



Speech by

**Mr G. HEALY**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

---

Hansard 1 December 1999

**TOOWOOMBA AND DISTRICT SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY**

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North—NPA) (10.25 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the Minister for Primary Industries the current situation in Toowoomba regarding animal welfare. Since the 1950s, the Toowoomba and District Society for the Prevention of Cruelty has been operating an animal refuge in the city. Apart from an annual grant of \$3,000 from the Department of Primary Industries, the society raises its own funds through boarding services, street stalls and donations.

Unfortunately, because of confusion between the independent society and the more publicised RSPCA, many people have made donations to the RSPCA, believing that it will benefit the local refuge. The Toowoomba society is not sales tax exempt, which is an additional financial burden.

For many years, the local society ran the pound facilities for the Toowoomba City Council. A decision taken in October 1998 by the Toowoomba City Council to run its own pound services and to take in only stray animals left the society with very little funds to care for the abandoned, neglected and abused animals unwanted by the community. In that time, the society has provided refuge for more than 700 cats and 900 dogs abandoned by Toowoomba and district residents. This includes animals from surrounding shires which, apart from one shire, pay no fees to the society.

Since 1998, the society has initiated cost-cutting measures to keep the refuge going. It has been using up its savings at the rate of \$10,000 per month and will run out of funds in the new year.

In November 1998, RSPCA Queensland approached the society, asking it to consider joining the RSPCA as a branch. Unfortunately, despite prolonged negotiations, this still has not happened.

I have written to the Minister for Primary Industries seeking his assistance and that of officers from his department in an endeavour to find a solution to the problem. Obviously, consideration of an increase in the State Government contribution would be a good start. But I believe that the society must also receive further assistance from local authorities and the general public for it to survive and continue to provide a most valuable service to the people of Toowoomba and district.

---