

**SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE OPERATIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS WESTERN AUSTRALIA (INC)**

*Report — “Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc)” — Tabling*

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [10.15 am]: I am directed to present the final report by the Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc).

[See paper 4137.]

Hon RICK MAZZA: On 13 May 2015, the Legislative Council ordered that a select committee be established to inquire into the operations of the Western Australian Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Incorporated) and to examine the RSPCA WA’s funding from the government, its objectives, and the use of its powers. Animal protection has been embraced enthusiastically by Western Australians, many of whom engaged with and contributed to this inquiry. The committee received 138 submissions, conducted 18 hearings, attended a site visit at RSPCA WA headquarters and deliberated extensively on the evidence presented to it.

The RSPCA WA is the recipient of a \$500 000 a year government grant. Public confidence in the administration of publicly funded projects is paramount, and there is a strong public interest in the transparency and accountability of agencies that carry out public functions. That the RSPCA WA provides a community service focused on the prevention of cruelty to animals—all animals—is not disputed. The RSPCA WA has achieved much since its inception and with some fine-tuning of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 there is much more it can achieve in furthering better animal welfare outcomes for Western Australians. The committee noted that the RSPCA WA itself has no enforcement powers conferred upon it by the Animal Welfare Act 2002—only its appointed general inspectors do. As prescribing enforcement powers to a general inspector employed by a non-government agency is unique or very rare in the Western Australian criminal justice system, it merits scrutiny by a parliamentary committee. The committee notes that the inspectorate service carried out by the RSPCA WA undoubtedly fills a void that would otherwise go unfilled. Doubtless, in the absence of the RSPCA WA’s endeavours, this would fall to government to do, at a considerably greater cost.

During its inquiry, the committee has refrained from responding to the internecine commentary levelled at the committee or from passing judgement on cases that have arisen during the inquiry involving conflicted versions of events. The committee chose instead to focus on gathering the facts, to make dispassionate assessments of the evidence and to concentrate on achieving constructive outcomes. This inquiry has been a valid attempt to clear the air and set the record straight on many aspects of the operations of the RSPCA WA. The committee has made 56 findings and 26 recommendations. The report attaches a minority report.

I commend the committee’s report to the house.