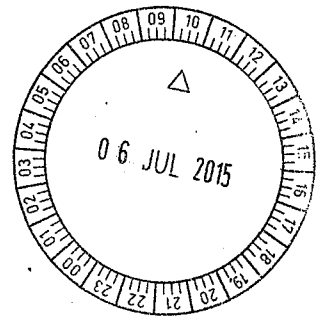


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**Dr Joe**  
Dr. Joe Kosterich  
M.B.E.S.

The Hon Rick Mazza MLC  
Select Committee into the operations of the RSPCA(WA)Inc  
Parliament House  
Harvest Terrace  
Perth 6000

Fax 08 9222 7805

Dear Mr Mazza

Re Submission to the Select Committee

It is often said that a society can be judged by how it treats animals. This does not mean that a vegetarian society is necessarily superior

It is entirely reasonable for humans as omnivores to eat animals. It is also entirely reasonable for animals to work for and with humans, as has been the case for centuries. It is incumbent on humans to care for and treat animals with respect and treat them humanely. This applies to farming, working animals and pets.

The recent live baiting issue in the greyhound racing industry highlights that not all those who work with animals can be trusted to do the right thing. We see this also in cases where maltreated pets are found or where farming practices lead to suffering of animals.

These cases are found as part of the work of the RSPCA. One of its roles is to investigate cases of animal cruelty. It does this on a shoestring budget. My understanding is that it receives some \$500,000 a year from the state government to do a job, which cost in excess of \$3 million. The remainder of the cost is borne by the association through member donations.

Essentially the government gets extremely good bang for its buck from the work done by the RSPCA. Inspectors have a difficult and at times heart wrenching task in dealing with cases of animal cruelty.

To do this effectively requires strong powers. For example they must be able to search properties. They must have the power to remove animals which are

suffering or in danger. They must have power to act to protect the wellbeing of animals. They need far more than the power to ask people nicely.

I have no doubt that those who have been caught out would love to see the RSPCA's hands tied. I also have no doubt that an organization, which defends those without a voice can expect to put some people offside. IN fact the more successful it is, sadly the more people who will be irate that their cruelty to animals has been exposed and that they have been duly and rightly punished.

The objectives of the RSPCA are straightforward. It is to protect the welfare of animals. My late mother was an animal lover and raised me to be the same. She was a life long supporter of the RSPCA.

As a doctor interested in health, I am aware of the many health benefits that come from pet ownership. This includes lower rates of depression, and lower rates of heart disease. Pets provide comfort to older people and can aid in the recovery of sick children.

The work of the RSPCA is invaluable. Any moves to weaken its powers would be a retrograde step and would take our state backwards in time. As mentioned earlier , the association is under funded for the work it does so hopefully this can be revised upwards at the end of this review.

I am happy to expand further on any of the comments made.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Joe Kosterich  
03/07 2015