



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard 5 October 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pit Bull Terriers

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: There have been a number of horrific attacks on people by pit bull terriers in Australia. Recently, an elderly Queensland woman was severely mauled. I was asked yesterday if the Queensland Government would consider taking action in relation to pit bull terriers on a Statewide basis. My answer to that is yes. We will look at what, if anything, can be done to curb these vicious attacks. As members know, this is normally the responsibility of local government.

Over the centuries, these dogs were bred to kill. They were bred specifically for their strength and fierceness. However, it is clear from the Internet that American pit bull terriers are still being bred specifically to kill. There are Internet sites in the United States containing graphic reports detailing how one pit bull killed another bite by bite. Proud breeders advertise how they have deliberately bred their dogs from the fiercest and strongest lines. They are bred to kill other American pit bull terriers of a similar weight over and over again. They are nothing more than killing machines. It is plain there is no place in our suburbs for killing machines such as these.

Also on the Internet is a site owned by the Australian Dog Breeders Registry. The site says, "We are the only registry for the American pit bull terrier in Australia." It has a direct link under the title of Interesting Reading to the Pit Bull Reporter in the United States. In the Pit Bull Reporter one can read how a "perfect southern gentleman" named Boudreaux has bred fighting dogs for more than 35 years and can read a bite-by-bite account of an hour-long dog fight involving one of his champions, or so-called champions. As I say, there should be no room in our society for these fighting dogs.

According to the Internet, other Governments have found it difficult to define a pit bull. One answer used in the United States is defining dangerous dogs as including American pit bulls and any dog exhibiting the appearance and characteristics of that breed. Since June, France has required all attack dogs, including pit bulls, to be sterilised. The law is aimed at eliminating dangerous dogs from the country within 10 years.

Countries which have banned pit bulls are Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Holland. In the USA there is a variety of laws aimed at dealing with pit bull terriers. In one ordinance, dangerous dogs must be leashed and muzzled when not confined to the owner's property, and owners must carry \$100,000 of liability insurance. Another dog law bans pit bulldogs, which includes but is not limited to American pit bull terriers, Staffordshire bull terriers, American Staffordshire terriers and any mixed breed of dogs that includes these breeds. Another jurisdiction insists on pit bulls being neutered or spayed. They are specifically licensed with an accompanying photograph and cannot be owned by anyone under 21 years of age.

In response to a dog attack on a child, Germany recently passed legislation banning three breeds of dogs: American Staffordshire terriers, Staffordshire bull terriers and pit bulls. We will investigate the success of these laws. Like many people in this House, I am a proud dog owner and I love my dog.

Mr Bredhauer: Rusty.

Mr BEATTIE: He is a great dog—a bit fat, but a wonderful dog. I do not think any sensible dog owner would support pit bulls. I table print-outs of some of the pit bull sites on the Internet, together with references to some of the anti-pit bull laws introduced in various jurisdictions.