

ANIMAL WELFARE INSPECTORS

**826. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:**

On 6 April the minister issued a press release on the Animal Welfare Act indicating the appointment of 100 general inspectors.

- (1) What functions will those general inspectors perform?
- (2) What will be the cost of this initiative?
- (3) What is the source of the funding for this initiative?
- (4) On what areas of the minister's portfolio will that cost impact?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(4) The member will recall that during debate on the animal welfare legislation, there was some discussion of the inspectors and their appointment. The inspectors are effectively established through the RSPCA network, so the cost of these appointments will not land on the taxpayer. By and large, the network of inspectors relies on the RSPCA network. The Labor Party made a pre-election commitment to give the RSPCA \$1 million over four years. Those funds have now started to flow to the RSPCA, and will perhaps be drawn down on to support this network. I understand that the nominations for inspectors are put up through that organisation to the director general of my department. I do not have any direct involvement in their appointment; it is done at officer level, so I am not familiar with precisely who was recommended and appointed. I understand that the RSPCA made the recommendations. Local council rangers and the like would be included in that process of nomination for appointment.

The obligations of the inspectors include enforcement of the statute. I tabled today the regulations that will basically underpin the activities of those inspection officers and the workings of that Act, which was proclaimed last Friday. Notice of that was in the *Government Gazette*. The operation of those regulations came into effect in double-quick time as a result of a fair bit of effort that was put into the work of the animal welfare unit inside the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. That unit came together from a small group of officers who worked vigorously to position the regulations that will effectively underpin the work of those investigative officers. I hope I have given every detail correctly. I think I have covered the complete flavour of the issue for the member. If I need to correct any detail, I will do so at the first opportunity.