




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.15 pm): It is not surprising that we highly object to the whole notion of the RSPCA having such a lead role in the conduct of inspections and policing of animal welfare in this state. In fact, we made it very clear in our statement of reservation that it is not surprising that these audit conclusions are going to say that, but that really misses the main point here that we are dealing with an ideologically driven organisation. I remember years ago talking to someone in my family who was donating to the RSPCA when they said, 'It's great. They save dogs and cats.' I said, 'Hang on, this is a politically motivated organisation.' It is against live exports, against intensive farming of pigs, chooks and feedlots and against rodeos. It would hate the pig hunting that we do out there which is pest eradication free of charge for the people of Queensland and the government of Queensland with introduced species. These people are against all of that.

The equivalent would be perhaps getting the Shooters Union in Queensland to do crowd control and Extinction Rebellion being audited by the likes of another interest group that would do crowd control by saying, 'Can you just audit those people holding up traffic on the South East Freeway?' Of course there is going to be a bias supplied in the way they do their duties. If I am into rodeo and I am out in Mount Isa and my horse is looking sick for whatever reason, despite whatever care and attention is provided the RSPCA inspectors can come and take my horse. You are telling me that they are not going to express some bias in the way they do their duties? We are expected to believe that there will be a process of accreditation for these inspectors and that that is going to do the job? Of course it is not. The reason they are there and given a fake badge by the government of Queensland is that they ideologically align with these activities that they do not like that are prevalent in regional Queensland.

There are not a lot of things that we get to enjoy anymore. We have crocs in our rivers. We still have our rodeos, but those opposite are trying to take them away from us. You can still do some pig hunting sometimes, but that is going to be clamped down on. I know the government is going to try and have a go at that, yet these guys are wanting weapons and you leave them there unabashed? The Auditor-General has outlined that there are some problems here and they are not doing very good, yet we are still saying, 'That's okay. Let's just tighten up a little bit around them, but let's still let them do what they're doing.'

In terms of some of the stories we heard—and it was outlined before—the RSPCA sells pets for profits to help fund its business, but it goes and inspects without notice and prosecutes pet shops that compete against it. As I said, inspectors can go out to a big rodeo area or horseracing area and just start hitting people with fines or whatever. If you expect that they are not going to express some bias, you are not being objective in this discussion at all. It is absolutely no surprise at all to find these recommendations from the audit in the committee report, but what is not discussed in the report is the fact that the central part of this problem is that you have the wrong people in there. We cannot get

biosecurity officers. In the whole northern and southern gulf the government hardly has one biosecurity officer up there anymore, and that fits much more in their role. Why can we not beef up the number of DAF biosecurity officers and make them joint roles?

We already have pet shelters. Mount Isa has the terrific Paws Hoofs and Claws. They do a great job looking after animals. There is no RSPCA out there and I do not think there is any in Townsville anymore. The Townsville rehoming shelter does a great job. We do not need the RSPCA up there. They are not looking at dogs and cats, but they are certainly quick to prosecute anyone if their horse or turtle is sick. I am not kidding about turtles. They have prosecuted people who had sick turtles in a pet shop. They will come after anything and they will use their bias as much as they want.

We keep forgetting that they are a political ideological organisation as much as anything else and, I think, much more so than an organisation that looks after dogs and cats. We heard some absolutely horrible stories about what they have done to people. People have been almost sent broke. People have had to go court to get back their animals. They are trying to fight for their business or their integrity and reputation. Here we are waving them through and saying, 'Well, let's just tighten up things around them.' That is not good enough. In this day and age in Queensland there should be more accountability. You should not have such people looking after these issues when they are clearly politically biased.