



Speech By  
**James Lister**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

**STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (2.20 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee report on the Auditor-General's report titled *Regulating animal welfare services*. It was very interesting to hear some of the things the member for Traeger said because they ring some bells with me given what has happened recently in my own electorate.

I was approached by some very disappointed volunteers from the Macintyre Animal and Pet Rescue, which is a great volunteer organisation in Gundy. They told me about a person who was living with 34 dogs in a tent on the side of the road in Texas. The dogs were malnourished and without water. The poor person was covered in faeces. The entire tent was covered in faeces. There were real concerns about the welfare of the person and also the dogs, because quite a few of the bitches were due to have litters of puppies. It was a very distressing situation. The Macintyre Animal and Pet Rescue volunteers said that they were unable to get any support from the RSPCA and they were not able to get assistance from Biosecurity officers.

**Mrs Frecklington:** That's their job.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from the member for Nanango; it is their job. Obviously, Texas is not the leafy suburbs of Brisbane and there are distance issues and so forth. However, there were 34 dogs involved, and probably a lot more by now. Quite apart from the moral obligation we have to look after the person who I fear was not well, there is also the question of looking after the animals. It turned out that the volunteers did a whip around and provided 80 kilograms of dog food to the person, who has since moved somewhere else. The RSPCA were of little help. It disappoints me to be reminded that they have been very zealous in prosecuting cases that appeal to their political proclivities but would not go to Texas to investigate that very serious case.

I understand there are not many Biosecurity officers, distances are great and so forth. Reports and that sort of thing are great, but we need to recognise that there are major animal welfare matters that do not involve the usual things, such as feedlots and so forth, that the commentariat get fired up about. Dogs or cats are being abused, kept in poor conditions or abandoned and the good volunteers of the Macintyre Animal and Pet Rescue and others, such as Southern Downs ARK in my electorate, have to pick up the pieces. They run on a shoestring budget. They are run by volunteers who work every hour that God sends and some besides, cleaning the shelters, looking after the animals and organising the local vets, who do a great job to vaccinate them et cetera. They all say to me that more needs to be done at a state level.

I think one answer would be, when there is a reasonable suspicion, to empower council officers to enter a premises to do something about such things. We have seen plenty of bills pass through this House that have enabled public servants to enter a landholder's property to inspect for tree clearing

and things such as that. Why can that not be done for rangers employed by councils, for instance? That is something that Carey Emerton from Goondiwindi raised with me when I was there a week or so ago, and I certainly agree with her. I ask the government to consider that. What is officially in reports and what departments and organisations are supposed to do in this field and what they actually do may not always be the same thing.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.