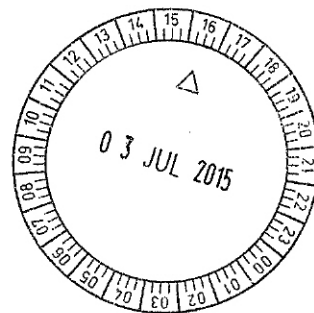


3 July 2015

To the Samantha Parson, Committee Clerk,
Select Committee into the Operations of RSPCA (WA)
Parliament of Western Australia



By email: selra@parliament.wa.gov.au

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. I am a veterinarian who has worked in the animal welfare field for several decades and was a member of the WA Animal Welfare Advisory Committee who reviewed the animal welfare legislation changing it to the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*.

It is disappointing that this inquiry has been called, especially as it would appear that the MP who has proposed the inquiry is heavily involved in an activity, namely hunting, which is opposed by the RSPCA (WA). One has to wonder if the main purpose is to discredit this well supported and hard working animal welfare organization due to their opposition to a particular personal vested interest. In addition, it would seem inappropriate that an MP with such a strong conflict of interest should be chair of the select committee.

Responses to terms of reference are provided below.

1. RSPCA (WA) funding from government

For many decades, despite RSPCA (WA) undertaking a regulatory responsibility that should have been undertaken by government, it received no funding support. It has only been in recent years that this has occurred. It is understood that the level of government funding is well below the actual costs of operating the inspectorate. As such, it is incumbent upon the government to fully fund the essential and important work of RSPCA (WA) to respond to cruelty reports.

2. Objectives of RSPCA (WA)

Based on media reports, it is presumed that RSPCA (WA) is being labeled by some politicians as an animal rights group. This is not correct. Having studied animal ethics for many years and having a deep understanding of the difference between animal rights and animal ethics, the philosophies of RSPCA (WA) are clearly those of an animal welfare organization. This is on the basis that it promotes the protection of animals and improved welfare and does not seek to stop animal use including farming, medical research etc. Animal rights organisations promote veganism and the abolition of all animal use including the keeping of pets. It is disheartening that some people, particularly those with a vested interest, condemn the RSPCA because they oppose particular uses such as live export and intensive animal production. It is interesting to note that on both of these issues, there is very strong community support.

3. Powers of RSPCA (WA)

It is assumed that the RSPCA has only those powers conferred to them by the legislation they enforce. If these powers are considered excessive, then perhaps the legislation needs to be reviewed. It is presumed that given the high costs involved in proceeding with a prosecution that only those that involve excessive cruelty and have substantial evidence would be pursued, therefore indicating that these are legitimate cases.

Submitted by Dr Dianne Evans BSc BVMS MPhil MANZCVS