

COMPANION ANIMAL SHELTERS

**642. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Local Government:**

I understand the minister recently made an important announcement regarding funding for companion animal shelters. Can the minister please update the house on what the Liberal–National government is doing to support animal shelters across the state?

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:**

I thank the member for Southern River for his question. I also acknowledge students in the public gallery from Carey Baptist College, a school close to the member for Southern River’s electorate and my own electorate.

The member for Southern River raised a very good point. This government has been committed to animals in general around the whole state. This government has been proactive in this area. The former minister brought in the Cat Act 2011, and made a huge amount of changes —

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean, you are on three calls. If you want to have a rest, it is up to you; okay.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** There is a commitment from our government to achieving what we call “companion animals under control”. Western Australia is the only state in Australia that has brought in a Cat Act. Under current laws, a person’s cat has to be desexed, microchipped and registered with their local council, putting the responsibility for the animal back on the person who owns the animal. In 2013, we also did a review of the Dog Act. It is very important to make sure that members are aware that on 1 November, all dogs will have to be microchipped under that legislative change. Again, that is putting responsibility back on the owner. Members may remember that with those changes to the animal acts, in 2012 we committed more than \$200 000 for four years to a number of rescue and shelter agencies to make sure that they could look after neglected animals in our community. I am proud to announce that we have continued that funding for another two more years to Cat Haven, the Dog’s Refuge Home, the Animal Protection Society of WA, Swan Animal Haven, K9 Rescue Group and Safe Animal Shelter. The important point is that we estimate that since the funding kicked in in 2012, more than 10 000 cats and dogs have been rescued, more than 10 000 were re-homed and, more importantly, 10 000 have been sterilised. The Minister for Environment was on his feet yesterday during question time talking about the Western Shield program and about protecting marsupials in the wider community because the greatest pressure on them is feral cats. This goes hand-in-hand with the Minister for Environment’s essential Western Shield program. It is very important for the government to be committed to making sure animals in the wider community are looked after, but also, more importantly, it puts the responsibility onto the owners of the animals in our community.