | Extended or enhanced human-animal bond          | \$3,453         | 84%               | 7%         | 0%          | 25%          | 5                      | 5%       | \$1,247,315                   |
|                 | Improved access to care for themselves          | \$1,378         | 33%               | 7%         | 50%         | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$45,922                      |
|                 | Decreased financial stress                      | \$1,780         | 40%               | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$142,345                     |
|                 | Increased social inclusion/ decreased isolation | \$1,412         | 49%               | 7%         | 50%         | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$69,014                      |
|                 | Improved physical health                        | \$648           | 20%               | 7%         | 75%         | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$6,478                       |

<sup>9</sup> To be conservative when claiming, the net present value of outcomes with a benefit period of nine years has only included the value of these outcomes for the first three years.

| Stakeholder (n)             | Outcome   | Financial Proxy | Outcome Incidence | Deadweight | Attribution | Displacement | Benefit Period (years) | Drop-Off | Net Social Value <sup>9</sup> |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Client's animal/s (292)     | Improved wellbeing as a result of preserving or improving the human-animal bond | \$957           | 41%               | 25%        | 0%          | 25%          | 5                      | 0%       | \$192,118                     |
|                             | Access to safe accommodation  | \$1,750         | 39%               | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$184,812                     |
|                             | Improved physical health  | \$300           | 67%               | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$54,348                      |
| RSPCA NSW Inspectorate (35) | More time available to pursue genuine animal cruelty offenses                   | \$1,638         | 80%               | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$42,654                      |
|                             | Improved mental health  | \$1,260         | 80%               | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$32,810                      |

<sup>9</sup> To be conservative when claiming, the net present value of outcomes with a benefit period of nine years has only included the value of these outcomes for the first three years.



| Stakeholder (n)            | Outcome   | Financial Proxy | Outcome Incidence | Deadweight | Attribution | Displacement | Benefit Period (years) | Drop-Off | Net Social Value <sup>9</sup> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Animal pounds and shelters | Fewer animals abandoned without care (32 animals; 11% of clients reported their animal would have been abandoned without care)      | \$885           | 100%              | 7%         | 0%          | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$26,711                      |
|                            | Fewer animals surrendered by their owners (49 animals; 17% of clients reported their animal would have been rehomed or surrendered) | \$686           | 100%              | 25%        | 25%         | 0%           | 1                      | N/A      | \$18,772                      |

<sup>9</sup> To be conservative when claiming, the net present value of outcomes with a benefit period of nine years has only included the value of these outcomes for the first three years.

**Table 11:** The social return on investment on the RSPCA NSW Aged Care Program for financial year 2020-21

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Total social value created for all stakeholders</b> | <b>\$2,049,463</b> |
| <b>Net Program Investment</b>                          | <b>\$354,909</b>   |
| <b>Social return for each \$1 invested</b>             | <b>\$5.77</b>      |