

Complaints against veterinarians

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Legislation

The object of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* (NSW) is to regulate the provision of veterinary services for the following purposes:

- i. To promote the welfare of animals
- ii. To ensure that consumers of veterinary services are well informed as to the competencies required of veterinary practitioners
- iii. To ensure that acceptable standards are required to be met by veterinary practitioners so as to meet the public interest and national and international trade requirements
- iv. To provide public health protection





Board composition

The Board consists of 8 members appointed by the Governor and selected by the Minister:

- i. One veterinarian representing specialist veterinarians
- ii. One veterinarian representing urban veterinarians
- iii. One veterinarian representing rural veterinarians
- iv. One veterinarian representing academics in the field of veterinary science
- v. Two veterinary practitioners selected personally by the Minister
- vi. Two persons who are not veterinarians selected by the Minister to represent consumers of veterinary services



Board functions

The Veterinary Practitioners Board of NSW (Board) has a number of functions including:

- i. To register veterinary practitioners
- ii. To license veterinary hospitals
- iii. To investigate complaints against veterinary practitioners and take disciplinary action against veterinary practitioners





Complaints against veterinary practitioners

- Any person, including the Board, may make a complaint against a veterinary practitioner in respect of the veterinarian's conduct
- The Board does not have the legislative authority to investigate complaints concerning fees or charges and refers such complaints to the Department of Fair Trading
- The Board is not required to investigate a complaint against a veterinarian if the complaint is made more than 3 years after the conduct is alleged to have occurred
- Complaints must be made in writing, must identify the complainant and the Board requires that the complaint and details of the complaint be verified by statutory declaration
- The Board has created a Complaint Form to assist with lodging complaints against veterinarians

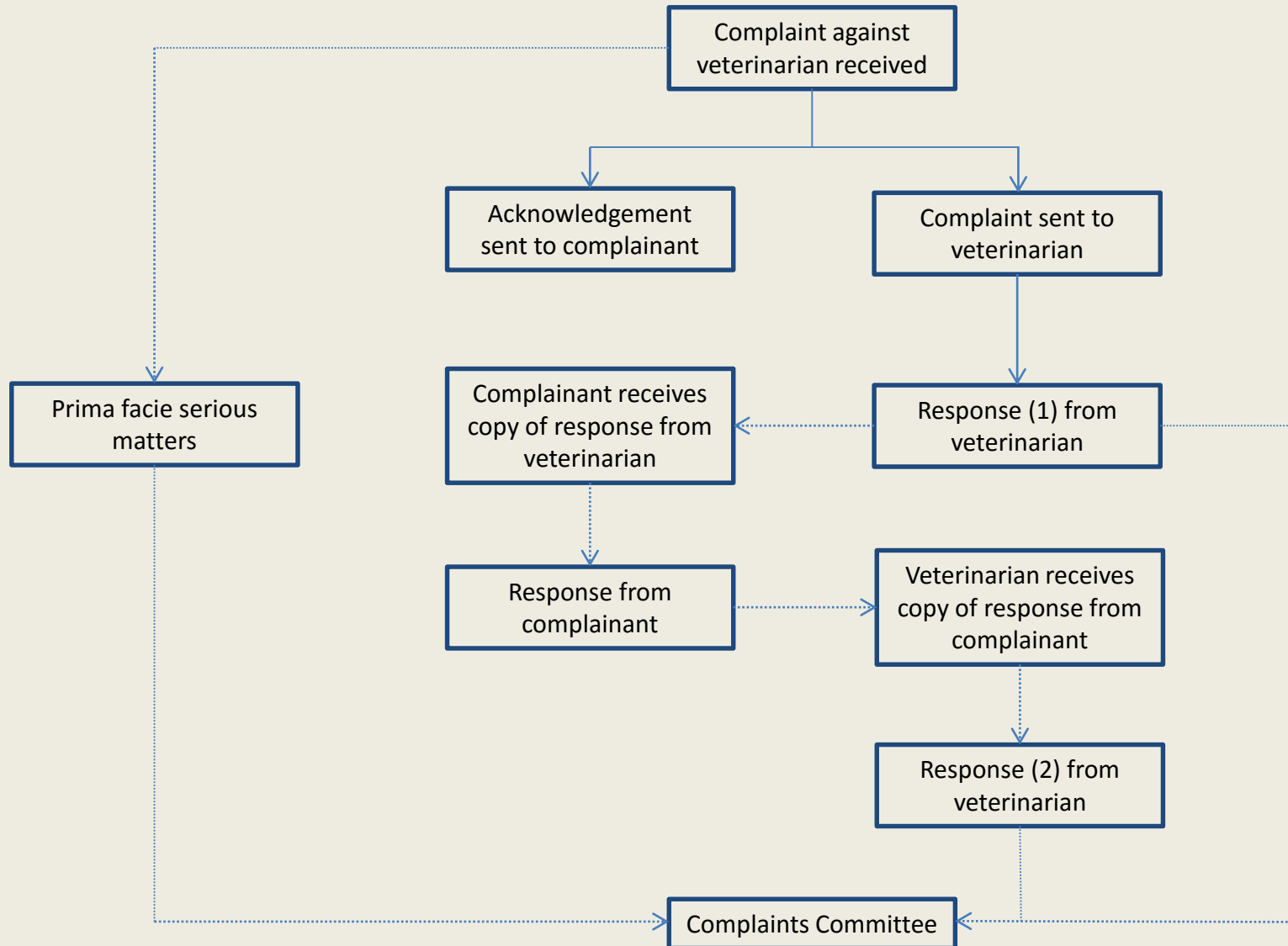


Complaints against veterinary practitioners

- The Board delegates the function of investigating complaints to a Complaints Committee
 - 2 veterinarian members
 - 1 non-veterinarian member
 - Others as required
- The Complaints Committee collects information from the complainant, the veterinarian and other sources as required
- The Board has the power to summon a person to appear before the Board to give evidence and to produce documents
- After completion of the investigation the Complaints Committee makes a recommendation to the Board

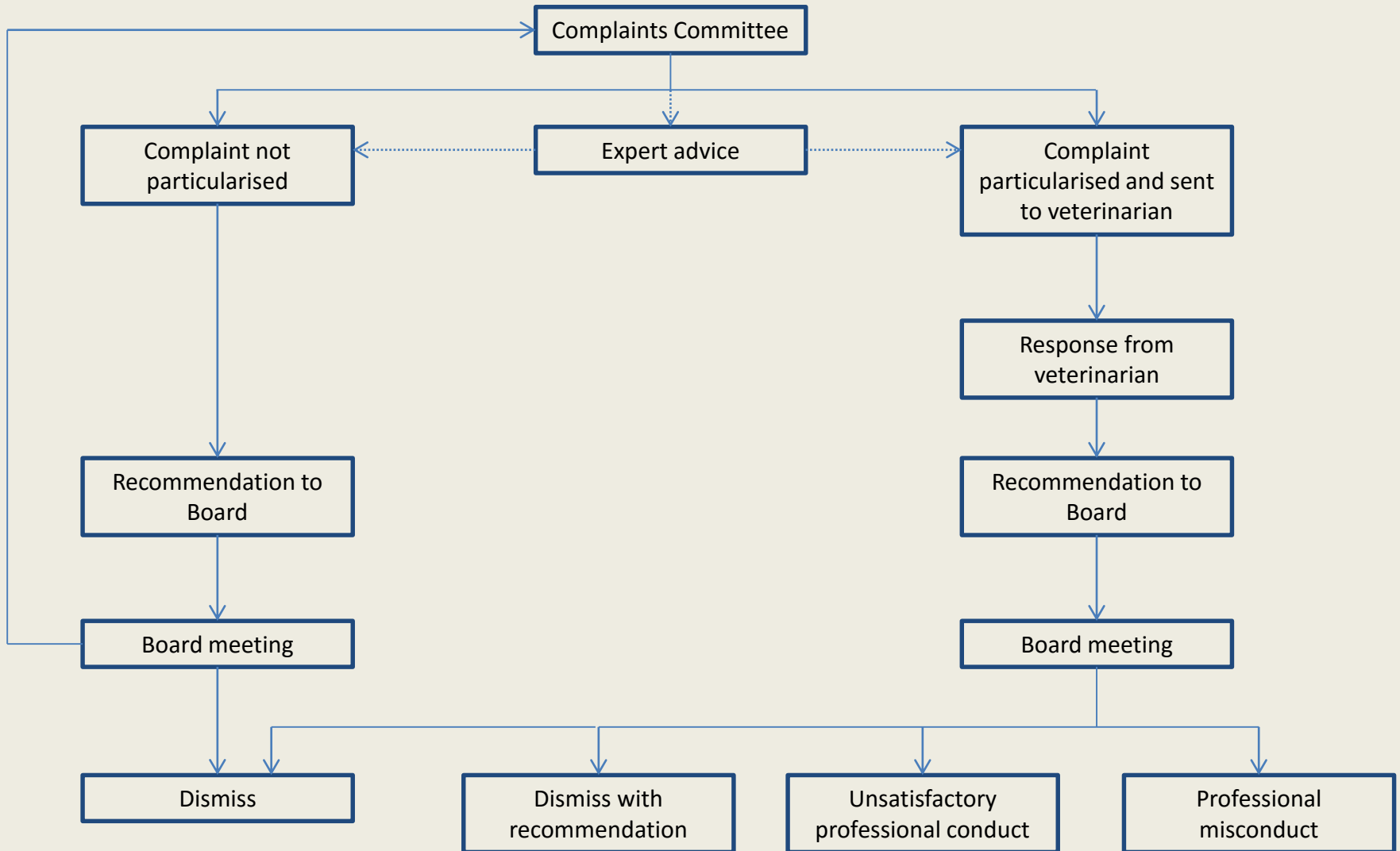


Investigation of complaints (1)





Investigation of complaints (2)





Decision after investigation of a complaint

After investigation of a complaint the Board may:

i. Dismiss the complaint

The Board determines that there is no evidence to support a finding of unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct

ii. Dismiss with a recommendation

The Board dismisses the complaint and also makes a recommendation to the veterinarian in respect of the matter complained of





Decision after investigation of a complaint

After investigation of a complaint the Board may find the veterinarian guilty of:

iii. Unsatisfactory professional conduct

The Board is satisfied the veterinarian is guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct as defined by the Act

iv. Professional misconduct

The Board is satisfied the veterinarian is guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct of a sufficiently serious nature to justify the suspension or cancellation of the veterinarian's registration or conduct declared by the regulations to be professional misconduct





Decision after investigation of a complaint

If the Board is satisfied the veterinarian is guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct the Board may:

- i. Apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Tribunal) for a disciplinary finding against the veterinarian or
- ii. Take one or more of the following actions including:
 - Reprimand or caution the veterinarian
 - Impose a fine on the veterinarian
 - Require the veterinarian to pay specified costs
 - Impose conditions on the veterinarian's registration

If the Board is satisfied the veterinarian is guilty of professional misconduct and has applied to the Tribunal for a disciplinary finding the Board may suspend the veterinarian's registration pending determination by the Tribunal



Decisions of the Tribunal

If the Tribunal determines that the veterinarian is guilty of unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct the Tribunal may make orders including:

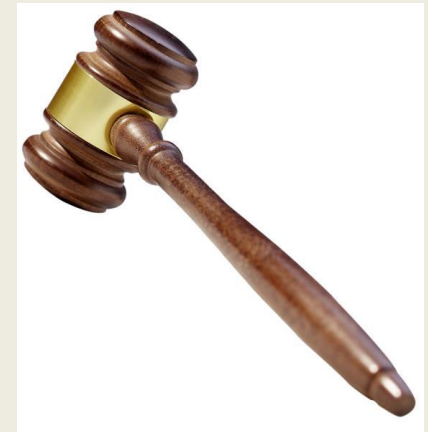
- i. Reprimanding or cautioning the veterinarian
- ii. Suspending the veterinarian's registration
- iii. Cancelling the veterinarian's registration
- iv. Imposing a fine
- v. Imposing conditions
- vi. To pay specified costs relating to the hearing



Decisions of the Tribunal

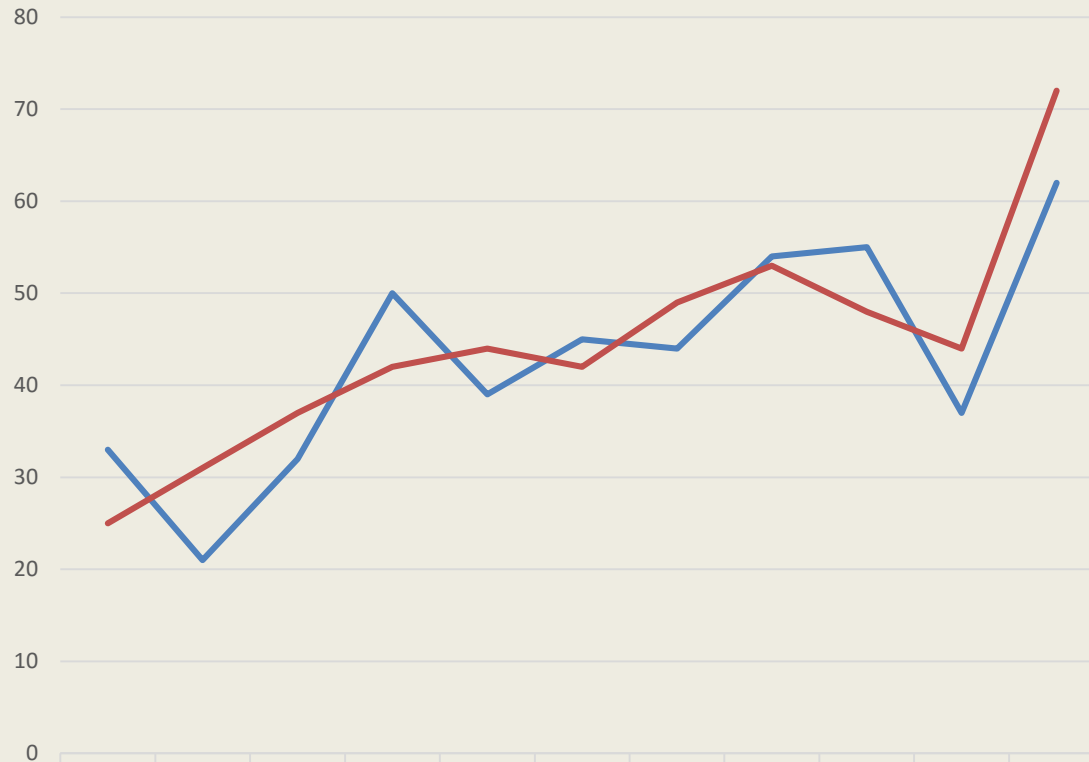
A veterinarian may apply to the Tribunal for an administrative review of a disciplinary finding made by the Board

A veterinarian may appeal a decision of the Tribunal to the Supreme Court of NSW





Finalised and New Complaints 2007-2017

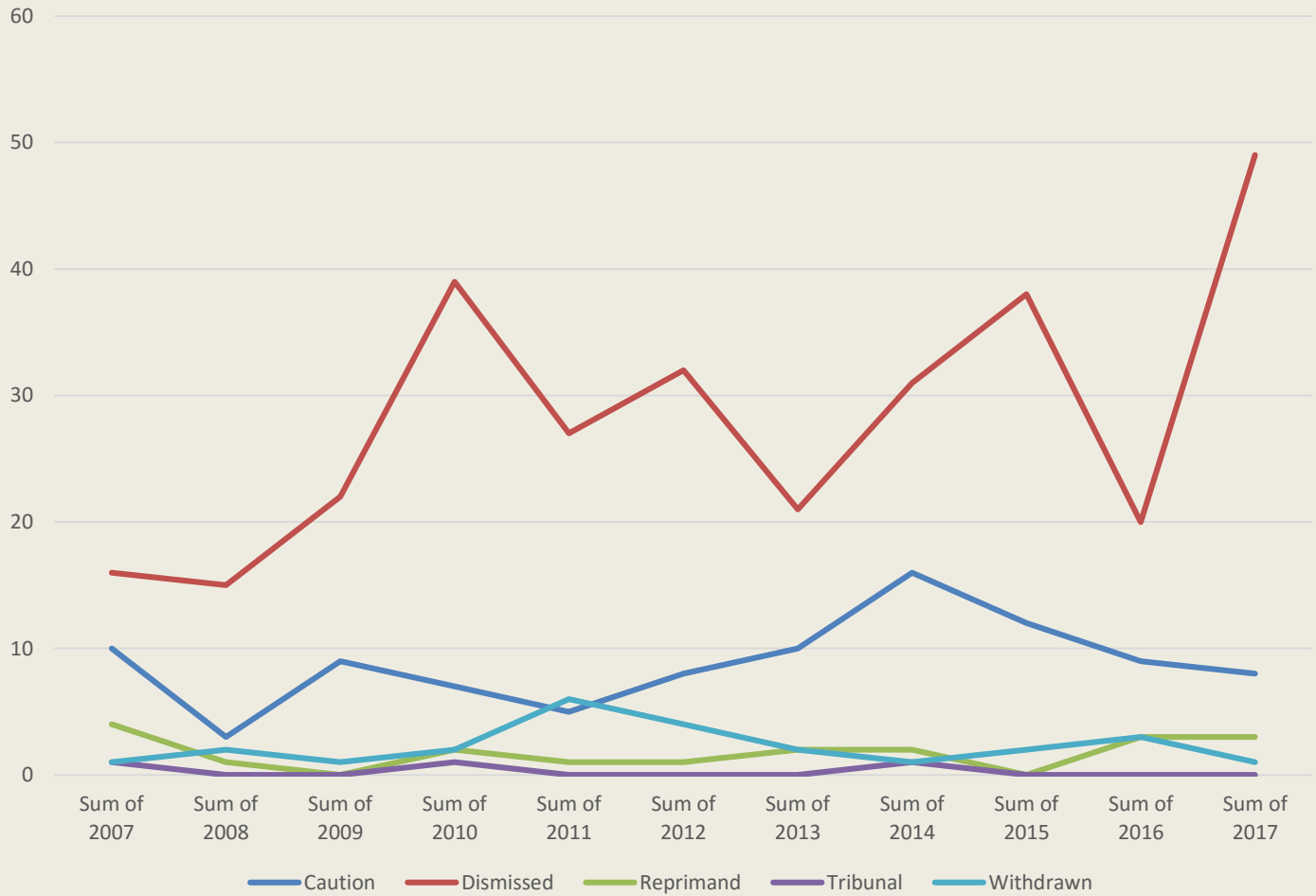


	Sum of 2007	Sum of 2008	Sum of 2009	Sum of 2010	Sum of 2011	Sum of 2012	Sum of 2013	Sum of 2014	Sum of 2015	Sum of 2016	Sum of 2017
Finalised Complaints	33	21	32	50	39	45	44	54	55	37	62
New Complaints	25	31	37	42	44	42	49	53	48	44	72

— Finalised Complaints — New Complaints

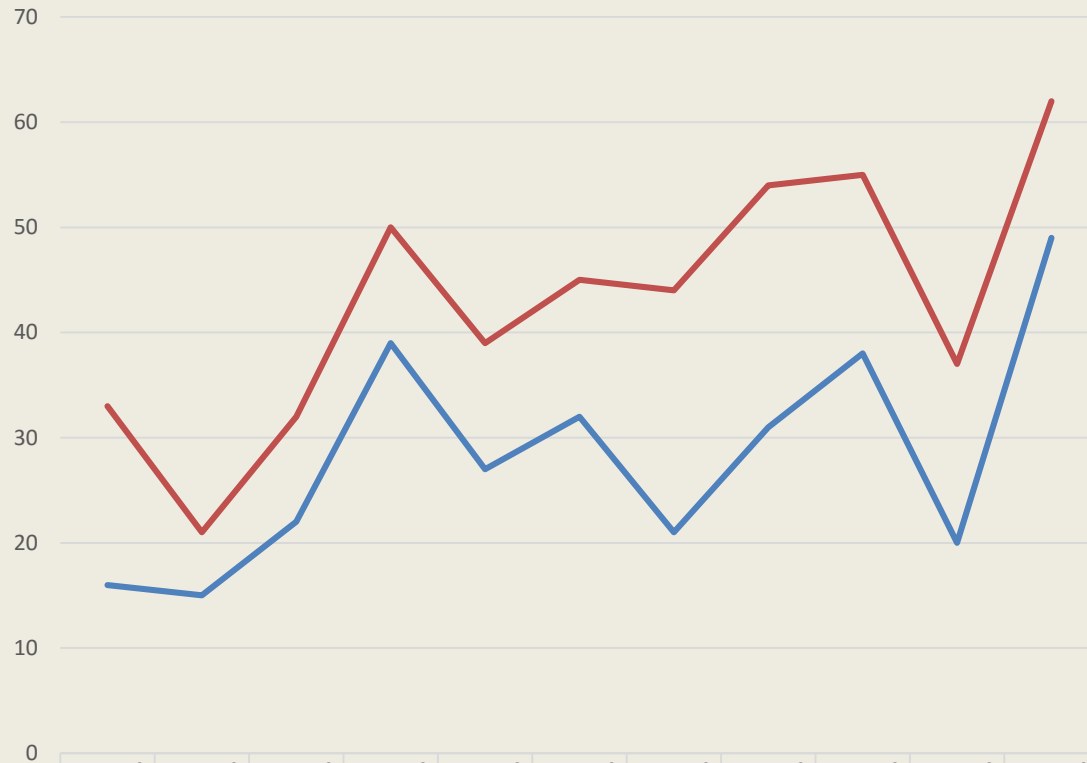


Complaint decisions 2007-2017





Complaint decisions 2007-2017

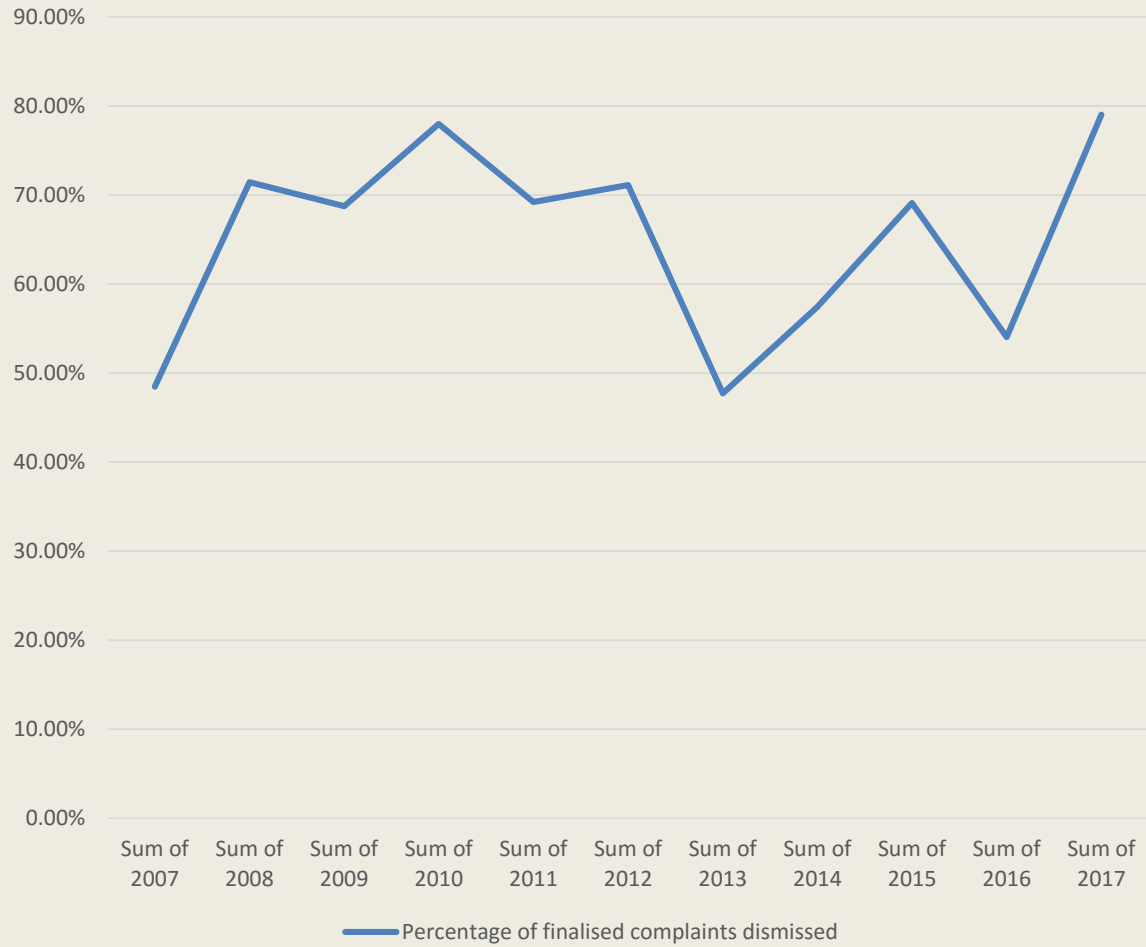


	Sum of 2007	Sum of 2008	Sum of 2009	Sum of 2010	Sum of 2011	Sum of 2012	Sum of 2013	Sum of 2014	Sum of 2015	Sum of 2016	Sum of 2017
Dismissed	16	15	22	39	27	32	21	31	38	20	49
Finalised Complaints	33	21	32	50	39	45	44	54	55	37	62

— Dismissed — Finalised Complaints

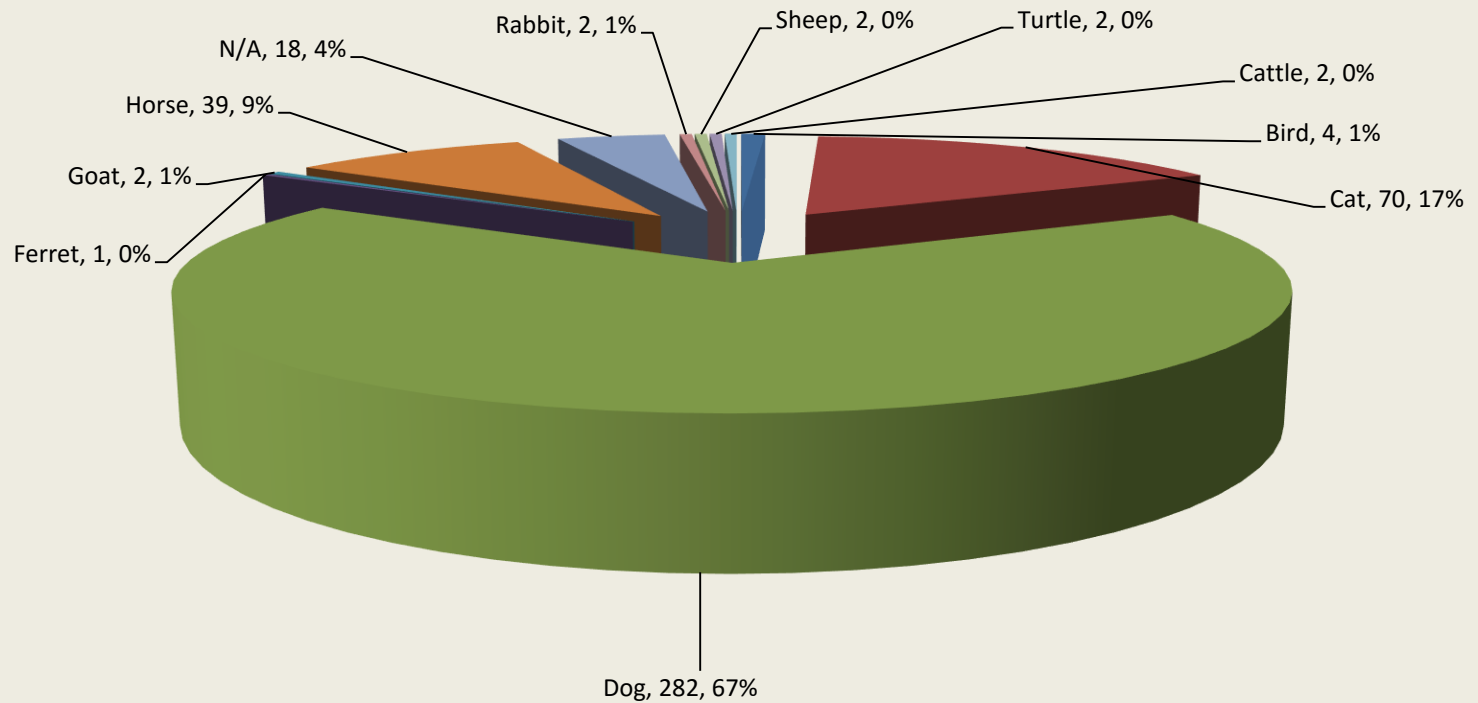


Percentage of finalised complaints dismissed 2007-2017



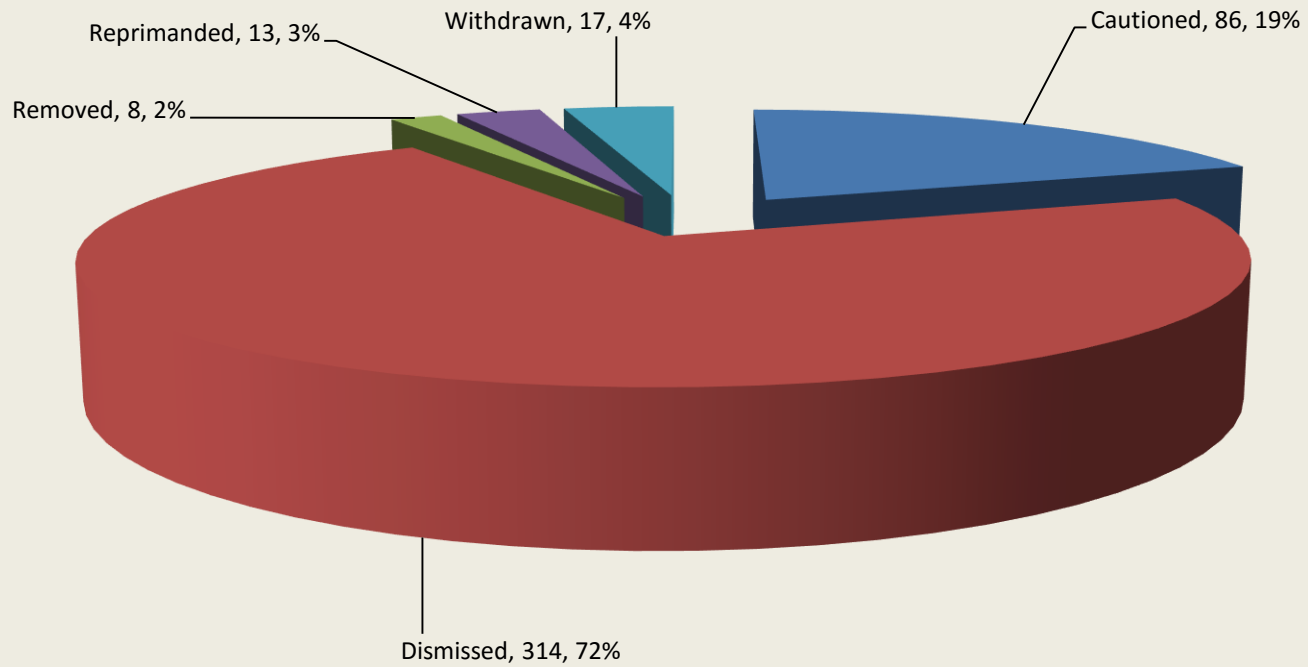


Complaints by species 2007-2014



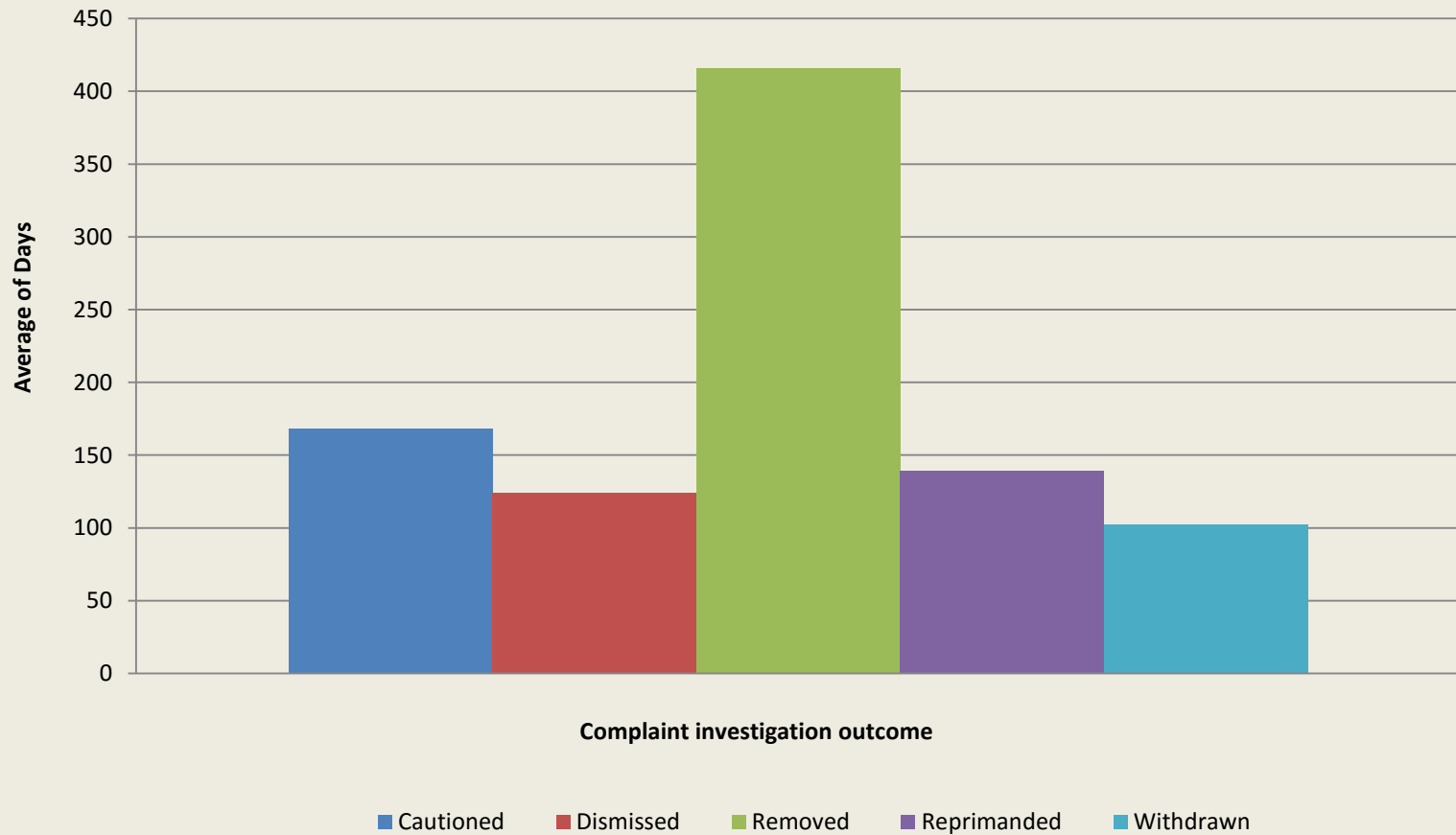


Complaints investigated by decision 2007-2014



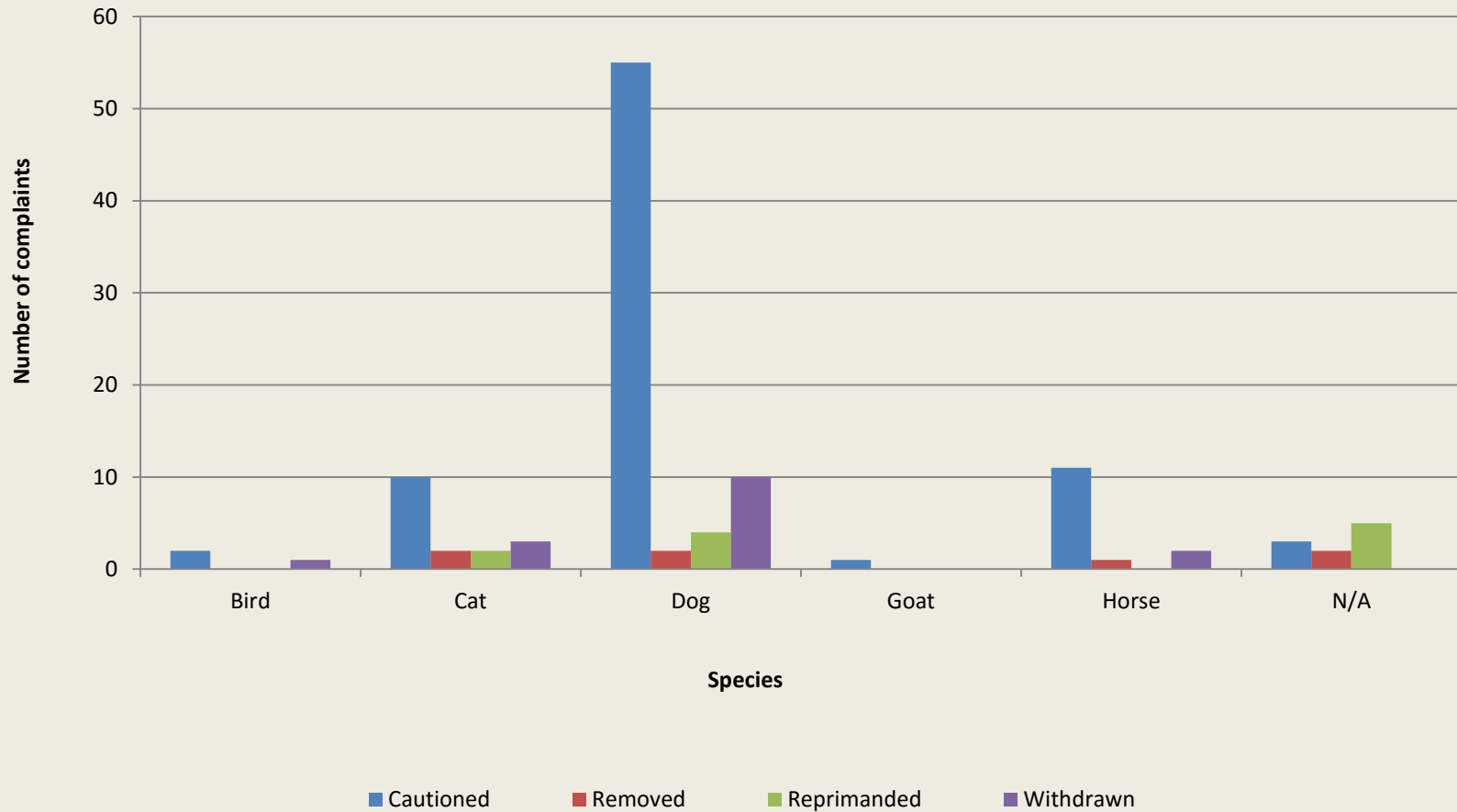


Complaints by average number of days to decision 2006-2015



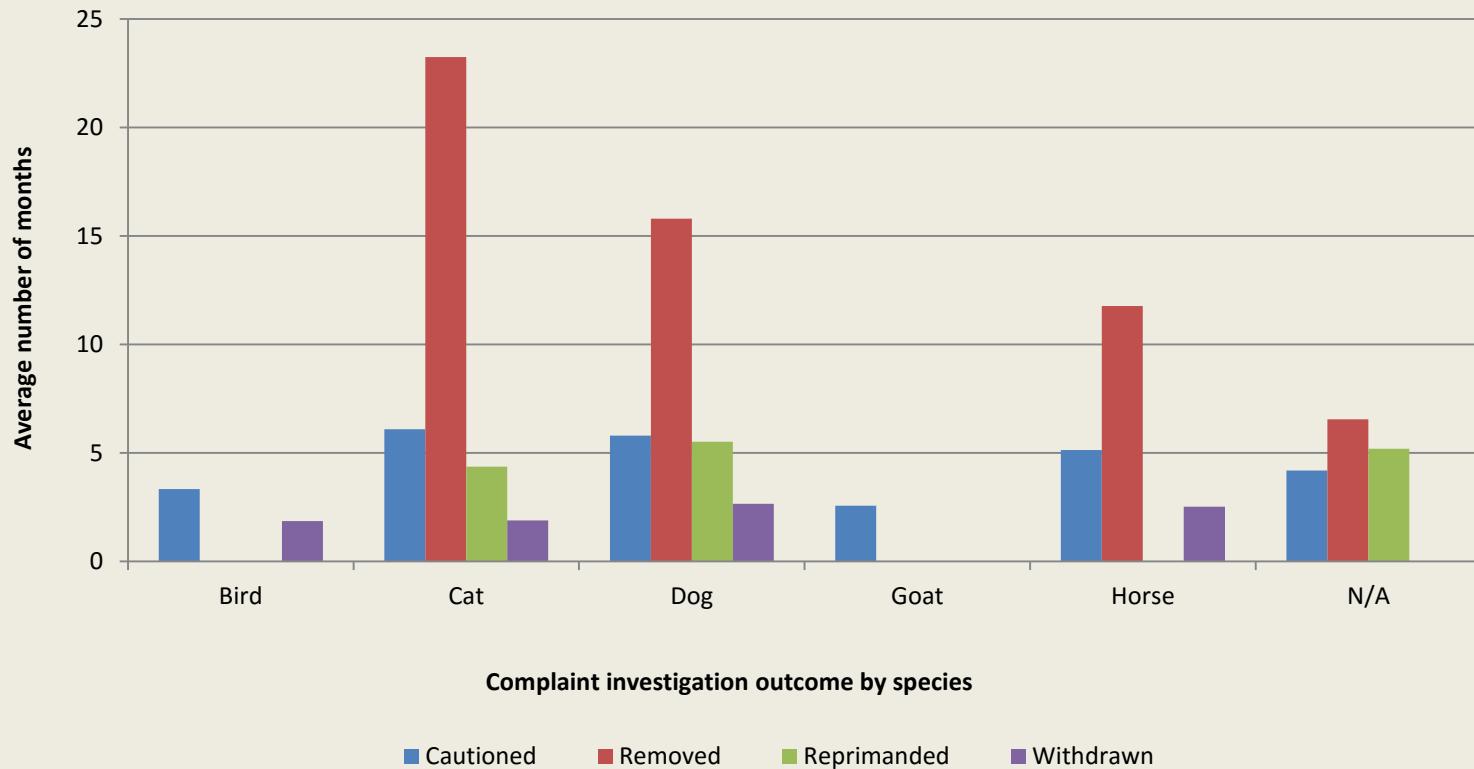


Complaints not dismissed by species 2006-2015



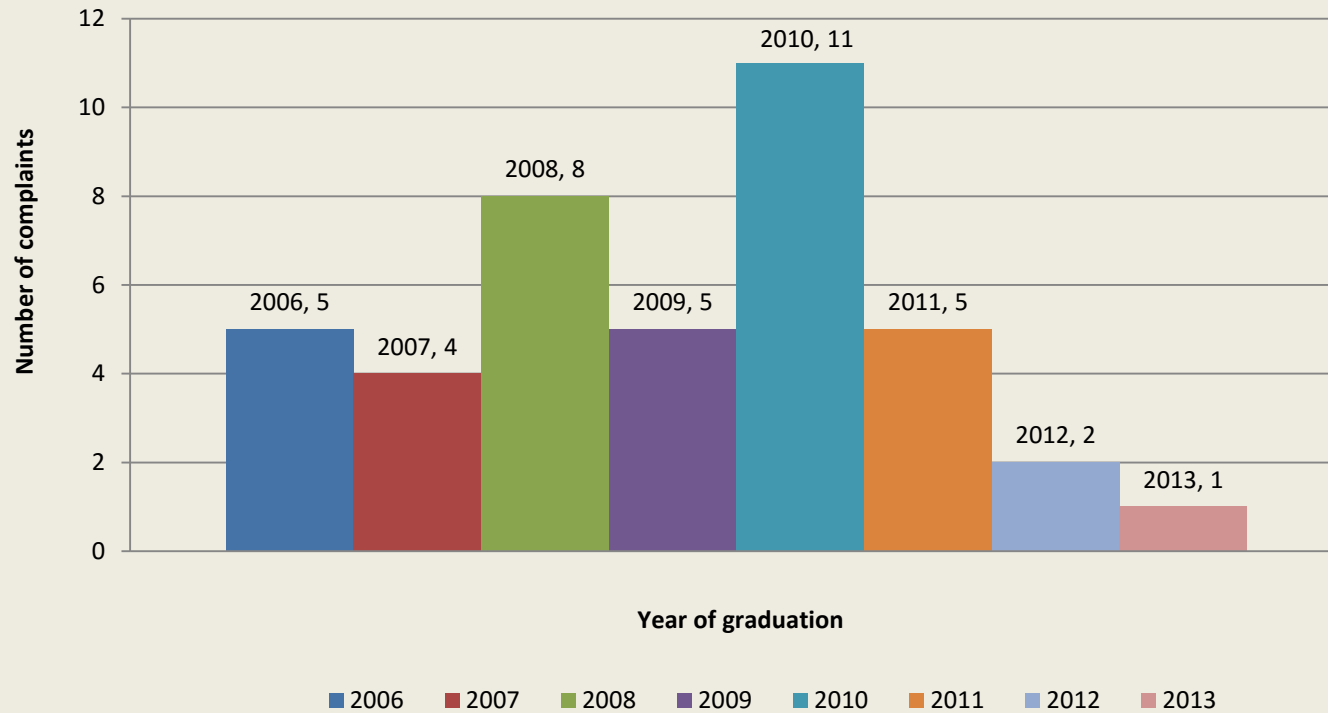


Complaints not dismissed by species and average time to decision 2006-2015



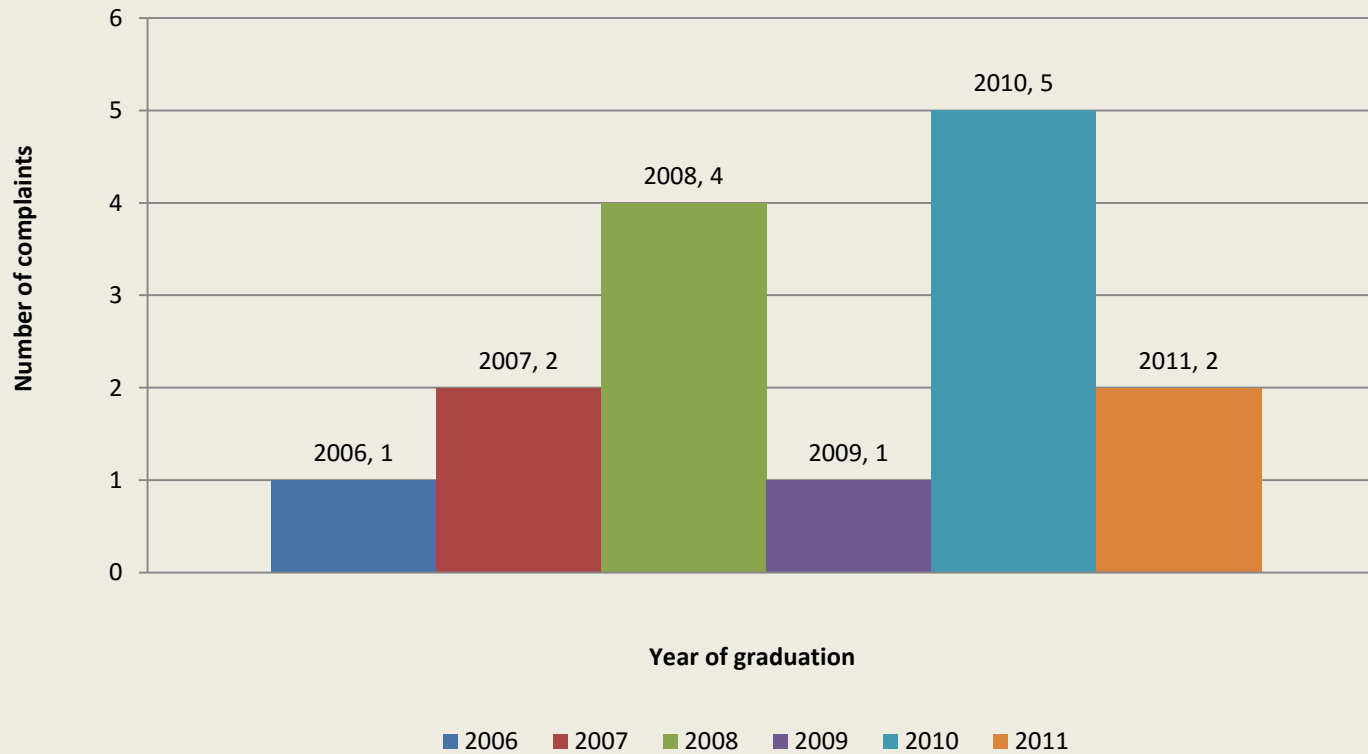


Complaints against new and recent graduates 2006-2015



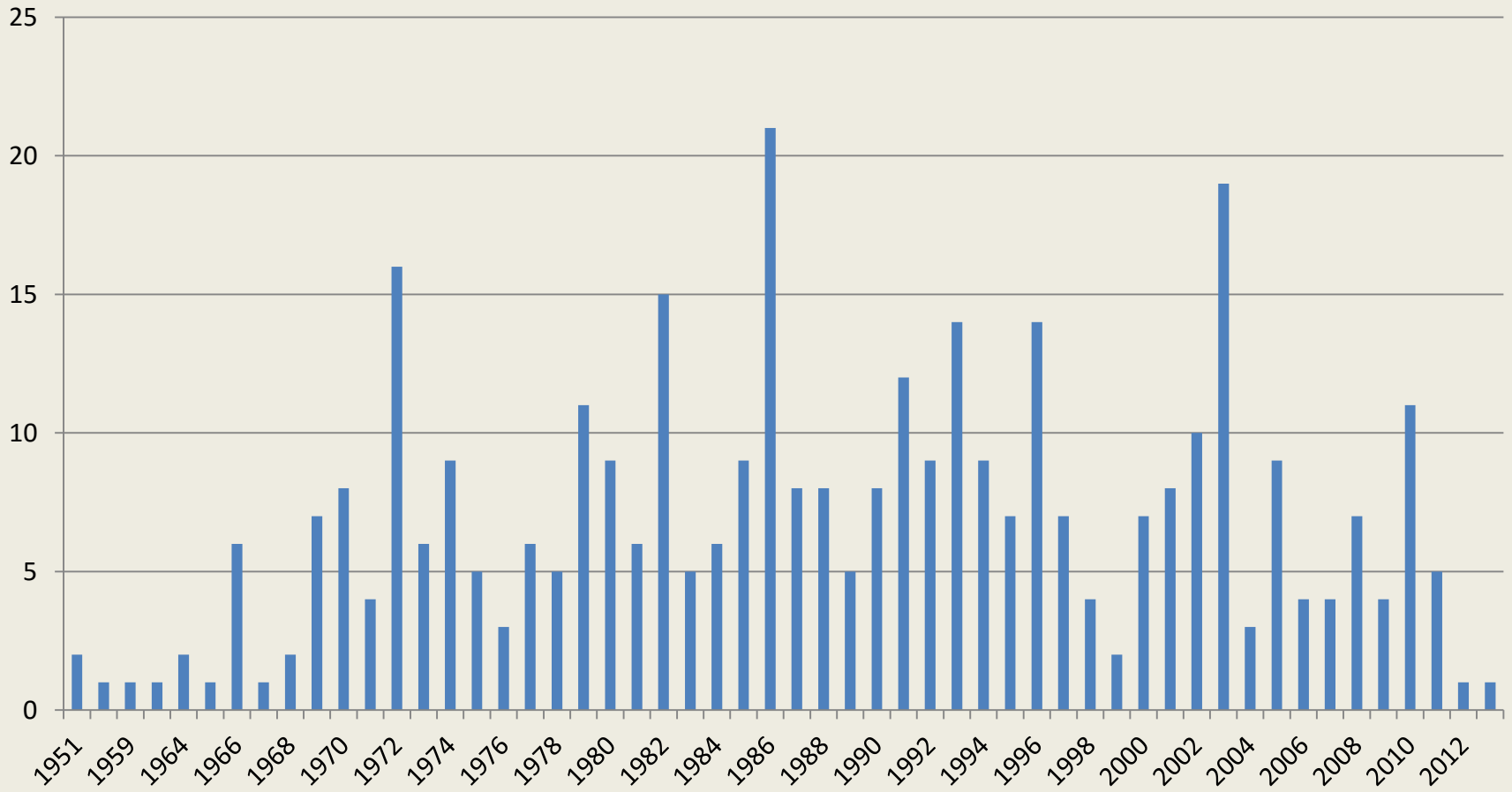


Complaints against new and recent graduates not dismissed 2006-2015





Complaints by year of graduation 2007-2014





Questions

