DOG AMENDMENT (STOP PUPPY FARMING) BILL 2021

Second Reading

Resumed from 2 June.

MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach) [4.11 pm]: I rise in support of this fantastic bill. I am glad to see it being debated in Parliament on this fine day. This is the second time we have had a crack at this bill and, hopefully, we will be able to get it past the upper house this time. I thank the Minister for Local Government in that regard.

I have had an interesting experience with puppy farming. As members are aware, I am currently training a PTSD service dog. Over the last 20-odd years, we have had four pets in our household, all of them labradors. The current ones are called Chey and Jasper. We also had one called Milo and the first one we had was called Alf. Alf was a golden labrador. Clearly, Milo, with a name like that, was a chocolate brown labrador.

Mr D.A.E. Scaife: Probably milo brown.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: That is it; they are the same colour. The two dogs we have are called Jasper and Chey, which is the hound that we are currently training.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: I thank the member; I will take her on notice in that space.

We have always found that having two hounds in the household tends to placate the more audacious young puppies; in other words, they do not dig up the backyard as much. It has been a good journey with the two dogs we have at the moment and I have a good story. We think that we purchased our third dog, Jasper, from a puppy farm, unbeknownst to us. In comparison with all the other dogs we have had previously, and particularly in comparing the two that we have currently, we think that Jasper came from a puppy farm. We were quite innocent and naive in that space, because we had bought all our other dogs from registered owners who had papers and all that sort of stuff that was readily accessible, but with Jasper it was not. All puppies are lovely and cute. I can remember having arguments with my wife and our daughter and I said that we did not need another puppy, but our son said that we needed a little bit more adventure in the household. We were driven by passion rather than our brains. We did not think things through and we did not look at the papers and the history of the dog and the bitch when we made that purchase. I regret that, on reflection.

Before we even purchased Chey, the dog that I am currently training, we did a good two years of research. When we were looking for a dog to train as a service dog, we met with the trainer and, after numerous discussions, we selected a breed. We also took into account the traits that we wanted in the hound. They say that the better bred the hound, the easier they are to train. On the show circuit, they breed out the poor traits in these animals, which is fine. I listened quite intently during that process. Louise, our trainer, told us to look at well-bred dogs and dogs that are capable of going onto the show circuit. I said that the last thing I wanted to do was show Chey. She said that the reason for going down that road is that all the poor facets of the dog are bred out. I said, "What do you mean by poor facets?" Clearly, it gets under my skin in that space. She said that they select breeds based on temperament. When people are looking for a service dog, temperament is the key. I asked how we would know whether a dog has a good temperament or a bad temperament. She said that we had to look at the mother of the dog, because all the good traits of the mother come out in the dog.

My brother-in-law is a mad amateur actor. One night, we were watching one of his shows at the Limelight Theatre in Wanneroo and there were a couple of dogs in the show. Unbeknownst to us, the mother of Chey was one of the dogs. These dogs had a beautiful temperament. The cast were singing and dancing around them. Chey's mother had a great temperament. We did not know at the time that she was going to be our dog's mother. Later, through our inquiries, we discovered Louise Fowler, who is the breeder of the dog. We sat down and spoke to her. Meeting the dog breeder was quite an interesting process, because at that stage the dog had not come into season. Eventually, Chey's mum came into season and she was mated. We were shown a whole heap of ultrasounds—it was like being a young parent. We were so proud when we got texts about the dog. Like an expectant mum and dad, we waited and eventually the litter arrived. We did not go out there on the day that the litter arrived; we went out a fortnight later and had our first conversation about Chey at the house. Two weeks later, we did the same thing, and then another two weeks later, we did it again. After the eighth week, we brought Chey home. I remember bringing our children home when they were born, but next to that, bringing Chey home was arguably one of our proudest moments, and he is now one year old.

Reflecting on how we went with Jasper, our seven-year-old labrador that we think came from a puppy farm, the bond that Chey and I have had is significantly different. The health issues that we have had with Jasper along the way have also been significantly different. We have taken Chey to the vet and all that sort of stuff; whereas Jasper is

really battling with hip dysplasia and he carries his weight a lot differently. The way he looks, when comparing both dogs, is significantly different. I think to myself: how am I going to take this forward? I know that this legislation will outlaw puppy farming. Having experienced what we have between two breeders in the particular circumstances that we have gone through over the past 12 months with Chey, I really think that this is a good piece of legislation. We can get rid of these backyard operators who are not registered in that space.

A couple of breeders approached me and were quite animated and scared about conversations that all dogs will have to be sterilised and all this sort of stuff. That is utterly untrue. It just means that dog owners will have to register their dogs. There is a quality assurance that goes into the breeding process. Dogs are not thrown together and that sort of stuff. I am a bit worried about cavoodles and all that sort of nonsense—these designer breeds. I think nothing is more horrific in that space. They have put poodles together with labradors to produce a dog that reduces allergies. I go, "Yeah; okay."

Ms J.L. Hanns: The labradoodle.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: Yes, the labradoodle. Cavalier King Charles spaniels with Shih tzus—I do not want to say what that comes up with! I worry a little about that. I think we may be breeding, for want of a better term, monster dogs rather than pedigrees. I understand at the moment there is a real shortage of proper dogs. I heard someone say the other day that a well-bred golden retriever was sold in the eastern states for $17 000. How can a family afford that? That is just wrong.

Coming back into this space with puppy farming and that sort of stuff, I am really concerned about these designer hounds coming into it. If a dog is properly bred by a registered dog breeder, I have no issues about that. I do not think anyone else would. This legislation does not target that. This legislation targets the backyard space.

I worked as a policeman in a previous life. I have seen pit dogs being bred for that space. Again, this legislation will stop that occurring. In a small town up in the wheatbelt, pits were dug out in backyards. The pits are horrific. They are about five metres square and three metres deep, and they throw the dogs into these pits to fight, and they fight until the death. These dogs are sourced from poor breeders. If this legislation stops that stuff, great; I am all for it. I am really keen to see puppy farming stopped. I can tell members what happens to the dogs that are not attractive, that sit in these boutique places—these designer dogs: they end up in the backyard in the backstreets, and the more unfortunate and the more aggressive dogs end up fighting in a pit. That is what we have to stop.

I thank you for the time to speak. Although it was short, sharp and sweet, I am really keen to go forward in that space. I am really keen to see some quality homes. I feel that the best places are the kennels that are run around the family. That is where Chey came from. Lisa Fowler was our dog breeder. To this day, I still take Chey to meet her. It is almost as though he can smell her. I can see it in his body language—his shoulders pick up; he knows he has gone home to see his mum. She works in childcare centres, and we take Chey to see her at the Clarkson early childhood centre. I remember him lying down. He has such a great temperament. About 30 kids were touching him, and he did not move. That is a really good example of a well-bred dog with a lovely temperament. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr J.N. Carey: Thank you for your proportionate speech!

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: Thank you.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [4.25 pm]: I also rise to speak in favour of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. I am very, very honoured to have some incredible areas in my electorate. I am very lucky to have the kennel zone within my electorate of Southern River. I also have some amazing members of Dogs West and a number of other incredible organisations that live in the kennel zone of my district and in the residential areas of my district. For those who are watching at home, I urge them to read my 2020 speech in which I talk more about the detail of this bill. What I seek to do today is address a number of untruths or misconceptions about the bill. I will talk about a number of things that I heard after doorknocking the residential areas of my electorate and the kennel zones. I am happy to clarify, so that members of my electorate know —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Member, have people been hounding you about it?

Mr T.J. HEALY: People have been hounding me!

It is very important that my community knows the reason I am supporting this and why there is no need for an exemption for Dogs West members. It is important that people know why I am voting in favour of aspects of this. I have spoken to my community, and I am very happy to raise the things that have been raised with me and clarify them now.

These laws will have an effect. They will change the way that some families live, but not in a major way, and in a way that will ensure that all of us get to look after the animals we love. The goal of this legislation is to stop dodgy, unethical puppy farmers—those people who harm animals. The goal is not to stop the great and responsible Dogs West members who care and love animals. It is my view that not much will change logistically. For the kennel zone residents, and for residential area residents, this will not be a tectonic shift in the way they live their lives and love their animals. Exemptions from sterilising dogs will be relatively simple to obtain. It is as simple as that. Responsible kennel zone residents are not the intended target. Existing council laws about the number of dogs that can be kept on properties and about terms for breeders in residential areas outside the City of Gosnells will remain unchanged. We are talking about bringing in laws—guidelines will form a part of it—that adopt the Dogs West guidelines. For example, if a dog has more than two litters in 18 months, or more than five in a lifetime, that is inappropriate. There are no laws that readily and appropriately take care of this. When I reported those dodgy and unethical people in my local council area, the council was bound to ensure that the dogs were fed and watered. Keeping a dog permanently pregnant is not currently classified as an offence, as long as the animal is being cared for. This changes that; as simple as this. There are no adequate laws. This bill seeks to address it.

The proposed *Standards and guidelines for the health and welfare of dogs in Western Australia* is very informative and should be read and understood as part of this process. The 18-month period is important, as is the maximum of five litters in a lifetime. I acknowledge the great work that Dogs West members and Australian National Kennel Council members did in communicating with the government in the previous term. We have now gone to two state elections with this as a huge part of our policy platform. I think it has been very important that we have continued all those conversations. I am not going to say that every member of the Dogs West executive, who I think do outstanding work, fully supports this bill, but we will always seek to keep working and having these conversations that are very important.

I want to make a couple of clarifications. I will now address a few of the misinterpretations of this bill. One is that we are creating registered breeders so that everyone is going to be given the status of registered breeder. That is not the case. When a dog reaches the age of two years old—it is for dogs that are born after the legislation is enacted—the family of that dog will need to make a decision about whether they will sterilise the dog. All animals will be traced through a much better tracking system for births and dogs. When a dog reaches the age of two, a person will communicate on the central system whether or not they will seek to sterilise the dog. It will be much more complicated than this, but I am keeping to just one aspect. They will be able to seek an exemption from sterilisation on veterinary or health grounds. They will simply go on the online system and elect not to sterilise the dog for a variety of reasons. For example, people who seek to show their dogs like to keep their dogs complete. They may not plan to breed them at all, but they will elect an approval-to-breed classification. They may also seek to breed their dog but not in the next 12 months. They may choose to breed their dog at the age of four or five years. As I said in my previous speech, it does not mean that people will have to rush out to get roses and chocolates for their dogs and try to breed them in the next 12 months; they will simply be electing to keep the dog complete and traced. I will say a bit more about this again later, but the council's directions for approving or not approving sterilisation mean that if a person does not have a history of abusing animals, no delay or changes to that process are predicted.

I have picked up on a couple of other things. I very proudly doorknocked through the kennel zone in 2018.

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr T.J. HEALY: Indeed; thank you, member for Landsdale.

In 2018, we spoke about the consultation. We spoke to a number of families about making sure that they participated in the consultation. Once the legislation was released for further discussion, I doorknocked again in 2019 and 2020. Again, in this term of Parliament, I have been out talking to families in the kennel zone and in residential areas of my electorate about the effects this legislation will have and trying to answer questions. I am not trying to say that I have had 100 per cent support for or understanding about all the aspects of this very complicated bill. A number of families had, for lack of a better term, niche queries, which I am always happy to answer as best I can and I will always be available. I will keep doorknocking and talking to families about this, and help to answer any queries. If members of my community who are watching at home now have further queries, they can reach out to me and I will do my best to answer them. I will not shy away from these conversations.

A lot of the Dogs West members in my electorate have incredible purebred dogs. They have been told that, because of our legislation, they will all die out. That is not true. The theory is that because there will be mandatory sterilisation, hundreds of years of lineage will die out in three or four years' time because the government is going to make the sterilisation of dogs compulsory. That is not the correct interpretation. In my previous speech, I listed all the amazing breeds that are owned by families in my electorate, in both the kennel zone and the residential area. When talking to people one-on-one, I asked them whether, if the legislation passes through both houses of Parliament

and is enacted, and if they have dogs that are born under this legislation and that reach the age of two years, they would elect to have them sterilised. They might choose to; that is fine. However, if they will want to breed the dog when it is four or five, as long as they abide by a maximum of two litters in 18 months—that is our requested time line, which is enforceable—they will be able to keep the dog complete. I see no reason why owners of purebred dogs in my electorate would not elect to do that. They could go to the vet for an exemption on health grounds. They could simply say that they wish to keep the dog complete. That is the approval-to-breed classification. Again, I am happy to clarify that for people.

I have also heard the poor rumour that councils will not approve exemptions on planning grounds. All of our electorates will have a number of what people call breeders-term contracts; I use the term "forever homes". It might be that a dog is bred in my electorate but it might live for the next two or three years in another residential area of Perth. Whoever owns the dog is the person to whom the dog is registered. Under existing council laws, a person has to register all their dogs and there is a maximum number of dogs allowed for their property. Those dogs will still be registered there and those are the people who will elect whether to keep their dogs complete. I have heard one rumour that some councils will not approve that because they will classify it as some form of business. It is suggested that under their planning requirements, they will not allow that, and they will therefore compulsorily sterilise the dog. Again, for members of my community who have legitimate inquiries, if the legislation passes—I am fairly sure it will because we have taken this to the community for two elections—these are good, niche concerns that I can answer. If people are told that by their councils, let us talk about it. I have not come across anything aside from verbal confirmation of that rumour, but I am always happy to help clarify.

For further clarification, I have also heard that we are changing the terms of breeders contracts. Those rules and arrangements are both private and commercial in some aspects and are not changed by this legislation. People will have to maintain that they leave a certain amount of time between pregnancies, but that is not affected by this legislation. If people are in circumstances in which they are not sure about this, reach out to me and I am happy to clarify it.

Another interesting one I have heard is that we are changing the rules about boarding kennels and maximum cage sizes, including whether kennels are indoor or outdoor. I think this has come up because of the review into the animal welfare laws. This is separate from the puppy farming laws, but I am happy to help answer any legitimate queries from people in my community. I have a number of boarding kennels in my electorate, specifically in the kennel zone. Those kennels may be licensed for 20 animals to stay overnight when families go on holiday or they may be breeding grounds where dogs are whelping and other activities take place. The best way for me to say this is that there were a number of draft proposals out there. It is in line with the desire to talk about the average space in which an animal of a particular size will need to be housed. That is not affected by these laws per se. If a boarding kennel in my electorate is genuinely worried about whether the draft animal welfare laws will mean that they will have 10 dogs that have to stay inside, or they can stay in the existing kennels that they have just invested $10 000 in upgrading, that is a legitimate business concern. For people who are unsure about those things, reach out to me and I am happy to raise them with the Minister for Agriculture and Food and find out what clarity I can give them. Again, that is not affected by what we are talking about here with the stop puppy farming laws.

I have also heard that there will be no more dogs because we will sterilise them all. We will make dogs unavailable to be sold as they currently are in a pet store—that is definitely changing—but the government has no desire for people not to have access to beautiful animals. If people are unaware of a place to purchase an animal, I have some incredible breeds in my electorate, and Dogs West is an incredible advocate for that.

I have also heard that people are buying land in the kennel zone now, to get ahead of these laws. That is another furphy. It does not matter whether people buy property before these laws pass or after. It does not matter whether people are trying to establish a business or do something prior to these laws being passed. If people seek to disobey these laws and not register their animals when they need to or to have their dogs impregnated and bred more regularly than the laws will allow, it does not matter whether they have purchased properties beforehand; they will be subject to the same laws.

I have heard that the government will issue breeders licences, and backyard breeders will be more legitimate or less legitimate than they are now. That is not the case. I have also been told that these laws are inadequate and will not stop puppy farming. Some people can hold that view, but I liken this view to the fact that we cannot stop people speeding on the freeway, but there needs to be a law that says, "If the speed limit is 100 kays an hour and you go beyond that, there needs to be a consequence." Put incredibly simply: there needs to be a law that says that if a person is a puppy farmer, there is a consequence. If a person mistreats and abuses animals—we have clearly indicated what we classify as "too much breeding"—there needs to be a consequence. There are no adequate laws that currently define that.

In the previous Parliament, the member for Cottesloe had a quote in his speech that there was no puppy farming here in Western Australia, which I disagree with. He also said that there were not enough prosecutions. That is certainly an effect of not having adequate laws. However, we know that these things take place and there needs to be an appropriate response.

In accordance with the standing orders, I seek leave to lay on the table an article from *Canine News*. I thought this might be interesting, shadow Minister for Education and Training, member for Roe. I will lay the article on the table and then I will read from it.

[The paper was tabled for the information of members.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: I assume the member will have a copy of this.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr T.J. HEALY: One of the issues that I found very concerning was the politicisation of puppy farming. In 2017, Labor put forward a suite of ideas for this legislation. The legislation was not passed in the previous Parliament. The previous opposition decided to not let it proceed, so it became another policy at the recent 2021 election. The community has spoken very strongly on both.

I will come to the document very shortly. I do not expect a response now, but I thought that the member for Roe might be interested to know about it. I will quote from the *Canine News* of January–February 2021 and its report of the meeting of the governing council of Dogs West in October 2020. I have just laid that document on the table. This is a great example of how great Dogs West is. When Dogs West is pushed by political parties, it stands up to the bullies and does the right thing. I was very, very impressed when I read this and a number of members raised this complaint with me. I will read this for the benefit of *Hansard*. A general business item states —

> A local liberal candidate had approached Dogs West to support an upcoming fundraiser for his campaign and had sent drafts of flyers indicating he was 'joining with Dogswest to stop puppy farming'.

The note here is —

> President to contact candidate to clarify that Dogs West was seeking amendments to the Bill and Dogs West are apolitical.

Shadow minister, one thing that I found very, very concerning was that the current opposition—the Liberal and National Parties—I felt, sought to politicise the issue. I will leave this article with the shadow minister. It might be something that the opposition could comment on further when the bill reaches the upper house. I was very concerned that there were attempts to politicise and lean on this great organisation. I felt that was very disappointing. One thing that I was quite impressed with is that, as I have always said, Dogs West is a fantastic organisation. It is apolitical. At its core, it has the hearts of its members and their animals. I do not know who this candidate was. Obviously, the candidate spoke for the Liberal Party or Nationals WA—the opposition. It was sad that the candidate chose to seek that support, but, again, I will allow that to be raised in the next chamber.

I would like to briefly address what I said earlier. There has been discussion about why an exemption for Dogs West members might be needed. I disagree; there is no need for Dogs West members to be exempt from this legislation. Dogs West is an incredible organisation and, as I have outlined, Dogs West members, on the whole, are already doing the right thing. There is already a practice, a culture, down to the core of looking after their animals. Again, it is not Dogs West members who I believe will be the focus of councils or implementing authorities for this legislation; the focus will be on people who seek to cause harm to animals, which is not Dogs West members. Therefore, I do not believe that an exemption for Dogs West members is needed, nor required.

I also think that it is interesting to note that not all Dogs West members are happy to have an exemption. There is generally a suspicion from some members of my electorate—probably some members of all our electorates—of any form of government, be that the state or local council. Some members do not even want their local council to have their details or the registration details of their dogs. When I have spoken to them, I have said, "Well, unfortunately, you're already bound by the council rules in having to register your dogs. There's no change to any of those rules." Again, our target is not responsible kennels or residents; our target is people who seek to do harm to animals.

I have spoken with the Gosnells council about one thing that I would be very happy to do. Hopefully, this bill passes through this chamber—I endorse the opposition having an opportunity to acknowledge the community support for these laws—and it could pass unanimously, but we will see. It can then go to the upper house for discussion and debate. If the bill passes and when the provisions are implemented, I would seek to hold some information sessions and continue to be available to all members of my community to talk about how this will be implemented. One of the more effective ways to inform people would be to hold some large community meetings with the residents of the

City of Gosnells, the relevant department, the local council, rangers and administrators. We can sit together and address any issues; for example, someone could raise, "Actually, this is the type of breed that I have. This is the query that I have." We could almost do what I like to call speed dating. We could try to sit with everyone. Someone could sit before me or a person from the department or someone from Dogs West or a council ranger or administrator to find out how they might be affected. I think that is a good way to do it, but I will wait until the law has passed. It is my commitment to my community to continue to have this conversation.

I would like to finish on this note. My mother has written me a little statement that I will read. My mother is not generally a Labor supporter. She has always been a big supporter of me, but is not a big fan of Labor. She wrote me this statement because puppy farming was the big change for her. She was very happy with Mark McGowan and how we have managed the COVID pandemic and dealt with a number of things. This statement is very special for me because we are a very robust family and have lovely debates about these things, but mum was not the biggest fan of Labor overall. There was a rally out the front of Parliament after a dog, Strawberry, had been horribly abused. My mother loves dogs. She loves Cookie and Lexie and all the dogs that we have had. She was very emotional about the fact that any dog could be left in permanent pain and permanently pregnant. The whole purpose of government, having members of Parliament and legislation is to protect not only humans but all dogs. She came to me during this rally and said, "The Liberals have got it wrong. They shouldn't be blocking this. The Nationals and the Liberals should not be blocking this in the upper house." This is not about the Labor Party or the Liberal Party. This should be a consensus thing. By the way, this is my view, not hers. These are things that we should be agreeing on across the political spectrum. We should not harm animals. Dogs should not be kept pregnant permanently.

I would like to finish by reading a statement from my mum. I do not think she ever thought she would support Labor on anything, but this journey certainly showed her that Labor has heart and it cares. This is from Martha Healy —

> First of all I would like to say how appreciative I am of the fact that the Labour Government is trying to stop puppy farming. The whole issue of puppy farming breaks my heart. Firstly and foremost the poor —

Dogs —

> … that are forced to have litter after litter with little or in some cases no break in between is a disgrace. Secondly the often cramped and filthy condition the dogs and pups are kept in with no regard for their welfare. They are bred solely for profit. The pictures and stories that we read about are truly heart breaking and I wish I could do something to help even one of those dogs. People need to be better informed about where they are buying their puppies from and not be fooled by the stories that are told to them by the unscrupulous people selling them.

She appreciates that Labor will do something about it. I think it was this issue that changed the minds of many people in our electorates about Labor and showed my mum where Labor stands. Members, I encourage you to vote yes to the bill.

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands) [4.51 pm]: Deja vu! I am really hoping that the outcome of this debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 will be to see a bill that has been the focus of my attention for far too long now become law. Approximately 10 years of my life has been spent negotiating with stakeholders and discussing the best pathway forward in order to block and eradicate forever the heinous practices surrounding the illegal breeding of dogs in conditions that do not match their health and physical needs. That is basically the definition of puppy farming.

Back in 2012, the first discussion paper I produced, *Strengthening animal welfare in Western Australia*—I have a copy of it here somewhere—formed the basis of the first discussions around the state about how we might move forward on this issue. In 2015, a paper was released after two years' work by an expert committee. I want to go through who was on that committee. It consisted of experts in the regulation of animal welfare, animal law and veterinary practise; dog breeders; and the rescue and rehoming sector. It included the CEO of Dogs West; the CEO of the Dogs' Refuge Home; the chief inspector of the RSPCA WA; an animal welfare lawyer; a pet industry representative; an adjunct professor in veterinary law and lawyer specialising in animal welfare ethics and regulatory compliance; a trustee from the Shenton Park Dogs' Refuge Home, who is also from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and Western Australia's Oscar's Law representative. We did not just stop with an expert committee; we engaged with all the key stakeholders around the state and in the eastern states who had an interest in this issue. That included the CEO of the Pet Industry Association of Australia. That organisation does not have any Western Australian–based delegates; they are South Australian, from memory. We consulted with him. The director of Consumer Protection in the WA Department of Commerce and the CEO of the Western Australian Local Government Association were also on the committee. That was extremely important because at the time the then CEO of WALGA was 110 per cent committed to seeing this bill become law as soon as possible.

That independent group—it was not a political party; it was a group of experts—took the report titled *Puppy Farming in Western Australia—Why this trade needs to end and recommendations to achieve this* to both the Premier of the day, Colin Barnett, and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan. We tabled it with both of those leaders—separately, obviously; we did not want to have a fistfight—and asked for their support. The then Premier, Hon Colin Barnett, was extremely supportive. He went away but, as we well know, did nothing. I suspect that the reasons for that are pretty obvious to everyone who sat in this house over the last nine years and watched as animal welfare reforms and improvements were continually blocked by the Liberal Party and the National Party. However, the independent paper that was produced was tabled by Mark McGowan, the Leader of the Opposition at the time, after he took one look at it. We continued to give him more briefings and he said, "This needs to happen. I'm going to make it an election commitment." I am extremely proud that the Premier of this state has not only kept the state safe during a pandemic, but is also genuinely concerned about the welfare of all the creatures that live in this state, including puppies and dogs, but broadly animal welfare in general.

I want to read a little testimonial. This story was given to the Premier back in 2017 on the steps of Parliament by Dennis. Dennis had come to Parliament with his family. His closest relative was Lynne Bradshaw, the president of the RSPCA WA. Dennis is a puppy farm labrador. Dennis wrote to the Premier —

> Sorry you had to wait for me Mr McGowan but my legs are sore and I take time to warm up.
>
> Thanks for inviting me. It's a long way from a puppy farm to Parliament House. But I was determined to get here and to stand with you if we can help each other stop puppy farms.
>
> I'm not a political animal but I want to tell you that your plan will work. It's really important because puppy farms are awful.
>
> Mine was very crowded and dirty. I was in a very small space with 57 other dogs. I didn't sleep much and I was always hungry. I didn't get to run around outside or even go for a walk. I was always frightened.
>
> My Mum wasn't very well. She had a lot of us to feed.
>
> The only good thing for me is I really love other dogs. I was lucky because most of us in puppy mills are lonely in separate cages.
>
> I had a very scary start with humans. Our breeder used to get angry and shout at us all the time.
>
> I love my life now but bad memories come back when I get stressed. I have bad hips too because I was in-bred. They can't be fixed.
>
> I would like more people to be like you, to understand what dogs need, especially dogs like me.
>
> Can you please get everyone who is a politician to support your plans for ending puppy farms? I can't see why they wouldn't.
>
> The first thing we need is all breeders to be registered, mine wasn't.
>
> Dennis

Dennis died a year or so ago, I am very sorry to say. He had hoped to see this bill pass in the last sitting of the Parliament but that was not to be. But, by golly, it is going to happen this time. It will happen for Dennis and for all the thousands of rescued, stray and abandoned dogs that we see in the state every year.

I have some figures that are worth committing to this Parliament once again. Data collected in Western Australia in 2016, which was the last time it was collected, from 12 per cent of the dog rescue and rehoming groups—by the way, there are about 300 of them now—reveals the extent of the problem of unregulated dog breeding, unwanted dogs and homeless dogs and puppies. The data provided by 12 per cent of the groups shows that in 2015–16, they had rescued and rehomed 3 311 dogs. This is back in 2016, quite some time ago. Members should also remember that that figure is just 12 per cent of those groups and that if we multiply that to get 100 per cent, we are talking about a lot of dogs. Of those dogs rescued, 2 600 were aged 12 months or older, and 1 300 were puppies under the age of 12 months. Do not be fooled into thinking that people cannot get puppies or young dogs from rescue and rehoming groups. In fact, most dogs that go through those homes are under 18 months of age. That is because, generally speaking, it can take up to two years before people who are not responsible owners, or who do not know what they are getting into, suddenly realise that they have an adolescent dog on their hands and that it is much like a three-year-old child that requires their attention, training and time. Some families hand over dogs to rescue and rehoming groups simply because they are not prepared to cope with a small or large animal going through adolescent teething pains and the normal behaviour that puppies go through, like chewing up everything that they can get

hold of in the house, digging holes et cetera. It is those figures that make it clear that we have a problem with unwanted dogs.

I have another set of figures that is worthwhile putting into *Hansard* again. Estimates from figures taken back in 2012–13—again, I apologise for the out-of-date figures, but as far as I know that was the last time these figures were collated; there may be more since then but I do not know about them—show that councils across WA found homes for 4 052 dogs, but killed 4 489 dogs. If we add those two figures, that is 8 531 dogs that went through kennels and council pounds in Western Australia, and more than half of them were euthanised—that, of course, is a polite word for saying "killed". You can bet your bottom dollar that since 2012 pet ownership has increased substantially across the state. If we go back to look at the number of dogs processed in pounds, unfortunately, we find that that number has increased.

What will this bill do? A lot of misinformation about what it can or cannot do is out there. I just want to read through the scope of the bill and what it covers. I will start by relating it to what was intended in the original bill. Clearly, this bill is about improving the way in which dogs are being bred in our community, but it is also about educating owners and potential purchasers of puppies. The very first expert committee report, which the Premier and former Premier were given a copy of, recommended the things the government needed to do to try to end puppy farming and to break the supply chain that feeds the industry. The report made seven points. I will run through them. Changes are required to the Dog Act 1976 to manage the behaviour of people who own dogs. It is meant to ensure the traceability of puppies by ensuring that all dogs in Western Australia are registered. This bill is trying to ensure that dog breeders are licensed by the state. That licence will ensure that they are bound to agree to the mandated standards the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development releases. I might say that dog breeders were consulted to make sure that those standards could be complied with and were acceptable.

I am quoted on the record as saying that Dogs West is the gold standard for breeding dogs. I stand by that; it definitely is. In the mandated standards and guidelines, the state puts down the compulsory things a breeder must do to breed healthy and well-adjusted animals. It is not as high a bar as Dogs West would have, and neither should it be. Dogs West is the pedigree dog breeder; it is the go-to place for pedigree dogs. The state's mandatory standards are a different set of standards, but licensed breeders must comply with them. They will give the state something so that it can go back and check on the practices in households where dogs will be bred.

The bill will also ensure the traceability of puppies through a central register to help potential owners identify responsible dog breeders. At the moment, dogs are registered across local government authorities in the state. I cannot remember how many local government authorities there are, minister—is it 123?

Mr J.N. Carey: No; more.

Ms L.L. BAKER: There are a lot of them and they all have different databases, and anyone who knows about databases knows what a mess-up that is. All information will be brought together and the consumer will be able to access information—not confidential information—to find out who has bred a puppy and find out where their dog came from. That is really important. The disclosure of breeder registration will be mandated at the point of sale and in advertisements so that when people buy a dog they will see its registration and the breeder's details. They will be able to search a database, follow through and find out where a dog was bred and by whom.

The sterilisation issue has been quite contentious. It started because rescue groups were sterilising dogs at a very young age. We all know the reasons for that. It was because many homeless dogs were being housed and people wanted the breeding of unwanted dogs to be stopped as soon as possible. In this instance, veterinary advice and the latest scientific evidence has been taken on the best age at which to mandate sterilisation of dogs. For particularly large breeds—I am responsible for a couple at the moment—it is recommended that two years of age is the best time, when they are a little more solid in their bone structure and joints. By that age, people know what kind of dog they have: whether it is offset, well bred, well put together and is suitable for breeding. That is, indeed, what this bill will do.

The bill will also stop the sale of puppies and dogs at pet shops unless the pet shop has formed an alliance with an accredited rescue group. It was recently brought to my attention that the accreditation system for pet shops will be challenging. As I said, there are nearly 300 rescue groups out there. I am not sure how many of them will want to or will even have the faintest desire to go into a partnership with a pet shop. I certainly would not want to if I belonged to a rescue organisation. But some of them will and some are already doing it very successfully. I know Shenton Park Dogs' Refuge Home already has a really good relationship with some big chain stores. They use DVDs and show images of the puppies that are available for sale. They hold an adoption day and when people come to the store, they know what dog they are looking for. It stops the irrational decisions some people make when they see a puppy in the window of a shop and it means that people are much more inclined to make sensible decisions. Pet shops can go into

an alliance with rescue groups, but rescue groups will have to be accredited so they can be trusted to be a good rescue group and do the right thing in terms of training dogs and qualifying them before any relationships are formed.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: I think that they are the key issues in the bill. The only other thing I want to mention is that a lot of the bill relies on public understanding of what good dog ownership is and that the purchase of a dog needs to be a well thought through thing. The department, minister and Premier have always been committed to running a significant education campaign concurrently with any changes in the Dog Act. This is exactly what we intend to do on this occasion.

I want to mention before I finish that the bill will also contain what I think will be the most essential and often overlooked changes in dog management in history, if I can be dramatic about it. It will remove the current provision in the Dog Act that greyhounds must be muzzled in public if they are not racing greyhounds but have been rehomed. I do not need to repeat the constant conversations with my colleagues in this house about what couch potatoes greyhounds actually are if they are not stuck in a concrete cage and forced to chase stuff on a racecourse. The historic development and genetics built into greyhounds means that they will go through phases of being triggered and the like, but so too do Weimaraners, Chihuahuas and Jack Russells. In fact, some of the most aggressive dogs I have ever met have been Jack Russells—they are very good at hunting rats. Greyhounds do not need to be exercised a lot or constantly attended to. They are very comfortable sleeping on a rug on the couch and watching TV with us.

When it comes to dog attacks, one of the things that people are led to believe, particularly through media coverage, is that dangerous or aggressive dogs are usually pit bulls or greyhounds. The media likes to portray them as being the criminals in these activities. Quite often, the media makes the assumption that because a dog has pink skin and almond-shaped eyes, or whatever it is, it must be a pit bull or a derivation of that breed, or some sort of vicious greyhound or the like. I have data specifically about greyhounds that was given to me at the beginning of this year. Between August 2019 and August 2021, 24 greyhounds died in Western Australia as a result of injuries incurred while racing. There were probably a lot more deaths than that. The data is very difficult to access. It is very unclear and not at all transparent, despite the best efforts of this government to try to get better data in place for the various people who are interested in it. Between April and May, there were 14 injuries, some of them fatal, to racing dogs in Western Australia. Not only is it time that greyhound racing was looked at very carefully in terms of whether it has a future and should be supported publicly, but at the very minimum we should stop these dogs from being attacked in public and having no defence whatsoever. There is a Facebook page dedicated to people whose greyhounds have been attacked by other dogs when they have been exercising them at the park or wherever, and because the dogs have been forced to wear a muzzle they have been unable to protect themselves. The page lists hundreds of instances of this having occurred. It is mind blowing.

I want to thank the staff of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries for all the work they have put in with me on this bill over a very long time, particularly Darrelle Merritt and her team. Previous to that were Tarnya Widdicombe and Kelly McManus in the office of Hon David Templeman, the member for Mandurah, who was at the time the Minister for Local Government. You guys have been fantastic. I thank you for putting up with my somewhat hysterical outbursts at times when I have tried to find the logic in this pathway. Thank you also for the extensive consultation that you have completed with the Western Australian public. That should absolutely solidify in all our minds the fact that this bill is very much supported by the public of Western Australia.

I want to say, in concluding, that it is time we got this bill through so that we can move on to some other animal welfare reforms that are desperately needed in this state. I am part of a government that is clearly committed to improving animal welfare in this state. We have been met with resistance and blocks on every occasion we have attempted to do this. Anyone who is interested in this issue can read *Hansard* and understand why some of the reforms that we have tried to progress have been blocked.

I want to mention a few things that this government did in its last term and in the election that we have just had. We are about to bring in the animal welfare small grants program. The many rescue groups and people who work to save and rehome animals will be able to access these small grants. It will be an absolute revolution for those groups that spend so much time supporting those animals that greatly need it. The Minister for Agriculture and Food has let me know that she is working on that as quickly as she can, and I hope that will be on the table and ready for access by next year.

This state government has also won the court case against the live sheep exporter Emanuel Exports. I am sure there will be an appeal at some time. The point is that these kinds of animal abuses have not been challenged for a very long time. They need to be challenged in a court of law that is higher than the local or District Court. These cases need to go up the line so that legal precedents can be set, and that can be done only in the higher courts. The

government needs to invest in pursuing litigation when accusations of animal cruelty have been made and charges have been laid. If we lose a case in the District Court and we think it is a good case, we need to pursue that case in a higher court. A decision will then be made in that higher court that will set a legal precedent that judges and magistrates can fall back on. The community can then have its faith restored in what is happening in this area.

The review of the Animal Welfare Act will mean that, for the first time, the Animal Welfare Act will recognise that animals are sentient beings. That might not seem like a magic thing to members, but it will be an amazing upgrade in the way animals are treated under the laws of this state. Fortunately, many other states and developed nations have gone a long way and changed and upgraded their thinking about animal welfare. I hope that when these recommendations come into Parliament and we have the obvious debate about them, we will recognise that animals are sentient beings. Animals have mental as well as physical needs. They feel pain, they feel happiness, they feel attachment and they feel separation. Anyone who works on a farm and breeds animals, or has anything to do with any kind of animal, would have no hesitation in acknowledging that. I remember that when I first started in this job as a member of Parliament, I was taken by the then Liberal–National agriculture minister of the day to a chicken farm. The chicken farmer told me that chickens are the only animals in the world that will tell us when something is wrong. I looked at him somewhat quizzically and asked why, and he said it is because their combs flop over. I thought: I am sorry, but if this is the level of understanding of the animal kingdom by people who are vested with looking after animals in a farming or intensive farming environment, how much work have we got to do in this Parliament?

The proposed reforms will also see the setting up of an animal advisory committee. The first job of that committee will be the residual recommendation—from the former Liberal government, in fact—that we have a WA animal welfare strategy. Hallelujah! Then we can get some research done that is not funded by industry—it might come from universities; it might come from a different direction—and that independently looks at animal welfare.

I have also been able to track many small grants that have been committed in each electorate to help animal welfare and rescue groups. I know that the Dogs' Refuge Home received $300 000 to help it build new accommodation for its rescue dogs and the Cat Haven received $150 000, I think, to help with its capital works.

There is so much work to do in this space. I have mentioned greyhound racing. We need an integrity unit at Racing and Wagering Western Australia that will start to separate the racing industry from the management of animal welfare. It happens in New South Wales and other states. Why do we not have it here? That is best practice. We should have it here. We have done some good things around animal welfare in the racing industry—do not get me wrong—but the integrity unit is a key issue that we need to sort out; we need to get on top of that.

We need approval to allow companion animals in rental accommodation. Animals are allowed on public transport and in restaurants and cafes in other countries without the world coming to an end, so it should be happening here. I am sure there would be universal support for microchipping horses rather than branding them to improve traceability. Sow stalls and farrowing crates need to go. The industry knows that; it committed to getting rid of them in 2017, but we have had no update from the industry on how that is going. We simply need to stop putting sows in stalls and farrowing crates. It is not sustainable for any creature to be put into an intensive environment like that and then claim that it is to keep the babies safe. If the mother is not kept in that confined space and does not roll on her babies, we are just keeping them safe so we can kill them later. It does not make sense.

MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [5.21 pm]: It is a privilege to follow the member for Maylands and speak in support of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. Before I start, I would like to say that although I have been here only a few months, I have developed a great deal of respect for the member for Roe. I would like to acknowledge that he has been sitting in the chamber and listening intently to all the contributions so far. I acknowledge that and respect that. He will no doubt hang on every word that I will say on this bill as well!

This is an important bill that will make reforms for the welfare of dogs in our community, and it is a further part of the government's agenda on animal welfare. It is yet another bill that was taken to the 2017 election. It was not supported by the opposition in the Legislative Council, so it was taken to the 2021 election, and here we are again. I think that history shows that this is not a government that will roll over and play dead on this issue. For that reason, speaking in favour of this bill is the "leash" that I can do. It is, after all, a very "pupular" bill with the community. Puns aside —

Mr P.J. Rundle: I'm switching off.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I have lost the member for Roe, so I will try to get back on track!

It is an important issue that affects a lot of people. For the first time ever, last year in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey people were asked questions about their pet ownership. The HILDA survey is basically the pre-eminent survey of household demographics from year to year in Australia. The researchers found through the HILDA survey that almost 62 per cent of the public own a pet and that a dog is still our best friend. Seventy-two per cent of pet owners, or 48 per cent of Australians in total, have a dog. I am one of those people. It is a shame that the Minister for Local Government is not the chamber at the moment. My dog is a cavoodle.

Ms M.M. Quirk: He's just seeing a man about a dog.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: He probably is; the member for Landsdale is quite right. I thought that the member might be able to assist me with her take on this. My dog's name is Albus. He is named after the great Albus Dumbledore from the Harry Potter series. The minister's dogs have been named after Star Wars characters. His dog is called Solo. Because the member for Landsdale mentioned names before to the member for Burns Beach, which did she think was the better pedigree—Harry Potter or —

Ms M.M. Quirk: It is probably after my time, frankly. I have had two chow chows. The first one was called Rupert, after Rupert the bear, and the second one was called Genghis because of his Asian heritage. Unfortunately, we should have called Genghis Nigel because he bit an Interflora lady and had to be put down, so I talk about Genghis with some regret.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I am sorry to hear that, member for Landsdale. That is the point. Pets are an important part of our lives. They are important to our lives and to many families.

Ms J.L. Hanns interjected.

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: I am informed by the member for Collie–Preston that she has a dog—Dolly from Collie. That is another excellent addition.

Not only are pets important to families, but also the pet industry is a very significant part of the economy. A report from Animal Medicines Australia published in October 2019 titled *Pets in Australia: a national survey of pets and people* estimates that Australians are currently spending $13 billion per annum on household pets. It is a very significant industry. It is a growing industry. That includes expenditure on food, vets and things like accessories, because people—the minister is guilty of this—are dressing up their pets in various outfits and accessories, so it is a growing industry. Anecdotal evidence suggests that during the pandemic, there has been a surge in the number of people buying and adopting pets, and the reason for that is quite obvious: pets are good for our mental health, they are good for stress and they are good for people who are lonely and seeking companionship. The result of that growth in the industry is a greater need for regulation, and we have seen that in recent years. The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee conducted an inquiry into, and released a report in October 2018 on, regulatory approaches to the safety of the pet food industry, so it is not a new issue that we need to better regulate the pet industry.

In my contribution today, I will talk about the history and the scope of this bill, I will address some concerns that have been raised with me about the mandatory desexing provisions and also the issue that was touched on by the member for Southern River about the lack of an exemption for Dogs West members, and I will conclude by noting a couple of other reforms in the bill that I think are significant in respect of greyhounds and abandoned dogs, and pet shops.

This bill has a fairly long history. After the 2017 election, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries conducted consultation on stopping puppy farming and, of course, that consultation process was chaired by the member for Maylands. I acknowledge her work as chair of that consultation process, and I will also later in my contribution acknowledge her contribution in larger ways. The consultation paper was released on 3 May 2018 and the process was open until 3 August 2018. It was a significant period and that consultation process received 4 754 submissions. Four forums were held at Dogs West premises in Southern River. I know that both the former Minister for Local Government, the member for Mandurah, and the current Minister for Local Government have met with representatives from Dogs West and listened closely to them about their concerns. We acknowledge that some members of Dogs West have concerns about the bill, but I would like to reassure those members that their concerns have been listened to and, as far as possible, taken into account in the bill itself.

One issue that was of particular concern to Dogs West members was the provisions in this bill that deal with mandatory desexing. I would like to note the following paragraphs from the consultation report. This relates to the mandatory desexing provisions. I quote —

> The support for this provision was not as strong among those respondents who completed written submissions or filled out the public submission forms. Members of purebred dog association, Dogs West, represented a high percentage of respondents using these methods and expressed great concern about this proposal.
>
> The most prominent concern regarding this proposal was the age that a dog would need to be desexed, and the possible health impacts this may have on the dog. Consultation indicated that there is a growing body of evidence that early de-sexing may have significant health impacts on dogs, especially in larger dogs. Many submissions indicated that whether and when a dog should be desexed should remain the decision of the owner in consultation with their vet.

I put that on the record because I think it is important for members of Dogs West to see that their concerns were heard during the consultation process and they are also heard here today in Parliament.

I will address those concerns, but it is always the case in making legislation that not everybody can be kept happy. Prior to diving into the detail of those provisions of the bill, it is first necessary to reflect on the general scope of the bill. Some have noted that there is no definition of "puppy farming" in the bill. I want to address up front why that is. The reason for that is that puppy farming comes in a variety of forms. Rather than defining the overall practice of puppy farming, this bill essentially defines objectionable practices that make up the overall practice of puppy farming. That means that Parliament is not legislating a definition that would have the effect of limiting what would be considered puppy farming. It remains the case that the intention of the bill is to weed out puppy farming in all its forms. That intention is obviously reflected in the title of the bill.

The reason this bill is needed in this space is that the breeding of dogs in WA is really completely unregulated. Mandatory desexing and breeder registration, combined with the central register that is proposed in this bill, will create a level of oversight and regulation that is much needed in the dog-breeding sector. It is also important to note that it is not possible to address the animal welfare concerns about puppy farming purely through this bill or purely through local government reforms. That is why minimum mandatory standards for breeders have been developed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. It made up a package of reforms that, together with this bill, address the practice of puppy farming.

The final matter I note on the scope of the bill is that, obviously, it is confined to Western Australia as it is Western Australian legislation. We need to see other jurisdictions follow through, but that is not a reason not to act; we cannot wait on other jurisdictions.

I mentioned that members of the community have concerns about desexing. One concern is that there may be health impacts, particularly to larger dogs. There was a concern that that decision should be a medical matter between the owner and the vet. There are also concerns about the possibility of reducing genetic diversity. As I said, those concerns have been heard. In fact, I have been contacted by constituents about this bill. When I have been contacted, I have adopted my usual approach, which is to pick up the phone and call the constituents and chat with them. I found in those conversations that once I went through the contents of the bill with the constituent and explained it to them, their concerns were either entirely dealt with or significantly diminished. I want to do a bit of that now.

It is clear from the text of the bill that the requirement for mandatory desexing is subject to some exemptions, and those exemptions are in addition to the exemption that is, obviously, provided to registered breeders. I take members to clause 23, which will insert section 26E into the Dog Act. Subsection (1) provides that a dog must be sterilised if it is of a prescribed age, unless exempt. Attention must be taken to proposed section 26E(3), which sets out the various exemptions. Those exemptions include whether the dog has been registered in accordance with the Dog Act or a law of another state or territory immediately prior to these reforms taking effect. That exemption is important for people in the community because some members of the community were concerned that decisions they had already made—pets that they already own—would be affected by these reforms in a way that they did not anticipate. We can reassure members of the community that that is not the case—these provisions are only prospective in nature.

An exemption will be given if a certificate has been provided by a veterinarian stating that sterilisation may adversely affect the health and welfare of the dog. That is important because of the point I just made about some members of the community feeling that this is a decision that should be between the owner and the vet. That exemption means that that conversation can still occur between the owner and the vet to ensure that desexing takes place only in circumstances in which it is safe and in the interests of the welfare of the dog. I encourage members of the community to look at those provisions. Certainly the constituents that I spoke to about those provisions—I have always followed

it up with an email as well, directing them to the relevant provisions we had discussed—have been satisfied with those explanations.

The other matter worth mentioning in this respect is the fact that mandatory desexing will only apply once a dog has reached the prescribed age, which will, obviously, be prescribed through regulations. The proposal is that that be at two years of age. That addresses the concerns that were raised with me about mandatory desexing affecting the growth of dogs. This is consistent with discussions I have had with constituents: it is largely accepted that, for the vast majority of dogs, by the time they reach two years of age they are likely to be fully grown. Mandatory desexing at that age is a significantly diminished issue compared with what some people believe is an issue raised by this bill. Reflecting on those exemptions, it is my view that they balance the concerns that have been raised by members of the community against the fact that we need to introduce mandatory desexing, because that is a critical plank in weeding out puppy farming.

One of the requests that I know has been made, particularly by Dogs West and its members, has been that members of Dogs West should be exempt from the mandatory desexing requirements. I understand that that request has been made in good faith, but, unfortunately, it is not workable. I would like to explain why. The starting point, obviously, is that we must all be subject to the same law. When offering exemptions to any law, it has to be done only after serious consideration. In this case, it is my view there would be unintended consequences if an exemption were granted to Dogs West members.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE: An exemption could only be given if we could be confident that Dogs West membership was, to at least a very high degree, a guarantee of breeding standards. It is true, as a matter of fact, that Dogs West members are the best of the best in the dog-owning community. There is no doubt about that. However, if we grant an exemption to members of Dogs West, one of the unintended consequences could be that it would incentivise unscrupulous actors in the dog-breeding industry to join Dogs West, and potentially do so in a way that is covert. The difficulty would be that Dogs West does amazing work but it is not a regulator. It is not an organisation that is responsible for the compliance of its individual members with the Dog Act or any animal welfare legislation. Dogs West is a private, incorporated association.

I would like to briefly take the chamber to the constitution of Dogs West, which is the Canine Association of Western Australia Inc, trading as Dogs West. The objects are set out at rule 2 of the constitution. I quote —

> The objects of the Association shall be:
>
> 2.1.1 to promote and encourage the breeding of pedigreed dogs;
>
> 2.1.2 to foster, promote and protect the interests of Members of the Association relative to dogs;
>
> 2.1.3 to promote, foster and encourage the welfare and care of dogs;
>
> 2.1.4 to collect, verify and publish information relative to dogs and their breeding and competitions involving dogs and their owners/handlers;
>
> 2.1.5 to encourage the affiliation of kindred bodies with the Association;
>
> 2.1.6 to keep a Register of dogs, their breeding, ownership and other breeding details;
>
> 2.1.7 to make contributions if thought fit, towards Sanctioned Events in the form of cash, trophies or medals and to contribute towards judges' expenses;
>
> 2.1.8 to issue official certificates;
>
> 2.1.9 to make regulations to govern Sanctioned Events not inconsistent with the recommendations of the ANKC;
>
> 2.1.10 to keep a panel of judges and make conditions for the placing of names on such panel;
>
> 2.1.11 to allot and approve dates for the holding of Sanctioned Events;
>
> 2.1.12 to grant championship status to shows by issuing challenge and championship certificates;
>
> 2.1.13 to issue certificates pertaining to Trials and Tests;
>
> 2.1.14 to enter into reciprocal arrangements with bodies affiliated with the ANKC; and

> 2.1.15 to provide and/or construct facilities and amenities for use by members and others and to acquire by purchase, lease, exchange or otherwise and to sell buildings and hereditaments of any tenure or description and any estate or interest therein;

These are the full objects of Dogs West. Understandably, nowhere in these objects is a reference to one of the objects of Dogs West being to police breeders, enforce legislation or regulations or to seek penalties or other sanctions in court. That is because Dogs West is not a regulator. It does not have the characteristics of a regulator and I do not think we would want it to have the characteristics of a regulator. That is not its core business. Its core business is in representing the community of dog owners and professional dog breeders in Western Australia.

It can absolutely be said that the eligibility criteria for membership of Dogs West is alive to the fact that it does not want unscrupulous operators amongst its ranks. Rule 8 of the constitution sets out the eligibility criteria for membership. I quote —

> To be eligible for consideration for any class of membership, a person must not —
>
> 8.1.1 be under suspension or investigation in another state or territory or body recognised by the ANKC, or
>
> 8.1.2 been convicted of a charge of cruelty or mistreatment of animals

I also refer members to rule 10.2, which is the provision that deals with objections to a person's application for membership. I quote —

> Objections to an application including reasons … must be lodged with the Administrative Officer within fourteen (14) days of the application having been placed on the notice board and web site.

That shows that Dogs West has already acknowledged that it wants members of its organisation to be only the best of the best and they really are the best of the best. However, it does not have investigatory powers. It is not an investigatory body or a regulator. More so than that, it is not resourced to do the work of a regulator. For that reason, if an exemption was granted to Dogs West members, there would be a significant risk that if a member of Dogs West who had been granted an exemption was later found to have been an unscrupulous breeder, the public would see those failures of compliance as being at least partly the responsibility of Dogs West. Unscrupulous breeders who join Dogs West undetected, who are then found out, would result in scrutiny being placed on Dogs West and that is a huge risk to the organisation when it is not resourced to deal with compliance. That is not one of its objectives and it is not the purpose of the organisation.

Obviously, Dogs West members will still be exempt from mandatory desexing under the amended Dog Act as long as they are compliant with other provisions of the act. Those provisions are not particularly onerous, but unfortunately, it would not be fair on Dogs West to grant an exemption to its members because it would expose the organisation and its members to significant reputational risk.

Finally, I would like to move now to a couple of other features of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill. These features have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community. They really have been welcomed across the board. The first, which was mentioned by the member for Maylands, is the de-muzzling of greyhounds. This is reflected in clause 4 of the bill. It deletes section 33 of the current Dog Act, which is the provision that contains the requirement to muzzle greyhounds. Over the last several years, we have obviously witnessed some quite tragic scenes of the greyhound industry in the eastern states and the way that some racing greyhounds have been treated after they have been retired. For that reason, there is a real need to ensure that we have avenues for adoption of greyhounds if we are to also have a greyhound racing industry operating. I know that many people have greyhounds. The member for Forrestfield has two rescue greyhounds. I know greyhounds to be very gentle dogs, which the member for Maylands also mentioned. They have been somewhat demonised because of the industry that they are used in. The review of the Dog Act and the Cat Act has concluded that there is no greater risk from greyhounds than any other dog breeds or mixed breeds. That is just the evidence. People who want to argue otherwise will have to marshal some kind of credible evidence. It is not enough to simply stand and give anecdotal stories. I make a point to come into this place and, whenever I give a contribution, make sure it is a serious contribution. I would encourage any member who is going to suggest otherwise to find actual evidence to back up their claims.

Indeed, this reform is not new. New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have already implemented this reform around de-muzzling. However, I reassure members of the public that there are still going to be some controls around greyhounds, as there are for some dogs. They will still be required to be on a lead while they are in public. The provisions for dangerous dogs will apply to greyhounds in the same way that they would apply to any breed of dog if a particular dog is declared a dangerous dog.

The second feature of this bill, which has been very well received, has been the transitioning of pet shops to adoption centres. We know that many dogs can be abandoned. They end up in pounds or the Dogs' Refuge Home in the member for Nedlands' electorate. Unfortunately, the open slather retail market for dogs incentivises puppy farming. Therefore, by transitioning away from that, we take away that incentive. We saw evidence around the world that at the outset of the pandemic, there was a rise at first in people abandoning pets. That transition is reflected in clause 32, which will insert proposed section 38G. This provision will require pet shop businesses to supply dogs obtained from only the holder of an approval. Proposed section 38N will place obligations on the supplier to do so only if the dog is a stray, abandoned, seized or surrendered and the supplier is the holder of a dog supply approval. Further provisions at proposed sections 38P and 38Q will provide for the granting and cancelling of dog supply approvals. There will also be a transitional period and financial assistance that will allow for businesses to make the transition from pet shops to adoption centres.

In conclusion, the reforms in this bill are broadly supported in the community. There has been significant consultation and, in my view, the provisions strike the right balance. I welcome the rise in pet ownership. As I said, pets are great for mental health and dealing with loneliness, which is a growing problem. This has also meant that there is a need for reform and regulation in what is now a very large industry. This legislation deals with concerns around mandatory desexing while also providing proper exemptions and including other positive reforms. I acknowledge both ministers who have brought this bill to the house. I thank the member for Maylands in particular. I encourage people to read the member for Maylands' foreword to the consultation report. It demonstrates that not only is there often a long road to political change, but also we can get there with persistence, and that is what I think everybody in this chamber believes.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [5.51 pm]: I rise tonight to make a contribution to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021, which I also did last year when this bill first came to our place. I, too, would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Local Government and his team for introducing this legislation and I thank the former minister for all his hard work in this space. As other members have done, I would like to acknowledge the member for Maylands for spearheading this legislation over what I have just learnt is a 10-year period, which is quite significant and certainly worthwhile. We all thank you, member for Maylands, for the work you have done to make sure that this bill found its way, yet again, to our house. Hopefully, it will pass this time.

I am always interested to speak on and support any bill that looks to enhance animal welfare outcomes in this state, and that is something that this bill will do. I would like to touch on the fact that there was extensive consultation on this bill. Dogs West, local governments and the public were consulted extensively. In fact, we took this legislation to the election back in 2017 and it was intensely popular within the community, and it still is.

As other members have indicated, at present, dog breeding is completely unregulated, which leaves the door wide open for animal abuse to occur. Consequently, that is exactly what has been occurring, despite members on the other side saying during the debate last time that it did not exist, which is, frankly, not true. It is fair to say that self-regulation in any industry simply does not work—period—and there is a plethora of examples that speak to that. In this instance, illegal puppy farming operators exist, they are rife and we need this bill.

This bill will amend the Dog Act 1976 and it will prevent and prohibit puppy farming by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs in WA so that we can end the irresponsible overbreeding of dogs. I am incredibly proud of our government for the work that we are doing in this space by introducing this bill and the amendments that other members have talked about regarding greyhounds. Those amendments are also long overdue, so I really welcome this bill and those additional provisions.

The physical and psychological suffering that dogs experience when kept in puppy farms is absolutely inhumane. Dogs have been found in incredibly small cages with little food, no water, and they are, essentially, treated like breeding machines. The squalid and overcrowded conditions that these dogs are constantly forced to mate and give birth in demonstrates a complete lack of compassion from the breeder. Breeders turn a living, sentient being into commodities to exploit. The Australian Veterinary Association describes puppy farming as the intensive overbreeding of dogs under inappropriate conditions that fail to meet the animals' behavioural, social and psychological needs.

I have a 2014 article here, which I referred to in my previous contribution on the earlier version of this bill. There are some people in this chamber who still do not believe that puppy farms are a problem, so I will refer to this article from ABC online news, dated 5 June 2014, which reported that 50 dogs were found in an underground bunker in Kellerberrin. The police officers who attended the site with the RSPCA inspector had to lift the distressed dogs out of a very small hole in the ground. The dogs were kept in complete darkness with no ventilation and they were suffering from ear mite and secondary infections. Clearly, this is unacceptable. I do not think—at least, I hope—that a single member in here would think that that is an acceptable way to treat dogs or is a tolerable situation for any animal to live in. It is not only the dogs that are forced to live in this condition; the puppies that are born into

these environments must live in this condition and it is completely unacceptable. It is evident that the breeders are not concerned about the health issues that these puppies are born with. The puppies are often not vaccinated. Even puppies that are purchased through local pet shops often have poor or non-existent vaccination records, which is largely due to the lack of traceability at present. This is dangerous to not only the puppy, but also the herd immunity for other dogs in our community.

One of the key changes that this bill will make is the introduction—this is a critically important element of the bill—of a single centralised registration system for all dogs right across WA. Right now this is done individually by the 137 local governments across our state, which seems quite absurd. A centralised system would make it easier to trace dogs and trace where they are originally from. Effectively, a dog will be able to be traced for life and information about the dog's history will be able to be shared across jurisdictions, from one local government to another. This will help monitor breeders, and consumers will be able to confirm whether a breeder is registered. A very important element of this bill is for people to be able to know the origin of the dog and the circumstances under which it was born.

Under the current system, illegal puppy farmers cannot be held accountable because we are not able to trace dogs. This will be addressed with the introduction of this bill. This becomes particularly difficult when dogs are sold across local government boundaries because very few share the registers they have at present. The centralised system will use a unique dog owner number, which will ensure that all the ambiguity and opaqueness around the dog's health, history and breeding will be eliminated. By combining all the current information on local government registers and allowing dog owners to register online, we will reduce the burden on dog owners while implementing a comprehensive system to enhance traceability and knowledge within the dog community amongst breeders and dog owners. The system is designed to ensure that whenever somebody is looking to buy a dog in WA, either directly from a breeder or through an adoption centre, they will know exactly where that dog has come from, the conditions that the dog has been born into and lived in and, crucially, the dog's medical history.

This legislation will further crack down on the illegal breeding of dogs by mandating that dogs are desexed by the time they reach two years of age, unless they are subject to one of the exemption measures, which other members have already talked about this evening. This provision will be enforced through annual registration for unsterilised dogs, with no lifetime or three-year registrations, and with authorities having the power to seize a dog that is not desexed, despite requiring to be so under the act. This provision has the aim of reducing the number of dogs that are indiscriminately bred, and will increase the visibility of dog breeders to ensure that they are following the breeding standards. The implementation of an official approval process for breeding dogs is a common sense approach to ensure high standards right across the industry. The absence of an approval process governing who can and cannot become a breeder provides an opportunity for unscrupulous operators to act within the space. The vast majority of breeders are doing the right thing, so they will be able to carry on doing the right thing and do not need to be concerned at all about this legislation. If they are doing the right thing, they should welcome these changes.

The approval process for breeders will be managed by local governments. A breeder can hold an approval for an indefinite amount of time unless it is cancelled or the breeder moves to another local government jurisdiction. This will not be an imposition on breeders who are following the rules and treating dogs with respect. This provision will be a mechanism to ensure that those who want to breed dogs do it properly, report what they are doing and operate with sufficient oversight and accountability to ensure that no dog is suffering or is subject to cruelty and living in squalor. This is all very reasonable in my view.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm

Ms C.M. ROWE: I would like to continue my contribution to the debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021, this very important bill to stop puppy farming in our state. I have already outlined some of the critical elements of this legislation. One key thing that I would like to reiterate is the fact that, at present, the breeding of dogs in WA is totally unregulated. I think that in itself speaks to the necessity of this bill. As I said previously, I do not think that self-regulation works in any industry, and there is evidence to show that it is not working in this industry. I think that we cannot be too compliant when dealing with live animals, and people should welcome regulation rather than try to avoid it. There is evidence of overbreeding and extensive puppy farming right across the state. We want to stamp this out. Regulation is the way to go. What is going on at the moment is clearly unacceptable. I am really proud of our government, and I have already acknowledged the minister for bringing this very important bill back to Parliament. I hope that this time it will go through the other place and we will be able to see these protections enshrined in legislation.

I talked about one of the really important elements of the bill being a centralised system to govern this industry. At the moment, the 137 different local government bodies all have their own individual systems to monitor dogs.

A centralised system will clearly be an important factor in identifying where a dog has come from—its point of origin—and tracing dogs throughout the course of their life. This is a really important measure. I want to reiterate that I think this will be a very effective part of the legislation to make sure that breeders are accountable, and also that dog owners can feel confident that when they buy a dog, they will have knowledge of the dog's origin and its health and vaccinations, because that accountability is now going to be placed upon breeders.

The breeders who are doing the right thing now can continue to do the right thing under this legislation. They should really welcome these changes. The centralised system is not going to be burdensome or an increase in red tape; it is about making sure that these sentient beings that are in the care of breeders are being treated appropriately, and I do not think that anyone should oppose that. I know that this is something that my community really welcomes, and the general public really wants to see this brought into legislation.

As I mentioned, one thing that is also very important is ensuring that we can trace a dog's origin in terms of its health and whether it has been vaccinated. A lot of these puppy farms have very little care for the animals that they are breeding; as a consequence, there are very low rates of vaccinations, and that poses a problem for the health of not only that individual dog but also the overall dog community in WA and its herd immunity. I think that is another really important element of this legislation. It will help to crack down on people who are behaving unscrupulously, and that is really important.

The other issue that I would like to talk about is the official approval process for breeding dogs. I think that is a really commonsense approach. Again, that is something that I really welcome. As I said, the vast majority of breeders in WA are doing the right thing, so they have nothing to fear from these reforms.

Another important aspect of the bill is how businesses dealing with animal sales conduct their operations. A number of members have already talked about how pet shops will be transitioned into becoming adoption centres for unwanted and abandoned dogs. I really welcome this, because it will make sure that animals that are sold in pet shops are sourced from rescue organisations and approved animal shelters. That also means that we are going to have an increased ability to make sure that we find forever homes for these animals. I think that is a really fantastic thing. It will drive down the number of animals that have to be euthanised because they have been abandoned and are homeless through no fault of their own, and I think it will dramatically reduce the incentive for puppy farming operations large or small to exist at all. That is a really welcome change. This change is much needed because currently there are no restrictions on where pet shops can source their puppies from, so I think this is a positive outcome to make sure that, again, there is accountability on all levels. We want to know that the puppies that are being sourced have come from a reputable place and genuinely need to be rehomed. I think that is fantastic.

Finally, an important measure that this amendment legislation will introduce is mandatory standards for dog breeders in WA. During the original consultation phase and drafting of the bill, the implementation of mandatory standards was supported by around 93 per cent of participants. That is an incredibly high number of participants who supported this. This change is firmly in the public's interest, but it is also firmly in the interests of puppies and dogs in Western Australia. The mandatory standards provisions include the number of pregnancies that a dog can have in its lifetime; the number of breeding females a breeder can maintain; compulsory vet checks, pre-mating and post birthing; and housing, transport and sale conditions. These provisions will ensure that breeders act responsibly and that dogs are not exploited. In my view, no-one should be opposed to such reforms. This bill will finally see much-needed regulation in this area. By doing so, we are providing a positive framework to protect the health and wellbeing of dogs here in WA. Clearly, we want to stamp out overbreeding and the irresponsible breeding of dogs in WA. I believe that this bill will absolutely achieve that outcome. The RSPCA has said that these laws will be the greatest single improvement to animal welfare in WA in the last 20 years. That really speaks for itself.

I am really proud that our government has acted to protect animal welfare as it relates to puppies in our state. This is a really great step in the right direction. I hope that this is a signpost for how we will continue around animal welfare issues in this term of government because so much more can always be done to protect animals. That is certainly in step with community expectations around what governments will do. I absolutely commend this bill to the house.

MR S.J. PRICE (Forrestfield) [7.10 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to rise and contribute to the debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021, which is very similar to the previous iteration of this bill, which was introduced in the last Parliament but did not quite get all the way through. I wish to start by thanking the Minister for Local Government and all the staff for getting this bill back in front of this house as quickly as possible, and also the previous minister, Hon David Templeman, and all his staff for the great work they did.

My deepest thanks go to the member for Maylands, Lisa Baker, for persisting with this issue for so long. I must have missed it previously, but she said that she started this journey back in 2012. That is testament to her dedication to animal welfare and the role that she plays in this space, not only within this place, but also within our party. The fact that she was able to carry on and bring this bill to fruition at the end of the day is outstanding. She deserves all the kudos and credit for it.

I also need to acknowledge and thank all the groups that participated in the consultation that took place. The member for Maylands outlined the extensive process that was undertaken throughout the bill's journey to this house. To those who say that they were not consulted over this, I am not sure where they were because everyone was given the opportunity to have their say during the bill's lengthy journey to this place.

I will just recap the history of this bill a little. The McGowan government made a very popular and firm commitment at the 2017 election to introduce a bill to stop puppy farming. That proposal, announced when we were in opposition, was very well supported by the majority of the public. As with every piece of legislation that we bring into this place, the bill will not please everyone. The intent of the bill to get the best outcome, which is to do away with the horrendous practice of puppy farming. This bill will do that. There are a number of key elements to the bill, which will stop unscrupulous breeders from carrying on their trade and ensure that, going forward, those who breed dogs are registered and traceable. The change from being able to buy a dog from a pet shop to only being able to purchase pets from a rehoming agency is a significant step forward, and will do away with backyard breeders, as they are referred to, basically being given the opportunity to churn out dogs for money.

The bill includes a number of key elements, including mandatory sterilisation of dogs from two years of age, the requirement for an approval to breed, the transition of pet shops to adoption centres, centralisation registration and, finally, the removal of mandatory muzzling of greyhounds. I will touch on each of those aspects. I mentioned greyhounds last, so I will probably spend most of my time talking about them.

The requirement for mandatory sterilisation of dogs from the age of two is quite interesting. Concern about that was raised by the opposition. Obviously, the science is there: from the age of two years, sterilisation is in the best interests of the health of the animal because it gives it time to develop. In a previous life, I dealt with Dogs West because I had a couple of show dogs. Many years ago, I used to show Old English sheepdogs. I had two dogs—a boy and a girl. When we got those dogs, we made a number of commitments to the breeders. Back then, the breeders were part of Dogs West. The blood line was a regency blue blood line of Old English sheepdogs. The commitment we gave was really threefold. First, we would show the dogs; second, we would not breed from them; and, third, if we stopped showing them, we had to get them sterilised. That is how we can keep control of illegal and uncontrolled breeding within particular breeds.

I am not sure if it had a lot to do with showing dogs, but after a while, the dogs did not seem to enjoy it. It is an interesting thing to get involved in. We decided not to continue to show our dogs, so we had to get them sterilised. At that stage, they would have been around two years of age. By that time, an owner can tell if a dog is a good show dog, they can tell whether they want to breed it, they know its full blood line and they can start to work out a plan forward, which is what Dogs West does. Its breeders are meticulous in their planning of the particular purebred dogs that they look after. Mandatory sterilisation has always been there. If someone buys a purebred dog from a Dogs West breeder, the dog may be sterilised to ensure the integrity of the breed. I do not see how that is a major issue for people. The other part to that now is that just about every dog that comes from an agency or a home is sterilised. That removes the ability for someone to get a dog and start breeding from it. It also stops the unnecessary proliferation of dogs out and about in the public. Dogs are sterilised anyway. To legislate the requirement to do that is not a huge change to the current situation, but it will make people aware that they have to do that.

One of the changes made to this iteration of the bill is the exemption for working dogs. The argument about why working dogs should be exempt was pretty well put by the Nationals WA in the last Parliament. At the time, it was agreed that working dogs would be given an exemption. I think it was going to be set out in the regulations. Now it will be brought back into the act, so there are no issues with that.

The requirement to get an approval to breed is a sensible step forward in the management of animal welfare. Like everyone else, I received a lot of presentations from Dogs West people who were opposed to the fact that they would have to register as a breeder with a local government. They had a number of issues with that. By ensuring that everyone who wants to breed a dog is registered with a local government will provide a lot of safeguards that are not currently in place. In no way will it diminish the great work of Dogs West. The standards that it holds for all its members and the breeding requirements that it places on its members are first class across the country. If we could lift everyone up to that standard, that would be sensational. This is the start of trying to do that. By having a system in place in which we can identify who is breeding the dogs and ensure that they are maintaining a standard and, if not, we can deal with it and take away their ability to breed, will not only improve the standard of dogs that

are bred anyway, but also eliminate those people who are not doing the right things. Over time, it will generally increase the quality of life for the animals that are being bred. Once again, it should not be a big issue that people take a lot of offence to. In no way will this legislation diminish the role that Dogs West plays in breeding animals in WA. If anything, it provides the benchmark that we are trying to get people to reach.

The transition of pet shops to adoption centres will be a wonderful innovation and a great change. We all know of a number of agencies around WA that house animals. I am now fortunate to have Swan Animal Haven in my electorate; it recently moved from the member for Belmont's electorate. It has purchased a property in Wattle Grove and is building some new shelters there for the dogs that it rehomes. Back in June last year, the government made a $600 000 commitment in the 2019–20 state budget to support six companion animal shelters over three years. The then Minister for Local Government, David Templeman, the member for Belmont and I went out and looked around Swan Animal Haven at that time. It was one of the recipients of some of the money from that $600 000 that was committed. I am not sure whether anyone has been to or had anything to do with Swan Animal Haven, but members should visit it, and they will get to meet the vice president out there, Sylvia Taunt.

Sylvia was awarded the Senior Community Citizen of the Year last year by the City of Kalamunda. At the presentation, which was at the Corymbia Multicultural Festival in March last year, the mayor at the time said that Sylvia had been a volunteer and committee member at Swan Animal Haven for more than 36 years. It is an outstanding commitment. Sylvia engages with people who take in rescue dogs; she spends a lot of time to get to know the people who are coming to take in a rescue dog so she can best match the dog with the person. She puts a lot of pride and effort into ensuring that the dogs are rehomed only once and go to the right place at the right time. As with any good volunteer in a very worthwhile cause, money is their biggest challenge. If any funds or grants are available out there, Swan Animal Haven is certainly a worthy recipient. One of the things we can do to help is sponsor a dog. Swan Animal Haven runs a sponsor-a-dog program whereby for $5 a fortnight, people can sponsor a dog and they will receive a photograph of the dog with the history of how it came to the haven and, of course, be notified when it finds a home. People can then sponsor a different dog, if they like. I urge members to go to the website. It is $5 a fortnight, which is 100 and whatever dollars a year. It is a great thing for people to do.

The centralised registration system for dogs is a no-brainer, really. The 137 local government authorities across WA all have their own little systems that do not talk to each other and there is no way of tracking where the dogs are going. By putting a centralised system in place, it will help track where the dogs are and where they have come from. That will be a really good change to the legislation.

The final part of the legislation that I want to talk about is a very small part. If you blinked, you would miss clause 4 of the bill, which states —

> Delete section 33(1) and (3).

If members did not know what that meant, they would look at the act. Section 33(1) of the Dog Act refers to the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled at all times when they are outside the home. Section 33(3) is the penalty associated with not having a greyhound muzzled outside. That is a consequential change. The removal of the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled in public is one of the most significant changes that we will see for the health and welfare of greyhounds. No other dog is legislated to have to wear a muzzle whilst outside. Declared dangerous dogs do not have to wear muzzles. This piece of breed-specific legislation is very unusual, very outdated and very wrong; removing it will change the image of greyhounds out in public quite significantly. As we heard from the member for Maylands, one of the issues with having to mandatorily muzzle a greyhound is, of course, if they are attacked by other dogs, they cannot really defend themselves. Greyhounds are of a very slight build. Their skin is very tight and tears very easily, so when they are bitten or scratched by another dog, it becomes quite a significant injury very quickly. I should also add that if a dog has been green collared—that is, temperament trained and proved—they do not have to be muzzled, but not all dogs are green collared. There was also an issue with what happens to the dogs who are not green collared.

I have two rescue greyhounds. One is a nine-and-a-half-year-old female; the other is a five-year-old male. My male would not pass green collar training. He is quite an anxious little puppy and I will continue to muzzle him when I take him out even after this legislation passes, for his comfort as well as mine. He is pretty good but when he gets overwhelmed by things, he gets a bit anxious and, like all animals, he reacts a bit to get out of the situation he is in. Removing the requirement for mandatory muzzling for greyhounds will not remove the requirement for sensible dog ownership. Pet owners have to look at what is in the best interests of their animal and, for some of these dogs, the unfortunate reality is that continuing to wear a muzzle will be best. It is not the dog's fault. This brings me to another area, which is the greyhound industry.

The reason that dogs behave the way they do is the way they have been trained. Greyhounds are very unique and are designated entertainment animals. They are regulated through the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Act.

Someone cannot breed a greyhound unless they breed it for racing and are a registered breeder with Racing and Wagering Western Australia. These dogs are bred to race; they are not bred to be pets. The first six months of their life is in a kennel and getting trained on how to race. They are not taken home to a loving family as a puppy and wrapped up and put into bed and taught how to be part of that family. They are objects that are used to make money and they are treated as such. Their longevity of life depends on their success and ability to make that money.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr S.J. PRICE: A greyhound will either make it in racing or it will not. They are trained to a point at which a trainer will make a decision about whether they will make money and continue to train and race it, or offload it. Fortunately, with the good work of some advocacy groups, we now have quite a good whole-of-life tracking system for greyhounds in the racing industry. Previously, the easiest way to get rid of a dog was to kill it, so that is what they used to do. Now they cannot. They have to rehome the dog. People can put dogs through a rehoming agency within RWWA called GAP, which is Greyhounds as Pets, or trainers can pass them off to one of the other adoption agencies.

What we have seen as a result of the whole-of-life tracing and tracking of these animals is a significant increase in the number of greyhounds in the community. Everyone has seen them; I certainly have a lot running around in Forrestfield, and not just in my backyard. They are everywhere in Forrestfield, and it is a great testament to the work that the agencies have done in finding homes for these animals—but it is also a great reflection on what a beautiful breed they are. Can we imagine how different it would be if we could actually breed them as pets? This is where the irony of the whole situation comes in. If ever we get to the point at which we can shut down greyhound racing, we would want the breeders to be members of Dogs West to control the breeding of greyhounds, because they are purebred dogs. It is funny how the circle works, but that is exactly where we need to head.

There are a lot of issues with greyhound racing across the world, not just here in WA, and because of the number of greyhounds that are now in the community, the community is beginning to ask, "Why are we racing these dogs? Why are we injuring them? Why are we killing them?" For the government, which is involved in racing, it is quite a tricky situation, because Racing and Wagering Western Australia is a government body that looks after the racing industry, which encompasses thoroughbreds, standardbreds and dogs. We need to be more aware of public sentiment, particularly in respect of greyhound racing. The reality is that the industry is losing its social licence to run, all around the world, and no more so than here in Western Australia.

Part of the issue is that the more people become aware of greyhounds as pets, the more they become aware of the issues associated with greyhound racing, and how many injuries there actually are. One of the concerns is around reporting of the injuries. To give an example, I refer to the *Racing and Wagering Western Australia annual report* of 2019–20, which talks about the injury rate in the WA industry, and the figure seems quite low. The problem is how the figure is arrived at. The statistics cite the total number of runners; for example, there were 28 473 starters in greyhound racing in Western Australia in 2019–20, and a total of 855 injuries. That gives us an injury rate of three per cent. But if we look more deeply at the figures—and these are the sorts of conversations being held at the moment—we see that 1 545 greyhounds raced in Western Australia in 2019–20. There were 28 473 starters, 855 injuries, and 1 545 greyhounds registered to race. That means that 855 of those 1 545 greyhounds registered to race were injured, which is 55 per cent, not three per cent.

If the industry wants to say that it is open and transparent, and that it is looking after the animals, it should tell the truth. It is how it presents the statistics. No-one is saying that it is telling lies in its annual reports; it is just not representing the figures in a way that people will know what is actually happening. That means that greyhound welfare groups are out there breaking the numbers down every month, because the figures are all available. Instead of the industry saying, "We've got a three per cent injury rate", and then someone from one of the rehoming agencies working all the figures out, it should just tell people what the figures are. They are all available in the stewards' reports. We know exactly what is going on, so it should just be transparent. Then, once the industry actually starts telling the truth—that more than 55 per cent of dogs are getting injured—people will say, "Well, that's even worse than I thought." The annual report then categorises the severity of the injuries—zero to 14 days, 15 to 59 days, 60 to 90 days and then deceased. It tries to justify it as some injuries being all right and others being more serious. An injury is an injury to a dog that should not be running around in circles to make money for someone.

As I said, public sentiment is changing and moving against the industry. Members may or may not recall, but last year a petition against greyhound racing in Western Australia with 11 500 signatures was tabled in the other place by Hon Alison Xamon. Interestingly enough, one of the greyhound rehoming agencies is down in Busselton. That group was involved last year in a news story with the *Busselton–Dunsborough Mail*. The story was due to be published, but the senior management of Australian Community Media, which owns that newspaper, actually told it to pull the story. I will read an article from an online site called Long Snouts; the article appeared on 7 July and was written by Matilda Duncan. It states —

> A news report on an 11,500-signature community petition imploring the Western Australian State Government to ban greyhound racing was pulled last month by one of Australia's largest media companies, Australian Community Media (ACM), at the instruction of the company's senior management.
>
> The story was due to be published by the Busselton–Dunsborough Mail in June, but was cancelled unexpectedly after higher management at ACM intervened and stated its journalists would no longer be permitted to write about the greyhound racing industry, a senior staff member at the Mail says.

The article goes on to talk about the petition and, interestingly, states —

> Exactly whom at ACM gave the directive to pull the Busselton Mail story is unclear, but a senior reporter at the Mail confirmed it had originated from management staff on the east coast, and that Busselton Mail staff had been told by senior management they were "not allowed to write about greyhounds anymore."
>
> The article had been cleared for publishing at the time it was cancelled by ACM management, according to the senior reporter who worked on it, Emma Kirk. Emails show the reporter had met with a local community greyhound advocacy and rehoming group, Busselton Greyhound Awareness, in late May as part of her work on the story.
>
> "I had it all ready to go," Kirk says, "I had the story all ready to print, I've done heaps of stories with the group in the past."

Why is the media interfering in public information that needs to go out there?

Finally, greyhound racing is shutting down around the world. There are fewer than 150 tracks left worldwide. Unfortunately, more than half of those tracks are here in Australia, and we need to do more to get ourselves out of this industry. We need to take the emotion out of it; it is another industry, and we can certainly do without it. I want to talk about one particular track that has closed down—Derby Lane in St Petersburg, Florida. It shut down last year, and it was almost the birthplace of greyhound racing. I read from an article by Craig Pittman that appeared in the *National Geographic* on 1 October 2020 —

> The era of greyhound racing in the U.S. is coming to an end.
>
> It's 8:30 on a Saturday night in August. A gibbous moon hangs low in the sky, its glow no competition for the neon sign proclaiming GREYHOUND RACING and DERBY LANE.
>
> About 300 people are scattered in the grandstands here in St. Petersburg, Florida, that once held thousands, murmuring as loudspeakers play big band and rockabilly.

The article goes on to say —

> Derby Lane, which opened in 1925, was once hailed as the Churchill Downs of greyhound racing. Back when the dogs were running last year, you could still get a hint of the glamour and excitement of the track's glory days in the 20th century. Back then, the stands would be packed with fans in suits and hats. Babe Ruth and entertainer Sophie Tucker were visitors. Joe DiMaggio once left Marilyn Monroe in an idling car while he ran inside to place his bets.
>
> Derby Lane was America's oldest continuously operating greyhound racetrack, but in December 2020 it headed for its final stretch. Two years earlier, Florida had more greyhound tracks than any other state … By the end of 2020, it was down to three, with about 2,000 dogs still racing.

Now they are all closed —

> In 2018 Florida's voters had the chance to approve a constitutional amendment … to ban betting on greyhounds as of December 31, 2020. The racing industry bet on Floridians rejecting the amendment, but it passed by a wide margin, owing mostly to the growing national concern over the mistreatment of animals in the entertainment field …

With that, I once again would like to thank everyone who has been part of the development and bringing on of this bill, and I look forward to its speedy passage through the other place.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie) [7.40 pm]: I am delighted to speak to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. I note the excellent contributions made by so many members on this bill. I think that reflects the role that dogs play in our own families and in the families of our constituents, who have come out in number to talk to us about this legislation. I can understand why so many members have wanted to speak on this legislation.

To me it is all about responsible dog ownership; that is what we really strive to create and ensure. This terrible practice of puppy farming is absolutely opposed to that notion of responsible dog ownership. Puppy farming is

a cruel business. Just as bad as the cruelty, it leads along a pathway to irresponsible dog ownership and to impulse buys of dogs in a very wrong way at a very wrong time. This is where people make mistakes. They end up with a dog that will at best perhaps bark in the backyard, causing stress and upset to neighbours, and perhaps, much worse, a dog that does not fit properly into the family. It will not get adequate exercise. It could be an aggressive dog. It might be an antisocial dog that attacks other dogs at the dog park. That is what we risk if we do not go by the objective of achieving responsible dog ownership.

How do we achieve responsible dog ownership? It is all about working with good dog breeders, and that is what this legislation seeks. The way to get a dog is to go to a good dog breeder and talk about the suitability of the breed that a person has in mind to their family's circumstances. Of course, they will be guided by the aesthetics of the dog, its size, the amount of hair that comes off it, whether it has hypoallergenic qualities, whether it is good with small kids, whether it is good with bigger kids, its time of maturity, whether it will be a puppy for the first three years of its life, whether it is a cuddly dog or whether it has longevity. Will it be prone to hereditary diseases? In that case, people can ask the breeder whether they have checked—I did this when we had a golden retriever—the hip score of the sire and the dam. That is the sort of testing that can be done with a good breeder. It is absolutely essential. This issue of responsible breeding is critical, which leads me to another point.

I know that many people, for the most noble, commendable reasons, are very much into the adoption and rehoming of dogs. These tend to be more mature dogs, and that can be good, because people can see the size of the dog and what its temperament is like. Often amazing bonds develop between rehomed dogs and people in the homes they go to. But there is a bit of a subterranean rivalry that goes on when people talk about pedigree dogs being the best versus adopted or rehomed dogs. It is unfortunate if that sort of debate gets into the conversation. We want good well-bred dogs. I come back to the point about purebred dogs and the issue of selective breeding. Selective breeding has enabled the advancement of the whole of humanity. Earlier today, I heard we were heading to a wheat harvest of 20 million tonnes. That has occurred through selective breeding, not through genetic modification or some lucky arrival of a particular type of wheat variety. It is the same with all forms of livestock, whether it is dairy cows or horses. Selective breeding has been a part of humanity, and so it should be. It is the same with dogs, and that is why we have pedigree dogs. They are the embodiment of selective breeding and they give people the opportunity to choose an animal that suits their needs. It also means that when people speak to a breeder, they get that guidance. I am a big supporter of pedigree dogs and the ability they give people to ensure that the breed they are getting meets their needs.

I will provide a list of the various breeds I have been connected with over my life. The breeds range from cairn terrier to labrador, Airedale, border terrier, golden retriever, Weimaraner, greyhound, whippet and curly coated retriever. They are all fabulous dogs with very different characteristics and temperaments. Of course, they have their own personalities as well, so it is a multifaceted thing. They have really worked out at different times. We have to accept the boisterousness of an Airedale in its early years. Similarly, a Weimaraner is quite slow to mature. There was the beautiful steadiness of the greyhound—an adopted ex-racing greyhound. It fitted in perfectly with the circumstances I was in. People know what a pedigree breed will be like, but with a random choice of a young pup from a crossbred litter, a person really does not know what genetic illnesses the pup may carry or how big it will grow. They are some of the concerns that people might have with young crossbred pups. As I say, there is that noble pursuit of a mature dog adopted from, say, a dog refuge, and that works very well. I am really pleased to see in this legislation the plan to end pet shops selling dogs and the move to remove impulse buying. Instead, pet shops will be linked to rescue organisations. My plea to people is that if they are buying a dog, their first port of call should be the Dogs West website to have a look at its breeder list and work out which breeder has a litter of pups coming along of the breed they think might be most suited to them, and they should then go and talk to that breeder.

This brings us to the issue in this legislation of breeders having to register. It is true that we are asking breeders to go through an extra process—an extra stage in the administrative arrangements of being a dog breeder. I understand that is a bit of an impost, but I think it is one that dog breeders are more than equal to. I think they will be able to cope with it and deliver on it handsomely.

Clause 23 contains proposed section 26J. Some concern has been raised with me by breeders that some criteria there will leave local governments to make quite important decisions about whether individuals will be able to continue as breeders. That is something that the minister might like to address. How can we reassure all those very responsible breeders that they will not be vulnerable to any subjective interpretation by individual local governments? I look forward to hearing the minister address that point.

I want to commend the work that is being done by people at Dogs West: Pam Campbell, the current president of Dogs West; Des Kehoe, the vice president; and Ann Rushby, the former CEO. I think they have copped a lot of criticism from their own membership at times. People were getting very anxious about this legislation, but they did their best to come here, make representations on behalf of their membership and let their concerns be known,

and discuss how the legislation could work with previous Minister Templeman and now Minister Carey. I think it is fair to say that they copped criticism from both sides. I commend them for continuing on and doing the very best that they could for the people they represent. I note that the new CEO Caroline Shaw is stepping into this role. I commend them for their work. On Sunday, 13 June I attended the open day at Dogs West. It was a magnificent display of not all, but many of the breeds that we have available to us in Western Australia. We saw the passion that people have for their individual breeds and their desire to discuss with members of the public their various traits and to talk about the suitability of a dog for a particular family. I recall one conversation with a man who had a fox hound. He was very honest about it—that a dog that is best in a pack is perhaps not ideal in a family setting and would be a challenging dog to have in a family home. That was the sort of conversation that was being had. Other breeders talked about the amount of grooming that is required for some breeds and the amount of attention some dogs demand. I pay tribute to Dogs West for putting on that event and think it is a great way to showcase its role in our community in helping match homes with the right dog. That is a critical role and a very important one.

I pay tribute as well to the diversity in the canine world. I think that is brilliantly demonstrated in a film from 20 years ago, *Best in Show*, a mockumentary by Christopher Guest that was just hilarious. It is a favourite film of mine as well, member for Maylands. It is a hilarious film, with its various styles of people, and yes, some people do resemble their dogs. It is a lovely insight into the whole canine world.

To conclude, I want to pay tribute to Mr Carey for bringing this legislation to this Parliament, Minister Templeman for all the work he did as well and especially to the member for Maylands for her sterling endeavours—an amazing task! Not unlike the people at Dogs West, she has received criticism from various people, and it was not always pleasant. She has stuck with it because she has known how important this legislation is. There are many other animal welfare issues that members here want to address, and I am sure we will in the term of this government. It is an important area and means a lot to our constituents and to many of us here. I think this legislation, to ensure that we stop puppy farming, is something that we can all be very proud of and anybody's concerns about some of the detail of how it might operate will soon be allayed once we get the system up and running. I really thank those who have worked hard on it and got it here today.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [7.54 pm]: I rise to add my brief contribution in support of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. I thank the members who have spoken on the bill before me. They have laid out the details of the bill perfectly and I do not need to go over them again in my contribution. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to my colleague, the member for Maylands. I think it is fair to say that without her tenacity this bill would not be before us. I will use my time to acknowledge the efforts of all those who dedicate their time as volunteers to rescue, care for and rehome the strays, the unwanted, the abandoned and the neglected. Specifically, I would like to thank and highlight the efforts of former Melville Senior High School student and head boy Dean Morris, who I am privileged to have known for several years now. At just 18 years old, Dean is a veteran and champion in the dog rescue space. He is now a first-year university student and has recently added author to his impressive list of achievements so far. It was fantastic to join Dean, his incredibly supportive family and teachers, Melville Senior High School Parents and Citizens Association president Jonathan Gayton, and Dean's many supporters and friends at a recent launch of his book, *Saving the World: One Stray at a Time*. To give members an insight into this exceptional young man's efforts, I will refer to Dean's bio from his book. It states —

> Dean was 10 years old when his world changed forever. He realised a stray dog is about to be euthanised and needed his help.
>
> This prompted a chain of events which not only affected and changed Dean's life but also the entire West Australian Animal Rescue community.
>
> SAVING THE WORLD—ONE STRAY AT A TIME is a story about a stray dog in a pound and a boy trying to make a difference. It is also a guide showing step by step how anyone can use leadership and perseverance to change the world and save lives.
>
> The book is a call to action and ideal for kids, adults and educators. Teaching empathy, compassion, animal welfare, the book is a great tool to initiate discussion.

At just 10 years of age, Dean started a campaign called Give Our Strays a Chance to raise awareness of adopting stray dogs and donating to animal shelters. GOSAC also helps wildlife rehabilitation organisations by providing needed medical and surgical supplies. Dean began with the rescue by his family of their dog Hooch from a country pound. He saved all the money he received for birthdays and holidays and bought food and toys for the dogs in the pound that Hooch had come from. When Dean went to deliver these items, he saw firsthand the conditions Hooch had lived in. They were horrific. The poor animals were in small cages on concrete floors. There were no windows and it was dark. It really affected him.

During this time, Dean was participating in the primary extension and challenge program at his primary school. They were learning about leadership and how to make a difference and Dean knew straightaway what he wanted to do. Dean started GOSAC to raise awareness of adoption, fostering and donating to animal shelters. Dean's book, *Saving the World: One Stray at a Time* is a continuation of his commitment to this important cause. His book is part awareness raising, part instructional and entirely inspirational. I personally look forward to hosting Dean here at some point. He is a very busy young man and he will share his book with members. Just watch this space.

I will return to Dean's story soon, but I would like to now give voice to a specific example of why this bill is so desperately needed. As my family has a much loved border collie, Archie, this story on the RSPCA South Australia website of March 2019 really hit home with me. It is an important illustration of that need. The story is from South Australia but the context is universal. It states —

> **RSPCA South Australia wishes to provide context to a very sad situation regarding 10 beautiful but severely mentally damaged border collie dogs currently in our care.**
>
> …
>
> Inspectors found almost 300 dogs at this property … The dogs were being kept in small and overcrowded cages—it's suspected they had been in this captivity for their whole lives.
>
> There was no evidence that these dogs received any enrichment or exercise. They were being used as part of a large-scale commercial puppy breeding operation …
>
> RSPCA inspectors seized 10 adult dogs from the property—those considered to be in the worst condition, exhibiting the most chronic behavioural issues and mental suffering. Some of these dogs were pregnant and later had puppies while in RSPCA care.
>
> …
>
> Our staff have also been looking for any small indication that these adult dogs are capable of trusting and relating to humans.
>
> … Sadly, while foster care has been possible for most of the puppies, it has not been possible for the adult dogs due to their chronic anxiety and unpredictable behaviour.

The RSPCA went on to say —

> We would like nothing more than for these dogs to live the remainder of their lives in a stress-free and caring home environment.
>
> It is a very sad fact, however, that it appears that many of these dogs are just too severely mentally damaged to ever make that possible. Most of the 10 dogs are now extremely fearful of humans and avoid any form of interaction.

As the owner of a much-loved four-year-old border collie, I can attest to how important it is for Archie to interact with us as humans and us with him. He brings us joy and I hope to think that we do so for him as well. Reading about how much these border collies are fearful of humans is really significant. I am quite emotional even thinking about it, knowing how very loving our dog is and how much he loves to be around us.

The RSPCA website continues —

> Their behaviour is highly erratic and unpredictable. This makes the dogs a significant risk to the safety of humans and other animals.
>
> We know that, with a lot of time and care, many dogs rescued from puppy farms are capable of being rehabilitated. We have and do take this course of action in many cases. However, not all dogs can be rehabilitated—some are just too damaged and moving them to new environments just prolongs their chronic anxiety and suffering.
>
> It must be remembered that these 10 border collies were seized because they were assessed as experiencing the worst mental suffering of the 300 dogs on the property.

Puppy farming is an abhorrent practice and unregulated breeding far too often results in abandonment and mistreatment, and stories like the one I recounted tonight. These stories are horrendous and the practice must stop. This bill is what is needed to achieve that outcome.

I will conclude as I began with the words of Dean Morris, founder of Give Our Strays a Chance and author of *Saving the World: One Stray at a Time —*

> GOSAC has truly made a difference. Many poor strays have been saved and hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised to pay for vet bills, food, supplies, beds, etc. GOSAC really saves lives!!!
>
> …
>
> I strongly believe each and every one of us can make a difference and change the world in our own little way.

I sincerely thank all those who, just like Dean, work tirelessly to protect dogs and, indeed, all creatures great and small. I thank the member for Maylands, again, and all those who have contributed to the creation of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. In particular, I thank the current and former Minister for Local Government for bringing this bill to Parliament and I commend it to the house.

MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys) [8.03 pm]: I, too, rise to make a contribution to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. I thank Minister Carey for reintroducing this important bill to the house and, as many members have done today, thank and recognise the member for Maylands, Lisa Baker, for her passion and leadership in this space. Her research and consultation gave me greater understanding of the serious issues in Western Australia and what this bill aims to achieve.

Right now in Western Australia, dog breeding lacks sufficient regulation. Anyone with a backyard, or for that matter even those without a backyard, can breed as many puppies as they want. Dog breeders are presently not required to register with any government authority to breed dogs and they can therefore act without oversight or transparency. It is entirely due to this lack of regulation and any pretence of industry oversight that the neglectful and often cruel breeding of dogs for monetary gain has blossomed in the back lots of suburban and rural WA. The cruel cottage industry practice of puppy farming inevitably involves inadequate, cramped and unsanitary living conditions for dogs and fails to consider the animals' behavioural, psychological and physical needs. From a fiscal perspective, it is part of the tax-avoiding, cash-in-hand black market economy. As such, it also involves a level of deceit and fraud, conning customers into paying for dogs that they claim have some dubious pedigree.

I will start with an anecdote of my experience receiving a dog from my parents when I was 12 years old. They gifted me a gorgeous cocker spaniel cross King Charles spaniel. I am ashamed to say that this dog, who I named Charlie, was bought from a pet store, but that was much more common 20 years ago than it is now. We took him home, armed with what looked like semiofficial pedigree papers. Upon his first visit to the vet, we discovered that Charlie had a hole in his little heart. The vet casually informed us that this was a very common "defect" in many similar pedigreed crossbreeds. He informed us it was simply the result of inbreeding in too small a gene pool. We took little Charlie back to the pet shop just to let them know what we had discovered. Immediately, they rang the breeder and we were offered a full refund for the gorgeous little pup. No doubt, it was part of a scrupulous but highly questionable quality control system of the end product. Of course, we did not give Charlie back and he remained a loving member of our family for many, many years.

My parents, to their credit, explained to me the problems with the situation we had participated in. I use this anecdote and the rather cold and emotive words "defect" or "defective" to simply underline the complete lack of sentimentality that underpins the business of puppy farming. It is essentially a cold and clinical commercial transaction to purchase a product from an unregistered business for hard cash.

We hear happy anecdotes of people—old ladies sometimes—with their Bichon Frisé named Madam Fifi or McMuffin.

Mr J.N. Carey: Can you say that again?

Ms C.M. COLLINS: Sure. Madam Fifi and Mr McMuffin end up pumping out 30 pups a year at $3 000 per unit in her converted garage in the suburbs.

Make no mistake: we are talking about a very unregulated, multimillion-dollar business. We are here to clarify the definition of what constitutes a legitimate dog breeder and to introduce practical regulations for an orderly and controlled industry, just as we would for any other large-scale commercial enterprise. Simply put, if the unregistered puppy farms cannot or will not abide by the regulations set forth in this legislation, they should be closed. This of course does not relate to people registered with Dogs West. Many people in my electorate have been concerned about that. As the member for Cockburn pointed out, regulating, investigating and policing is not in Dogs West's job description. It is simply not Dogs West's core business. We need a regulatory body like a local government to assist with that.

Why is this bill needed? Today we heard about the number of unwanted dogs born in Western Australia that are simply abandoned. The member for Maylands mentioned that up to 4 000 dogs end up being euthanised annually in WA due to the lack of care arrangements for them. Thankfully, there are not-for-profit organisations in place that aim to rehabilitate and rehome some of these dogs. Last week, I had the privilege to meet Carol Stuart who co-founded Dogs Behind Bars, a community dog adoption service in Ocean Reef, just north of my electorate.

Carol has managed to unite over 370 dogs with families since 2016. She said that without traceability and paperwork from breeders, many new dog owners find that the cute puppy they once bought turns into a much larger, much more energetic dog then they had anticipated or were prepared for. This then drives up higher dog abandonment numbers. Carol described a number of horror stories to me about improper care sometimes not even motivated by puppy farming but simply by greed or pure neglect. She spoke to me about greedy, disreputable breeders who create contracts with owners for a female dog to produce a minimum of three litters over a very short time. These litters of valuable puppies must be delivered no matter what the health problems of the female dog. She went on to say that these are just one of the varieties of dodgy pseudo-contractual guardianship arrangements at play in this business, which take zero account of the wellbeing of the poor animals involved.

I will very briefly address some aspects of this Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill that others have spoken about today. The first one is mandatory sterilisation of dogs from two years of age. These reforms simply follow the commonsense approach of the Cat Act 2011. For years now, Western Australians have been happy to follow a responsible course of action by getting their cat microchipped and registered with local government, as we do with dogs, as well as making sure their cat is sterilised. The sky has not caved in; we still have lots of affordable pet cats years after the introduction of that legislation. Let us be clear: this bill is not about forcing people to sterilise their dog. If people want to breed their pet, it is simply a matter of registering with their local government so that it is aware and can ensure that the owner is a responsible person who has made a conscious decision to accept the legal responsibilities that come with being a dog breeder. The member for Forrestfield noted that the bill contains provisions that place agricultural working dogs in a special category to ensure farmers have access to generations of healthy outdoor working dogs. Simply put, if people do not have a reason to breed their pet, they must sterilise.

Secondly, there will be a requirement for approval to breed. We have a duty to ensure that adults seeking to breed animals have commonsense and are responsible people. Currently in WA, we can buy a dog through Gumtree or from a pet store or a backyard breeder, but have no way of knowing for sure where or how the dog has been bred. The RSPCA has warned of really drastic diseases that can occur due to the inbreeding of dogs, such as blindness disorders and metabolic problems. Veterinarian research groups have also identified terrible debilitating conditions. We hear about deformities such as hip dysplasia, premature blindness, heart failure and respiratory deformities due to these practices.

This legislation is about traceability—about tracing the lines of responsibility of owners. It will mean that responsible owners have more information at their disposal to select which dogs can produce a healthy litter with the best possible start in life. Purely from a commercial perspective, it has to be said that that acceptance of and adherence to these commonsense controls and regulations will in fact increase the value of their litters through implementing what are essentially product control measures. As it is often said, there is no sentiment in business, let us not forget this is a business for commercial breeders.

The third aspect of the bill is about a centralised registration system. As previously mentioned, under the proposed laws, a pet owner wanting to breed will have to obtain approval from local government. Local government will have the ability to grant or refuse to grant or cancel an owner's approval to breed dogs. Dogs will be traced throughout their life via a central registration system. Anyone who has spoken to distressed owners of runaway pets will know that a centralised register will be a fantastic tool for reuniting pets with their owners in cross-electorate or local government areas.

The fourth aspect of the bill is simply about transitioning the industry—that is, from pet shops to adoption centres. If we close the pipeline of puppy farms to pet stores, we will create a pipeline of animal ownership from family to family and reputable breeders and greater transparency in backgrounds and health checks as well as genetic lineage. We want to empower pet stores to be sites that raise awareness of adoptions and strays.

The fifth aspect of the bill is around de-muzzling greyhounds. I would like to mention that a very close friend of mine has owned three greyhounds and fostered many from a not-for-profit greyhound rescue group. I would like to read her comment on this part of the legislation. She said —

> Greyhounds love human company and sleep most of the day with short bursts of excitement for walks, food and car rides. The muzzling law is an archaic one formed from a false belief that greyhounds are dangerous because they like to chase. Greyhounds are sight hounds and the love of running is in their DNA

> but they are no more aggressive than any other breed. Many top veterinarians and animal behaviourists will tell you to judge the deed not the breed and the same should apply to greyhounds.

I think this clearly shows that muzzling should be a thing of the past. This legislation is clearly and simply a pragmatic and very humane response to what has been a very inhumane, abusive and unregulated industry for far too long. As evidenced by the very warm and deeply positive public responses to this bill it is clear that it has overwhelming support and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Hear, hear!

DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton) [8.16 pm]: I rise today to commend the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021 to this house. Like always, I would like to begin with a story about myself! When I get home after I finish work today, while waiting for me after a long day's work, my wife will probably be watching the news or a movie on telly. My son will probably be in his own world with his headphones on. My daughter will probably be chatting away to her fiancé, who is in India. The one person who is anticipating my arrival, carefully listening to the faint sound of the garage opening is Sunny, the Maltese Shih tzu, who has been with us for over 10 years. It is such a great pleasure to go home to him. He will run down the stairs from the first floor wagging his tail demanding I give my socks to him before I enter the house. I am bringing this up because dogs become part of the family and contribute in a big way to our leading a healthier life. More than half the number of Western Australians have someone like Sunny in their home. It is important that we make sure such Western Australian companions are healthy. There was overwhelming support from the public for the bill with numerous submissions. The bill was an election promise of 2017. Unfortunately, it did not pass the upper house in the last Parliament. I hope we have an overwhelming majority in both houses this time to pass the bill.

Mr J.N. Carey: I think we will.

Dr J. KRISHNAN: Puppy farming is synonymous with animal cruelty. We all know that regulations are required because of the bad conditions in which breeding happens. This deregulated industry allows breeders to quickly sell off dogs and hide the bad things they want to hide at any time they want, before it can be picked up that they have made mistakes.

This bill encourages the adoption of rescue dogs and greyhounds. Speaking about greyhounds, I was fortunate to accompany Minister Whitby on a recent visit to a greyhound rehabilitation and training centre. It was a unique learning experience and I learnt everything about greyhounds. The most pleasing outcome of that day's visit was that my friend the effective member for Carine decided to adopt a greyhound, and he is now thinking about taking a second one home.

There are three elements to this bill, and they are mandatory sterilisation, approval to breed and centralised registration. Many of my colleagues have risen to speak about these issues in detail, and all these regulations will lead only to healthier inmates in our Western Australian homes.

There will be some exceptions to these regulations, like the farm working dogs and special skill dogs. These exceptions have been included in the legislation to accommodate the special needs of those dogs, because they are unique and there cannot be a blanket rule for them.

There is a question about whether these regulations will cause a scarcity and will therefore push up the price of dogs, meaning that people are unable to afford them, but there is no real evidence to say that the price of dogs will go up. When we compare price versus the welfare of our dogs, there is a clear decision to be made that welfare takes priority over price.

Are there any implications for local government? There will be no cost increase for local governments. We have the lowest dog registration fee in the country. The registration fee is lower for sterilised dogs, to encourage sterilisation. There will be an annual fee for unsterilised dogs only. For farm working dogs, the registration fee is only about 25 per cent.

With all this in mind, for the welfare of families and to provide healthier companions to Western Australian homes, I commend this bill to the house and I seek the support of every member of this house and the upper house to pass this bill.

MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough) [8.22 pm]: I rise in support of the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021, which will see an end to puppy farming in Western Australia.

Scarborough has a strong doggo community. It is filled with young people and growing families. Included in those families are our pets. Part of what makes Scarborough a beautiful and vibrant place is the wagging tails and puppy-dog eyes of all the furry friends we can find hanging out with their owners in local cafes, bars and eateries along the Scarborough strip. We can also find them frolicking in the ocean at Peasholm Dog Beach, a stone's throw

from my home in Scarborough. Another favourite for the Scarborough dog community is going for walks around Lake Gwelup and occasionally frightening a duck.

Some of my favourite moments during the election campaign were the doggo debriefs following a doorknock, whereby my volunteers and I would share what doggos we had met during the doorknock and the issues of the day. Interestingly, when one has knocked on over 4 000 doors during an election campaign, it becomes a bit of an art to be able to distinguish what type of doggo lives in a house based on the sound of his bark. Either way, I was always happy to meet and pat a new doggo friend when doorknocking.

The C-Breez Kiosk at Brighton Beach in Scarborough has a lot of local doggo celebrities. I will mention a few. There is a pug couple called Flo and Bentley. They are two beautiful pugs that live one street over from me and are regulars at the C-Breez cafe. Flo was a battery dog. She produced litter after litter and, as a result, she now suffers from many physical health conditions and struggles to walk. Luckily, she has been rescued and given a loving home with Willow and Anne, members of the Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club. They both now live a wonderful life and are cared for by some of the most beautiful humans, who have been known to wheel them around in a pram when Flo is not feeling up to walking.

When I first moved into my office in Scarborough, it was important to me that my constituents and team have a place for their kids when needed. We converted a spare office into a welcoming space for kids to play and relax, visible to parents, so that those parents can discuss their issues with me calmly and clearly without having to worry about their kids. I want my team to know that kids are a welcome addition to my office, and making accommodation for working parents to be able to come to work is the right thing to do. We do not know when things may go wrong—a babysitter falls through, there is a lice outbreak at the local day care or school, or plenty of other kid-related things—that may result in people needing to find care for their children. But I know firsthand that working parents are incredibly productive, caring and effective in their roles, and I am committed to ensuring that they are supported as not only working parents but also highly contributing members of my team and the community. I found out very quickly that the kids' room is an amazing addition to my office. We can hear the pitter-patter of the kids, and their vibrant energy enlivens my team and me.

Not all my team have kids, but one team member has a child who is welcome to my office anytime—a four-legged fur child. That child is the Labor voting two-year-old labrador Ziggy. Ziggy is a ball of energy who always runs straight into my office to look for me for pats and to give me a lick, even when I am not there. I think I am his favourite.

Although it is sometimes a bit chaotic when there are both human and fur children in my office, it is a good kind of chaos. I am not sure who keeps an eye on whom—the kids watching the dog or the dog watching the kids—but it works and brings joy and energy to the office. We have made a doggo space at the back of the office for Ziggy to be welcome and for when I eventually take the leap and get a pupper of my own. I had many doggos and cats while I was growing up; they were as close to me as my siblings and I felt their loss dearly when they passed, but that is part and parcel of pet ownership. Sheba was a kelpie cross greyhound who was fast as the wind, and we spent many hours trekking up the beach chasing her when she slipped off the leash. Then there was Rory, a beautiful black labrador cross who was also a rescue pup. He was a gentle and loving addition to our family.

I have to confess, I actually made an election commitment that is not widely known. I am not sure if Channel 10 ever actually showed it on the telly in the end, but I made a commitment that if I won a seat in the state election, I would get a golden boy—a golden retriever—and name him Sparky. I felt that naming my future doggo "Sparky" would be a fitting tribute to the career I had left behind upon winning, and a reminder of where I had come from. I have wanted a doggo since I moved out of home; however, having grown up with pets, I know full well that owning a pet is no small commitment. It is not a $7.9 million commitment to upgrade Scarborough Primary School, but it is still a big commitment. One really has to consider what is fair to the pet before committing to pet ownership. I knew that, as a fly-in fly-out worker, it would not be possible for me to have a doggo and be fair to it. Dogs take time and responsibility. They are a long-term commitment, and at the time I could not dedicate the time to train and care for it as each doggo deserves. That is why this bill is important—it will ensure that people consider the wellbeing of the animals first and do not just impulse buy a pet only to dump it at a rescue centre or worse.

Back to Sparky. I am looking forward to getting my furry best friend. As much as my team constantly pesters me to meet my commitment to get Sparky, I still needed time to consider whether I could manage my time in this place and the electorate whilst also giving my doggo the loving and caring life it deserves. I will honour my election commitment in due time, and I know that Sparky will one day make a great contribution to the Scarborough community.

Dogs can make great contributions to our communities not only as pets but also by serving us in many ways. The member for Burns Beach shared his experiences with police service dogs—how they are trained and the service

they give in protection of our community. Other service dogs guide and support some of the more vulnerable amongst us, such as seeing eye dogs, and, in more recent times, we have discovered that dogs can help people suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions or disabilities.

There is also the malamute—a territorial, protective and loyal doggo breed that is used heavily in agriculture to protect livestock from external threats such as foxes and other dogs. I have seen them utilised on mine sites to protect the workforce from dingos that flock to the sources of food and water that mine sites present. Unfortunately, that trial did not last long, as the malamute with its luscious, long, golden locks struggled to cope with the intense heat of the Pilbara. I know that feeling all too well! These impressive doggos are relentless, hardworking and courageous. They serve, protect and support us human beings using their unique talents and abilities. As they protect us, we must protect them. They look to us as masters, as best friends and as human beings, and human beings sometimes do the wrong thing. We must protect our dogs in Western Australia as they are vulnerable to us human beings. We must protect them from those who would take advantage of them, mistreat them and abuse them and their good nature for personal greed without consideration for the health and wellbeing of the doggos.

One reason I chose to become a member of the Labor Party was that the Labor Party encompasses the values that resonate with me. Those values include a sense of fairness and equality for all, a sense of compassion, and a sense of protecting others in the community, especially the vulnerable. I do not think that many people out there would disagree that dogs are an essential part of our communities and should be protected. The provisions of this bill are ultimately about protecting the welfare of dogs. The Labor Party has always strived to protect and committed to protecting not only humanity's best friend, but also the welfare of all animals.

Over the last four years, the McGowan government has pursued many commitments to further protect the welfare of animals, including passing legislation to allow WA to adopt national animal welfare standards. We have pursued improvements to the welfare and safety of animals involved in the racing industry, including greyhounds, standards and thoroughbred horses and, of course, there was the commitment to reintroduce the stop puppy farming laws to Parliament, after the legislation was previously blocked in the upper house. I am looking forward to seeing this legislation pass both houses once and for all.

I am proud to have spoken on this bill, and in good time I will be proud to purchase Sparky from a registered dog breeder as a result of this bill. I commend the bill to the house.

MS A.E. KENT (Kalgoorlie) [8.30 pm]: I rise today to speak to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. As a dog owner and dog lover, I was astounded to learn that in Western Australia, dog breeding is totally unregulated and there have not been minimum standards for keeping a dog. This means that anyone can breed as many pups as they choose without any regard for the welfare needs of the dogs bred. It was good to hear that the amendments in this bill received so much input when it went to public consultation in 2018. In total, 4 754 submissions were received, which is a testament to the importance of dogs in the lives of Western Australians and the strong will of the community to end this inhumane practice. One of the quotes that resonated with me was from the Canine Welfare Alliance of Australia, which said —

> Apart from the Animal Welfare Act 2002, which focuses on preventing cruelty, there are currently no standards or guidelines against which the care of dogs can be measured. The dog breeding industry is self-regulated and has failed to keep dogs safe. Introducing legislation where minimum standards and guidelines are mandatory will allow for better regulation and will improve the lives of hundreds of dogs.

It is long overdue, but this bill will, in part, ensure that people who wish to breed from their dog will need to apply for approval to breed, enabling breeders to be traced.

I love dogs. My first memory of a pet was my gorgeous toy poodle called Peppy. Since then, dogs have always been part of my life.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

Ms A.E. KENT: The minister is going to laugh a bit more in a minute. They are important members of the family. Now my two fur kids are Lulu and Belle, a seven-year-old Bichon Frisé and a three-year-old bitzer. I cannot bear to hear the horror stories about the abuse of poor bitches who are forced to have litters at each season. Why should these defenceless dogs have to be put through this time and again?

Let me relate a media article in *The Kalgoorlie Miner* in 2017. The article said that homes were being sought for 13 mix-breed puppies. The article stated —

> The Kalgoorlie 13, as they are better known as, were signed over to the RSPCA when the mother of the large litter needed an emergency caesarean after the third puppy got stuck during the birth.

> General Inspector of the Western Australia RSPCA Fiona Brown said devastatingly the mother did not make it through labour.
>
> "The ordeal put an enormous amount of stress on the mum dog. The full vet team fought to keep her well but they lost her," Ms Brown said.
>
> "There were 14 female pups. One was lost during the difficult birthing. The Kalgoorlie 13 are thriving in the care of dedicated and expert foster carers here in Kalgoorlie."
>
> RSPCA inspectors said the owners of the dog did not realise the complications involved in backyard breeding …
>
> "(The) owner's intentions were not unkind but misled," Ms Brown said.

It is such a sad and needless story. Let us not forget that we are, of course, in unique times. There has been a lot of interest in dog ownership since COVID. The past year has seen demand for purebred dogs rise, leading to big price increases. Buyers have reported that dogs that once cost $2 000 before the pandemic have doubled or tripled in price. Apparently, French bulldogs are now in high demand.

The concept of the dog as man's best friend is nothing new. Sigmund Freud wrote personal accounts about his pet dog, a red chow named Jofi, who became his late-life and therapy company. On account of a series of mouth operations he endured, he said of his dog —

> I wish you could have seen with me what sympathy Jofi shows me during these hellish days, as if she understood everything.

Not even Freud could have predicted that 90 years later a pandemic would sweep the globe, locking down countries and confining people to their homes; if he could have, he would have prescribed a dog to counter the loneliness many people have experienced. Some people have said if it were not for dogs, they would have had no-one with them. They do not talk back but they are definitely there for people. People describe dogs as their lifesaver and say they have no idea how they would cope without them. They give people company, purpose, some affection and joy. There is no question about it: dogs are awesome. All dog owners know that feeling of thinking of our dogs as our own babies. We spoil and love them, and we would rather sit on the couch for an extra hour than move them off us while they are sleeping—in my case, in my bed too. Dogs are the most selfless and caring beings out there. Their commitment to us is unmatched. They spend their whole lives cherishing us. We are their everything. Is it not equally important for us to respect our dogs? Treat them well. Do not force them to have puppies every season. Please remember that to us dogs are only a small component of our lives, but to them we are their world.

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park) [8.35 pm]: I am very pleased to rise this evening in this house to speak to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. Today is a big day for animal welfare in Western Australia. Although this bill is not about animal welfare laws or amendments to those laws—which will, hopefully, come—it is about the breeding and traceability of dogs. As such, in effect, this bill will deliver the most significant animal welfare improvement in WA since the Animal Welfare Act was updated in 2002. I am proud that this government is committed to improving animal welfare in this state. Currently, and sadly, anyone can breed as many puppies as they want and unplanned litters are common. The stop puppy farming bill is vital to prevent cruelty, neglect and abandonment of dogs. It will be the first law to regulate dog breeding in Western Australia. It is the result of an extensive and comprehensive public consultation process. The bill that resulted from that consultation is now, I am very happy to say, the beneficiary of strong public support.

Along with community members, one of the stakeholders that made a significant contribution to this bill was the RSPCA. As the RSPCA has concurred, the four key planks of this bill—mandatory sterilisation, registration of anyone wanting to breed their dog, a centralised registration system and pet shops that sell dogs to become adoption centres—will have a huge impact on the number of unwanted dogs and puppies in WA each and every year. I will go briefly into these four key planks.

First is mandatory dog sterilisation. Under this legislation, unless exempt, all dogs will be required to be sterilised by the time they reach two years of age. This does not apply to dogs that are currently registered with their local government. Exemptions for mandatory sterilisation will apply in certain understandable circumstances.

Second is the approval to breed dogs. Under this legislation, people will apply for approval to breed from their local government. It will be a one-off application and it will stay in place indefinitely unless it is cancelled. I am pleased that this bill will allow a local government to cancel an approval to breed if the owner is not compliant with the relevant acts or if they breach the conditions of their approval. Put simply, all breeders will need to comply with new

health and welfare standards for their dogs and puppies. This means that people and families wishing to purchase a dog can be confident their new pet is bred in acceptable welfare conditions.

Third is the new requirement for a centralised registration system. This bill will also amend the Cat Act 2011 so that all information on cat and dog registrations will be recorded in the same central database. This database will ensure information can be shared across local government districts and, importantly, will assist authorities with monitoring and enforcing welfare standards and breeding approval conditions.

Finally, the bill will transition pet shops into adoption centres. This bill will change the way pet shops source their puppies and provide another outlet for unwanted or abandoned dogs. Crucially, the approved pet shop will be able to source dogs only from a rescue or shelter organisation that has been accredited by the state government. To safeguard consumers, each accredited organisation must provide a health certificate for each dog that is supplied to a pet shop, and the pet shop must supply the certificate and breeder information to the person who purchases the dog.

Some of my crossed-out words may be making their way back in, minister!

This caveat has provided me and many members of my community with great comfort. Many community members have expressed to me that they have purchased dogs through pet shops and were concerned that they had inadvertently supported the puppy farming industry, which was never their intention. All the community members I have spoken to have welcomed this change, and I can assure members that we love our dogs in Victoria Park.

It is undeniable that these reforms will prevent the cruelty, neglect and abandonment of dogs. We know that RSPCA WA inspectors deal with many cases of unwanted puppies and dogs being simply abandoned and left to fend for themselves. In recent years, cases have included puppies being found dumped in a shopping bag in bush near Collie; a box of 10 black and tan puppies estimated to be just one or two weeks old, with their umbilical cords still attached, dumped near Narrogin Creek; and, in December 2019, a litter of puppies was dumped at a rubbish tip in Esperance. The RSPCA has agreed that the new provisions in this bill will most certainly reduce the number of sad cases like these.

Added to the neglect and abandonment of unwanted dogs, puppy farming leads to the heartbreaking scenario of genetic faults, which may not be apparent until the dog is much older. This means that owners may face massive vet bills for ongoing care and corrective surgery; or, in the event that health problems become too great, the dog must be euthanised to save it from a life of pain and suffering.

Many people in this place, and hundreds of thousands of people in our community, know the heartbreak of having to euthanise a beloved family dog, me and my family included. This last year has been the first time in my more than 40 years that I have been without a dog waiting for me at home, and I desperately miss their welcoming, wagging tails. I can honestly say that between a husband, two boys and two dogs, it was often only the two dogs who were excited to see me come home from a day at work! In what feels far too recently for me, my family and I said goodbye to our beautiful and love-filled Airedale terrier, Indi, and our hilarious and mischievous standard poodle, Jeff. However, we were lucky enough to have loved our dogs to a ripe old age—each more than 13 years of age when we said goodbye, or roughly about 80 in human years.

Both our dogs came from what would be accredited and approved breeders under this legislation. The breeder of our Airedale terrier, Pauline Kitching, is somewhat famous in the Airedale terrier community in WA. She cares passionately for her dogs and breeds for health and temperament. If anything, she puts the fear of God into new owners to treat their new four-legged family additions well, and she has been known to refuse potential owners because she did not trust that they would make good Airedale parents. Although Airedales are Pauline's favourite, and she somewhat grudgingly came to the conclusion that our other dog, Jeff, was all right, she actually loves all sorts of dogs. Pauline has now become a fan of greyhounds, and has taken in retired and injured animals, and those that cannot race, from a nearby property after she became increasingly concerned for their welfare.

This bill will support reputable and caring breeders like Pauline who do the right thing and love their dogs as much as we all do. It will help her efforts to breed ethically, and help ensure that healthy, loved dogs enter our family homes. It will minimise the inflow of puppies into the market from unscrupulous breeders, and arm buyers with the information they need to make an educated decision about who is an approved breeder and provide comfort in respect of their animal welfare practices.

I mentioned greyhounds, and I want to mention them again. Although not deemed a defining pillar of this bill, it is important to note that the bill will remove the requirement for retired greyhounds to be muzzled. I am very happy about this clause. Greyhounds suffer from a misplaced reputation. In actuality, greyhounds are incredibly well-mannered, calm and lazy dogs. Despite their speed, on average greyhounds sleep up to 20 hours a day; I am very envious!

Mr J.N. Carey: That's my dream lifestyle!

Ms H.M. BEAZLEY: My dream life, too, minister.

They are very affectionate dogs and make perfect pets. My sons and I are in the process of convincing my husband to adopt a greyhound. With young kids, and having already undergone that wonderful all-chewing, all-digging toilet training puppy phase quite a number of times, adopting a greyhound is very appealing to a family like mine. When you adopt a former racing greyhound, you are adopting a dog that does not need a lot of exercise, especially compared with a puppy—I have to say that that appeals to me greatly—and is friendly, well-mannered, quiet and great with kids. So Andrew, if you are listening, the boys' and my campaign for greyhound adoption is now immortalised in *Hansard*! We may give you a year or so, with a newly decent-looking backyard, but after that, the campaign will hit overdrive, and this is fair warning!

Sadly, for my family and other families, the requirement to muzzle can be a barrier to fostering or adopting a greyhound. This bill will remove that barrier for greyhounds to find a loving home. The wearing of muzzles also compounds the effect of a misplaced reputation. When you see a dog wearing a muzzle, you naturally assume that it is an aggressive dog. Greyhounds are not naturally aggressive. Removing the requirement for muzzles will open more space for the rehabilitation of their reputation, and they deserve a good reputation.

I take this opportunity to compliment the work of Greyhound Adoptions WA and Greyhounds as Pets. I regularly set up a stall at our Vic Park markets on Sundays, and I always request to be next to the greyhound adoption stall so I can spend a good part of the morning cuddling these wonderful hounds. They are a wonderful breed, and I know that these groups are very excited about the requirement for muzzling being removed. I look forward to letting them know when this bill passes into law. I also take this opportunity to thank RSPCA WA, Dogs West and other stakeholders for having contributed to the development of this bill, and for working with the McGowan government for years to help realise its reintroduction to this place. I thank Ministers Carey and Templeman, and particularly the member for Maylands, staff, and other community stakeholders for their years of work in getting this legislation before Parliament. The sooner this bill becomes law, the sooner it will help prevent much of the suffering and cruelty many dogs sadly suffer every day in the state. I commend this bill to the house.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.47 pm]: I am surprised to be here at this point; I thought there would be many, many speakers from the Labor side of politics who would want to talk on the particularly interesting issue of puppy farming. As has been reiterated many times tonight, this bill, the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021, is very similar to one that passed through this house in the last Parliament. It did not pass Parliament as such, but it certainly passed this house. That legislation was the stop puppy farming bill of 2020, but I have heard many mistruths about the positioning of the opposition in all of this. As I recall—it is quite clear in *Hansard*—we were not opposed to the bill as such. We were opposed to elements within the bill that we were concerned about, and which we raised with the minister at the time. We put forward amendments and, if you look at the final vote as the legislation left this chamber, there was no division on it. We were not, as has been said, opposed —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am going to quickly scroll through a couple of media releases —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: For goodness sake, you had the opportunity to talk. Do I not have an opportunity as well? Thank you.

I refer to a press release from the minister on 17 August, I think it is, about the reintroduction of the stop puppy farming bill to Parliament. Sorry, it was 2 June. There is a very strange, misleading number at the top. Anyway, it says —

> The McGowan Government is prioritising plans to end puppy farming in Western Australia by reintroducing the Stop Puppy Farming legislation into State Parliament.
>
> A key McGowan Government election commitment in 2017, the proposed laws have been overwhelmingly supported by the community and the animal welfare sector, however, were not supported by the Liberal and National parties.

That is a bit of a long stretch. As I said, it went through this house and all the parties, Liberal, National and Labor, were agreeable to it passing, and it then went to the other place. As we know, it sat there in the other place. The media release goes on to say —

> "The Government —

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: For goodness sake! I did not interject on any speaker for the entirety of this debate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, he is actually on your team, mate.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member for Swan Hills is being quite raucous.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.S. LOVE: This press release from Hon John Carey goes on to say —

> "The Government wanted this bill passed in the previous term of government, but this was another piece of critical legislation that was not supported by the Liberal Party and National Party.

That is factually incorrect. All that the Liberal and National Parties were doing was putting in place —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I implore your protection, Deputy Speaker!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I shall give it to you.

Mr R.S. LOVE: All that the Liberal and National Parties were doing was trying to put in place some sensible amendments. In fact, this bill was introduced —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is workplace bullying! The member for Belmont is bullying me!

The bill was introduced into this house on 19 February 2020. It went through its third reading on 25 June 2020. I remember quite a lengthy discussion on various members' views throughout that debate. There was a lengthy consideration in detail stage, and a number of amendments were moved but were not supported by the Labor Party. The bill was received by the Legislative Council on 25 June 2020 and the second reading speech was made on 25 June 2020. Despite everybody's enunciations in this chamber thus far, it was not brought on for debate by the government's own supremos in the Legislative Council. That is why it did not pass. It sat there from 25 June until the termination of Parliament, and was never debated beyond the initial receipt and second reading speech. There were some amendments on the supplementary notice paper and maybe that was something the government did not want to contemplate. The supplementary notice paper is dated 11 November 2020. The bill had been sitting there for five months at that stage and the amendments were still sitting there yet to be prosecuted.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: For goodness sake! You have many, many people in your electorate who are vitally interested in this bill. They want to breed animals. They are dog breeders. They have contacted my office in this term and in the last term, because you have failed to represent them. You are now trying to make up for your failure to represent your electorate with raucous interjections! It is a disgrace!

I will now talk briefly, if I may, about some of the amendments that the Legislative Council would have considered if the bill had been brought on for debate by the government, which controls what happens in the house. It is the government's agenda; it is not the opposition's agenda. The government's agenda was not to bring this bill on for discussion.

Ms J.J. Shaw: You are a disgrace!

Mr R.S. LOVE: The government's agenda was not to bring this on for discussion, member for Swan Hills.

If I may just quickly read through a couple of the proposed amendments.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Hon Martin Aldridge proposed —

farm working dog means a dog —

(a) whose owner —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: For goodness sake!

Point of Order

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am struggling to concentrate.

Several members interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have been in here and have listened to repeated interruptions.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister! That is not a point of order, member, but I agree that it is getting a little bit hard to hear up here and I am sure Hansard cannot do what they need to do. If the members to my right could keep the noise down, it would be much appreciated.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The member for Swan Hills is a very noisy member of Parliament, but we know that empty vessels make the most noise!

If I can just return to the amendment proposed by Hon Martin Aldridge to clause 7; the supplementary notice paper states —

Hon Martin Aldridge: To move —

Page 4, after line 26 — To insert:

farm working dog means a dog —

(a) whose owner is carrying on a business, or is employed in a business, involving breeding, maintaining or rearing horses, cattle, sheep, swine, goats, poultry or similar farm animals; and

(b) that is primarily kept by the owner for the purpose of droving, protecting, tending or otherwise managing the farm animals; and

(c) that is primarily kept on rural land that is zoned for agricultural or rural purposes under a planning scheme as defined in the *Planning and Development Act 2005* …

The supplementary notice paper also states —

Hon Donna Faragher: To move —

Page 18, after line 5 — To insert:

(ea) the dog is registered with The Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc) and the owner of the dog is a member of The Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc);

Further, she proposed —

Page 19, line 21 — To insert after "kept,":

or the owner of the dog is not a member of The Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc) and the dog is not registered with The Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc),

Why is it important? It is important because we tried to move amendments in both this place and the other place that would have led to farm working dogs and dogs registered with the Canine Association of Western Australia, which is basically Dogs West, being exempt from certain elements in the bill. We moved a number of amendments in this house. I am sure that the member for Swan Hills, and the former Minister for Local Government and the current Minister for Local Government opposed all of those matters, yet what do we see in the current legislation? We see some sensible legislation that actually reflects the plight of farmers, with working dogs being recognised in the bill. I think that is a tremendous victory for the Nationals WA in having moved those amendments in the last term of government. The former minister sitting there underneath a tulip did not agree, despite, I think, some moral support being given by other Labor members in the chamber for our very, very appropriate amendments, which would have exempted working dogs from some of the more onerous parts of this bill that would have meant they would lose certain parts of their anatomy and would not be able to perform their jobs as working dogs. We know from representations made by farm working dog people that it is very important to ensure that the dog can continue to do

its job. We put forward those amendments. They were not supported by the former minister and were probably not supported then by the current minister. I do not know, but I am sure *Hansard* probably records that he voted against these measures, yet we see these measures coming forward. It is a great example of how members of the opposition can have a meaningful impact on very poor legislation and can improve it. In this case, we actually improved it.

I will go on to explain some of the other poor provisions within the bill later, but they are around some of the concerns that Western Australian local governments and Dogs West have with the bill, and which the government refuses to recognise. I put on the record that the government has accepted the wisdom of the Nationals WA's position on working dogs. It has put some of that provision in the bill regarding the sterilisation of working dogs—not so much to do with the breeding of further dogs, but certainly within the sterilisation of the dogs. It has accepted the wisdom of the National Party view. It is gratifying at least that the current minister is a little more willing to take on board these measures than was the former minister, who refused to accept our amendments and was too frightened to prosecute the argument in the upper house for the six months or so that the bill sat there undebated. We would have willingly taken on the debate.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The government did not bring it on. The Labor Party is in control of the business of the house. If it did not wish to bring it on, it is not a matter for the opposition.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: You did not bring it forward, member for Belmont. You should have brought it forward. If you wanted it passed in the previous Parliament, you should have brought it forward.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member!

Mr R.S. LOVE: We could have discussed all the amendments around Dogs West and around working dogs and we could have pushed the matter through. We were not opposed to the legislation as such. We were never opposed to it. The member has erroneously claimed that we have been opposed to it, but that is not the case. She has erroneously claimed that there has been opposition from the Nationals and other members of the opposition on this matter.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont!

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is erroneous. If you had listened to our sensible reforms to your flawed legislation, the legislation could have gone forward.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Belmont, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The government did not want to do it. I do not know why it did not want to do it. It would have been a really good idea to have brought it on, but it did not want to do it. We would have loved to have brought this legislation forward. We actually had all the amendments ready that we wanted to see done, but the government did not bring it forward.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, talk through the chair, please. Stop inciting.

Mr R.S. LOVE: How can I not incite them? There is a whole bevy of people over there shouting at me.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I know. Talk to me, through the chair.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I thank you for your protection, Deputy Speaker.

This press release is from 2 June from John Carey. It is provocative. It says —

> "The Government wanted this bill passed in the previous term of government, but this was another piece of critical legislation that was not supported by the Liberal Party and National Party.

That is false!

Ms J.J. Shaw: True!

Mr R.S. LOVE: Lies! Labor lies!

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: You lied! You lied when you wrote this!

Withdrawal of Remark

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to withdraw your comments.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I withdraw; however —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no qualification on a withdrawal. Just move on.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am not qualifying —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just move on.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: The media release is there and people can read it. In this chamber tonight, I have heard accusations that the National Party and the Liberal Party were opposed to the previous bill that was put forward. I refer to a press release I put out on 20 March 2020, when this was first an issue and the bill was being read into the previous Parliament. It said —

> **The Nationals WA will seek to amend the Labor Government's proposed puppy farming laws to minimise impacts for farm working dogs and responsible dog owners.**

We never opposed the legislation as such; we sought to make sense of the reforms to the legislation. We did not oppose the legislation.

Several members interjected.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Every single Liberal member did.

Mr D.R. Michael: Read Alyssa Hayden's speech. It was disgusting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Dr A.D. Buti: Where is she now?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister!

Ms C.M. Rowe: Read Zak Kirkup's.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If members look at *Hansard*, they will see that a substantial amount of the discussion was led by me. I am still here and I am telling members what was in my press release of March 2020. It goes on to say —

> Deputy Leader Shane Love said the Nationals WA were committed to stamping out intensive dog breeding.
>
> "The Nationals WA find the practice of puppy farming to be unacceptable and we support improved welfare for all animals," Mr Love said.
>
> "However, following consultation with the agricultural sector —

Which we did, about the working dog situation —

> the WA Local Government Association —

That had a motion at its state council that said it was not in support of this legislation.

Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It did, whether you agree with it or not.

Mr D.R. Michael: They are all your members, aren't they? They are all Nationals on the state council.

Mr R.S. LOVE: You have got your mate in there now, but whether you agreed with it or not, that is what it said. The member has made me lose my spot! The press release continues —

> … and Dogs West, it is clear the State Government has not done their due diligence with this legislation.
>
> "Our amendments will be aimed at minimising the impacts of this Bill, if it passes, for owners of farm working dogs and responsible dog owners and breeders who are members of Dogs West."
>
> The Nationals WA amendments will include:

- Defining farm working dogs within the legislation;
- Exempting farm working dogs from mandatory sterilisation …
- Exempting farm working dog owners from needing to become registered breeders;
- Exempting Dogs West members from needing to become registered breeders.

I note that the government has seen the wisdom of our earlier discussions around farm working dogs and the very sensible suggestion that the exemption of those dogs be included in the bill. It is a very commonsense attitude for the industry and I think it shows that the advocacy of the Nationals was not completely wasted, although the fact that the government failed to bring the bill on for six months when we were ready to debate it actually delayed any good changes that we could possibly have made. I made a contribution to the second reading debate on the 2020 bill. I will not reiterate everything that was in that speech; it is in *Hansard*. Nothing much has changed. Actually, I heard someone challenging the former member for Darling Range's views on this issue. As I remember, the former member for Darling Range put forward a number of amendments to do with the Dogs West situation. She was very active in advocating for change in this area.

Mr D.A. Templeman: She just opposed it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: But she is not here, so I am not going to go through old ground about that. I will talk very briefly about some of the issues that I raised during the second reading debate last time.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Are you going to quote yourself, member?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I find it very difficult to take the Leader of the House seriously when he is sitting under a tulip. Why is the Minister for Transport represented by a tulip?

Mr D.A. Templeman: This is a lovely gift from the Nannup flower show.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Is it a gift to you or the Minister for Transport?

Mr D.A. Templeman: It is a gift to me, but I am representing her because she is absent.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Perhaps you could put it on your side so that it is not representing the Minister for Transport, because it is actually quite off-putting.

Point of Order

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: What is the relevance of tulips?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. There is no point of order.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of repetition is valid.

Debate Resumed

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not think it is important for me to run through, reiterate and regurgitate everything that was said about the last bill. We know the position I put on the record; it is in *Hansard* and I really do not think it would be of value to anybody to run through it again at 9.10 pm. I could talk for the next 40 minutes. If government members want me to, I will do that and they can sit and listen, but it is all recorded in *Hansard*. There has been a change since last time this legislation went through Parliament; that is, I am no longer the spokesperson for my party or the opposition on local government. Hon James Hayward in the other place is the opposition spokesperson on local government. In terms of consultation on the current bill, Hon James Hayward has been taking the lead for the opposition.

Ms L.L. Baker: Do you support the bill now?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not oppose the bill.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I want to see some further amendments to the bill that may well improve the bill, but certainly we are not opposed to the bill. In fact, the consideration of the issue of working dogs was very important to the Nationals WA, as the member for Maylands would know. We raised that issue extensively in previous discussions. In the previous bill, we had the almost bizarre situation in which the former Minister for Local Government referred to exemptions for working dogs but refused to put them in the legislation. The Nationals were calling for those exemptions to be put in legislation rather than regulations so that we could see them up-front. That has now occurred. For us, that is a very fundamental change. We will still prosecute some important amendments perhaps in the other

place. I have read through the amendments that we would like to put in place around Dogs West especially and I have heard some of the discussions —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The member for Swan Hills is becoming quite repetitive. I am trying to put on record our position and doing so is very difficult if members continually interject on me.

Going back to the situation with Dogs West, I have heard people say that it is not a regulatory authority and does not have any ability to control what goes on. If members refer to the debate in 2020, they will read that Dogs West has a good understanding of the industry—perhaps "industry" is the wrong word. It has a good understanding of the culture of breeding, caring for and showing animals, and making sure that they are well looked after.

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burns Beach, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you.

Dogs West also ensures that the genetic pool for the animals is protected. Tonight, I heard that Dogs West is not really regulatory and cannot enforce any of these matters. If one were to follow through the logic of an exemption from sterilisation that would allow Dogs West members to breed their dogs, the consequence for someone losing their membership of Dogs West would be that they would lose the authority to own an unsterilised animal and breed that animal. As far as I can see, that in itself would be the main spur, if you like, for people to abide by Dogs West's directions to them. That would be its rod or stick, as opposed to a carrot, so that it could ensure that animals were being looked after, because if a person lost their authority from Dogs West, they would be thrown into the main system and would have to apply independently for the right to have an unsterilised dog and for breeding approval et cetera. I think it works, and for that reason members of the government should look again at what Dogs West has been saying, because there is a pathway here. If Dogs West were to say to a breeder, "Actually, we don't agree with what you're doing and you're going to lose our approval", a breeder would lose all their other approvals under the act. That is how the legislation would work. It would almost be a dual system. I think the government needs to take on board some of Dogs West's concerns and understand, too, that there are avenues for regulation other than government authorities regulating.

If I digress for a moment —

Ms L.L. Baker: Why do we have to include farm dogs then?

Mr R.S. LOVE: Sorry?

Ms L.L. Baker: We could've left the farm dogs thing out too if you could regulate in another way. We didn't have to put the farm dog exemption in, member.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There is not a body in the same way —

Ms L.L. Baker: Australian working dogs are.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Not with general farm dogs—the working dogs association is more about show and pedigree animals, and breeders, not so much about the commercial users. The farming industry is structured in all sorts of things, whether it be dogs or, for instance, stud animals, into a commercial aspect and a breeding aspect, and they are different. I am not sure that it would work in the same way. But Dogs West is all about stud and show animals, so that perhaps could work. We would have seen some amendments in the previous Parliament that could have put Dogs West in a position to do that. I still think there is merit in that. They may explore that in the other place.

I know the government has the numbers in the other place to not listen to anybody else, but I hope that is not the way it does business. I hope the government goes through legislation trying to find ways to improve it, because that is a function of the upper house. The upper house is different from the lower house. The lower house is where executive government gets to have its say, and it calls all the shots in this house. Traditionally, the upper house is a house of review. It is going to be very interesting over the next three and a half, nearly four, years to see how that house functions with a vast majority of Labor members—government members. This ties into the discussion we will be having tomorrow on electoral reform. What is the function of the upper house as opposed to the lower house? How will that house go through the legislation? Those are all matters we will deal with tomorrow. But there are different functions for the two arms of the Parliament, and I hope that government members listen to some of the discussions that go on in that place.

I have spoken to, and consulted with, Hon James Hayward, the shadow Minister for Local Government, who is in the upper house, on these matters. He assures me that —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Pop back in your box!

Hon James Hayward assures me that he has been discussing these matters with Dogs West, which is still looking for the same sorts of exemptions that it was in 2020. Hon James Hayward has had discussions with the RSPCA and the Western Australian Local Government Association. WALGA is an interesting beast. When we first discussed this back in 2020, there were some interesting discussions around the costs to local government and the fact that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries had done some modelling on all the costs but it had not released them to the local government sector, claiming they were commercial-in-confidence because it needed to set up the body that would undertake the central register. The department refused to release the costs to the sector. My understanding from discussions with Hon James Hayward is that that continues to be the case. The local government sector still has concerns around the costs that will be imposed upon it and the amount of recovery it will get. This will become more of an issue for some of the regional local governments. At the time, I was informed by some regional local governments that up to two per cent of their rates were expended on rangers just doing the jobs they were already doing. Undertaking the services provided for in this legislation to ensure breeders have appropriate premises et cetera will cost money. WALGA was seeking the level of cost the government expects and how the modelling will apply to local governments and what the level of cost recovery will be. However, as I understand it, we have not seen much information come through. Very little information was there in 2020, and I know from my discussions with the current shadow Minister for Local Government that WALGA remains concerned about cost recovery and the lack of information around the cost modelling. The same sorts of issues that were there in 2020 are still live issues in this forty-first Parliament and have not been resolved with WALGA.

I have not directly consulted with WALGA. I feel uncomfortable about consulting directly with WALGA now, since its president is an endorsed candidate for one political party, which is not something that should continue into the future. WALGA should be a bipartisan organisation able to work with all spheres and all parties of government. It is disappointing that the person now appointed to run in the federal seat of Pearce, endorsed by the Labor Party, continues to be the president of WALGA. I think that is quite dangerous for WALGA. It is entering into dangerous country for WALGA.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: If I were that person, I would stand aside from that appointment. I have no issue if that person wants to continue to be the mayor of a municipality, but I think to continue as the president of WALGA is quite dangerous for the organisation.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is something that has been said to me by a number of councils in my electorate. I am reporting to the Parliament discussions I have had. It is not purely my position. I think that needs to be reconsidered. I do not feel comfortable discussing matters with that president, now that they are running for a political party.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It should be a bipartisan position of the —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Come on! Member for Burns Beach, do not run in and out yelling and then move and come back again. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, it would be great if you started to wrap up.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I am concerned about that position, so I have not made any approaches to WALGA as such.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The WA Rangers Association was involved in the consultation on this bill. They do the job.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Does the Leader of the House really want me to go into the consultation around that bill? Does he want me to go back into the history about how the Leader of the House treated the consultation group when he asked them to Parliament for a meeting but introduced the legislation without telling them? Does he really want me to go through all that again? No; I will not do that.

Mr D.A. Templeman: There are a few things I can go through about you, sunshine. I know about you!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think we will move on from that because this is 2021. We have a new Minister for Local Government and I am not trying to visit the sins of the father upon the son, so we will move on. If we look at what happened in 2020 —

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I want to run through a couple of things quickly and put my comments from 2020 on the record again. We all know that now that the Labor Party has the numbers in both houses, it can just run this stuff through, so it does not really care what anybody thinks about anything else. It is important to put it on record while we still have that opportunity, before the government shuts down democracy completely in this one-party state.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: That is what I sought to do in the upper house.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Perth, do not go there. Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: As we have seen in the upper house, the principal debate this year has been, "Let's shorten all the speaking times for members of the upper house so they cannot cause us any problems; let's make sure those pesky members of the upper house cannot actually hold up the government's agenda any further."

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Upper house members are trying to review the government's agenda and do their jobs, but members opposite do not accept that they have a different job from that of lower house members. I am sure the government would like to get rid of them all, but we will discuss that tomorrow.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Put on a cardigan. You belong in the 1950s!

Mr R.S. LOVE: This is a suit, not a cardigan.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister! Deputy leader! Minister! Minister, you are not helping. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, through the chair.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop; no, through the chair. I will sit you down if you keep going on the way you are because all you are doing is wasting time!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I am trying to reiterate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am talking. Do not talk back. Sit down. Thank you. Finish up and do it properly or I will sit you down.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I think I have 23 minutes left; is that correct?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not if I say not.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The former Minister for Local Government, from under his tulip, has been calling out to me to be quiet, but I will not be quiet because I think that what I have to say is very important.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Button up your cardigan!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do have a couple of cardigans, which are very attractive, but I do not think they meet the dress code in this chamber. I think we have to be a bit more liberal about the male dress code in the chamber.

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills!

Mr R.S. LOVE: I want to touch on a couple of matters that I raised during the 2020 second reading debate that have not been spoken about much here today. One is that there does not seem to be a definition of puppy farming in either the 2020 or 2021 bill. That was raised in 2020. In the briefings that were given, some definitions were given based on RSPCA definitions et cetera but there is still no actual definition in the bill.

I think it is a bit problematic to bring forward a bill that is subtitled the "stop puppy farming" bill but that does not actually define "puppy farming" in the bill.

Mr J.N. Carey interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister has a long time to wrap up his speech; I will let him run through those issues then. I still see no definition of "puppy farming" in the bill, despite us raising that as an issue.

One other matter that was raised as a concern in consultation, and I raised this in my second reading contribution, was: when people want an approval to breed, what does that trigger in terms of local government approvals? I want the minister, if he can, to run through what it is that local governments will be taking into consideration when they decide to issue an approval. One concern that has been relayed to me from a number of constituents over different shires is that it appears that if someone applies for an approval to breed, they will be treated as if they are running a breeding kennel. A puppy farmer will probably want some sort of concrete tank or something to house the dogs in, but an average person who just wants to breed their pet dog is going to be breeding from home. There needs to be some direction to local government about people who are not going to need a kennel licence for some commercial operation but who just want to breed their pet. I would be very grateful if the minister could explain that.

As I said, it might be a surprise for some people here to know that many local governments consider that the existing requirements of the Dog Act are quite onerous in terms of expense, and this bill will introduce a whole range of costs. Local governments have not had the benefit of the government's modelling and are not sure what their return for that cost will be. There needs to be some guarantee and assurance to local governments that they are not going to be unfairly impinged on by the legislation, and that the fees and charges that will be set will reflect not only the cost modelling but also the different costs. I do not know, but the government has the cost modelling and it does know. Will there be different costs in different types of local governments? Will remote local governments have a different cost structure from city local governments, peri-urban local governments et cetera? We know that a lot of dog breeders live in the hills and peri-urban areas. Southern River is obviously an area of concern for the member for Southern River because he spoke extensively on that in both 2020 and 2021. The government needs to give some sort of indication that there will be adequate cost recovery for local governments, that this will not drive up the rates for local governments, and that it will not be prohibitively expensive for people to apply for a licence to breed or keep an unsterilised dog.

I have spoken already about Dogs West and the need to recognise its standards, which the member for Maylands and others recognised as being a gold standard. We have seen that Dogs West has positively improved welfare. I was about to discuss this at one stage, but then I got distracted by I think the member for Swan Hills and one of her frequent interjections. There is a difference between, if you like, a hard type of regulation, under which the government does all the regulating, and allowing some other entity to do the regulating. For instance, we can look at what has happened with a range of issues since the introduction of consumer reviews on the internet. A simple internet review of Uber has done more to drive positive behaviour and ensure that customers get a good service than a whole plethora of regulation under the old taxi regulations.

Similarly, I think there are probably other ways of skinning a cat to ensure that there are good animal welfare outcomes for dogs than just having local government deal with it in their day-to-day business. We all know that local governments have a lot of priorities and deal with a lot of issues, and rangers also have a lot of issues to deal with. Maybe the government should be a bit more open-minded about this. Maybe Dogs West has a point and there is a different way to do this. A review process will be undertaken of the act; if it is not working, change it. Maybe listen to Dogs West and put it in place. Be a bit innovative, because, as the member for Maylands has said, and she has been a great advocate for this issue over many years, Dogs West represents a gold standard for welfare. Maybe it can play a part. Maybe a bit more flexible attitude can be taken to ensure that it does play a part, rather than just ruling it out altogether.

We know that breeders of farm working dogs, Dogs West and others have spoken about the need to ensure that the genetic pool is maintained, and there is a whole range of reasons they would like to see a bit more flexibility in the considerations around this legislation. I do not think we should be so ready to rush to binary outcomes here. Maybe we should have a bit of an understanding that other people may have good things to offer, other than regulation, and try to work for good outcomes for the animals rather than just going in with predetermined mindsets about what is the best way to regulate a particular sector or industry, because it is not necessarily an industry. The breeding of a pet does not represent an industry; it represents an event in the life of a family and the life of the animal and everything else, but it does not necessarily in all circumstances represent an industry. There are people who profit from the breeding of animals; there are other people, like farmers, who let their dog have a litter of pups, normally keep one and find a home for the four or five others. It is not always driven by an incentive to make money, so it

is not really, strictly speaking, always an industry. There could be other motives involved, and we need to be quite flexible in ensuring that we look at good outcomes for the animals rather than just going in with a mindset that government and local government are the only ones that can properly ensure that animal welfare standards are met. I do not think that is necessarily the case. There are many very well-meaning people who breed dogs and other animals, and I am sure that if we can harness that good intent and the institutions and the networks that they already have, we will have a good outcome for the animals and a good outcome for animal welfare. That will also help to ensure that the retention of some of those less popular and less commercial breeds can continue in the future. These are all admirable things. Genetic diversity is important in any type of gene pool for any animal, and we want to keep that going. We do not want to limit the opportunities for people to be involved.

One thing has not been spoken about here, but I would like to put the case for the kids in the poorer suburbs of Perth so that they can actually in the future enjoy the ownership of a dog. I have heard people say that this is all about stopping impulse buying. I have been to one of the puppy shops that has been mentioned in dispatches around this, and I have seen the price of dogs. They start at $6 000.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr R.S. LOVE: How can a family in one of the areas you guys represent afford that, in the metropolitan area especially, where people do not have representation and the ability to get farm dogs? How can a family in one of the poor areas of Maylands afford that sort of money? Are you going to drive up the price of dogs?

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Oh, for goodness sake! Can I continue?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members! If you want a chance to have a say, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will be finished shortly. You are more than welcome to get up.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not know why government members take that as being somehow offensive. I have grandkids and I want them to have the opportunity to have family pets. They cannot afford to pay $6 000 for some sort of dog. There needs to be availability for people to have dogs. Dogs are an important part of the human experience. They have been companion animals to human beings for millennia. We need to ensure that people who are not on —

Ms J.J. Shaw interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Excuse me, member for Swan Hills!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you for the second time.

Mr R.S. LOVE: We need to ensure that people who do not have a standing salary of $158 000, or whatever the base salary is for an MP, can also afford to have a dog in their lives.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Oh, my God.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I think that is important. The member for Swan Hills says, "Oh, my God" as if I do not care what happens to people who want a dog. Actually, I represent many people. My electorate has a lower socio-economic indicator than many metropolitan areas. The people in my electorate are not necessarily wealthy people. They are not all wealthy farmers. They need to afford to buy a pet as well, and my concern is about this legislation being mishandled. I am not saying that the motives for driving out the disgusting practice of keeping dogs pregnant forever are not valid; we are not talking about that. But we would also like to make sure that people can have access to animals in the future.

As I understand it, under the legislation, dogs will still be imported from other jurisdictions. What happens if a dog shows up in the system and it does not have a clear pedigree or a history? Will that dog have to be put down? What will happen to that dog?

Several members interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: It is a legitimate question. I would like to know. I am not asking for emotive reasons. I want to find out because people have asked me this question. What will happen to that dog? If we put the legislation in place, all the early processes will happen. In three years, if a three-week-old puppy shows up that is not microchipped,

what will happen to it? I want to know because people have asked me. I would like to know. If the minister could outline that in his response, I would be very grateful to him.

I know that the opposite side of the chamber seems to hold the view that the only moral authority resides on that side of the chamber. It is not true. We are all trying to achieve good outcomes —

Mr M.J. Folkard interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Member for Burns Beach, we have beautiful ties. Why do you not just settle down? Just settle down. I am on my feet. If you want a chat, hop up.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: He already has.

Mr R.S. LOVE: He already has; then he has had his say. We all want to see good outcomes for animal welfare. We on this side are not opposed to this legislation. We have some very reasonable amendments to move, just as the amendment about working dogs that we moved in the previous Parliament was reasonable and has now been more or less included in the bill. Just listen to us. Instead of calling out across the chamber because they can—they have the numbers and can do what they like—members opposite should listen to other points of view, because other people have other points of view. The whole idea of a Parliament is to have an exchange of views. If we did not have that exchange of views, there would be very little point in paying members the very large salaries that we all get paid. Members are here to listen, to take on board the views of others, and to help guide the proper development of legislation through the consideration of the views of many people in the community and not only their own view.

I urge members to take on these other opinions, which I have been putting forward. I am sure in the other place these opinions will be put forward as amendments. I hope that this time, unlike the last time, we do not let this legislation languish. From 25 June 2020 to the end of the last Parliament, we never discussed it. Despite the government claiming the bill was very important, we did not look at it for six months.

If it was so unimportant to the government then, I hope it has become important to it now, but I also hope that the government listens and takes on board the views of others, just as it has around the working dogs issue. I think that that is testament to the good arguments made by constituents who came to the Nationals and brought their concerns around genetics and the mechanics of making sure a dog can develop long enough to see whether it is going to function as a working dog before the decision is made about whether to sterilise. I put all those matters to the former minister. He refused to listen. But the current minister has apparently listened, which is good. I urge him to listen to these other concerns from Dogs West, because I think they have merit.

With that, I will conclude my contribution. But I want to make it very clear that despite all the misinformation put out by many members here tonight and by the minister in his own press releases to try to promulgate it throughout the community, the opposition is actually not opposed to this legislation. We want some sensible outcomes and amendments that we will put to the government. It can reject them, but having rejected them, it can answer to the groups in its communities that have made these suggestions, such as Dogs West. The member for Southern River cannot hide from the fact that he does not necessarily support an amendment. I think he did not support it in the previous Parliament. If we do move an amendment in this place, it will be interesting to see whether he will support it in this Parliament, but, moreover, whether he and members in the South Metropolitan Region in the other place will support sensible amendments.

With that, and noting the time, I will conclude my remarks. I do not know whether the minister will respond tonight. I look forward to the minister's response or any other discussion points that government members want to put forward.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.A. Templeman (Leader of the House)**.

House adjourned at 9.47 pm