



Speech by

## Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard Wednesday, 21 February 2007

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### ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF QUEENSLAND

**Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (8.19 pm): Since 1959, the Animal Welfare League of Queensland at Coombabah has been providing healthcare, food, shelter and love to society's unwanted, abandoned, injured and homeless animals. Annually, the Animal Welfare League cares for over 10,000 animals that arrive on its doorstep. Tragically, not all animals can be rescued and rehomed by the efforts of the Animal Welfare League volunteers.

Every year many companion animals are euthanased because there are too many animals and not enough responsible homes for them. In fact, in 2005 the Animal Welfare League of Queensland received 4,197 stray and surrendered cats and kittens from the Gold Coast and its surrounding areas. Of those, 43 per cent—1,800—were euthanased. Of the 5,480 strays and surrendered dogs and puppies that were surrendered in 2005, 19 per cent of them had to be euthanased.

The figures are even higher for the RSPCA and council pounds. It is clear that large-scale euthanasia is failing to reduce the problem of stray and abandoned animals. It is a reactive measure that does not adequately address the root cause of the problem. Cats are the most significant issue due to seasonal or summer breeding, which is referred to as the kitten tsunami. There is an increase in the euthanasia of cats in summer. On one day alone, the Animal Welfare League processed 87 unclaimed stray and surrendered cats and kittens.

It is really sad that in 2005-06, 75 per cent of all cats and kittens were handed in by their owners. These litters could have been prevented if all cats had to be desexed and microchipped prior to sale or exchange. This is the most easily policed and cost-effective way to ensure that animals that are not intended to be bred responsibly are desexed.

It is time that communities became more committed to working to reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanased each year. In December last year, I tabled a petition in this House signed by over 7,000 people who were committed to the compulsory desexing of animals to be the solution to this sad and tragic reality of pet overpopulation.

This Sunday I will be attending the Dogs Day Out event at The Spit, Main Beach, to demonstrate with hundreds of other people who want this issue to be addressed. I will be launching the next round of petitions that I will present to this House. Indeed, registered breeders would not be required to desex all of their animals. The aim of this petition is to highlight the unnecessary backyard breeding of cats and dogs and the consequences of humans not taking responsibility for that. I am pleased to support this petition and I call on all members of this House to promote the need for pet owners to microchip and desex their cats and dogs.