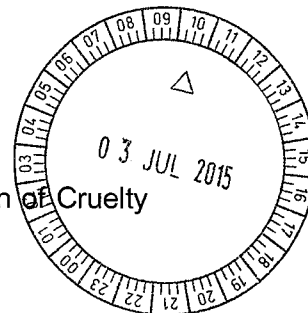


Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc)
Legislative Council
Parliament House,
GPO Box A11, P
PERTH WA 6837



I am a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Incorporated) (RSPCA WA) as are my two sons aged fourteen and twelve. I have had an active interest in the operation of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* and how it has been administered by the Department of Agriculture and Food since about 2013.

It was with some interest that I followed the debate in Hansard regarding the Honourable Rick Mazza's motion for this enquiry into the operations of the RSPCA WA. Of particular interest was a motion by the Honourable Lyn MacLaren to amend the motion to include the Department of Agriculture and Food. This motion was lost, and so too was an opportunity for this select committee to make a meaningful contribution to the welfare of animals in this State.

So it was that on Wednesday, 13 May 2015, The Legislative Council ordered that a select committee be established to inquire into the operations of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc), including an examination of:

- (a) its funding from the government;
- (b) its objectives; and
- (c) the use of its powers.

I wish to make this submission to the Select Committee giving my full support to the RSPCA WA.

I advise that whilst this submission is my own personal view, in my experience these views are shared by the majority of my family, friends and colleagues. I have no reason to believe, that they are not representative of the silent majority.

I make my comments using the three specified topics in the terms of reference.

Funding from Government

The RSPCA (WA) is an incorporated body pursuant to the *Associations and Incorporations Act*. It is its own legal entity, governed by a Board of Directors in accordance with its Constitution. The RSPCA (WA) should not be confused with the RSPCA in the other States and Territories of Australia nor its national body. These other RSPCA bodies are governed by their own and separate Constitutions and Boards.

Members of the Select Committee ought to be careful and keep this distinction in mind as the terms of reference for its enquiry only relates to the RSPCA (WA).

It is apparent, by reading Hansard reports of the Hon Rick Mazza's speech in support of the motion to establish this select committee, the Hon Member has a distinct lack of understanding on how incorporated bodies are formed and governed in the various States of Australia and role and functions of a national body. Much of his speech relates to matters of other States and of the national body of the RSPCA and organisations such as PETA and not the RSPCA (WA). The Hon Darren West provided a speech which showed a much clearer and correct understanding of incorporated associations. On the reasoning of the Hon Rick Mazza, it would be perfectly legitimate for me to associate the rhetoric of the American National Rifle Association or Revolution PAC with his own party. However, I am not that unreasonable.

The Honourable Rick Mazza's speech, in my view only serves to demonstrate his ignorance in the difference between animal welfare bodies, such as the RSPCA (WA) and animal rights activists, such as PETA. It is a shame, in my view, that a Select Committee is required to provide the Honourable Rick Mazza with research opportunity in which to educate himself.

The Western Australia Parliament has provided legislation for the welfare of animals in Western Australia by enacting the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

The long title of the Act states:

An Act to provide for the welfare, safety and health of animals, to regulate the use of animals for scientific purposes, and for related purposes.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food has been given responsibility for the administration of the AWA and is assisted by the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA)

In the second reading speech on 1 August 2001 the Honourable Mark McGowan, Parliamentary Secretary stated:

The intent of this Bill is to provide for the protection of animals by regulating the use of animals for scientific purposes and prohibiting cruel, inhumane or improper treatment of animals. The Bill intends to accomplish this by promoting and protecting the welfare, safety and health of animals; ensuring the proper and humane care and management of animals in accordance with generally accepted standards; **and reflecting the community's expectation that people who are in charge of animals will ensure that they are properly treated and cared for.** (Emphasis added)

In today's modern society, it is clear that the silent majority of the community have an expectation that animals are properly treated and cared for. One only has look at community sentiment after each reported event of animal mistreatment to know that this

is the case. The recent attempted burning of a Quokka on Rottnest Island by two backpackers and the resulting media attention and public outcry is but one example.

Given the huge public sentiment against animal mistreatment one would expect to find that the arm of Government charged with administering the AWA, the Parliament's ultimate way of influencing public behaviour and attitudes, would provide ample public information on how it's putting the Parliament's intent into action. One would also expect, that the Government of the day would provide adequate funds for the Parliament's legislations to be administered.

As a rational thinking, mainstream objective constituent and taxpayer of the State of WA, that's what I expect.

I have referred to the DAFWA website, which I note has been extensively rewritten in the past two years, at least as far as animal welfare is concerned.

Upon visiting the DAFWA website you are informed of DAFWA's vision statement which reads:

We aim to create a progressive, innovative and profitable agriculture and food sector that benefits Western Australia.

I then contrast this with the following comments of the Honourable Mark McGowan during the second reading speech of the AWA:

The intent of this Bill is to provide for the protection of animals by regulating the use of animals for scientific purposes and prohibiting cruel, inhumane or improper treatment of animals. The Bill intends to accomplish this by promoting and protecting the welfare, safety and health of animals; ensuring the proper and humane care and management of animals in accordance with generally accepted standards;

I am immediately drawn to a reasonably perceived conflict of interest between providing progressive, innovative and profitable animal food versus ensuring proper and humane care and management of animals.

Upon further exploration of the DAFWA website, it is clear that DAFWA itself has identified this conflict of interest and has needed to adopt a 'Chinese wall' situation between its compliance role and industry development role.

I explored further to ascertain what else DAFWA, on behalf of the Government, is doing to meet its responsibilities in administering the AWA and how it measures its success. Alas there is very little information with regards to the latter.

I then turned to the DAFWA annual report. As the Annual Report is tabled in Parliament and is intended to inform the Parliament and the Public on how it has met its various responsibilities and spent its allocation of public funds, one would certainly expect to find some achievements and reporting of its functions concerning the AWA, especially given

the public interest that arises in such issues from time to time. Again, there is no information apart from the reporting of a \$500,000 grant to the RSPCA (WA) pursuant to a funding agreement.

I understand that it is the provision of the \$500,000 funding grant, and how it is utilised by the RSPCA, that is the subject of this enquiry by the Select Committee.

Therefore there is no public information available as to how the Government is administering the AWA or how it measures its performance in this area. The only information that can be found, is contained in questions recorded in Hansard. In order to provide context, the Select Committee should take notice of questions concerning the administration of the AWA recorded in Hansard.

During questioning before the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations on 20 August 2013, DAFWA advised the Standing Committee that it budgeted \$1.8 million to the administration of the AWA which included \$0.5 million grant to the RSPCA for the 2012/2013 fiscal year. Therefore DAFWA has a budget of \$1.3 million and it has 11.5 full time employees dedicated to the administration of the AWA.

In response to a question by the Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Minister for Child Protection representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Parliament was informed of the following:

- (DAFWA) has a budget of \$1,012,000 for the operational expenses of the Livestock Compliance Unit (LCU) in 2012–13, which includes the enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act 2002;
- Since assuming responsibility for the Animal Welfare Act 2002, the LCU have instigated investigations into 71 animal cruelty reports. Of these investigations, 12 are ongoing. The remainder have been dealt with through education supported by warning letters, management plans and direction notices.
- Operating costs are met from the LCU budget and prosecution costs are met by the SSO.
- All unfinished complaints transferred to DAFWA have been either referred to the RSPCA or assessed and managed within the LCU. A number of prosecutions are currently before the Courts.

In contrast to the Governments reporting (or lack thereof) on achievements made in the administration of the AWA, the RSPCA (WA) provides a detailed account of its achievements, funding and spending, in its annual report.

This annual report is freely available on the RSPCA (WA) website and is available to any person in the world who has access to the internet. The annual report contains financial statements that have been independently audited. As mentioned, this information is freely available in the Annual Report and it does not require a Select Committee Enquiry to uncover this information. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said when it comes to the

Government's spending on the administration of the AWA. In my view the Hon Lynn MacLaren's motion to amend the terms of reference of this Select Committee to include DAFWA was a missed opportunity to allow the Select Committee to make any meaningful recommendations into animal welfare in this State, and to provide the community of Western Australia with any worthwhile return from the Select Committee's time and costs in conducting this enquiry.

When one looks at the RSPCA (WA) 2012-2013 annual report the following can be ascertained:

1. Its mission is *'to improve the welfare of animals through leadership, collaboration with stakeholders and the provision of quality services'* and its vision is that *'All animals are accepted as sentient beings treated with dignity, compassion and respect.'* There is nothing in this mission or vision that is inconsistent with the objects of the AWA. The same cannot be said for DAFWA.
2. The RSPCA (WA) has a specific and dedicated team, known as the 'Inspectorate' that operates under the AWA. This is a distinct team separate from other areas of the RSPCA (WA) such as media, fundraising, education, shelter, and policy (Board). The team is managed by a Chief Inspector.
3. At the time of the report, the Inspectorate consisted of 15 Inspectors for the entire State of Western Australia.
4. This Inspectorate of 15 investigated 2782 complaints as opposed to DAFWA's 11.5 staff investigating 71 complaints;
5. This inspectorate of 15, received and handled over 20,000 calls from the public;
6. This inspectorate of 15 commenced 24 prosecutions as opposed DAFWA's 11.5 staff commencing none;
7. In the 2012-2013 year, 7 prosecutions were finalised in Court with all of them being successful. This 100% success rate would be the envy of every Government Department in Western Australia.
8. The 7 successful prosecutions by RSPCA (WA) resulted in the Court imposing \$74,500 in fines. It's my understanding that fines are returned to Government Consolidated Revenue.
9. The RSPCA (WA) is responsible for funding prosecutions it commences under the AWA, as opposed to DAFWA, who has their prosecutions funded by the State Solicitor's Office.

The above public achievements by the RSPCA (WA) have been provided to the public of Western Australian with the only Government funds being a \$500,000 grant. When one takes into account that these achievements by the RSPCA (WA) resulted in \$74,500 being returned to consolidated revenue, the net cost to Government is \$425,500.

Using DAFWA's achievements for the same period as a measuring stick, \$1,300,000 in government funds, 11.5 FTE's, 71 investigations, no prosecutions, no returns to consolidated revenue, I am extremely pleased, as a tax payer of this State, that value for money has been obtained through this grant.

As a taxpayer of this State, I am a little concerned regarding the level of reporting of the Government's achievements versus spending under the AWA. I would like to think that this Select Committee would share these views.

Turning to the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations 2014-2015 Budget Estimates Hearings, it is apparent the Hon Rick Mazza himself had difficulty locating information concerning the AWA, specifically the \$500,000 RSPCA (WA) grant in DAFWA's annual report.

In response to questioning DAFWA advised the 2014-2015 Budget Estimates Hearings the following can be ascertained:

DAFWA had 12.5 FTE's and a budget of \$1.6 million dedicated to the administration of the AWA;

- DAFWA has additional staff, on top of the 12.5 FTE's who are appointed as General Inspector's under the AWA. DAFWA obtains a 'synergy' having these inspectors attend to animal welfare matters whilst conducting their normal duties;
- DAFWA conducted 400-423 inspections in the 2013-2014 fiscal year however it is uncertain whether these were conducted by the 12.5 FTE's dedicated to animal welfare or other staff who have been appointed General Inspectors;
- In supplementary information provided it can be ascertained that DAFWA in fact had 14.9 FTE's in the Animal Welfare Unit of which 4 FTE's were vacant at the time of providing the information, 12.5 as previously stated.
- In supplementary information provided, DAFWA had 8.9 FTE's of which 3 were vacant dedicated to Inspections however, given the 'synergies' DAFWA utilises in its staff, it is not clear in which department of DAFWA these 8.9 FTE's work;
- In supplementary information provided DAFWA advised that although the 2013-2014 reporting was incomplete, 1 case was prosecuted and another 4 were with the State Solicitor's Office.
- In supplementary information, DAFWA provided an activity report relating to the 2013-2014 fiscal year despite the information being provided on 4 July 2014, after the end of the 2013-2014 reporting period.

On 7 May 2015, in response to a question by the Hon Samantha Rowe, the Minister for Agriculture and Food provided:

1. There are 17 members of staff at DAFWA who are appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 2002 as general inspectors, and four as scientific inspectors. All have powers to investigate offences under the act.
2. In relation to breaches or potential breaches of the act —
 - a. A total of 131 investigations were undertaken in 2013–14, and 123 in 2014–15 to date.
 - b. Zero prosecutions were commenced in 2013–14, and three in 2014–15 to date.
 - c. One successful prosecution in 2014–15 to date.
 - d. One unsuccessful prosecution for 2014–15 to date.

Again, to see the actions and achievements of the RSPCA (WA) in regards to animal welfare for the 2013 -2014 fiscal year - it's a relatively simple process of going to their website and downloading the annual report. No need for Standing Committee's and questions without notice – it's all there, transparent, for the world to see.

Upon review of the RSPCA (WA) annual report the following can be ascertained:

1. The RSPCA (WA) conducted a review and restructure of the Inspectorate;
2. RSPCA (WA) established a 24 hour 7 day per week reporting hotline, for the public to report matters relating to the AWA;
3. 6,113 investigations were conducted;
4. There were 23 successful prosecutions which saw 28 people convicted of animal cruelty – a 160% increase on the previous year;
5. The result of each prosecution is specified in a table which shows fines of \$265,000 were imposed by the Courts. It's my understanding that fines are returned to Government Consolidated Revenue.
6. RSPCA (WA) were successful in all 23 of its prosecutions. Again, this 100% success rate would be the envy of every Government Department in Western Australia.

The above public achievements by the RSPCA (WA) have been provided to the public of Western Australian with the only Government funds being a \$500,000 grant. When one takes into account that these achievements by the RSPCA (WA) resulted in \$265,000 returned to consolidated revenue, the net cost to Government is \$235,500.

A meaningful comparison cannot be made with DAFWA due to a lack of transparency in reporting by DAFWA in the area of animal welfare. The information provided in the Parliament is inconsistent with the 2014-2015 Budget Estimates Committee being told *'that although the 2013-2014 reporting was incomplete, 1 case was prosecuted and another 4 were with the State Solicitor's Office'* and then the Minister for Agriculture and

Food advised parliament on 7 May 2015 *'Zero prosecutions were commenced in 2013–14, and three in 2014–15 to date'*.

Again, as a taxpaying constituent of the State of Western Australia I am very happy with the return the State has obtained in return of it's \$500,000 grant to the RSPCA (WA). I am not so certain that I am happy with the return to the State for the \$1.6 million expended by DAFWA.

The \$500,000 grant provided by Government to the RSPCA, does come with conditions. It is subject to a Grant Agreement date 15 January 2014 between DAFWA and RSPCA (WA). Some of the aspects of this agreement include:

- The RSPCA (WA) may only use the funds for an 'approved purpose';
- Approved purposes are specified and include training of inspectors, enforcement activities, providing a 24 hour complaint receipt, assessment and response service and public education and promotion of responsible companion animal ownership.
- Requires the RSPCA to fund its own prosecutions; and
- Requires the RSPCA (WA) to report to DAFWA on a range of matters both relevant and irrelevant to the AWA;

It is fairly apparent, in my view, that from the information referred to above in the RSPCA (WA) Annual Reports and in Hansard, that the only organisation actually doing any meaningful work with regards to the AWA is the RSPCA (WA).

As a taxpaying constituent of the State of Western Australia, I believe the funding provided by Government towards the activities provided by the RSPCA by enforcing part 3 of the AWA are totally inadequate. As a result, the RSPCA (WA) are limited in the way it utilise public donations for other worthwhile pursuits.

I am not at surprised that the Hon Ken Baston did not support the Hon Lynn MacLaren's motion to amend the terms of reference of this select committee to include the operations of DAFWA. I also would not like to be in the position of trying to justify DAFWA's performance in the administration of the AWA, especially if I was the responsible Minister.

The Government, through the funding agreement has effectively made the RSPCA totally responsible for enforcing AWA, as the RSPCA must receive and respond to all calls of animal cruelty. The RSPCA must refer complaints regarding commercial livestock, as defined, but only commercial livestock and DAFWA maintain discretion as to whether they will accept the complaint.

If the RSPCA, under the AWA, determines an animal needs veterinary treatment, it may issue a direction to the owner. If the owner does not do this, then the animal may need to be seized and then the RSPCA becomes responsible for the costs veterinary treatment. This is a cost associated with enforcing the provisions of the AWA.

If an Inspector needs to seize an animal the AWA determines how that animal is to be dealt with, in accordance with the principles of property law. The RSPCA may need to house and care for these animals pending the convoluted processes contained in the AWA. I have confidence in the work of the RSPCA (WA) therefore I believe that the animals are in a better environment with the RSPCA than the environment from which they were seized. However, the best interests of the animal would be to have it with a responsible pet owner. However, the RSPCA is required on many occasions to house animal pending court processes, some of which may be deliberately or unintentionally drawn out by person from whom the animal was taken. The cost of housing, feeding and caring for the animal, including veterinary treatment, is borne by the RSPCA (WA). This is another cost that directly relates to the RSPCA (WA) in enforcing Part 3 of the AWA.

I submit that this Select Committee should establish what it costs the RSPCA (WA) to enforce Part 3 of the AWA. This analysis should include:

- Cost of providing 24 hour call centre;
- Salary costs for Inspectorate;
- Vehicle, plant and equipment costs;
- Training costs
- Cost for sheltering animals seized under AWA including food, water, shelter, cleaning, walking, veterinary treatments, and staff salaries for providing this.
- Cost of prosecutions

Where a service is provided by a volunteer to the RSPCA, costs should be calculated on a reasonable wage that might be paid for that service;

Pro bono legal services should be estimated on a reasonable hourly rate – perhaps that set by the State Solicitors Office.

Only after this analysis has been conducted by the Select Committee will it be able to make any informed decision or recommendation regarding it's funding from Government.

OBJECTIVES

The Select Committee is to examine the objectives of the RSPCA (WA).

Again, I don't think a Select Committee was required to be established to ascertain these as they are clearly stated in it's Constitution, which can be viewed by anyone in the world with internet access, simply by down loading the RSPCA (WA) Constitution.

Whilst it is outside the terms of reference of this Select Committee, for the benefit of the Hon Rick Mazza, information such as the Constitutions or Articles of Association as applicable, for the RSPCA (SA) Inc, RSPCA (Vic) ACN 131 965 761; RSPCA (NSW) ACN 000 001 641, RSPCA (ACT) Inc., RSPCA(Qld) Inc., RSPCA Darwin Regional

Branch Inc., RSPCA (Tas) Inc., and RSPCA (Australia) Inc. are available upon their independent websites.

The Constitution of the RSPCA (WA) provides its purpose at rule 4.1 which reads:

The Purposes of the Society shall be to:

1. promote animal welfare and kindness to animals;
2. prevent or suppress cruelty to animals; and
3. do all such lawful acts as the Society may consider conducive or incidental to the attainment of these Purposes

In my view, there is nothing inconsistent with purposes of the RSPCA (WA)'s purpose with the objects of the AWA. In fact, they are quite complementary and that why various and separate RSPCA organisations around Australia have been entrusted with powers to enforce animal welfare.

I acknowledge that there may be policy differences with the RSPCA (WA) and Industry and Community groups. I do accept that this as a problem that requires the RSPCA (WA) to be divested with powers to enforce the AWA.

It must be remembered that the RSPCA (WA) Inc. does not hold any authority under the AWA. It is individual inspectors that are appointed General Inspectors under the AWA. The individual appointment of powers pursuant to an enactment is common place throughout all government agencies. This is because with each individual appointment comes accountability. Each General Inspector appointed under the AWA is accountable for the use of their powers.

To my knowledge, no members of the Board of the RSPCA (WA) Inc are appointed General Inspectors under the AWA. It is the board members who adopt the policies of the RSPCA (WA).

To my knowledge, there is no evidence where the Inspectors of the RSPCA (WA) who are appointed general inspectors have ever used their powers under the AWA to advance a policy of the RSPCA, other than those policies that mirror the objects of the AWA.

One of the main contentious issues at the moment is that of live export trade, and whilst the RSPCA (WA) Inc may be opposed to this practice due the inherent likelihood that animals will suffer harm during the process, I am not aware of any use of power where an RSPCA Inspector has tried to stop or interfere with a live export from taking place. In any event, through the Funding Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding, DAFWA has effectively stopped the RSPCA (WA) Inc in having any involvement in cruelty complaints involving commercial livestock.

The same argument applies to recreational shooting. There is, in my view, an inherent likelihood that animals will suffer at the hands of recreational shooters. That inherent risk is reduced by the use of professional marksman employed to undertake a cull. Whilst the

risk is still there, it is reduced. The risk of animals suffering may be even further reduced by conducting a cull by some other means. This is a policy issue of the RSPCA (WA). It is not something that is effected by the appointment of the Inspectorate as General Inspectors under the AWA.

The policy positions of the RSPCA (WA) and it's enforcement role under the AWA are separate and distinct. Industry and Community groups that have difference of opinion with the RSPCA (WA) when it comes to policy matters are merely using the RSPCA's powers under the AWA as a distraction to further their own political agendas.

USE OF POWERS

I became interested in the administration of the Animal Welfare Act in 2013. Since that time, I have not come across anything that causes me concern with the way in which the RSPCA (WA) Inspectors have utilised their powers under the AWA. I am aware of some of the complaints that have been levelled at the RSPCA (WA) Inspectors that have been reported in the media, social media and Hansard. Most of the complaints I am aware of are peddled by persons with political motivations and none have been substantiated.

As mentioned previously, an appointment as a General Inspector, like most other appointments under an act of Parliament are personal appointments. This is because with each individual appointment comes accountability. Each General Inspector appointed under the AWA is accountable for the use of their powers.

All general inspectors, regardless by who they are employed, are responsible to their employers, via their employment contract, and also the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman) and the Corruption and Crime Commission. General Inspectors – whether they be employed by the Commissioner of Police, DAFWA, Local Government, RSPCA or some other organisation or agency all hold the same level of accountability.

Given the level of scrutiny that has occurred with regards to the RSPCA (WA) Inspectors over the past 2 years, I find it surprising that, if they are indeed misusing their powers, I have not seen any evidence of it. Given the level of scrutiny and lack of evidence I do not believe this is occurring by the RSPCA Inspectors. However, I cannot say the same for General Inspector's employed by other agencies, as there does not appear to be any scrutiny or review of these. It is interesting that the Government has appointed over 150 general inspectors in the State of WA, yet the majority of work done under the AWA is performed by the 14 inspectors employed by a Charity who only has the welfare of animals at heart. What are these other publically funded Inspector's doing?

Many of the criticisms that have been levelled at the RSPCA (WA) Inc. are a result of the drafting and operation of the AWA itself, and not as a result of the actions of the RSPCA (WA) inspectors.

One complaint that is making the rounds relates to the Greenough Equine Centre Hansard [COUNCIL — Thursday, 15 May 2014]. From my observations, the complaint here was that a RSPCA (WA) Inspector issued a direction which was non-reviewable under the AWA. The recipient of the direction, a livestock veterinarian that has been deeply invested in the industry for over 15 years, and no doubt has friends and acquaintances within DAFWA, complained that the direction ought to have been written under another sections so it was reviewable by DAFWA or the Minister. I will not ponder the reasons why the recipient, a livestock veterinarian that has been deeply invested in the industry for over 15 years might have thought it was in his interests to have the matter reviewed by the DAFWA, or indeed the Minister for Agriculture – both who are also deeply invested in the livestock industry.

Just to be clear, I am not anti-livestock industry and regularly eat meat. However, I prefer to eat animals that have not been mistreated or subjected to unnatural intensive farming practices.

The Hon Paul Brown believed it was untenable that a RSPCA Inspector could issue a direction which was not reviewable. The simple fact is it would not matter who issued the direction under that section of the AWA it would still not be reviewable. The Direction could have been written by a Police Officer, Local Government Ranger appointed as a general inspector, or DAFWA themselves and it still would not have been reviewable.

If DAFWA, as the agency assisting the Minister in the administration of the AWA finds an issue with the construction of the AWA, it ought to take action to have the AWA amended so that those directions under that section are reviewable. That way they are reviewable regardless of the agency the general inspector works for.

I am aware of complaints by a Mr Mark Aldridge whom it appears to me shares the same political ideology as the Hon Rick Mazza.

Mr Aldridge, who I note is not a constituent of the State of Western Australia, alleges that the RSPCA (WA) Inc deliberately delays litigation to cause financial harm to people it alleges mistreats animals. Again, as the Hon Rick Mazza could attest, it is easy for people with political agendas to pursue, to throw mud and hope enough sticks. I congratulate the Hon Rick Mazza for obtaining the support of the liberal party in getting enough mud to stick.

However, I am confident that after a little bit of water is applied, the facts will reveal themselves, and any delays in litigation will, on the most part, be due to circumstances beyond the RSPCA (WA)'s control and most likely be due to the operation of the AWA or judicial processes.

Sincerely