




Speech By
Verity Barton

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2016

**ANIMAL MANAGEMENT (PROTECTING PUPPIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.20 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I say that I trust that all 89 members of this House are absolutely committed to fighting cruelty against animals and that each and every one of us is very much committed to sending a strong message to the community that it is simply not okay. The reason that I want to rise today and make a brief contribution to this bill is that, as the member for Broadwater, I am incredibly proud to say that the Animal Welfare League of Queensland has its headquarters in my electorate at Coombabah. I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to them and the great work that they have done.

The AWL was established nearly 60 years ago and in that time they have built an incredibly strong reputation and they have had a very longstanding commitment not only on the Gold Coast but also in Ipswich, Beenleigh and other parts of Queensland to making sure that we reduce the number of unwanted cats and dogs. The reason that I particularly want to speak and pay tribute to them today is that they had taken the opportunity to make a submission to the bill, and indeed there was another submission that I think does reflect some of the concerns that the AWL have had.

The AWL, as I said, have a very strong reputation. Their record really does stand for itself, particularly when we consider that their Gold Coast facility has the lowest euthanasia rate for cats and dogs in a large city, that being the Gold Coast. Every time I have had an opportunity to go there I am always welcomed with not only open arms but usually lots of kisses and licks from the puppies and the cats that I get to cuddle. They also have guinea pigs. I would certainly encourage anyone, particularly on the Gold Coast, who is looking to get a cat or a dog for their family to take advantage of the Animal Welfare League's Adopt a Pet program.

The concern that has been raised—perhaps not directly in the submission but certainly by Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand, who is at the University of Queensland School of Veterinary Science—is that there may be some unintended consequences for animal shelters. I want to go on the record today to not only support the work that the Animal Welfare League do but also encourage the minister to make sure that there are no negative impacts on animal shelters, to make sure that we do support those organisations, particularly not-for-profit organisations like the Animal Welfare League which do rely heavily on volunteers and donations, and to make sure that there are no unintended consequences of this legislation which would hamper their ability to do the amazing work they are doing or have a negative impact on that work.

The only other thing I would briefly touch on is to join my colleagues on this side of the House in questioning whether or not this is the most necessary legislation. Certainly those on our side of the House feel that the existing provisions that enabled councils to manage this were sufficient. However, I appreciate that this is a commitment of the government and that is something on which they are

following through. The reason that I am sure all sides of the House will come together on this is that ultimately we need to be able to ensure that when Queensland families go and buy a puppy or a dog—and of course not everyone is going to go to a shelter like the Animal Welfare League—for their household they can have absolute confidence not only in the breeder and the lineage of the puppy or the dog they are purchasing but also that through the purchase they are not unwittingly endorsing cruel practices against animals.

As I say, I only wanted to make a brief contribution. In closing, I again pay tribute to the amazing work of the Animal Welfare League. They do a fantastic job. I look forward to seeing them again soon.