

DOG BREEDERS — CRUELTY PROSECUTIONS

**640. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

Ample notice of this question has been given.

- (1) How many prosecutions have there been in WA in the last five years against dog breeders who have committed acts of cruelty that the proposed legislation will seek to reduce?
- (2) How many of these instances were able to avoid prosecution due to the inadequacies of the current legislation?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I apologise that this has been a little bit difficult—and the answer here today is not ideal, either. Part of the difficulty is due to the member’s original question talking about the Dog Act, whereas, in fact, I think we are talking here about something that comes under the Animal Welfare Act. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is responsible for the Animal Welfare Act, but it has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals by which the RSPCA is responsible for the reports of cruelty to companion animals, including investigating and prosecuting cruelty to dogs.

In the grant agreement, the RSPCA is required to prepare an annual report to the department. That report details the charge under the act and the outcome under the prosecutions. The Animal Welfare Act does not set out specific offences in relation to dog breeders, so the RSPCA is not asked to specify what offences have been committed by dog breeders as opposed to other individuals in charge of dogs. The department says it has no information relevant to this question, but I will direct the department to get on the phone and contact the RSPCA and see whether we can find that information for the member.