

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

DOG AMENDMENT (STOP PUPPY FARMING) BILL 2020

Second Reading

Resumed from 19 February.

MR W.R. MARMION (Nedlands — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.28 pm]: I rise to speak on behalf of the Liberal Party as the lead speaker on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. I advise the minister that we will not be supporting the bill in its current form. The intention is well meaning. I think everyone in this house, and probably everyone in Western Australia, would not want puppy farming to be undertaken. On its website, the RSPCA defines “puppy farming” as —

‘an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs’ behavioural, social and/or physiological needs’.

That is totally unsatisfactory. No-one in Western Australia would condone that sort of activity.

The Liberal Party has had a very close look at this bill and consulted widely. The member for Maylands is a well-meaning person and strongly supports this bill and the objectives that it endeavours to achieve. Although we also support its objectives, we feel it not only has some shortcomings but also a lot of people think it could have the opposite effect, which would be most concerning.

The bill has some reasonably good aspects, but they add red tape to the current process of owning a dog. That may be a good or a bad thing; there are different views either way. Extensive consultation was undertaken by the government. Quite a large consultation document was produced—I will not go through it—about various aspects put forward. There seemed to be widespread support; a high percentage of people supported the objectives of the bill. I will go through some of those in a minute. The Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill basically amends the Dog Act 1976 to give effect to measures to prevent and stop puppy farming by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs in Western Australia. That is one of the bill’s objectives, as mentioned in the explanatory memorandum.

The mandatory standards underpin these legislative changes and are critical to ensuring that everyone is aware of the appropriate standards of care for these animals, which are integral to the lives of many Western Australians. One objective is to regulate the sale and breeding of dogs in Western Australia. As mentioned in the explanatory memorandum, dog breeding is not currently regulated in Western Australia. As a result, dog breeders are able to disguise their operations, avoid detection by authorities, and continue to breed dogs irresponsibly. The bill attempts to solve the problem of overbreeding and the inappropriate breeding of dogs in the following ways: firstly, by reducing the number of unwanted dogs born. We would all support that. Secondly, it will provide another outlet for the sale or adoption of unwanted or abandoned dogs. We would all support that too. The Shenton Dogs’ Refuge Home is in my electorate of Nedlands. It is a terrific facility that benefits the community widely—that is the broader community of Western Australia—particularly in the metropolitan area. Thirdly, it will provide a means for purchasers to be confident that they are not sourcing their dog from a puppy farm. Fourthly, it will allow dogs to be traced throughout their life, thus allowing puppy farms to be identified and shut down. The database would indicate whether a large number of dogs are being bred from one particular source. That could be identified and presumably investigated to see whether a breeder is operating within the rules and also that the dogs are being well looked after.

This bill will regulate the breeding of dogs and ensure both transparency and traceability to identify where dogs are coming from. There are arguments that these measures will not necessarily stop poor breeding practices. It may not cover the registration of all dogs throughout the state. Even if it stopped puppy farming in WA, dogs will still be sourced from the eastern states. That is another issue.

It would be interesting for the minister, in his second reading response, to mention how many dogs are currently registered. My experience, having lived all over Western Australia, is that it is probably a lot easier to register dogs in the metropolitan area than it is in certain rural locations. That is based on my experience living in the Kimberley. I wonder how many dogs are registered in the Kimberley. Are all dogs registered in the metropolitan area? I know they are supposed to be registered, but are they currently registered? Obviously one of the key issues of this bill is to ensure that all dogs are registered.

Mr D.A. Templeman: If we had a central registration system, we would know.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Correct. No; not necessarily—not everyone registers their dog. I do not know that everyone registers their dog with their local authority.

This bill will amend the Dog Act 1976 and the Animal Welfare Act 2002. I must say that we received a very good handout from departmental officers during our briefing. I am looking around but I do not see them, because I do not think we are going into consideration in detail today.

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Mr D.R. Michael interjected.

Mr W.R. MARMION: They are here, hidden at the back. I thank the minister for our briefing and the very good handout. The second page refers to the scope of the Dog Act. The first dot point states that it provides for the control and management of dogs—that is, responsible dog ownership. It also provides for dog registration and microchipping, dog attacks and dangerous dogs. Its enforcement authority is the local governments. The other act that is extremely relevant to the bill before us is the Animal Welfare Act. The scope of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 is the prevention of cruelty to animals; it promotes the health, welfare and safety of all animals, including companion animals; and regulates the use of animals—we do not need to worry about that—for scientific purposes. The primary scope in terms of puppy farming is the mistreatment of animals, particularly dogs. One would argue that the Animal Welfare Act is the vehicle to make sure that all animals, whether in a facility that has lots of dogs or in a house with one dog, are all treated and cared for properly and that their wellbeing is managed.

When we asked in the briefing whether the Animal Welfare Act would be part of this process, the answer was yes. I understand this amendment bill is part of a package to stop puppy farming. The government wants to regulate dogs so that we know where all the dogs are in Western Australia. The welfare of dogs will be managed through the Animal Welfare Act. We had some discussion about that. I guess an amending bill will come before this house in due course. In some of the consultation that I have had with various people and organisations, including the RSPCA, obviously, I have been told that perhaps they need to be beefed up a little in their powers; maybe more support mechanisms are needed so they can get out there and do their job. All the people I spoke to, certainly on our side, would see that as being an essential element of getting the desired outcome of this bill. I should say that this bill only achieves some of the outcomes the government wants to achieve. Without the Animal Welfare Act, we are only halfway there. Some people have argued that we could potentially go backwards without the Animal Welfare Act being in play.

One element of the bill that is mandatory is dog sterilisation. The aim is to ensure the non-proliferation of dogs—unwanted dogs. We do not want that. The aim of it is well meaning. Obviously, it is a burden, but an exemption in the bill states that current owners will not have to do that. People who criticise this argue that it means that some dogs will not be sterilised. We can take it either way. Of course, Dogs West is totally opposed to this, as it is a breeder that believes, as both the minister and the member for Maylands know, that Dogs West should have an exemption for sterilisation —

Ms L.L. Baker: Of dogs!

Mr W.R. MARMION: —of dogs!—and also to be registered as a breeder. Dogs West is a bit up in arms over that and it has its reasons. If I have time, I might mention some of those later.

Another aspect of the bill is the approval to breed. If someone is a breeder, they will have to register. If someone owns a dog that is not sterilised after two years, I understand that that person is required to register as a breeder. The Dogs West people get a bit grumpy over that because that is what it does: it has dogs that breed. Any dog that is not sterilised and is over two years old will have to be registered as a breeder. The bill outlines that a local government will approve the breeder and can impose conditions. Indeed, the way I read the clause is that local government can put any conditions on a breeder in writing. That is open, and naturally people who are concerned about that can see the negative side of that. I have had suggestions from members of Dogs West that some councils might make it very difficult for someone to register as a breeder. As the member for Maylands would know, a lot of breeders breed from their home. Some are concerned that their local government may put a condition such as owning only one breeding dog. There may be some restrictions on having two or three breeding dogs. A breeder might find that they may not be able to legally live in certain local authorities with breeding dogs.

Ms L.L. Baker: It's the same at the moment, member.

Mr W.R. MARMION: That is true; the member is right. People, though, do not necessarily register as a breeder.

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr W.R. MARMION: No, that is not the member's fault.

When I was a young lad in Bunbury, we had a dog. When the dog disappeared for two or three days, we would find that it had been under the shed and suddenly there were all these little puppies. I think that happened to every household where I grew up. As a child, it was a wonderful experience to see these little puppies. Obviously, there are drawbacks—with what happens to the puppies. This bill means that if someone happens to be in that unfortunate situation, as we were many decades ago, they have seven days to register as a breeder. I understand the reason for that, because this is an important element for tracking dogs and the process of looking after dogs. When someone registers as a breeder, they will get a number. One good thing about the bill is that registration will be able to be done online. That will be useful if someone happens to have a computer and access to the internet. If someone finds themselves in this unfortunate situation—or fortunate; they might be very happy that their dog suddenly has

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puppies—they will have seven days to register as a breeder and they will get a number. If they happen to live in a remote area of Western Australia and they do not have the internet, I do not know what they would do. Maybe the minister or the member, because the member for Maylands will be talking to this bill, might be able to explain whether there will be some sort of leniency on the seven days if someone who lives 300 kilometres from Halls Creek suddenly has a litter of puppies, they do not want to get a fine under the act, and they have to get to a computer or the internet to register as a breeder, explain their circumstances and pay the fee set by the department to become a registered breeder. We understand that mechanism and there may be some issues around that.

In the briefing, we asked what fee might be set for someone to become a registered breeder. It was suggested at about \$300, which was not guaranteed; it was going to be a regulated fee. That is a concern for local government. I have spoken to the Western Australian Local Government Association and it has some concerns. The member might be able to say what that fee would be. I understand that local government was heavily involved in consultations at the beginning, but from the feedback I have been getting of late, they are a little disappointed with recent feedback. They were rolling along with, and very supportive of, the bill until they realised that there will be a fair bit of work for them to register dogs and breeders and make sure they comply with a whole lot of things. I think they found out that fees were not going to be set by the council. The member can correct me if I am wrong; this is what I managed to ascertain from talking to people. The fees will be set by the department. If the fees are one size fits all, the fee may be reasonable, to cover costs for some local authorities, but it may not be sufficient. I assume, from my logic, that one fee for all may not sit well with some local authorities, particularly remote ones. They may not be very diligent in enforcing the act. I would not mind a comment on how diligent some of them are at the moment in enforcing the registration of dogs.

I move on to the smart part of the bill, the centralised registration system. In the briefing, we were told that each council has its own registration system, with some being paper registration systems and others being on computers and spreadsheets. The aim of this bill is to have a centralised register that also brings in cats; we may as well have one for both. It will be managed by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. I asked a few questions about that. Resources will be put to the department so that it can do this. Obviously, the department will need a lot of resources at implementation, because it will have to go to all the different local authorities around Western Australia—there are some 138 at last count—to get all the information, some of it on paper, and manually put it onto a centralised database. It is a job that I would probably be loath to do, even if it is well paid. It will be a major task. One could argue for the bill that local authorities will not have that problem. Basically, if it is all centralised, the minister can say, “There you go; there’s a reduction in your workload. It’s all going well.” One of the key aspects of the centralised registration system and how the department will manage looking after all the dogs in Western Australia is through the breeding number. When a new dog is suddenly born from somewhere, the breeder of that dog has a number. Once this legislation comes into effect, when someone gets a dog, they will need to register it, so they will need the breeder’s number, which makes sense. Once the breeder gets that number, they have that number forever, unless they decide not to be a breeder. The mechanism has been thought through cleverly. The minister might be able to explain what happens in reality. Someone may breed a dog at home, so they can register as a breeder and comply with the act. What would happen if someone stops for a picnic on the way to Fitzroy Crossing and a lone dog comes along? If the dog likes that person and the food they have, it might decide to jump in their car. If that person notices that no-one is looking after it, they may take it home. They realise that they have to register the dog but they do not have the breeding number. I am talking about what would occur once this legislation comes into effect. Someone needs to explain to me how someone can register a dog without knowing the breeding number. We will get on to pet shops in a minute. The register needs to have a mechanism for a dog that just appears.

While I am talking about this subject, I turn to the source of dogs. A dog can be sourced from a dog refuge or from Dogs West, which sells pure breeds. The bigger source is crossbreeds from wherever. A lot of crossbreeds come from the eastern states. I think about 10 pet shops source these dogs from various places. That is by far the majority. A number of these dogs may have come from the eastern states. They might have been sold by a pet shop. When this legislation takes effect, they will not be able to be sold by a pet shop. People in my electorate may have a crossbreed from somewhere in the eastern states. They do not know exactly where it came from, but suddenly it is in a little box in WA and they have to register it. They would not have a breeding number either, unless there was a national scheme. I can see that it will never be 100 per cent because people will try to register dogs that have no breeding number.

I will wait until the Premier finishes chatting with the minister. This is a really important bill. It is our first day back. We have one week to go and we have to get down to business.

I am interested in how the register will work when the majority of new dogs will be crossbreeds. What will the mechanism be for fudging the breeding number? As I just said before I was interrupted, we could end up having a national register. That could make it a bit tricky if there was no number. What happens then?

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Ms L.L. Baker: They've got the same problem with microchipping at the moment.

Mr W.R. MARMION: That is another thing. That is the same problem. It is amazing how long I have been talking!

Mr D.A. Templeman: You haven't said much.

Mr W.R. MARMION: No. I have only got to pet shops. Lots of members want to talk on this bill.

The other key part of the bill, which will have a big impact, is that pet shops will transition to adoption centres.

Ms C.M. Rowe: It's fabulous that that is happening.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I did not say that it was not. By transitioning to adoption centres, that is another outlet. A lot of people who want a dog go to the Dogs' Refuge Home at Shenton Park in my electorate. This will be another outlet. That is a good thing. There is no question about that. I understand that someone will have to be approved and registered as having a dinky-di dog refuge that meets certain standards and be ticked off. I am sure that the Dogs' Refuge Home will meet those standards. I want to give a bit of a throw-out to the dog refuge in my electorate, which does a wonderful job. Karen Rhodes, the president of the Dogs' Refuge Home in Shenton Park, has been there a long time—since 2007. She has a board. The current CEO is Kristi Treadgold. There are some 30 staff and 250 volunteers. If people ever drive down Lemnos Street on the weekend, they will see people walking dogs all over the place—all over Mt Claremont. We thank all the people who do that. There will soon be another outlet through pet shops transitioning to adoption centres. The question that arises for people who want to buy a crossbreed dog is: what will happen there? Presumably, they will be buying them online. I do not know what will occur.

From the statistics that I have looked at, most of the market seems to be crossbreed dogs, not purebred dogs. I am not an expert on dogs. My wife has bought one dog. I am not going there; it is not my dog. I do not mind talking about greyhounds. When I was at university, my college decided to buy a greyhound. I was the treasurer of the St George's College greyhound racing association. We were called the Shafter Syndicate. We had to register our syndicate. That was the name that was approved. The poor little dog won four races at Cannington.

Ms L.L. Baker: What happened to it?

Mr R.S. Love: You put it down?

Mr W.R. MARMION: No, it was not. I was the treasurer of the greyhound racing association. We had to issue new shares. I worked out the numbers. Dogs had to come second every time they raced to break even. In our view—we were just a student organisation—we had to have a dog that won quite a few races. The dog was a bit small and would get buffeted around when it came around the corner. I will not mention his name. One of our members ended up adopting a dog as a pet. The dog's name was Cannon Newell. I do not know whether we can look up the register. It won four races at Cannington Central.

Ms L.L. Baker: And lived happily ever after!

Mr W.R. MARMION: Yes, it lived happily ever after. Colin looked after him.

On that note, this bill removes the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled. Having been a former greyhound owner, probably a one-twentieth shareholder, I fully support that. Many people have been lobbying. Someone who works in a shop very close to my electorate office is a strong supporter of greyhounds and the adoption of greyhounds.

I have contacted the Dogs West Canine Association of WA lots of times and I have been to Cannington. It has a wonderful facility, and has it not grown? I do not know whether it is the largest such facility in the Southern Hemisphere, but it would not surprise me because it is enormous. It does a really good job. Dogs West is 100 per cent behind stopping the sale of puppies and dogs in pet stores and ending puppy farming, but it believes that the bill in its current state will not have the desired outcomes and that it will, in fact, make the problems a great deal worse. I will refer to some of the outcomes that Dogs West members believe will come from this bill. They believe that it will legitimise and support already well-known puppy farm productions; force already poorly resourced and funded local councils to manage a process that Dogs West already does extremely well; have a massive negative impact on registered breeders who are already transparent with their practices and are accountable to Dogs West; and result in the strong likelihood that rare breeds will no longer be available in Western Australia if current registered breeders living in the suburbs are forced to sterilise their dogs.

Ms L.L. Baker: Did they say how they're going to be forced to sterilise their dogs, member?

Mr W.R. MARMION: I am assuming that what they are saying is that they will end up sterilising their dogs —

Ms L.L. Baker: But this bill does not make them do that.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I am just saying what Dogs West members said. I have another comment on which the member for Maylands will probably ask a question, but I will read it into *Hansard*. They are also concerned about a reduction

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of the gene pool of certain breeds, especially now that there is a flying ban—this might be related to the COVID-19 pandemic—because the genetic diversity will be sitting in a home in the suburbs sterilised. From my brief knowledge from the people I know who have pure breeds, they have to go interstate. That is what they are getting at there.

I also spoke to the Western Australian Local Government Association, and I think it is on board. From what I can gather, I think the minister had it on board until more recently. I think I have probably explained that to a great extent. Specifically, it is concerned about certain proposed sections, which I will raise tomorrow during consideration in detail, but I will foreshadow them now. I refer to proposed sections 26I, 26K, 26L and 26M, all of which relate to breed applications. It is also concerned about the new power to seize under warrant an unsterilised dog, which comes under proposed section 29(3)(caa); assessing, granting or refusing and cancelling a pet shop approval, which comes under proposed sections 38B, 38C, 38D and 38E, which relate to the things that have to be done; inquiring into the conduct of an approved pet shop business, which comes under proposed section 38L; inquiring into the conduct of a dog supply approval holder, which comes under proposed section 38W; additional powers of enforcement that may require additional specialised training, such as seizing and copying documents, taking photographs, film, audio, video and other recordings for evidentiary purposes, which comes under proposed section 43B; and dealing with objection and review processes, which comes under proposed sections 54E, 54F and 54G. In general, everyone supports the objective of trying to eradicate the mistreatment of dogs at the top level. If there is a concern that they are more likely to be mistreated in a facility that has lots of dogs, which is logical —

Ms L.L. Baker: That's not true.

Mr W.R. MARMION: It is not true. The term “puppy farming” conjures up the idea of more than one dog—a farm. We do not usually farm one animal. A good facility could have an enormous number of dogs with their own heater, spa parlour —

Ms L.L. Baker: Masseur.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Yes, a masseuse, and a lot of pasture to run around on. I know it is not about that. It all comes back to the welfare of dogs, whether it is an individual dog or lots of dogs. The main concern is that the enforcement of looking after a dog comes under the Animal Welfare Act 2002. This bill has a mechanism to regulate how dogs are registered and put on a database in local authorities, and one of the conditions of being a breeder is that the person is not unfit. Certainly such a person can register a dog but they cannot register to be a breeder. If a person has a record of being very bad in looking after dogs—that is, they have form—the local authority, I understand, will have the power to not allow them to have a dog or become a breeder in that local authority area. They might go local authority hopping to see whether they can get away with it somewhere else.

That pretty much sums up all my points, but I am interested in some feedback on designer dogs, if you like. I have an article that refers to dog breeding in Queensland. It suggests that the price of designer dogs has doubled in recent times. It is a surprising figure.

Ms L.L. Baker: I saw one article saying \$12 000

Mr W.R. MARMION: The article I have suggested only \$8 000. I am staggered that a designer dog can cost \$8 000. It is my understanding from the people in my area of Nedlands who have designer dogs that they cost \$2 500, \$3 000 or something like that, but I am out of touch. The cost is \$8 000 in Queensland, and the member for Maylands suggested that it can be up to \$12 000. There are a number of speakers on our side.

Ms L.L. Baker: You mentioned \$300, if you don't mind commenting.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Yes.

Ms L.L. Baker: No price has been set for this. The only thing I can think of is that at the moment when you register a dog, the annual fee is \$250, but it may go up by \$50.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I think it is to do with the breeding licence.

Ms L.L. Baker: It certainly has not been set.

Mr W.R. MARMION: I know that it has not been set, but I asked for a ballpark figure. In fairness, I do not want to do them in. I was keen to get a rough idea of what it might be. We understand that it could end up coming in at \$10. The government has not set it. That is just the figure that I was given.

Mr D.A. Templeman: So you're opposing the bill.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Yes. I said that before, I think some amendments will be moved by the Nationals WA. We will see how we go.

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MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Deputy Leader of the Nationals WA) [5.08 pm]: I will speak quite briefly on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020 and say at the outset that the Nationals WA will not support the bill in its current form. I have some amendments on the notice paper, to which the member for Nedlands alluded.

Mr D.A. Templeman: So you wouldn't support it even if they —

Mr R.S. LOVE: If those amendments were passed, we would have to reconsider that position because most of my concerns revolve around those particular matters. In the second reading speech that the minister made some time ago now, back before COVID hit, he spoke of this being the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020, but there does not seem to be a definition of "puppy farming" in the bill; that seems rather strange. In the handout that we were given in a briefing from the department, a definition was provided that appears to be taken from an RSPCA Australia definition; that is —

'an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or physiological needs.'

There is no doubt that we should all support that aim, but the issues that I will highlight are ones that, unfortunately, have not been taken on board by the government despite earlier indication that there would be consultation. One of the matters that we know with consultation is that we normally take on board what people tell us, but that does not seem to have happened.

The Minister for Local Government knows that he is not only responsible for the administration of the Dog Act, but also in charge of the relationship with local government. From his previous speeches and previous actions, we know that he is quite proud of the way that he has interacted with local government. We also know that the member for Maylands has been central in these discussions that have taken place with a range of people in this state, and is also involved in a working group to look at the law.

One of the concerns put to me is that under the current legislation, approval is needed if a person wants to breed a dog. Local governments are responsible for ensuring that the people are fit to undertake that, and that the dog will be kept in the expected standards. The conditions of keeping that dog must align with any written law and, presumably, that may include a local planning scheme. The concern put to me from potential users is that local government will insist that they have a property that is essentially for the purposes of being a breeding kennel. If a person is a puppy farmer, I dare say they will need a breeding kennel. They will probably need some sort of concrete shed or something to house the dogs in. But if a person wants to breed from their pet Chihuahua, and to keep the breed going, they will probably keep the dog in their home, and so the idea that they need to have a kennel licence is way over the top. But this has been confirmed to me in the process of consultation we undertook with the sector by many people who have contacted me, by unbidden people who also got in touch and by other members who passed feedback on to me. Those people were concerned that they would be unable to get a dog breeding permit from the local government because they would not fit into the definition of a breeding kennel.

Ms L.L. Baker: Would you happen to have any specificity around which LGAs said that, because I'm really interested in finding out if I can.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I would have to go through my notes to find that, and then I would have to be happy that the person would want to be identified—but assuming that that is the case, at some point we could pass that on to the member. That certainly is an issue raised by local governments themselves in that they are concerned about the onus that will fall on them.

As we heard from the member for Nedlands, the local government sector was initially quite happy with the concept of controlling puppy farming, as I think most people would be. Oscar's Law was introduced because of a situation in another state, so we do not want to see those types of things perpetuated. Local governments have very practical people on them who are very concerned about how this will all be undertaken. It might surprise some to know that for some local governments, maintaining the existing requirements under the existing Dog Act is very expensive. Ranger services pertaining mainly to the Dog Act in some rural councils, as I have been advised, account for up to two per cent of their rate base; one local government in my electorate assures me that it is 1.5 per cent. Therefore, local governments already have considerable costs, and, as the member for Nedlands highlighted, local governments are greatly concerned about the imputations of this bill on them. I have been furnished with a copy of some minutes by a local government person from a March meeting of the Western Australian Local Government Association, which is the peak body for many local governments—but not the member for Nedlands' home local government, and maybe one other.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Maybe Cambridge is thinking about it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: There we go.

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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Most local governments are in the sector, and we know that the minister has the much-lauded state and local government partnership agreement that says that there will be minimum expectations on consultation. It appears that according to this agreement, those expectations were not met in this case. I am not arguing the case for WALGA; I am simply relating to the minister what WALGA recorded in its minutes.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They were a long-term stakeholder group.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes; I will get on to that later.

Reading from the minutes, a motion was moved by Mayor Carol Adams and seconded by Catherine Ehrhardt. The background commentary to the motion says —

The Bill was introduced to Parliament prior to consultation with the Local Government sector under the State and Local Government Partnership Agreement, where a 12 week consultation period is considered appropriate if new legislation or amendments to existing legislation are likely to have a significant impact on the sector.

There it is in black and white from the local government sector itself that it considers the inadequacy of this consultation to be quite a problem. It continues —

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries advise WALGA that fees and charges are to be set in regulation will be based on evidence produced via cost-modelling consultations performed in 2018 with 18 local governments. However, this body of work is currently commercial-in-confidence due to the need to utilise information to go to tender for the establishment of a centralised dog registration system. With the current lack of information, the local government sector may lack confidence that full cost recovery will be an inherent principle of future regulated fees and charges.

We can see why the local government sector would be concerned as I have already outlined the costs that are plaguing the local government sector around the existing Dog Act. In some cases, local governments can span many towns and many hundreds, if not thousands, of kilometres, so for someone to go to inspect a premise to ensure that a person is fit and proper to hold such a permit can be quite an expensive and time-consuming process. We also know all the rest of the issues around the registry et cetera that local governments have concerns about. All this culminated in a motion that was put and carried by WALGA. The motion was that WALGA write to the minister and request that he withdraw the Dog Amendment (Stop Public Farming) Bill and more appropriately consult with the sector, traditional custodians and the wider community, or, failing that, that he remove any reference to local government in the bill, as the sector did not endorse it in its current form. It is quite concerning that the local government sector, which is tasked in the main with carrying out many of the functions of the bill, is asking to step away from those functions and for any reference to it to be removed from the bill. I do not know whether the minister has responded to WALGA and I do not know whether the minister is likely to give any response in his summation to the second reading debate, but that is the situation. I have checked with WALGA to see whether there has been any further consideration of that matter, and to the best of my knowledge there has not been any. That is a very worrying situation for local government. The state and local government partnership is somewhat left in tatters because of this refusal by the government to consult local government.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: They are not my words; they are the words of local government.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have they torn up the agreement?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not know, but local government is certainly saying that the minister does not appear to be abiding by the agreement. It seems that the minister has torn up the agreement; I do not know that local government has.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You would be wrong.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Maybe the minister should consult local government properly, because it is saying the minister has not.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: They are not my words, minister. Do not argue with me; argue with WALGA. It wrote that—not me. I am just relaying. I am just a messenger; do not shoot the messenger, minister. I am just relaying WALGA's concern to the minister about what has happened.

Earlier, I mentioned other consultations, and the member for Nedlands talked about Dogs West. As we know, Dogs West is a very important advocacy group for good welfare outcomes for dogs, and we are all about good welfare outcomes for dogs, are we not? I understand that Dogs West met with the minister. I think it has also met with the member for Maylands. It has been involved in the consultation process along with people representing

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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farming groups or working dogs groups. I guess the RSPCA, local government and others were involved in those consultations. I will relay some information that Dogs West has provided to me. Dogs West is a member body of the Australian National Kennel Council, which is the peak body in Australia for purebred dogs and is affiliated with UK Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, American Kennel Club, New Zealand Kennel Club and other peak bodies. There are representatives of these peak organisations in 98 different countries. Dogs West is responsible for ensuring that the breeding, caring and welfare of dogs are maintained by members that are already well regulated, and they must abide by the Dogs West code of ethics, rules and regulations and breeding. The information goes on to highlight a lot of those things. I might talk about it in consideration in detail, because as members well know, I have an amendment on the notice paper pertaining to Dogs West. I will not go into too much detail about it at the moment, but suffice to say that Dogs West told me that it had met with the member for Maylands and she said that Dogs West members were the gold standard when it came to welfare for dogs.

Ms L.L. Baker: They are indeed.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Obviously, the member for Maylands holds Dogs West in high regard.

Dogs West was surprised and very disappointed when it was not recognised in the bill in the way that other kennel clubs in other states apparently are. As my amendment says, Dogs West would like to see that issue addressed. I would be very interested to learn more in consideration in detail about exactly why its concerns have not been taken on board. It is very worrying, because one of the tenets of all of this and underlining some of the discussion at the very start when the minister made some comments is a view that there is an oversupply of dogs. That is not a view I am getting from others. One of the concerns of people dealing with a particular strain of dog, whether farm dogs or any other sort of dog, is making sure that there is a sufficient number of animals and a wide enough gene pool to avoid the problems of having a small, isolated gene pool with cousins basically marrying cousins, which is not a good outcome in the long term apparently. We do not want to see those things happening, so I have assured the members of Dogs West that I would like to hear from the minister and probably the member for Maylands, if she is able to make some comments about that, because they are very concerned. Some Dogs West members are also concerned about the kennel requirement of local government. That is a real problem for them.

As I said, there are a whole range of people on that dog working group. There was a handout, which I have left on my desk, given as a presentation to members outlining the consultation process. It more or less says that the consultation process wound up in about 2018, and then there was the presentation of the bill. That was not the understanding of the people I have spoken to in the working group made up of WALGA or working dog people. They felt that they would be shown a final draft of the bill before its presentation to Parliament.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr R.S. LOVE: On the day the bill was introduced, they were summoned to Parliament, only to be told that the bill had been introduced an hour ago. They were understandably very, very annoyed, because they felt unvalued and that the consultation had become a sham. They thought it was just lip-service and that they were not being taken notice of.

We have spoken about local government and Dogs West. Another key area is the farming sector. The Pastoralists and Graziers Association and WAFarmers and members of various farm working dog groups have spoken to me about their concerns. They say that working dogs are specifically exempted in other states. They were of the understanding that was going to happen in this bill. There is a reference to regulation, but there is nothing in the bill, and they want it in the bill. That is the reason for two amendments that appear in the notice paper addressing the defences for breeding and non-sterilisation. Those two matters will be discussed at length. Again, some of the difficulties that have been highlighted are very sensible matters, and I do not think that they should stand in the way of the amendments. As I said, if the government looks at those amendments seriously, our position may well change, because the key groups concerned are Dogs West, WALGA, farmers and working dogs groups. I know the minister will eventually get around to working with local government to work out a sensible cost-recovery system. I am sure he will undertake to do that. If he does not, we may have to continue to oppose him. I am sure that at some stage he will come to a sensible arrangement with local government on those measures, and he will understand that local government is sick of being treated in this appalling way, as he disregards the much-trumpeted local government state agreement that he put in place—the MOU—in which he said he would consult local government. We have seen time and time again that he has not.

Mr D.A. Templeman: When?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I remember the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 that just went through the house. Local government was telling me that it was not consulted about that. That is a pretty big impact on local government, as the minister knows.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Mr D.A. Templeman: Have you spoken to local governments about their response?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have spoken to local governments. I just attended two WALGA country zones in the last two working days, and I have no doubt the local government is concerned.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Did you chat to the Stirling Mayor about it?

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have not spoken to the Stirling Mayor, but I have spoken to officeholders of WALGA and I have spoken to senior members of its state council. Anyway, I must move on, because the minister is wasting my precious time. He would be better off if he spent his time talking to local government rather than talking to me about local government, because we know he is not talking to local government.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms S.E. Winton): Member for Moore, try not to goad the minister.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I was not goading him. With respect, Madam Acting Speaker, he interjected himself!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, do not engage.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore!

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr R.S. LOVE: A good line through a press release!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Moore, I would like to assist you. Just do it through me.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Okay. That is good. We were talking briefly about this minister's lack of concern for local government, but I will get back to dogs.

Local governments would like to see happen what has already occurred in Queensland, where working dogs were already exempted in the legislation. It should be put in the legislation. The government told us at the briefing that working dogs would be exempt, but when we were shown the bill, we saw that they were not exempt. There is a problem there. We would like to see working dogs exempted in the legislation in the way that I have put forward in my amendment and as they are in Queensland. There was a similar situation in Victoria, so the legislation was revised and further exemptions for farm working dogs were put into the legislation. A fact sheet put out by Animal Welfare Victoria titled "Farm Working Dogs Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Act 2017" outlines some the matters relating to farm dogs that are eminently suitable and need to be reflected in our legislation. It states that the Victorian government —

... understands the unique role of farm working dogs in Victoria's primary production sector. As such, the ... Act included provisions to ensure these dogs have the recognition they deserve.

That is what we are asking for here. Farm working dogs are unique. Why are they unique? One of the bill's requirements is that dogs be sterilised at two years of age, if my memory serves me. Working dogs take some time to mature and it is difficult to predict whether a pup will become a good dog. Dogs that excel quite often do so as they become more mature and it is very important that the breeding potential of those dogs is kept. If they turn out to be a humdinger of a dog, that farmer will want to breed from them. Not every dog has to be bought from a high-priced supplier. A lot of farm dogs are quite reasonably priced. They have good bloodlines and are good honest working dogs that work on farms. They are not fancy trial dogs. They are harder and more used to the tougher conditions found in real life than some trial dogs. Those attributes can only be judged over time. It is very important that that is recognised and that a larger number of dogs are left entire and able to pass on those genes. We do not want to see a monopoly in which breeders of farm dogs do it as a profession. That will make the gene pool smaller and take out a lot of potential good traits that could be brought in by breeding a wider range of animals.

One of the people who approached me about this matter is an eminent geneticist who is very worried about the effect that this bill will have on the purebred dog populations and farm working dog populations, which are discrete groups. Smaller populations are very likely to accumulate recessive genes that cause defects in animals and, ultimately, lead to misery for the animal and poorer animal welfare. If that were to occur, it would be a perverse outcome of this legislation, which aims to increase animal welfare. That is another reason I think the government should take the amendments that are on the notice paper very seriously, and I hope it does. As I have said, the Nationals WA are not opposed to achieving better outcomes for animal welfare. We are about achieving sensible outcomes. We do not want to see outcomes that will lead to that kind of perverse effect. We do not want farmers to have difficulty sourcing a good working stock of animals that are essential to their operations. Dog welfare will be more of a concern because of a diminishing gene pool. I am getting that feedback from geneticists, vets, and farmers—a whole range of people who know a lot more about dogs than I do. I have owned a few dogs but I would not claim to be an expert on the matter.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

People who are experts in dog management and genetics have come to me and voiced their concerns. They are not only from Western Australia; I am talking about eminent people on the national scene. They do not all want to go on record, but they have made it quite clear that although these kinds of bills are valuable, it is very important that breeding is not limited to smaller numbers of breeders because that will mean a smaller gene pool. If the number of breeders is wider, the gene pool will be wider. Farmers will not be breeding dogs as a profession. They will breed their own working dogs, share them with the neighbour down the road and one day they might get some genes back, which might be mixed with another dog from hundreds of kilometres away. That is how it has operated until now, and it has kept the gene pool very healthy. It would be concerning if a very limited number of people were to supply farm working dogs. We have seen undesirable genetic traits develop in some closely bred lines that have problems, and we do not want to see that.

I implore the government to be sensible and to take on board the amendments that I have put on the notice paper. If it does, the government might have something approaching a good outcome for animal welfare. If the minister talks to local governments and can regain their confidence that he is going to talk to them fully about proper cost recovery for all the extra effort they will be asked to make, and if we can get to the bottom of the problem of local government permission for the operation of breeding so people do not need to have a five-acre lot on the outskirts of the hills somewhere in order to breed a couple of pups, we might be able to support the bill.

MR K.M. O'DONNELL (Kalgoorlie) [5.37 pm]: Greetings, Madam Acting Speaker. I, too, wish to contribute to the second reading debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. The explanatory memorandum states —

Dog breeding is not currently regulated in Western Australia. As a result, irresponsible dog breeders are able to:

- disguise their operations;
- avoid detection by authorities;
- and continue to breed irresponsibly.

We do not want that. The bill aims to reduce the number of unwanted dogs that are born, for purchasers to be confident that they are not sourcing their dog from a puppy farm, and allow dogs to be traced throughout their lives, thus allowing puppy farms to be identified and shut down.

I refer to unwanted dogs being born. I will put on my policing hat again. Many times I had to go to Aboriginal communities several hundreds of kilometres out in the desert. Dogs are a part of life within Aboriginal communities. At Tjuntjuntjara, I have seen little kids holding an icy pole surrounded by anywhere up to 20 dogs that are waiting for scraps from an icy pole, a burger or a kangaroo tail—anything.

Mr W.R. Marmion: How many were registered?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes. I will get to that later.

There are large numbers of dogs in Aboriginal communities. I have actually been out there and seen a puppy just after it was born with only scraps of hair, minuscule hair here and there—somewhat like the minister's forehead over there! Just little bits of hair, like mine. They are scratching with their legs because they have mange.

Mr D.A. Templeman: You impugned me!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, I apologise! It was —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You should withdraw!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I do; even I realise I should not have said that, sorry!

Mr W.R. Marmion: It's probably all right after tea, but not before!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Not before; all right!

We see that out there. It is not regulated, so I do agree with this regulation. We want to try to cut that out, but it is going to be an issue out there. The bill will regulate the breeding of dogs and ensure both transparency and traceability to identify where dogs are coming from. From what I have read, there is already an organisation called Dogs West that does a very good job in this area.

All dogs will be required to be desexed by the time they are two years of age. Will there be any provision for people from a poor background who have a dog as a companion to have their dog desexed? There are pensioners and other people who struggle to even pay their electricity bills in the cold months. They will now have to fork out money to desex their dogs. There are exemptions for mandatory sterilisation if a vet provides a certificate on health or welfare grounds, if the dog is owned by a person granted approval, or if the dog is a livestock working dog.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Unsterilised dogs can only be registered on an annual basis. My question is: who approves the sterilisation? I take it that it is the local government. If the dog is taken to a vet, will the vet charge the owner a fee for the certificate as well? That is possibly an added cost. I refer to transitioning pet shops to adoption centres. Any pet shop that intends to sell dogs will be required to apply for approval from their relevant local government. Has that amount already been set for the pet shop? Again, that is another added cost. A health assessment must be provided for each dog that is supplied to a pet shop. A health assessment includes information about the source of the dog, but will the pet shop have to take the dog to a vet to get its health assessed? Again, that is another added cost. I would be keen to find out who provides the health assessment and how much it will cost—or is it just a verbal assessment, if the person says, “Oh, the dog’s okay”?

The bill removes the requirement for retired greyhounds to be muzzled. The current Dog Act provides that greyhounds must wear a muzzle when in public places, unless it has successfully completed a training program. Now it appears that the training program has been thrown out and greyhounds, once they have finished training, will not need to be muzzled. I think that there could be risks down the track.

Ms L.L. Baker: Member, Racing and Wagering Western Australia supports the removal of that.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, I dare say something has changed. They had the training program and now they have said it is not needed.

Ms L.L. Baker: They said it was an outdated view of the animal.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Okay. I will just read one thing from an ABC news article on this issue from 14 July 2018 that quotes a vet, Dr Karen Dawson. It states —

They’re considered docile and low maintenance but a vet is warning that adopted greyhounds may be in a chronic state of fear and ready to bite.

That is a bit of a worry. It continues, quoting Dr Dawson —

“I know this is the kind of story that people don’t want to hear, but this is the reality.”

...

“I see the bites on the child’s face,” said vet Dr Karen Dawson, who specialises in animal behaviour.

I saw that and thought that if we had a training program that is not needed, okay. But I do hope that once those muzzles come off, no-one gets bitten.

Under proposed section 16(5), a local government may direct a registration officer to refuse a dog registration application or renewal, or to cancel a dog registration, if the dog is required to be sterilised and is not sterilised. I take it this will just be the local ranger; it keeps referring to local government, so I am trying to work out who can refuse or cancel the dog registration. I would be keen to hear about that.

Under proposed section 26E, “Dogs must be sterilised unless exempt” there is a fine of \$5 000—not up to \$5 000—for failing to comply with proposed section 26E(1). I can honestly foresee Nanna not being able to afford to sterilise her little Shih tzu and—bingo! She is hit with a \$5 000 fine. I have seen people convicted of dangerous driving causing death who have been fined \$2 500 if we are lucky, in some instances. That is a big number, \$5 000, and there is no room for the magistrate to go on it; none at all. Up to \$5 000 I could understand, but just bang, \$5 000—I think we are going to hit poor people, the elderly and pensioners who do not have much money.

Only the holder of an approval to breed may breed dogs. What happens if the next-door neighbour’s dog jumps the fence? The Labrador comes over and finds the little Shih tzu and the Shih tzu gets pregnant.

Ms L.L. Baker: It would kill it! It would probably die in birth!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, but in my life I have come across people who have got pups and said it was an accident. They tried to keep hidden their dog that was on heat, but that does not necessarily always work. I hope there is something in the bill that if a person comes forward with the dog and says, “My dog’s pregnant and we don’t want the pup”, will the local government charge that person a fee to dispose of the dog? Will they offer a service for unwanted pups, once they are born?

Ms L.L. Baker: It’s not their responsibility.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: The council?

Ms L.L. Baker: It’s not the council’s responsibility.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: No, I am saying the person. It is an unwanted birth after another dog has jumped the fence and got their dog pregnant. Again, what if the person is unemployed, elderly, or has no money?

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Ms L.L. Baker: Then proposed section 26E(2) covers it.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes. They do not commit an offence?

Ms L.L. Baker: They've got seven days to register.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, but if they do not want the pups and the dog is pregnant, will the council take the pups from them without costs?

Ms L.L. Baker: They don't do that now, do they?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I have no idea. People just get rid of them. I am just saying that if we are trying to do the right thing in this legislation —

Ms L.L. Baker: I'd love to be able to make people nicer!

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes!

I refer now to proposed section 38E, "Cancellation of pet shop approval". Is it only the local government that can do this—no other government department or organisation can cancel a pet shop approval? It is just the local government? Okay. Proposed section 54A states that an application for approval will be prescribed via regulations. The fee for a cat breeder is currently \$100 a cat—will it be the same for a dog?

Ms L.L. Baker: We do not know yet, but it is certainly not \$300, which the previous member said it is.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I refer to the objection and review process. Proposed section 54E relates to when a decision is made by a local government; that is, a decision to refuse to grant an approval to breed or a decision to refuse to grant or renew a pet shop approval. Seven days' notice has to be given to the person. After receiving the notice, the person—the victim—has seven days to make a decision. The objection is to be dealt with by the council of the local government. Are we talking about the elected members? It says "the council of the local government". Would that be referring to the rangers? That would be something that I would like to find out. It says "or by a committee authorised by the council". I do not know how many people would make this decision. Where it has "committee or council", would it take two or three people to hear that submission?

Proposed section 54I is titled "Suspension of effect of some decisions". If the local government refuses to grant approval to breed or a pet shop approval, can they still operate pending the final decision? The council serves the letter on them, they appeal to the committee or council, they are not happy with that and then it goes to the State Administrative Tribunal. Are they still able to operate until the last legal parameters are exhausted?

I talked about dogs in remote Aboriginal communities. I cannot imagine a local government in a regional area paying rangers to travel several hundred kilometres into the middle of nowhere to check on dogs.

Ms L.L. Baker: They do it with cats at the moment.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I am sure we have a very good council! In the city, houses are everywhere —

Ms L.L. Baker: It will be the same as the Cat Act, member.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes. Take my electorate, for example, which is regional, and checking on the registration of sterilised dogs. We have so many pastoral stations and so many Aboriginal communities. Even out in Hay, travelling out the Trans Access Road, there is not even a road to the house where the people live. People who drive out there probably will not get back—their vehicle will be smashed by the rocks on the road. It is well and good to say we will check on the registration of dogs and we want to keep on top of it, I can understand that, but I cannot see local councils going the extra yard to all these communities, especially regional ones, unless the government says that for every dog that is verified, they will be reimbursed. When travelling into the desert, two people have to travel together for safety. It will be a cost issue for councils.

Dog breeding is already regulated by Dogs West—a very good organisation. We could possibly consider looking at exempting it. Exemptions have been given for different things here and there over the years in some bills that have passed. We could possibly revisit utilising Dogs West.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Why is local government in charge of overseeing dog breeding? Has there been any consultation with local government? After I thought of that question, I did some research and I can see that there has been. Did everyone say yes? Did any local governments say, "No; we are not doing this"? If it is legislated, only a brave council would say it is not going to do it. Who will police the unsterilised dogs? I think it will be the local government. Is that unsterilised dogs? I am sorry to look at the member for Maylands. The minister is not looking at me so I am looking at the member for Maylands.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyrán O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: How does a small local government, such as the Shire of Dundas in my electorate, have enough funds to police this when they struggle to have enough funds to fight bushfires? I do not mean to pick on the Shire of Dundas.

Ms L.L. Baker: Do they police the Cat Act?

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Under local councils, yes.

Ms L.L. Baker: It will be the same.

Mr P.A. Katsambanis: More resources are needed.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yes, if it is to be done correctly. Do we audit shires for their Cat Act?

Ms L.L. Baker: You brought in the Cat Act, member.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: I know.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: The member for Kalgoorlie was not in Parliament at the time.

Ms L.L. Baker: No; your government.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: But I was on council. Do we go back and find out whether they are policing the Cat Act?

Ms L.L. Baker: No.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Then the government does not expect the local councils to do this either.

Ms L.L. Baker: It will be a matter of complaints.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: In wanting to stop unscrupulous breeders, it will most likely impede professional breeders, and backyard breeders will go underground. That is the possibility. Dogs West is one of the eight states and territories' canine controlling bodies that are governed by the Australian National Kennel Council. To have such a big reaction from Dogs West in opposing this bill shows that the government has made a farce of listening by not actually taking its views into consideration. There is a chance we will be losing breeds in WA. If this legislation passes, most dogs will be purebred or will be the popular breeds at the time. Puppy farming can be unhygienic. I thoroughly agree with that. There is often inadequate and overcrowded housing conditions in puppy farming. It can be said that it is better to adopt a pet rather than buy one.

Will the government reimburse local governments or give an annual grant to cover possible costs? It will be another impost on local government, especially at a time they have been requested to freeze their rates. On the website of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, I found the title "Stop Puppy Farming". Under "Consultation", it says the department released a consultation paper in partnership with the local government sector and industry stakeholders. I noticed that on 21 November 2018, the City of Swan recommended —

Cost and complexity of policing the puppy farming legislation, if it applied to livestock dogs on farms, would be an unnecessary burden to Council staff and farmers.

I have noticed that it is now exempt, which is good. That was listened to.

On 29 August 2018, the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils said that the Western Australian Local Government Association welcomes a cost modelling review of the financial impact on local governments of any new legislation to stop puppy farming.

I want to read a couple of lines from emails. I cannot read them all, so I have plucked out a couple. One is from Dr Ann Jones, secretary of the Golden Retriever Club of WA. She said that dog breeding is regulated by Dogs West. Under the proposal, Dogs West members will be able to keep their dog unsterilised if they obtain an approval to breed. At what point in this debate was it decided that local government is the organisation to oversee dog breeding? Are they experts? No. There is already a body set up to oversee dog breeders. She said, "Yes, you guessed it—Dogs West."

She said that Dogs West members provided a significant number of submissions to the government requesting an exemption from the mandatory dog sterilisation and dog breeder approval requirements. The government considered this feedback, yet it chose to ignore how reputable and ethical breeders operate already. Why?

I refer to another email; this one is from Marion Watson. She said that she had attended all the meetings that Dogs West had, along with the member for Maylands, who said that Dogs West members were the gold standard.

Ms L.L. Baker: I still do.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: Yet she seems to have ignored all of its suggestions, allegedly. Marion has been a Dogs West member for 50 years. Dogs West is hoping that the minister might look at exempting it.

Sitting suspended from 6.01 to 7.00 pm

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe) [7.00 pm]: I want to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. I indicate at the outset that I will not be supporting this bill. I must say, Madam Deputy Speaker, directing my comments to you, that it causes me some angst to say that. That is not because of the title or context of the bill, but because I hold you in such high regard. Therefore, I am torn —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do your worst!

Dr D.J. HONEY: Despite that, I cannot support this bill. This bill will potentially affect a lot of people. I am told that 38 per cent of Western Australian households have a dog. That is a large percentage. Therefore, this bill may certainly affect a large number of people. When this bill came up, I was a bit sceptical about the purpose of the bill. The title of the bill—Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020—is a bit like a subtitle of “Support Parenthood”, or “Stop Beating Children”, or whatever. It makes a good headline, but it makes us question the substance of the bill and whether it is just about a headline or about substantive legislative change. The title of the bill conjures up images of starving dogs, dogs crammed into filthy small spaces, and bitches constantly whelping puppies, shortening their lives, and the like.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The only problem is that although that paints an emotional scene, it does not reflect the reality in Western Australia.

Ms C.M. Rowe: That’s not true.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I believe I have good advice that there are no puppy farms in Western Australia.

Ms C.M. Rowe: I have the article right here!

Dr D.J. HONEY: I will be genuinely happy for people to educate me about that, as I always am. However, my understanding is that although on the east coast there may have been some examples of that, that does not reflect the reality in Western Australia. I understand that over a period of five years, there have been two prosecutions of dog breeders for abuse. I understand also that we do not have the sorts of puppy farms that are painted in that vivid image. If people are abusing animals in the way I just mentioned and as is conjured up by the title of this bill, we already have an excellent instrument under which to prosecute people for those acts. If people are keeping animals in those conditions and in those ways, we already have an excellent act to deal with that. That is the Animal Welfare Act 2002. For the benefit of members who are not familiar with the Animal Welfare Act 2002, section 18A, “Objects of Part”, states —

The objects of this Part are —

- (a) to promote and protect the welfare, safety and health of animals; and
- (b) to ensure animals are properly and humanely treated, cared for and managed.

Section 18B, “Regulations — animal welfare, safety and health”, states —

- (1) Without limiting section 94(1), regulations may be made under that subsection for the purpose of achieving the objects of this Part.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), the regulations may provide for, authorise, prescribe, require, prohibit, restrict or otherwise regulate the following —

It then outlines paragraphs (a) to (q). Paragraph (m) states —

the management of animal breeding establishments;

Division 3 of that act deals with cruelty to animals. Certainly the things described in division 3 are egregious cruelty, which no-one in this place would support. Section 19, “Cruelty to Animals”, states in part —

- (2) Without limiting subsection (1) a person, whether or not the person is a person in charge of the animal, is cruel to an animal if the person —
 - (a) tortures, mutilates, maliciously beats or wounds, abuses, torments, or otherwise ill-treats, the animal; or
 - (b) uses a prescribed inhumane device on the animal; or
 - (c) intentionally or recklessly poisons the animal; or
 - (d) does any prescribed act to, or in relation to, the animal; or
 - (e) in any other way causes the animal unnecessary harm.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

(3) Without limiting subsection (1) a person in charge of an animal is cruel to an animal if the animal —

...

(b) is confined, restrained or caught in a manner that —

(i) is prescribed; or

(ii) causes, or is likely to cause, it unnecessary harm;

or

...

(e) is not provided with such shelter, shade or other protection from the elements as is reasonably necessary to ensure its welfare, safety and health; or

...

(h) suffers harm which could be alleviated by the taking of reasonable steps; or

It strikes me that the very things I have talked about are already dealt with under the Animal Welfare Act. I am struggling to understand why we need this bill when it would be far simpler to either amend the Animal Welfare Act or introduce new regulations and improvements as required. All members in this place would know that introducing appropriate regulations is a far simpler process than introducing a bill into Parliament.

I am also struggling to understand why this bill is taking legislative precedence over real issues. As I have said, I have seen no evidence in Western Australia of puppy farms or that this is a widespread problem. Although there might be a concern about what could be, we need to talk about what actually is. The enormous problem that this community is facing at the moment is unemployment. What we are seeing now is just the beginning of the problems we will have to face. We are facing serious problems.

Ms C.M. Rowe interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L. Mettam): Member for Cottesloe, do you want interjections?

Dr D.J. HONEY: No, I am not particularly seeking them.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Belmont, can you please not interject.

Dr D.J. HONEY: There are real problems facing this state. The state government has increased debt by \$4.1 billion in the three and a bit years that it has been in office. Over 112 000 people are unemployed and, on top of that, 167 000 people are underemployed. It is the highest level in our state's history. Even before this crisis hit, our economy was in trouble, with state final demand being down by 0.2 per cent in the December quarter, when it increased in the rest of Australia.

Point of Order

Ms L.L. BAKER: I wonder what relevance this has to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Further to the point of order, of course the Deputy Speaker will be well versed in second reading debates, when quite a lot of leeway is given. I imagine, Acting Speaker, that you would consider it as part of any member's contribution in this place.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L. Mettam): I think that the member for Cottesloe has a bit of latitude during the second reading debate. I ask that he continue with his contribution.

Debate Resumed

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you for your indulgence, Acting Speaker. In anticipation of that very point, I was coming back to how it relates to this bill. The member for Maylands can read my notes; I am happy to share them with her, but she may struggle to read my writing.

Where is the plan beyond the short-term stimulus packages to deal with those problems? As I said, no-one in this place thinks that the mistreatment of animals is appropriate, and I certainly do not. We have an appropriate tool in the Animal Welfare Act, and that has been proven by those prosecutions. However, I think we in this place could spend our time focusing on the plan beyond the short-term stimulus, because that is the real issue facing this state. It is affecting people in the most dreadful ways.

I have not seen any indication that there will be any major change in enforcement. One of the comments that have been made was that it is difficult to enforce. I do not see why it is difficult to enforce under the current act. It is a very clear act. If we are not looking at some mechanism to provide much greater enforcement, we will have the

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

same outcome under this legislation as we now have under the current act. It seems that it may be a lack of enforcement, rather than major deficiencies in the legislation.

One of the major deficiencies that has been highlighted by other members, and I want to cover it too, is that the pre-eminent breeders association in Western Australia—that is, the Dogs West Canine Association of WA—was not included in the consultation on the final form of this bill. It is very clear that there was some early consultation with it, but as this bill progressed, it was not included in that consultation. This association has over 2 700 members, about 900 of whom are breeders. Breeders have to pass an exam. It is the only association in Western Australia that is affiliated with the Australian National Kennel Council, which controls all registrations for national and international dog shows. As I am sure the minister and the member for Maylands will know, these people have a deep concern about dog welfare. They are almost zealot-like in their concern about dog welfare. In fact, I have noted from visiting breeders who are members of the association that more often than not, the accommodation for their dogs is substantially better than the accommodation they live in. They seem to be prepared to sacrifice all worldly comforts to ensure that their dogs have the best of worldly comforts. It is certainly a group that has rigorous enforcement systems to protect dog welfare; it makes the bill that has been presented look pretty tame. In fact, one of its members was given, and paid, a \$15 000 fine for whelping a bitch too soon after a previous litter. These people are passionate about dogs and care deeply about them. As has been pointed out—I will not go through the whole discussion that other members have had—they do not believe that the bill as has been presented deals with the issue in the way that it should. Dogs West says that it was not properly consulted on the bill and it did not see a copy of the bill before it was read into Parliament. Again, as with the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020, it seems that a bill has been rushed into Parliament to get a headline when, in fact, relevant parties have not been given sufficient time to read it. In particular, to reinforce a point that has been made by others, why was Dogs West not given some role under this legislation? These people are passionate about enforcement. I suspect that in the majority of prosecutions under the Animal Welfare Act—I am happy to be disabused—the group that would be likely to come forward with information about people who abuse dogs would be Dogs West. I understand that in South Australia, for example, the legislation was written to include its association and give it a specific role in management, and it seems to me that that would be appropriate under this bill.

If the government is concerned about dogs from puppy farms, one of the concerns that has been expressed to me is that the changes to be made through this bill will in fact encourage people to bring dogs here from puppy farms on the east coast if they are much cheaper than dogs in Western Australia. Rather than discouraging puppy farms—I have seen no evidence that they exist in Western Australia at present or that there has been any significant problem in the recent past—this bill could encourage puppy farms in the eastern states, because it would be much cheaper for people to bring dogs into Western Australia than it would be to buy puppies bred here.

There is a concern about people selling dogs from pet shops. I understand that only eight pet shops in Western Australia currently sell dogs. The member for Maylands will know that other jurisdictions have solved that problem very simply by saying that pet shops cannot sell dogs. They can sell fish and budgies and other things, but they cannot sell dogs. That is certainly something that could be done through regulation under the existing act.

As has been mentioned, I am concerned about the burden that this bill will put on local governments. There will be a cost, including the cost of enforcement. I heard the comment made in the debate today that people do not think that enforcement is going to occur. The other concern is that individual councils might take an idiosyncratic approach to dog breeding. This is a particular concern for registered breeders, because as this bill is written, breeders will be registered by their particular council, but if they move to another council area, they will have to be re-registered as a breeder by that council. There is a concern that there will be different conditions in different jurisdictions.

An issue has also been raised about puppies born on farms. I understand that under the bill, working dogs on farms will not be required to be sterilised. Concern about that was raised earlier. I believe that the bill specifically excludes a requirement that dogs on farms be sterilised, but, as members have pointed out, inevitably, dogs will be dogs and pregnancies will not always be planned. Avid readers of *Footrot Flats* will know that that occupies about half the cartoons in that comic strip, but it reflects life on the farm. What is going to happen to the excess puppies of farmers who are not registered as breeders? Will they be sold illegally or, worse still, will those dogs be killed because farmers are concerned about this legislation?

It seems to me that this bill is not required. The Animal Welfare Act is more than adequate. It is currently under review. Given the structure of that act and that it enables regulations that specifically apply to breeders, I can see no reason that those changes could not be made to that act. We have the bill before us now, but, to be frank, the government would have been better placed focusing its efforts on longer term structural change to our economy and creating lasting employment in our COVID-affected economy. On that note, I will conclude my speech.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

MS L.L. BAKER (Maylands — Deputy Speaker) [7.19 pm]: I was not anticipating speaking quite so soon on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020, but that is absolutely fine. I listened with great interest to some comments that I think were pretty well thought out by some members and to some very pertinent points made by a number of members about working dogs and the like. I will comment on those at the end of my speech. I have quite a bit to get through so if members bear with me, I will refer to my notes.

Puppy farming is associated with varying degrees of poor welfare of the puppies and breeding dogs used in the industry. Illegal puppy farming refers to the keeping and breeding of dogs in conditions that fail to meet health and wellbeing requirements. This bill will stop the intensive farming of puppies, or puppy farming, by reducing irresponsible dog breeding and educating dog buyers and owners. Overall, this will significantly improve the welfare of all dogs and puppies in WA. I want to raise some of these issues because I have heard a number of quite outrageous statements about there being no such thing as puppy farming in Western Australia, and also some questions about whether or not it is actually bad for a dog to be bred in that way. The mental and physical health impacts associated with puppy farming range from discomfort and poor quality of life to significant cruelty over many years. Puppy farms range in size—this is important to remember—from large, organised businesses to small-scale backyard businesses. It could be that someone who owns just one dog is breeding it.

Scientific evidence compiled over the last 20 years—I repeat: 20 years—from the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia shows that the prevailing conditions in puppy farms are “injurious to the mental health and welfare of dogs”. That is a quote from the US in 2011. In 2014 in Western Australia, the first research paper was completed into the nature and incidences of illegal puppy farming in Western Australia. I draw to the attention of the member for Cottesloe that this paper was done six years ago and it looked specifically at the instances of puppy farming in WA and the drivers of it. Using the resulting research paper as a baseline, an expert steering committee commenced work to better understand how puppy farming works in WA and define “puppy farming” and why it should end. That was done independently of political parties.

The committee consisted of experts in the regulation of animal welfare—specifically dog welfare—animal law and veterinary practise, dog breeders and the rescue and rehoming sector. Membership of that group—I am going back to 2015—included the CEO of Dogs West, the CEO of the Dogs’ Refuge Home, the chief inspector of the RSPCA WA, an animal welfare lawyer, a pet industry representative, an adjunct professor in veterinary law and lawyer specialising in animal welfare ethics and regulatory compliance, a trustee from the Shenton Park Dogs’ Refuge Home, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and Western Australia’s Oscar’s Law representative. Other key stakeholders consulted by that group included the CEO of the Pet Industry Association of Australia, the director of Consumer Protection in the WA Department of Commerce and the CEO of the Western Australian Local Government Association. I repeat: the CEO of WALGA. To inform its deliberations and ensure that best practice was clear, the committee of experts completed a review into the scientific literature—“scientific literature” is underlined—that drew on other expert stakeholders as well as applying relevant evidence from international and national jurisdictions that were successfully tackling illegal puppy farming. That committee released its report and recommendations in May 2015 and briefed the Premier of the day, Hon Colin Barnett, and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mark McGowan.

The bill we are debating is based on the findings of that expert group. WA’s expert committee investigated what WA needed to do to put an end to puppy farming and break the supply chain that feeds the industry. It made seven points. First, changes are required to the Dog Act 1976—the Dog Act manages the behaviour of people with dogs, not the Animal Welfare Act specifically—to ensure the traceability of puppies by registering all dog breeders. A central register would help potential owners identify responsible breeders who have agreed to comply with state standards and guidelines, enable the number of homeless dogs in WA to be recorded, help in placing homeless dogs in homes and enable puppies and dogs to be traced back to the breeder. Second, we should mandate the disclosure of breeder registration numbers at the point of sale and in advertisements. Third, dogs not registered for breeding should be sterilised. Fourth, the state should develop mandated standards and guidelines for breeding, housing, husbandry and transport to be adopted as regulations under the Animal Welfare Act 2002. Fifth, the sale of puppies from pet shops should be restricted to partnerships with approved rescue organisations and shelters. Sixth, we need effective monitoring and enforcement by relevant agencies. The seventh and final recommendation from this expert group urged the state to create a multiagency targeted education program to inform consumers about what to look for when purchasing a puppy, and how to recognise, avoid and report unscrupulous sellers.

Currently, the problem in WA is that when people buy a dog or puppy from a pet shop, a backyard breeder, off Gumtree, Quokka or any other online marketplace, they have absolutely no way of knowing with any degree of certainty where or how that animal has been bred. Sellers may claim that the puppy is a purebred or a crossbred, but the purchaser does not know. Consumers often find themselves supporting illegal puppy farms rather than ethical and responsible dog breeders. This is because the puppy breeding industry is not regulated in this state. There have

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

been no mandatory standards or voluntary guidelines to assure a purchaser that dogs are bred ethically and there is no way of tracing a puppy back to a breeder when problems arise. When consumers want to purchase a purebred dog, with or without a pedigree, it is more complex.

Members tonight have mentioned Dogs West. That is, indeed, the peak body responsible for registering people who breed pedigree dogs and issuing pedigree dog papers. Please note that not all purebred dogs come from Dogs West members. Many backyard breeders are selling what they claim to be purebreds. Prospective owners who mistakenly buy their puppies from those people are supporting unregulated backyard breeders operating without standards for the welfare of dogs and puppies. Dogs West membership requirements do not permit members to sell puppies in pet shops and their members are expected to comply with the organisation's own standards for the care and welfare of dogs. Although there are challenges for membership-based groups that are tasked with resourcing the auditing and enforcing of their standards, there will always be penalties that they need to or want to apply. Sometimes they end up not being able to apply them because there are no standards at the state level that would empower them legally to carry that forward.

The reforms in this bill will not negatively impact on reputable Dogs West members who are meeting Dogs West standards and local laws for dog ownership and breeding. There is nothing new in this. We are not suddenly giving local government the capacity to storm about the place and enforce local laws differently from how they enforce them now. Local governments can make local laws. That is their job. We are not saying they have to. They do not have to do that. It is very clear in the bill. The reforms will stop the supply chain for illegally and improperly farmed puppies and protect dogs from the abuse they suffer as part of the industry.

Every one of the key stakeholders in this process has been consulted. There is a big difference between consultation and agreeing with everything everybody does. I do not intend to give members of this house a lecture on the differences between consultation, participation and agreement. They are fundamentally different concepts. I was once in charge of the Western Australian Council of Social Service and I lectured all the CEOs in state government on the difference between consultation and participation. You lot need to go and find out that difference because you are talking rubbish!

Several members interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: And you do not because you have demonstrated it many times tonight. As is often the case when driving change, not every stakeholder request will be met 100 per cent in the scope of any bill.

The reforms in this bill will deliver a universally agreed best-practice framework to manage out puppy farmers. I will summarise the reforms. The traceability of dogs and puppies will be improved by introducing a central dog and breeder identification database. Unregulated and irresponsible dog breeding will be stopped by sterilising dogs not used for breeding purposes. I will talk about the member's issue in a moment. We will introduce mandatory standards that must be met by anyone granted a dog breeding registration and transition pet shops through partnerships with approved rescue group so that they can offer dog and puppy adoptions of homeless puppies and dogs. Finally, there will be a public education program so that people will know how to find a puppy or dog to suit their family and avoid supporting illegal puppy farms.

I will give some data. Data collected in Western Australia in 2016 from a sample of 12 per cent of the more than 200 dog rescue and rehoming groups in WA revealed the extent of the problem of unregulated dog breeding that leads to unwanted homeless dogs and puppies. The data provided by the 23 groups, or 12 per cent of all groups, shows that in 2015–16 they rescued and rehomed 3 311 dogs. That figure represents just 12 per cent of those groups, so do the sums. Of those rescued dogs, 2 600 were aged 12 months or more and 1 305 were puppies under the age of 12 months. Members cannot tell me that people cannot get puppies from rescue groups; that is a complete lie.

Dr D.J. Honey: But did they come from puppy farms?

Ms L.L. BAKER: They were homeless and rescued. Do I have to draw a picture for the member? They had been deserted.

No figures are available from WA councils about the number of dogs in pounds. In fact, the last time this was measured was in 2012–13. Estimates show that councils across WA found homes for 4 052 dogs in that year and killed 4 489 dogs. Add the two figures together. Since 2012, pet ownership has increased across the state, as the member for Cottesloe pointed out, so we can expect that the number of dogs in pounds and the number of dogs killed in council pounds because they are not found a home has increased. The WA public does not accept that such a large number of dogs should find themselves straying, homeless or killed. The Western Australian public has shouted, "Not acceptable!", in response to information about this high mortality rate and the associated unregulated market for dog breeding in this state. Western Australians say that this should not be allowed to continue and have resoundingly called on the McGowan government to address this mortality rate. Western Australians understand that the problem of homeless dogs is directly linked to irresponsible or uneducated ownership and the oversupply of puppies through unregulated and irresponsible breeding patterns.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

It must be noted that as with the Cat Act reforms made by the previous Liberal–National government, local governments will not be mandated to monitor all compliance with these new requirements. It will be at the discretion of the local government how and when it undertakes these functions. The reforms do not require local governments to inspect premises to assess whether they are suitable for dog breeding purposes. However, it is expected that the act should allow rangers the power to enter a premises to inspect if there is a requirement to do so, which is very different from the provisions in the Animal Welfare Act. Rangers will have the power to but not the expectation that they will inspect, which is the same as under the Cat Act, which the former government passed and we supported. Upon receiving a complaint, the local government will be responsible for investigating reported breaches, issuing infringements or prosecuting breaches. In workshops conducted to shape these reforms, local government representatives agreed that a centralised database that registers dog breeders and mandatory standards that must be complied with are the two essential components of these reforms. They agreed and we are delivering that.

Local government reps also asked that implementing the provisions in the legislation should not place a great financial burden on local governments. That is correct and that is what this legislation will deliver. Estimates of the cost that I have been able to pin down indicate that for a small council, say, a country shire, it may be about \$4 000 a year at a stretch. For a medium local government, it might be \$12 000. The large local government authorities in the city would carry the biggest cost—that is, \$50 000 a year—because that is where the majority of dogs are.

Mr R.S. Love: I think that doesn't really take into account the geography of those larger ones.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I understand what the member is saying. I am just stating estimates of costs taken from data that councils fed back to me. I did my best to work out what it would be from that.

Anyone who has an entire dog will be on the central database and can be accepted as having approval to breed should they want to do so. An owner may or may not decide to breed from that dog, but if they do, by design or accident—as many seem prone to having accidental pregnancies—each puppy bred will carry their registration details on its microchip. This will allow potential owners to trace a pup on the central database. Joining up will be a one-off process and will be for life unless a person opts to cancel. If an owner is accepted, it means that they agree to comply with the mandated state standards—not Dogs West standards. This will cover anyone who breeds dogs. If members in this house think for one minute that they can rule out the breeding of crossbreeds or that that is a fair thing to do, they need to go and do their homework. We need a system that covers all dog breeders in this state, not just pedigree dog breeders, and that is what this legislation will do. Remember that the RSPCA Western Australia has said that although some puppy farms may be large-scale operations with inadequate conditions, there are also small operations that may not be run for profit.

I want to go through some incidents for the benefit of the member for Cottesloe. In June 2012, Katherine Lisa King of South Doodlakine was found guilty on three counts of animal cruelty under the Animal Welfare Act after the RSPCA found 50 dogs in poor health on her property.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: Some of the dogs were kept in an underground bunker, three metres below ground, accessible through a small hole with a metal lid.

Dr D.J. Honey: What year was that?

Ms L.L. BAKER: It was in 2012. It was Katherine Lisa King.

Dr D.J. Honey: And she was prosecuted?

Ms L.L. BAKER: She was prosecuted. When the lid was opened, there was the stench of animal faeces and urine from 12 dogs confined underground in total darkness with little or no ventilation. In November 2012, Fay Marie Armstrong, a backyard dog breeder, was convicted of 17 counts of animal cruelty. She operated from Spearwood and a property in Korrelocking, near Wyalkatchem. Dogs were found confined to two-square-metre cages, covered in faecal matter and with contaminated water or no water or food. They were emaciated, dehydrated and malnourished from their confinement. In November 2015, Armstrong was found guilty of contempt of the Western Australian Supreme Court for disobeying orders made when she was again caught selling unvaccinated and sick puppies out of the boot of her car.

In January 2018, the RSPCA took in 49 “designer dogs” surrendered by a backyard breeder who did not want to pay local government fines for keeping the animals. The dogs were in various conditions. They had been kept in small pens and cages. Taking into account medicines and routine treatments, it cost the RSPCA \$141 000 to deal with that group of dogs.

Friday and Ostara were the last two surviving puppies of a litter of seven found dumped in bushland near Balingup in March 2018. They were days old when they were found. Despite initial health concerns, after regular check-ups,

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Friday and Ostara were able to be rehomed. In Narrogin, in July 2018, the RSPCA received a call from a member of the community who had found a box containing nine newborn puppies. Sadly, one of the puppies died shortly after RSPCA staff arrived. The puppies were only one week old. Despite their shaky start to life, with the right treatment and care, all the puppies were rehomed after being sterilised and microchipped. They spent 588 days in care.

If the member for Cottesloe reads the paper or looks at social media, he would have seen that on the weekend, the WA Police Force and the RSPCA raided a property in Bullsbrook under an emergency warrant and took from it 20 dogs that had been confined in basically puppy farming conditions. That case is in the legal system, so I cannot comment any further. The member is in la-la land if he thinks there are no such things as puppy farms. Open your eyes, sunshine. Go and have a look at the cases that the RSPCA and WA police have prosecuted. This is a hidden industry and we cannot find —

Dr D.J. Honey: But they're already prosecuting them under the existing act.

Ms L.L. BAKER: How many do members think are out there? These are just the ones we can find. The member for Cottesloe needs to get out of his little rarefied city beachside suburbs and look at what the real world is dealing with! You're full of it! You're just full of it. Some Western Australian pet shops have admitted they sell puppies sourced from large commercial puppy farming establishments in New South Wales and other states, some of which have been investigated for various breaches of local laws and allegations of cruelty. Other pet shops have admitted to purchasing puppies bred in unacceptable conditions in small backyards. The pet shops consider they are doing puppies a favour by taking them out of these poor conditions and finding homes for them. Of course, the problem is that they support the supply chain for unethical breeding in this industry. Do not be fooled into thinking that backyard and unregulated dog breeders are stupid or easily deterred; they are making tens of thousands of dollars from these animals, all done in the informal economy, off the record, no income is declared, no taxes are paid, no vet bills are covered, and there is no comeback for those who are fooled into buying those animals. As evidenced, puppy farmers go to great lengths to hide their operations. The unregulated nature of the industry means that there is no central register of dog breeders and therefore the location of potential puppy farmers are not available. By the time puppies are released into the market, they have poor traceability and we cannot find out where they were bred or in what conditions. This makes the investigation and identification of cases almost impossible. There is no transparency and no public scrutiny. This is a hidden industry operating outside the formal economy. I hope members understand that.

Dr D.J. Honey: What will change under this bill?

Ms L.L. BAKER: I have just gone through what a central register will do, member. Stay awake and listen! The bill contains provisions that allow the traceability of all puppies back to their breeders and demands that all breeders meet mandated standards and guidelines for the keeping, breeding and transportation of dogs. Anyone who owns a dog over the age of two years and chooses to keep that dog entire will need to gain approval in case they decide to breed from that dog, unless the dog is exempt on the grounds that it was registered prior to the commencement of this legislation, the dog is temporarily exempted by a veterinarian on health welfare or development grounds, or the dog is a livestock working dog. Member for Moore, under this bill, a livestock working dog is defined as a dog that is bona fide used for droving or tending stock. By the way, I like the member's definition better; I think we should change it, but that is just a comment.

There are no acceptable reasons that any ethical breeder of dogs would not agree to ensuring that puppies are traceable. Similarly, no ethical breeder would disagree with traceability that requires a one-off registration to identify them as registered breeders bound by the newly introduced WA standards and guidelines for the health and welfare of dogs. The bill allows working dogs to be excluded from mandatory desexing provisions and asks that farmers who keep entire dogs register on the central database. This will enable traceability of puppies and dogs and increase the safety of their breeding lines. When working dogs turn up in rehoming and rescue systems, we will know who bred them and can reunite those dogs with their breeders. I will reference that in a bit more detail in a few seconds at the end of this when I address the member's proposed amendments specifically. No responsible reputable breeder who cares for the puppies they breed would object to this provision.

On the latest advice from veterinary research, the desexing provisions in the bill are set at two years, to protect large-breed dogs and those breeders who want to see a level of maturity in the dog before deciding whether it is suitable to breed. The Australian Veterinary Association requests that the definition of desexing should be as broad as possible to allow for new technologies as they become available. Vets will be empowered to grant temporary or permanent exemptions in consideration of health and welfare impacts and vets will be encouraged but not required to report desexed or entire animals to authorities.

This bill seeks to remove section 33 of the Dog Act, which dictates an outdated and ineffective requirement that greyhounds must wear muzzles when outside their homes. This restriction has already been removed by Victoria

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

and the Australian Capital Territory. For the record, greyhounds are required to be on leashes when they are out of their home environment, and we are not suggesting that should change. Racing and Wagering Western Australia agrees that muzzling requirements for retired and unraced greyhounds are outdated and do not contribute to either improved community safety or animal welfare outcomes. RWWA supports the removal of muzzling and concurs that leash provisions should remain in place.

The bill has been brought to this place with the support of rescue and rehoming agencies; animal advocacy groups; dog homes and shelters; veterinarians; the Pet Industry Association of Australia; expert animal welfare regulators; many dog breeders, including Dogs West members who have contacted me personally, including breeders of rare breeds; and with the resounding support of the Western Australian public.

I want to read from a media release by the RSPCA on 9 February 2020. It states —

The reforms promise to deliver the most significant animal welfare improvement in WA since the Animal Welfare Act was updated in 2002. Right now, dog breeding is totally unregulated and anyone can breed ... puppies ... Unplanned litters are common. RSPCA WA inspectors deal with many cases where unwanted puppies and dogs are simply abandoned and left to fend for themselves.

...

Added to the neglect and abandonment of unwanted dogs, puppy farming leads to the heartbreaking scenario of genetic faults which may not become apparent until the dog gets older. New owners who bought a cute looking puppy may face massive vet bills for corrective surgery. Or in the event the health problems become too great, the dog must be euthanised to save it from a life of pain and suffering.

I want to quickly turn to the three proposed amendments that the member for Moore has on the notice paper. I do not consider that the member should have a problem with his first amendment, because we have agreed that livestock working dogs will be exempt from the desexing provisions.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Ms L.L. BAKER: We could read you any letter that we have written to the working dogs groups, and they are being disingenuous if they have told the member anything but that we have agreed. It is going into the regulations and we have committed to do that. The member should get them to be a little bit more honest in their dealings. We have told them we will do this; they are being disingenuous. Quite frankly, I am over this. We are trying to protect these animals. I have had enough of the likes of people who say one thing to someone's face and then turn around and do something else.

I refer to the member's proposed amendment on Dogs West. I absolutely understand Dogs West's position and I have full sympathy with it. The government and I tried very hard to talk through some of Dogs West's concerns. It would be fantastic if it could afford to run the whole system; it cannot. The proposed amendment effectively seeks to exempt members of the Canine Association of Western Australia Incorporated from requiring approval to breed and desexing their dogs. We know what Dogs West does. For breeders to apply to the relevant local government for an approval to breed requires only a one-off application and assessment based on specified criteria. Unfortunately, we cannot control local governments changing local laws. If we could, I am sure that the Minister for Local Government would have been really happy about some of the things that he has tried to get through. But all of us who have been members of local government know that local government is a fearsome machine and will make its own laws. We cannot dictate local laws to it. In determining the application, an approval to breed may be granted subject to conditions considered reasonable in the circumstances, there may be various rights of appeal to the local government or to the State Administrative Tribunal, people can appeal that decision, and, above all, we have not said that local governments have to go into back gardens and inspect premises to say whether someone can breed a dog or not.

Mr R.S. Love: You have.

Ms L.L. BAKER: We have not. Read the legislation.

Mr R.S. Love: I have read it.

Ms L.L. BAKER: Well, read it again, because the message is not getting through, I kid you not!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms L. Mettam): Excuse me, members!

Ms L.L. BAKER: Although the approval to breed is a one-off assessment, a process exists to cancel it if someone changes their mind. It is difficult for authorities to investigate breeders for offences against the legislation if they are exempt from the dog breeder approval system. A decision to cancel an approval to breed is also subject to

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

review on application to the State Administrative Tribunal. On the exemption from having to obtain an approval to breed for working dogs —

Mr R.S. Love: There is no exemption in the legislation.

Ms L.L. BAKER: The member asked for an exemption; I am addressing his amendment. One of the things that has been claimed is that this is about companion animals. I did a Google search and I found about 30 rescue groups that deal with only Australian working dogs. I have already asked for an extension. At the end of the day, if farmers say that working dogs do not become part of the companion animal marketplace, that is not true. For instance, in the last 10 years, the K9 Rescue Group has fostered about 50 border collies and cattle dogs. I could list about 17 other agencies that deal specifically with working dogs.

MR S.J. PRICE (Forrestfield) [7.49 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. As we have heard, this bill seeks —

- to amend the Dog Act 1976 to provide for matters relating to the sterilisation and breeding of dogs and the supply of dogs to and by relevant pet shop businesses; and
- to amend the Dog Act 1976 and the Cat Act 2011 to provide for a centralised registration system; and
- to make other amendments to the Dog Act 1976 and the Cat Act 2011.

The Labor Party made a commitment during the 2017 election campaign to stop puppy farming, for which it received overwhelming support. This bill is the McGowan government delivering on another of its election commitments. As we just heard, the member for Maylands has been through this whole journey, including the consultation associated with the development of this bill. It would be a waste of time for me to go through everything she just touched on; however, I will jump to one small part of the bill in making my contribution to this debate. Most people would not even notice this small part of the bill unless they were looking for it specifically. I am referring to clauses 4 and 5. Clause 4, “Section 33 amended”, states —

Delete section 33(1) and (3).

That does not tell us much about what that is about. Clause 5, “Section 33B amended”, states —

In section 33B delete “32(4), 33(3)” and insert:

32(4)

Once again, unless someone was interested in what that means, they would not look at it. I fully understand the concerns of members of Dogs West, who have provided me with feedback on the bill, but the bill in no way diminishes what they are doing. Yes, they are held to the highest standard of breeding under the Australian National Kennel Council, but this bill does not diminish that; instead, the bill captures those who are not held to that standard and puts them into a regime in which they can be monitored and identified, so that they can also be held accountable. I say to Dogs West members in my electorate who have contacted me that I understand their point of view on this bill; however, the bill does more than, in their words, undermine what they are doing. Those people are held to a high standard and they do a great job, and we encourage them to continue to do what they are doing. The bill will not stop them from doing that; instead, it will place obligations on other people—the backyard breeders, as Dogs West members call them—who do not seem to have any concerns or consideration for the welfare of the animals that they breed.

The amendments in clauses 4 and 5 relate to the removal of the requirement that greyhounds be muzzled in public unless they have completed the prescribed training, otherwise known as green collar training. During the consultation period for the development of this bill, 1 192 submissions were made in support of this amendment. In addition, a petition with 2 700 signatures was presented to the other place, which also sought an end to the laws that make greyhound muzzling compulsory. Along with the dozens of Dogs West members within my electorate who have contacted me about this bill, hundreds of greyhound owners have contacted me. There are concerns that this amendment to the Dog Act to remove the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled once they are rescued from the racing industry and rehomed will get tied up and bogged down in people’s opposition to the bill, based on either the Dogs West position of opposing this legislation or, as we heard during a brief interchange, the concerns about working dogs. As the member for Maylands said, working dogs should not be an issue—there is an agreement that they will be exempted.

I have two rescue greyhounds at home. They are beautiful pets. The requirement for greyhounds to wear a muzzle in public unless they have passed green collar training has a detrimental effect on people’s perception of greyhounds, and therefore a negative impact on the ability to rehome these beautiful animals.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: What are their names?

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Mr S.J. PRICE: My boy is Tyler. He was 18 months old when we adopted him, which is quite a young age for these dogs. If Racing and Wagering Western Australia did not have the integrity and lifetime tracing programs in place, there is every chance that he would have been euthanised. If members saw him run, they would know why he was not going to be a good racing dog, but he loves to run around. He quite obviously was not going to pay his way as a racing greyhound, so his trainer decided to move him on. Fortunately, he was given to one of the rehoming agencies, Greyhound Adoptions WA, and found his way to my house. Tyler is an anxious dog. He is now four and a bit years old, but he gets very anxious when we go out in crowds. This behaviour is a direct result of the way he was raised. You cannot get a greyhound puppy for a pet; they are bred for trainers in the racing industry. They are not socialised, they are not comforted and they are not part of a family; they are taught to race. Who knows how they teach them. There are varying documentaries about what this process entails. I do not know what happened to him. When we talk about green collar training for greyhounds once they have been rehomed, it is essentially a temperament test and the dog is put through certain situations to see how they react. Based on that reaction, a decision is made on whether they need to be muzzled when they are out in public. I never put Tyler through temperament testing because he would not have passed it, and he still would not pass it. He gets muzzled every time I take him out of the house and when we go into public places. He gets very excited when he sees little fluffy dogs. I am not sure why, but anything that runs past him that is little and fluffy seems to excite him!

With all pet ownership comes responsibility. As a responsible pet owner, I muzzle Tyler. If and when this legislation is passed, I will continue to muzzle him, because I know he is anxious when we take him out. Strangely enough, wearing a muzzle gives him a level of comfort, and me as well, because I know that people will not overwhelm him. As I said, people have a misconception that they need to be careful of muzzled greyhounds because they might be aggressive towards them, so people stay away, but that gives Tyler a bit of room and a bit of comfort. He is one example that, should this legislation be passed, which it should, we do not need breed-specific provisions, such as that a particular breed of dog needs to wear a muzzle. As the member for Maylands mentioned earlier, the other part of the legislation that we are keeping is that greyhounds will always have to be on a lead when in public. Once again, it is for the protection of the dogs as well.

My other dog is quite a special little dog. Her name is Grace and she just turned eight years old. We have had her for just over a year now. Grace was bred on the east coast and exported to China when she was two years old. She spent five years racing for her life in a place called the Canidrome in Macau. To stay alive at the Canidrome, dogs had to place three times out of every five races. If they did not, they were killed. This notorious dog racing track, the Canidrome, was owned by a very wealthy Chinese gambler's wife. They owned all the dogs that raced there. A lot of them were imported from Australia—in theory, illegally. They were all housed on site in concrete kennels that were about two feet wide and five feet long. The dogs were allowed out twice a day and spent around 23 hours a day locked in these cages. From when the Canidrome opened in the 1960s until late 2015, Australia supplied around 300 greyhounds a year to the stadium. It is estimated that nearly 20 000 dogs were killed over the 50 years that the Canidrome was running. Animal rights groups successfully lobbied for its closure and it closed on 21 July 2018. When the owners abandoned the Canidrome, 532 dogs were left behind. The owners were going to be charged with abandonment of 532 dogs at quite an expensive amount for each dog. A group of animal welfare and dog rehoming agencies that had been trying to shut down the Canidrome worked with the owner to ensure the animals were rehomed.

Greyhounds Australasia, the racing industry's governing body in Australia, banned exports to Macau in 2013, no longer issuing passports for greyhounds to be exported to China. However, the Australian government refused to make it illegal to send greyhounds to Macau without a passport, so the ban was ineffectual and it still is. I strongly urge the Australian government to ban the export of Australian greyhounds. We still find that greyhounds end up in China although they are exported to Ireland, the United Kingdom or somewhere like that. They go through the back door to China, so we really need to ban the export of greyhounds from Australia.

Greyhound Adoptions WA was involved in rehoming around the world the abandoned greyhounds. An organisation called Anima: Society for the Protection of Animals in Macau was one of the key organisations in not only getting the place shut down, but also rehoming around the world the 532 abandoned dogs. They were assisted by GREY2K USA Worldwide and Pet Levrieri Onlus, based in Italy.

Twelve months ago, 19 of the greyhounds came back to Australia. Of those, five came to Western Australia: Alby, Hope, Faith, Ivy and Grace. When Grace came to live with us, she was very underweight and had a whole mouthful of rotten teeth, 27 of which had to be removed. She had a severe skull fracture, a broken tail, a toe was missing and she had numerous scars over her body. Her remaining teeth were worn right down from chewing the bars at the front of her cage. She has a beautiful temperament and gets so excited to see, be around and be loved by people. When I take her out, she does not wear a muzzle. She should because she is not green collar trained, but she does not wear one. She will benefit from this legislation going forward because she will not be breaking the law. Once

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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

again, it comes back to responsible pet ownership. Dog owners have to do what is in the best interest of the dog they are looking after. This applies to all animals.

Globally, greyhound racing is on the decline. The greyhound racing industry is contracting. Around the world, dozens of tracks have closed and continue to close. Fewer than 150 commercial tracks currently exist around the world and more are slated to close in the near future. The decline in greyhound racing is due to increased public awareness that dog racing is cruel and inhumane, coupled with competition from other, faster forms of gambling associated with the rise of internet and phone gambling.

I stress that these are my personal views on the greyhound racing industry. It is very concerning that Australia has around 76 tracks. That means over half of the world's greyhound racetracks are here in Australia.

Mr W.R. Marmion: How many are in WA?

Mr S.J. PRICE: There are three.

That is not good enough. There is a global push to get out of this industry and more needs to be done to reduce the number of tracks in Australia and in Western Australia. I would like to thank Greyhound Adoptions WA, Free the Hounds, the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds, GreyhoundAngels of WA and Greyhounds as Pets for the work they do rehoming these beautiful animals.

This small amendment, which removes the requirement to muzzle greyhounds in public, will have a significant impact on the future of greyhounds as pets and I urge members to ensure the speedy passage of this bill through both houses to effect that change. This bill also meets the McGowan government's commitment to stop puppy farming by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs in Western Australia. I appreciate people's views on the impact this bill will have on their activities, and I sympathise with the Dogs West breeders, but it will not stop them doing what they are doing. There is a small requirement for them to get a licence from their local government, then they can carry on doing what they are doing. If this bill is held up or not passed, it will have a big impact on greyhounds and their owners. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe) [8.05 pm]: I rise to make a reasonably short contribution on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. I would like to make a few points. The points I will make are firstly as a local member. Many constituents have raised issues with me and they are mostly very concerned. Secondly, I will speak on behalf of Dogs West. I could not believe the amount of Facebook activity and number of emails I have seen, not so much in the last week or two, but several months ago. I will go through some of the points made in emails sent to me. Thirdly, I would like to speak on behalf of our kelpie, border collie, sheepdog and working dog breeders and our farmers who are very close to me as many of my constituents are farmers.

I will start with the Minister for Local Government. I refer to an article by a very concerned member of local government—a man who probably has two or three hats on in this scenario. He is the president of a local government and is a farmer who has working dogs. The headline reads, “State burden falls on Shire. Dogs breakfast of a legislated Bill will throw costs of licensing and enforcement on to local governments”. Minister, I am very concerned —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You should name him; say who it was.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It was Phillip Blight.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I know Phil.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Yes. A fantastic shire president of Wagin. I am concerned and will speak of a slightly broader issue. As Minister for Local Government, the minister has said, “Let's freeze the rates for the upcoming year. Let's keep all our employees employed. You're not going to get JopKeeper”. Obviously, that one is out of the minister's control. The puppy farming legislation can be administered and the minister can run the container recycling scheme, but planning legislation has been thrown in with no consultation. Lo and behold, it is also COVID-19 legislation. We have a conundrum of things and our local governments are being squeezed from every direction. I think this legislation is the final straw. That is what the article points out. Basically, it points out that the legislation will take up to a two per cent levy, or part of the rates for every shire. It well and truly could end up being a five per cent levy. Mr Blight's article states —

Recently, a senior WA bureaucrat was heard to say, “But it's only a few small changes, what's your problem?” when questioned about changes to the Dog Act.

Our local governments will be asked to administer this. A few members have pointed out that local governments will have to send out rangers to administer the registration and microchip policy. All these things impinge on local government.

Mr D.A. Templeman: The core business of local government is to address issues around dogs and pets.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The core business of local government is to look after ratepayers—rubbish and roads, as they say. The minister is loading up local governments with one thing after another. He is loading them up with a variety of responsibilities at the same time as telling them to freeze their rates and keep all their employees. The revenue of one large local government in the great southern is down by \$7.6 million, but it is being loaded up with this responsibility. What I am trying to do —

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: — member for Maylands, is point out the dissatisfaction that we have heard in our consultation with our local governments. What is coming through—I think the member for Moore said it earlier and Dogs West pointed it out—is that the consultation process has been just paying lip-service.

Ms L.L. Baker: What! It's been there for eight years.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The government is just saying, "There has been consultation and we'll bring you in when the bill comes in and let you know what is going on, but lo and behold we've put it in."

Mr D.A. Templeman: It was an election commitment. Have you forgotten that?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know it was an election commitment.

Mr D.A. Templeman: They don't like it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What I do not like is that our local governments will have to pick up the tab. As I said, it is a bit the same as with the planning legislation. At some stage, there was some sort of consultation and then, whack, in it came—COVID-19 legislation. The Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2020 is still in other place.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Can you point to where in the Shire of Wagin the planning changes will have an impact? Can you point where it will impact on them?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: At this stage, I am focusing on the —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You can't because you know it will not.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It could. Depending on the amendments in the other place, it could potentially impact the shire. But I am saying that this minister is loading up local governments with all these requirements.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A major health crisis—goodness gracious! Have you seen the figures?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What I am worried about is that local governments might go into liquidation.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, are you inviting interjections?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: No. That is fine. It is fine by me, Acting Speaker.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I beg your pardon?

Mr D.A. Templeman: I actually get on well with Phillip Blight.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Phil is highly respected. He might get on well with the minister, but he obviously does not get on too well with the legislation.

Anyway, the world is made up of many different people and many different local governments, but we are seeing this scenario now. I am worried that our local governments are being squeezed from both sides. Many of them are on the path to liquidation because of the number of things that this minister is loading them up with. That is just one point I want to make.

The next point I want to make is about Dogs West. I think that Dogs West is aghast. It was asked to be part of a process and when it did not agree, it got dropped like a hot potato.

Ms L.L. Baker: That is simply not true. That might be their version of it, but that is simply not true.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Facebook went into meltdown several months ago. I could not get over it. I was really surprised by the passion of the members of Dogs West. It loves dogs and it was certainly concerned about the way that the member for Maylands had gone about her consultation. I will say that I certainly do not like those instances that the member for Maylands spoke about—puppy farming, dogs being kept below ground level and the like. That is not on. It is the same with puppies in the window at shopping centres; I am not impressed with that at all. I can see where the member for Maylands is coming from in a few elements of the legislation. However, I would like to read a sample of a few emails I received from Dogs West. It said that there is no evidence that the bill will prevent puppy farming. It also stated that the definition of a puppy farmer is —

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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

... a person or organisation which breed puppies solely for profit with little care or responsibility for the health and wellbeing of the adults or offspring.

We are worried that there is evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the bill will prevent that. That is one thing.

The legislation is based on compliance with microchipping and registration with LGAs and the state government. I have just spoken about that. One thing I am concerned about is the register for microchipping. I am informed that a register in New South Wales covers the whole of Australia. I am concerned that there will be a doubling up.

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Another massive register will be established here, potentially, but I am not a subject-matter expert on that, member for Maylands.

Ms L.L. Baker: It is a very good point and one that I'm across.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That had been pointed out to me, and I wanted to make sure that the member for Maylands was aware of it.

Ms L.L. Baker: I actually had a Dogs West member speak to me a couple of weeks ago about that and his concerns about the microchipping process, so I'm on top of that and we're dealing with it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: That is very good. I am pleased to hear it.

I guess another point is that puppy farmers do not microchip now. Is there any evidence that they will change their behaviour? Currently, there are laws with a fine of \$5 000 for not microchipping a dog, and has not really discouraged puppy farming so far.

Ms L.L. Baker: My response to that is that this is a suite of reforms that you have to take together. It won't work on its own; absolutely guaranteed not to work on its own. But if you also have an education program for people who farm puppies and tell them to source the dogs with that information available, then you attack the root of the problem. It is like this. You cannot tease one thing out and say it is all about desexing. It is not; it is about public education, desexing and a central register.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I hear what the member is saying about that, but I take issue with one thing the member for Maylands said. She said that the vets support her.

Ms L.L. Baker: Yes.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: In its desexing of companion animals policy document, the Australian Veterinary Association says —

Compulsory desexing of privately owned animals has not been shown to substantially reduce the unwanted dog and cat population.

Several vets that I have spoken to are very worried, especially about the two-year-old working dog scenario.

Ms L.L. Baker: It doesn't apply to working dogs.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The member for Moore pointed that out earlier. He said that working dogs sometimes do not mature until they are well over two years old and sometimes they need to get out of the puppy stage before they can find out what that is all about. I take issue with the suggestion that all vets support this legislation. I do not think that that is the case.

Ms L.L. Baker: I've got a letter from the AVA on my desk, which I'm happy to bring in, that says pretty much the opposite of that. They do support it. But, also, you did hear me say that working dogs are exempt from the desexing provisions.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Maylands.

Ms L.L. Baker: So the two years is irrelevant for you. You're all safe.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Another point that Dogs West members raised is that desexing causes well-documented health and developmental problems in dogs, especially before they have undergone physical, behavioural and/or sexual maturity.

Ms L.L. Baker: All the evidence says that, and the AVA says that, too.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I am just giving the member feedback from not only members of Dogs West —

Ms L.L. Baker interjected.

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The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Maylands, I think this can be adequately answered at the appropriate time.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: All I am trying to do is raise the concerns of the vets and Dogs West members who have contacted me. They are concerned that this will reduce the availability of well bred, healthy companion dogs and drive illegal puppy farming operators further underground. Dogs West members already pay registration fees. If this bill goes ahead, they will also have to pay local government fees. That is an example of some of the feedback that I got from Dogs West members. I have read only a few of the emails that I received. The copious Facebook messages that came to me from Dogs West members were strongly negative about this legislation. Another email states that Dogs West was consulted during the development of the bill; however, none of its input has been considered. That is probably a bit extreme. Another Dogs West member said that allowing a local government to determine whether an individual is suitable to breed puppies, rather than the national or state bodies that have been doing this, is ridiculous. That is the sort of thing that I am getting.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern River and member for Maylands!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I have explained the situation with local government. The minister has pointed out how well he gets on with Phil Blight, the president of the Shire of Wagin. I get on well with him as well. He is wearing two or three hats. He understands working dogs and he understands farming. He also well and truly understands local government. They are some of the concerns that Phil brought up in this article. I think he would be more than happy to be quoted on those.

I also want to talk about the farm dog sector. We used to see a lot more dogs at the Katanning saleyards than we do now. The Katanning saleyards are the largest undercover saleyards in the Southern Hemisphere. Dogs play a role at those saleyards. They are now muzzled. Dogs also play a role in just about every sheep farm in Western Australia. Katanning would probably be considered the centre of the sheep industry in Western Australia. I have seen many fantastic working dogs. What worries me is that the member for Maylands said that will be put in the regulations and that will be fine.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: If this was recognised as a real issue, why was it not put in the bill? I am not comfortable with that being put in the regulations. It should be put in the bill. Therefore, I support the amendments proposed by the member for Moore. I think they are excellent.

One of the points that has been raised with me is that farm dogs are an essential part of livestock management. Good farm dogs can replace the work of an employee. Working farm dogs are considered part of the family and work arrangements and are treated exceptionally well in most cases. We should use education rather than policing to control puppy farming. That is also what the member for Maylands spoke about. Another point is that we need to make farmers aware of the need to microchip their dogs. Most farmers now know that they need to microchip their dogs. This helps if their dogs go missing, because they can be returned quickly. Farmers who care about their stock and their dogs would never purchase a dog from a puppy farmer. It is essential that the bill recognises the importance to the agricultural sector of farm working dogs. We have spoken about the importance of the sheep industry to Western Australia. It is becoming increasingly important that our sheep are handled well and in an ethical way. Sheep are generally well treated by farmers. That is because farmers understand that these days, they need to deliver a good product. As I pointed out when we had the recent scenario with food security, people now understand the importance of our livestock producers.

In summary, I do not like puppy farms any more than the member for Maylands does. I do not like seeing puppies in shop windows. I believe there is still room to consult properly, or a bit better. That is a summation of the feedback that I have received. We need to take notice of the local government authorities and Dogs West. I strongly support the member for Moore's proposed amendments for farm working dogs.

My final statement is that if the government does not start to listen, this bill is doomed to fail. Working dogs should be included in the bill, not in the regulations. If the bill does fail, it will remain as an election commitment. I hope the government will take these things on board. As I have said, many of my constituents are not happy with elements of the bill. I understand where the member for Maylands is coming from and where the government's election commitment has come from. However, there is room for improvement.

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [8.26 pm]: I would like to make some comments on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. First, if I say something frivolous, that does not mean that I question the compassion and interest of the member for Maylands. I understand the issue.

I grew up on a puppy farm. I was not a puppy, but I raised dogs. At one time, I had 15 dogs. They were Irish wolfhounds. They are tremendous dogs. We had to be careful, because they are rather big, and they tend to chase.

Several members interjected.

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Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We shipped them around the world. Irish wolfhounds had been inbred and their breeding stock had declined, so in order to save the breed, they were bred with bull-mastiffs, so they had some problems. Bull-mastiffs are really thick. They are running dogs. Every time they would see a German shepherd or an Alsatian, they would go for it. They had an imprint on the brain about wolves, hence the name wolfhound. As I have said, we raised these dogs and shipped them around the world. They were in our backyard, to use the euphemism. They were puppies. Did we farm them? We had quite a few of them. Did we take care of them? Like our brothers and sisters. Indeed, to this day—this is 50 years ago—I still get letters from people to whom we sold dogs. By the way, I calculated that in today's dollars, we were selling those puppies for \$50 000 each. That was a lot of money.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I can tell members that on the farm, my father lost more money in other ventures, like Angora goats, than he made on the dogs. It is good that he was a lawyer.

No-one has a monopoly on compassion for dogs. Dogs are very popular in my electorate. My last dog was called Mango. He was actually my daughter's dog but kids leave home and what stays is the dog.

Mr D.A. Templeman: What sort of dog was that?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: He was a spoodle, although it would have been more apt to call him a noodle, because he was not the smartest dog. He was the cutest dog, but not the smartest. He died recently, at 18 and a half years old. He was a good dog. He had a hard life. He was bred at a real puppy farm in Victoria. It was a large farm, breeding these spoodles. I bought him from a pet shop. Let us not be pejorative about people breeding a large number of dogs or good pet shops. Let us be careful. It is a legitimate business. I assure members that the person I bought Mango from treated dogs and other animals very well.

The problem highlighted by the minister and the member for Maylands is that we have seen an overproduction of dogs that have to be put down. It is not just puppies. I might be wrong but I understand that people get the wrong type of dog and they are not able to cope with it. These dogs end up in the pound and they have to dispose of the dogs. That is a real issue.

Victoria has had mandatory microchipping and registration of dogs for a long time. Mango was registered and microchipped. The phrase "puppy farm" is used to garner support, but I think the government is exaggerating the extent of puppy farming and also trying to put forward policies that will not address the issue; instead, puppy farming will be pushed forward.

I must admit that I came across this debate during the Darling Range by-election, the two-year anniversary of which is today. The member for Darling Range's father used to breed Dobermans, I think. We went to all the Dogs West people and to a meeting attended by the member for Maylands.

Mr T.J. Healy: Me too. I was there. We saw you at that, talking to everyone.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, we were talking to everyone, as we do. We said nothing. We were polite. It was interesting. It reminded me of all the dog shows that I used to go to. We saw the same type of people. There were a lot of ugg boots and woolly jumpers. I used to go to a lot of dog shows. We had a male dog that was a national champion. That is what people do when they breed dogs. He was very happy in life.

We made a commitment to support Dogs West and ensured that its issues were addressed in this bill because it is necessary to do so. We could not find a group of people more committed to the behaviour and protection and the stopping of the maltreatment of dogs than this organisation. If we want to solve problems like this, the best thing to do is not give it to a local government, which will not solve the problem because we have not forced it to do it and if it does it, it does it chaotically. We need to enfranchise Dogs West and give it a leadership role like we have with the RSPCA so that it can manage this issue. It might be overzealous if it did it, but I think that is what the government wanted.

I know that the member for Maylands negotiated extensively and tried to co-opt Dogs West. The issue is that it specialises in its own breeds—what it calls purebreds—and does not look at the vast bulk of dogs that are crossbreeds. I understand that but we could enfranchise it. The member for Darling Range will speak for herself, but I made a commitment that I would do my best to enfranchise Dogs West in this bill, and that is why I will not support it. We made a commitment and I think the commitment was solidly based. I was not just trying to get its vote, which I was; I also made a commitment and I think it is valid. Both the member for Darling Range and I were involved in that group as young people and we understand the passion, the commitment and the expertise.

One of the issues that the member for Maylands raised—I was at the back of the chamber when she mentioned it—related to kennels. She was going to talk about the kennel structure and design and other issues. She has walked away from that. That is good. The government uses terms such as "backyard". Where does it think the dogs should be raised—in the front yard? Of course they should be. One of the senior ladies at Dogs West raised a dog; I forget the breed. She was crying next to me because her puppies are raised in a house, not a kennel, and so they should

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Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

be. I remember that some of our dogs were pretty big; if my mother let me, they would be under the bed. That led to a bit of smell and noise, but that is a different issue.

We need to have people self-regulate for these things because if we push this and have too much regulation, particularly with local government, it will not enforce it. I think the government was going to try to be much more stringent and force local government to enforce it, but it decided not to because it would be fruitless.

Ms L.L. Baker: I don't remember that.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is what it told me. The member did not tell me that.

Ms L.L. Baker: Then I have misinterpreted something.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It has been a long debate. The best thing to do is to have the community directly involved in this activity as much as possible, like the RSPCA, as well as people at the dog pound, dog refuges and vets.

Mango was purchased from a pet shop. He lived to 18 and a half years. He was a lovely dog and he was treated very nicely.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Why did you call him Mango?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It was my son's dog. He was orange in colour. He had a lot of names, such as Mangosteen and some of which I cannot mention in Parliament.

I know it is unpopular for pet shops to have dogs generally. I think the government has made a good move to allow them to keep selling puppies and to sell puppies from the pound. I think that is a good move because the purebreds are so expensive nowadays. In fact, I am worried about that. They are almost as expensive as my dad's Irish wolfhounds. I think registration is an excellent idea. I think Victoria has had uniform registration forever and it is no problem. Microchipping is sensible. Mango was microchipped. He got lost a couple of times and that really helped us to find him. He had a habit of going out and, because he was so cute, ingratiating himself with the neighbours. He ended up in Sorrento at someone's holiday home. He had a good life.

Mr W.R. Marmion: How far was that?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: He went from Willetton to Sorrento. I do not know how he did it. I had to go get him. My point is that he was a well-treated dog, even though he came from a puppy farm and a pet shop. I think it is a good idea that the government is keeping the pet shops alive, as they will keep selling puppy dogs that are crossbreeds or getting other dogs from the pounds.

We have had good regulation of dogs for a long time. Some people overbreed dogs. More recently I had an electorate issue—it also occurred when I was young—of people who raised too many cats. There are cat ladies. It is a phenomenon.

Ms L.L. Baker: Don't call them cat ladies.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I know that I am pushing the boundaries here.

Ms L.L. Baker: Cat hoarders!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, I know. One lady had 20 or 30 cats.

Ms L.L. Baker: That's nothing. I've got 209. Not me personally—in my electorate.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Is it a lady?

Ms L.L. Baker: Ladies.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Those are the concerns. The cats are much more of a concern than the dogs because the cats do damage not just to themselves but to wildlife. Are we regulating cats as stringently?

Ms L.L. Baker: We already have.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: What about backyard breeders?

Ms L.L. Baker: You have to pay \$100 to breed a cat. That's what you guys put through.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Joe Francis did that.

Ms L.L. Baker: Yes, he did. Blame him.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I did. He was very passionate about dogs too. I can tell members stories about his love of dogs. He had an Alsatian that died. His mother and father raised Alsatis, and so did he. He raised long-haired ones, and one of them died. One day he was sitting despondent, which was uncharacteristic of Hon Joe Francis. I asked him what was wrong and he said that his dog had died. I sat next to him for a while. He had cameras in his house and he watched his dogs sleeping on his bed.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Ms L.L. Baker: Nothing wrong with Hon Joe Francis.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Did the member see his dogs? They shed hair everywhere. I said, “Your wife just had a baby, Joe. Where are the dogs sleeping?” He said they were sleeping on the bed. I asked, “Where’s the wife?” He told me that she was in the other room with the baby. He had one of the dogs cremated.

Mr T.J. Healy: It died first?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, of course; don’t be rude!

Mr T. Healy interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: He had the dog cremated in a special manner that created really strong carbon, because he was very hygienic, and he had a tattooist tattoo a large dog paw print using the graphite from the dead dog. It was always close to his heart.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is why Joe always went like this.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Let *Hansard* note that the member did an interesting scratching motion!

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We kid Joe about it but that is how passionate people are about their dogs, and I am too. But I think that unless local government is incentivised, it will not enforce the measures. The government has stood back and made it optional for local governments, and they will not enforce it. Therefore, if the government is really concerned about the improper breeding and treatment of dogs, the best thing to do is to enfranchise Dogs West to act as the eyes, ears and vigilantes, if you wish, on the ground, just like we do with the RSPCA. We might disagree with it and it might get overzealous sometimes, but I am thankful that we have it.

Ms L.L. Baker: To your knowledge, would Dogs West then welcome the registration of all dogs, not just purebred dogs?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I will not answer for them.

Ms L.L. Baker: They are not allowed to under their membership.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The RSPCA does things as an adjunct to its general activities. Even though Dogs West might not allow its members to, it could be —

Ms L.L. Baker: Ring-fenced.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. The government could ask Dogs West to look at that.

The government is worried about the mistreatment of dogs and the overproduction of puppies that have to be destroyed. The numbers that the member for Maylands read out would disturb anybody; they are awful. I think the market will improve. People have to pay \$4 500 for a purebred dog, which often is not the best companion dog. Purebreds are often bred for a purpose. My dad’s Irish wolfhounds could not go near an Alsatian, otherwise they would go for it, because it is in their brain to do that. But crossbreeds are often the best. Maybe they are free or low cost and can be brought in. My plea here is to enfranchise Dogs West because I think that is the organisation that needs to help the government.

One of the great things in life is for young people to have a litter of puppies.

Ms L.L. Baker: For their dogs to have a litter of puppies.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, of course. I am not going to explore that.

We are choking off one the great things of life, which is to learn to raise animals and take care of them. This bill will, effectively, eliminate that. Modernity and life move on, but do not eliminate the ability of young kids to take care of a litter of puppies.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [8.44 pm]: I rise tonight to make a contribution to the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. I would like to start by congratulating and acknowledging the hard work of the Minister for Local Government and, of course, all the minister’s staff and also the member for Maylands for all her hard work in making this bill come to fruition, at least in the Assembly. I am rather aghast that members on the other side do not seem to see the need for this bill. That is deeply concerning. I see this as a crucial piece of legislation. It is, as the member for Maylands and the minister have already said, an election commitment. We took it to the election in 2017 and even before that in 2013. From speaking to my constituents in Belmont, I know that they feel deeply passionate about it. I wonder whether members on the other side have spoken to their constituents about puppy farming.

At present, dog breeding in Western Australia is totally unregulated. I completely disagree with the member for Riverton, who asserts that the best option is self-regulation. I do not see any example in any industry of self-regulation

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

being effective for anything. The fact that it is unregulated leaves the door wide open for animal abuse to occur. Consequently, that is exactly what we have seen by some irresponsible breeders. I state for the record that it is only some breeders who are doing the illegal puppy farming. I am not referring to those members of Dogs West who abide by the law. This is not directed at them and they should not be afraid of the legislation; they should be embracing this call for transparency and cleaning up the industry.

This bill amends the Dog Act 1976 to prevent and prohibit puppy farming by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs in Western Australia so that we will see an end to the irresponsible overbreeding of dogs. I am incredibly proud of the McGowan government for introducing this legislation, but I am incredibly concerned that it will not see the light of day and become enshrined in legislation in this state because I worry that the Liberals and the Nationals WA in the upper house will thwart our efforts to bring about a humane response to dog breeding in Western Australia.

The suffering that dogs experience when kept in puppy farms is, quite frankly, inhumane. I challenge the member for Cottesloe to do a tiny bit of research on this matter. With a simple google search he can find a number of stories highlighting the plight of puppies born in such conditions. Dogs have been found to be locked in small cages with little food and water, and treated simply as breeding machines. The squalid and overcrowded conditions that these dogs are forced to mate and give birth in demonstrates a complete lack of compassion on behalf of the breeder and turn living, breathing animals into commodities to exploit. The Australian Veterinary Association describes puppy farms as “the overbreeding of dogs under inappropriate conditions, conditions which fail to meet the animals’ behavioural, social and physiological needs”. This is not just a made-up concept, which I think the member for Cottesloe insinuated. That was outrageous. As a result, I am disappointed that I have only one example that I have retrieved from the news to highlight the existence of puppy farms, because I was under the assumption that everyone would acknowledge the existence of puppy farms and be equally outraged as I am and as members of the government and my community are.

A member interjected.

Ms C.M. ROWE: A 2014 online article on the ABC titled “Puppy farm kept dogs in filthy, unventilated underground bunker in WA” reported that 50 dogs were found in an underground bunker in Kellerberrin. Police officers and RSPCA inspectors had to lift distressed dogs out of a small hole in the ground covered by a heavy metal lid. They lived in total darkness with no ventilation. Many suffered from ear mites and secondary infections. Clearly, this is not acceptable and, clearly, puppy farming does exist. As the member for Maylands quite rightly pointed out, because there is no capacity to trace dogs, we are not able to appropriately monitor and manage these illegal puppy farms, hence the need for this bill. I am quite disturbed that we even have to have this debate to prove the worth and merit of this legislation. I encourage members opposite who oppose this legislation to speak to their constituents—lay members of the community, not people with a vested interest—and hear what they have to say. I know that in my community people overwhelmingly want to see this practice outlawed.

The conditions that puppies born in puppy farms are forced to endure are absolutely woeful. Their parents are kept in the same conditions. As other members have mentioned, puppies are often born with or go on to develop serious health issues that either cannot be rectified or can be rectified only at significant cost to the owner. Another issue with illegal puppy farms is that the puppies are not vaccinated. When the puppies are purchased by an unknowing pet shop, it can be very difficult to ascertain whether the puppies are vaccinated. Again, the puppies go out into the community and can affect other dogs’ health and so forth.

A key change that this legislation will make is to introduce a single, centralised registration system for all dogs in Western Australia. This is done individually by each of the 137 local governments across our state now. Obviously, a central system will make it easier to trace and track dogs and breeders throughout a dog’s life, from the moment it is born until its death. Critically, the register will also be effective in allowing the sharing of information so that we can apprehend illegal puppy farmers. The register will help to effectively monitor breeders. It will also help consumers confirm that they are purchasing a dog from a registered breeder who is doing the right thing. Again, I feel that concerned members of Dogs West should be embracing this change. This is a matter of transparency and they should welcome it with both arms. It is a really important element of this bill.

It is important that dogs can be traced back to their original breeder. Under the current system, illegal puppy farmers cannot be held accountable for this reprehensible behaviour, as the dogs that they sell or that are onsold cannot be traced back to the original source. This is a real problem and means that we cannot apprehend illegal puppy farmers. This becomes particularly difficult when dogs are sold across local government boundaries, because, as I mentioned, there are currently 137 different systems in play for managing dogs. I think a shared register is absolutely overdue and basic common sense.

This legislation provides for a centralised system, with each dog owner receiving a unique dog owner number that will be recorded alongside the dog’s microchip details. This will be provided to all new owners so that they will be able to trace the past owners of their dog in order to understand where responsibility falls for concerns about

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Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

the dog's health. By combining all current information on local government registers and allowing dog owners to register online, we will reduce the burden on dog owners while implementing a comprehensive system that will enhance traceability of dogs and knowledge within the dog community. The system is designed to ensure that whenever a person is looking to buy a dog in WA, either directly from a breeder or through an adoption centre, they will know exactly where that dog has come from, the conditions the dog was born into and lived in and, crucially, the dog's medical record. With the centralised registration system, dog owners in WA will know about the health of the dog that they have purchased and will be confident in the knowledge that their money is not being used to prop up an industry that abuses and overbreeds dogs.

This legislation will further crack down on the illegal breeding of dogs by mandating that dogs are desexed by the time they reach the age of two years, unless they are subject to one of the exemptions. Dogs that are exempt, as we have already discussed, include dogs that were registered with their local government before the commencement of the new legislation; dogs whose owners have an approval to breed dogs; dogs that are temporarily exempt because a veterinarian has issued a certificate on health, welfare or development grounds; greyhounds registered with Racing and Wagering Western Australia; and livestock working dogs. That is an important point. I know that our colleagues in the Nationals WA were concerned about that. We have taken on board those concerns and that is definitely factored into our legislation. The legislation will be enforced through an annual registration for unsterilised dogs, with no lifetime or three-year registrations. Authorities will have the power to seize a dog that is not desexed despite being required to be sterilised under the act. Of course, this excludes the categories I just mentioned. This provision has the aim of reducing the number of dogs that are indiscriminately bred and it will increase the visibility of dog breeders to ensure that they are following breeding standards.

The implementation of an official approval process for breeding dogs is a commonsense approach to ensuring high standards in the industry. In the absence of an approval process for who can and cannot become a breeder, some individuals have seized the opportunity to wilfully neglect standards of decency, respect and humanity for dogs in their care. The vast majority of breeders doing the right thing can carry on doing the right thing and breed dogs. They have nothing to fear from this legislation. The approval process for breeders will be managed by local governments. A breeder can hold an approval for an indefinite time, unless it is cancelled or the breeder moves to another jurisdiction. This will not be an imposition on breeders who are following the rules and treating dogs with respect. This is a mechanism to ensure that those who want to breed dogs do it properly, report what they are doing and operate with sufficient oversight and accountability to ensure that no dog is suffering or subject to cruelty or living in squalor.

On this point, I highlight that there has been extensive consultation. Members opposite have continually brought up the issue of consultation and suggested that the government has done scant, if any, consultation, particularly with Dogs West. That is completely inaccurate. There was consultation over, I think, an eight-year period. Four workshops were held at the Dogs West premises at which over 400 members were in attendance. Again, as the member for Maylands said, just because not everything was agreed on, it does not mean that they were not consulted. I wanted to highlight the point that we have consulted in a very genuine and wholehearted fashion and those suggestions that there has been no consultation are simply not true.

Another important aspect of this bill is how businesses dealing in animal sales will conduct their operations. Pet shops will essentially transition to become adoption centres for abandoned or unwanted dogs. I think this is a terrific element of the bill. The legislation will make sure that dogs sold at pet shops are sourced from rescue organisations and approved animal shelters. This will drive down the number of homeless, abandoned and unwanted dogs in WA and obviously dramatically reduce the incentive for puppy farming operations, large or small, to exist. This is a much-needed change, as currently there are no restrictions on where pet shops can source puppies from. Of course, a major positive to flow from this is that it will help with the rehoming of rescue dogs.

Finally, the bill introduces the important measure of mandatory dog standards for dog breeders in WA. During the consultation phase, prior to the drafting of this bill, the implementation of the mandatory standards was supported by 93 per cent of participants. This change is firmly in the public interest and is supported by the community. The mandatory standards provision includes the number of pregnancies that dogs can have in their lifetime, the number of breeding females a breeder can maintain, compulsory vet checks, pre-mating and post-birthing housing, and transport and sale conditions. They will ensure that breeders are acting responsibly and that dogs are not being exploited. I do not understand how anyone could oppose such matters.

This bill delivers on an election commitment to stop puppy farming, and by doing so we are providing a positive framework to protect the health and wellbeing of dogs bred in WA. This bill will stamp out the overbreeding and irresponsible breeding of dogs in our state. The RSPCA has said that these new laws are the greatest single improvement to animal welfare in WA in 20 years. I am proud to be part of the McGowan government, which acts to protect the welfare of vulnerable animals, and I commend the bill to the house.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price; Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [8.59 pm]: Just to make sure, in the event that Hansard did not get my interjection before, I was going to praise the big brooch that the member for Maylands is wearing, obviously in preparation for this debate.

Ms L.L. Baker: Very observant, member for Dawesville!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Sometimes, member for Maylands, I am an observant individual.

Mr T.J. Healy: He has a nice pin!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: He does have a great pin.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): No-one will guess what my pin is.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: We can go through this lapel pin contest if we want. It looks like an Order of the Garter, I have to say, from my perspective.

The ACTING SPEAKER: It is from the Belgian city of Ypres, and it is the fire brigade of Ypres, which has a service every evening to commemorate the soldiers that fell there.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I cannot really top that. Mine is just the Western Australian flag. If the member for Southern River did not know that, he is not particularly patriotic!

Mr T.J. Healy: I can't see it; it's so small!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I cannot wear it as a flag. I will wear it as a cape! In any case, owing to the lateness of the evening, I thought I would congratulate the member for Maylands for her contribution and the passion with which she continues to advocate on behalf of what I know is an issue that is close to her heart—that is, the concerns of animal welfare. Undoubtedly, as we have seen from the contributions of members of the Nationals WA and the Liberal Party, there are obviously inconsistencies in our support for the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020, but that does not take away from our passion for animal advocacy and welfare that is attached to that important issue. I thought it might be prudent to point out to the Minister for Local Government that this is the first explanatory memorandum that I have seen in both my time as a policy adviser and as a member of this place that has paw prints instead of bullet points. The minister is not a particularly technical individual and I cannot imagine that he put them there!

Mr D.A. Templeman: I thought it was a nice touch.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I thought it was a nice flourish on behalf of the minister. Given that a number of other members have canvassed their own dog ownership, it would be remiss of me not to say that I consider that I am a dog person, rather like 38 per cent of all Western Australians, who have a dog in their house, in contrast with 29 per cent of Western Australians who have cats, regardless of what their gender might be.

Mr S.J. Price: Confused ones!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In the course of my animal ownership, when I was growing up in my parents' house, we had a bull-mastiff cross Great Dane called Bart. We got him from the pound. He was not mine. I took him for a walk for the first time, and he pulled me over. I was not a particularly fit child. He was quite large. He pulled me over and dragged me behind him; the first dog I have ever walked.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That's what your grandmother told me, too!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, my grandmother tells a lot of people about how overweight I was! It is a great story.

Mr D.A. Templeman: I think she told me about five times!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: She revels in it; she really does. She really enjoys it. One time, she bought me a cricket set that was deliberately a couple of sizes too small, so that I would get out there and play cricket. Little does she know, I do not particularly like sport. Nonetheless, I had a bull-mastiff cross Great Dane called Bart, and presently I have a Bernese mountain dog called Archer and a chocolate labrador called Charlie, which I have learnt is a particularly popular name. I think it is number nine in the most common dog names in Western Australia, so not a particularly original contribution on my behalf.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Charlie?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Charlie is a chocolate labrador, so *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Mr D.A. Templeman interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would never call a dog after one of our possible sovereigns!

Mr T.J. Healy: I assumed it was more of a non-gendered name, right?

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you very much. We are going to get through this. This has really wandered into territory I had not anticipated.

Mr T.J. Healy: We will make the fence high for you so you can go again!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am looking forward to the member for Southern River's contribution.

Mr T.J. Healy: Lower your expectations!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: There are two points that I would particularly like to go through as part of the explanatory memorandum, which has been well defined by the member for Belmont in her contribution. I refer to pet shops. I remember, as a young boy, I went to Morley Galleria when it first opened, and outside Kmart or Target there was a pet shop. I specifically remember seeing the dogs in the windows there. I find the practice of pet shops selling puppies to be out of step with modern societal expectation. Obviously, it makes a lot of sense for pet shops to be selling accessories and food and things like that, but I hate the practice of pet shops selling animals. It is something that I fundamentally do not support. I think, with this legislation, we are seeking to get rid of that practice entirely, and that is a good thing.

Ms C.M. Rowe: If we can get the bill passed, member.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have much more confidence in the good elected members of this place than the member for Belmont does. In my contribution here, which is what we are here talking about, it is something that I think is a compelling reason. It is obviously a compelling aspect of this bill. Helping to protect animal welfare is a good thing, and that should be recognised. I have also used the register that I think the member for Nedlands or Cottesloe talked about—the microchipping register. It may have been a member of the Nationals WA who talked about it. I have had the unfortunate experience of having to go through submitting paperwork for that. It is a terrible system.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: It is a long number.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is a very long number, member for Thornlie. If someone gets it wrong, they are off on a different tangent. It is not particularly user-friendly. I think the idea of a Western Australian register that is based in WA is a good thing, as is making sure that it is as user-friendly as possible. At the moment, it is a triplicate paper-based document; it is bloody terrible. Getting rid of reliance on that will be a good thing.

I was fascinated by the story of the member for Forrestfield and his two greyhounds, Tyler and Grace. Until the member for Forrestfield's contribution, I had always assumed that if I saw a greyhound out walking and they were not muzzled, the dog owner was walking their dog illegally. I did not realise that there was a green collar—process to be gone through. I have noticed that a number of people I know who have greyhounds are particularly passionate about the cause. Good on the member for Forrestfield for rescuing a dog from the Canidrome overseas; I think it is really admirable of him. I think that animals and our care for them speak to the greater part of who we are as humans. I am fascinated by the coevolution theory of dogs in particular—that is, how much we as humans have evolved alongside animals, particularly dogs, and what that might mean in terms of trade-offs and benefits that we get as separate groups. Undoubtedly, when scientists study the existing oxytocin feedback loop, it has been observed that it exists only between dogs and humans. Dogs are one of the few species of animals with which we can use gaze—visual cues—to indicate to each other what is going on.

Ms J.J. Shaw: Dogs have evolved eyebrow muscles to deal with us.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is fascinating to me, member for Swan Hills.

Ms J.J. Shaw: And they've learnt to smile.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: And they have learnt to smile. Absolutely, that is the contribution of coevolution, with whatever other aspects there might be that are not as obvious to us. It is a fascinating theory to me, because I think there are undoubtedly experiences internationally, particularly with First Nations people across different continents and countries, who have interactions with different animals.

Ms L.L. Baker: A lot of work has been done on that with horses.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, horses are a really good example; that is right. In an Australian context, dingoes fascinate me, because, of course, dingoes are particularly important for Aboriginal people. Interestingly, across the country, regardless of which geographic area or Aboriginal group someone may have come from, dingoes are almost universally part and parcel of that culture. The diet of dingoes is often, as one would expect, heavily reliant on the environment that they are in. If they are in the central desert or somewhere like that, they are particularly reliant on kangaroos, when they can find them, and animals like that, but there is evidence from an Australian government study of dingoes' stomachs that found that coastal dingoes hunt birds and magpies. They are heavily dependent on the

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

environment in which they exist, which makes a lot of sense in the natural context, but, of course, the relationship that each different Aboriginal group has with the animals is particularly important.

Minister for Local Government, I notice that the Dog Act has been introduced or amended in different formats 21 or 22 times in the state's history. I was very surprised to see just how much this act has been amended. Of course, up until about 1970, there was a lot of contention about the role that dogs—domestic animals—played with Aboriginal people. There was a concerted effort by the Western Australian government in the 1840s to place limitations on dog ownership by Aboriginal people. The Dog Act of 1883, I think it was, placed a reverse onus of proof on Aboriginal people, so if someone alleged that a stock animal was attacked or killed by one of their animals, they had to prove otherwise or the dog would be destroyed. Also, if there were more dogs than humans in an Aboriginal group, they would have to destroy some of the dogs. We do not know when dingoes were domesticated. Obviously, it was sometime after colonisation, but it could have been during earlier times of exploration. Undoubtedly, these dogs would have played an important role in hunting, even though dingoes are more solitary hunters. Domesticated dogs played an important role and became ubiquitous in Aboriginal culture. There are many stories of the important role that they played. I had not initially considered that I would speak in this debate because I thought it would be a short bill, but here we are. When I looked at the original act, I was incredibly surprised to see the inherent racism, to be perfectly frank, enshrined within it. It was shocking.

Ms L.L. Baker: I think it's due for review.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Yes, it is due for review. The inception of the legislation was in 1883, so it is probably prudent that it be reviewed. We obviously expect something fresh and new to be brought to this place that does not include the entrenched views of an act that deliberately targeted Aboriginal people's rights and, in many cases, ensured that they could not continue traditional land practices or their reliance on animals, which in this case were dingoes and domesticated dogs. A bounty was placed on the head of dingoes or dogs held by Aboriginal people at that time. It is high time that a full review of the act is done.

The only other point I want to raise is my increasing concern about street-present people having dogs. I understand the importance of animal companionship. Plenty of studies point to the importance of dogs and their impact on health and mental health. I appreciate and understand all those points. However, I have a very real concern when I see a street-present person with a dog that is undoubtedly unregistered, or possibly unregistered. I suspect that it would be unregistered. Sorry, that is a broad assumption on my behalf; they are perhaps unregistered. I do not know what fixed address the dog of a street-present person would be registered to. Unfortunately, these people have custody of the animal and have to look after it. I do not know how long these dogs exist in these situations with street-present people and what that looks like. If street-present people go into housing, does it make it more difficult for them because they have an animal?

Ms C.M. Rowe: It definitely does, member.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As such, what happens to that animal?

Ms L.L. Baker: Do you know there is a group that looks after them? It's called Pets of the Homeless Australia.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I did not know that, member for Maylands. That is really good. I am glad that the Pets of the Homeless organisation does that. From my perspective, I do not think there is a need to penalise or discourage street-present people from animal ownership, either because they want to get out of that situation or because of welfare concerns of others. All responsible dog owners understand, particularly in your context as a former farmer, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr I.C. Blayney), the importance of making sure that dogs are kept on a property and are well looked after. In the context of street-present people, I have concerns about how that can be managed.

Ms C.M. Rowe: Are you supporting this bill?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am supportive of the Liberal Party's position.

Ms C.M. Rowe: So you won't be voting for the bill?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Many opposition members have outlined aspects of the bill with which they have concerns, and I echo those concerns.

Several members interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The member for Mandurah will see when it is on the paper. It is important for me to point out the parts of the bill that I think are good, which I have done.

Several members interjected.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: If members want to attack me for that, please do. That is a deep concern of mine.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Mr D.A. Templeman: There are a few issues that you don't agree with on your side, so support the bill. It's a very important bill.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: As enticing as the member for Mandurah might be, I stand in support of our leader and the party position.

The only other point I would like to raise is probably a matter more for the staffers at the back of the chamber on behalf of the minister. I go back to my earlier point about the interaction of this legislation with Aboriginal communities. I note that in some cases it is going to be regulated and not enshrined in the legislation —

Mr R.S. Love: We don't know that. We haven't seen the regulations.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Member for Moore, I have not seen the regulations. I am only going on what has been said in the chamber.

Dr D.J. Honey: He's very trusting.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I am sometimes too trusting, member for Cottesloe. The concern I have is with the interaction of this proposed legislation with Aboriginal communities. The bill covers a number of matters, such as the failure to mandatorily sterilise a dog, not having approval to breed a dog or not participating in the central registration system. I do not think greyhounds or pet shops are an issue for remote and regional communities. I realise that the bill will empower local governments to make the call in many cases, but if a local government decides to utilise all these provisions, I do not know what that will translate to on the ground for Aboriginal communities. I am genuinely quite concerned about that. I am sure that all of us in this place understand the concerns. The member for Geraldton would know them well. To be perfectly frank, it will be very difficult for remote and regional communities to respond adequately to the legislation and the expectations enshrined in it if it becomes law. The bill contains penalties in the order of \$5 000 or \$10 000 for breaches, whether it concerns failure to sterilise or a lack of registration for the animal or for breeding. I think that is a real concern. I hope that that will be adequately addressed and that exceptions will be in place for Aboriginal communities.

I return to the point at which I started my contribution this evening—that the discrimination against Aboriginal people was enshrined in the legislation from very early in Western Australia's history. The act has consistently discriminated against Aboriginal communities to the point that it has actively targeted them, in a bid to ruin cultural practices. I would hate Aboriginal communities to continue to be marginalised by new legislation that regulates the animals that they have relied on for thousands of years.

MS J.J. SHAW (Swan Hills) [9.17 pm]: I would like to make a brief contribution—it may not be brief; I will see how I go—to the debate on the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. In doing so, and as others have done, I would like to congratulate the minister and acknowledge the member for Maylands. I have known the member for Maylands since I was a university student. It has been well over 20 years since I graduated, so I will leave it at that! When I met Lisa, one thing we had in common was a love for animals. The member for Maylands' commitment to all animal welfare issues is commendable. The leadership she has demonstrated in shepherding this legislation and this issue over the last eight years is amazing. My very dear friend, I think you should be very proud of yourself with this bill.

When I was preselected as a candidate in 2016, I went to the FurBaby Cafe with the member for Maylands and the Premier for the announcement of the policy to ban puppy farming. The following week, I was very privileged to be asked to open the Mundaring leg of the Million Paws Walk, to which I wore my red "ban puppy farming" T-shirt. Lots of people were there and many came up to me that day to express their incredible support for the policy. The consultation process that the government subsequently initiated had well over 4 700 submissions, demonstrating the commitment and strongly held views of people in the community. I encourage the opposition to listen to those views and tune in to the sentiments of people in our communities. We are dog lovers. From listening to the debate, what I have learnt about members has been really interesting. For example, the member for Riverton discussed his history with Irish wolfhounds. My grandparents had Irish wolfhounds. My aunt bred rough collies. My parents bred newfoundlands. At one stage, we had well over 10 newfoundlands and they lived in the house. It was crazy and very often a lot of the food we ate had dog hair in it! My mum was the secretary of the Newfoundland Club of NSW. I grew up in New South Wales completely within the organisations that represent the very same sorts of people who are involved in dog showing and dog breeding—the Dogs West membership base. We are dog people. I keep it even. I had two dogs and two cats, but I lost my little schnauzer, Poppy, last year. Harry is hanging in there at 13 years old.

Swan Hills people are dog people. When I doorknocked throughout Ellenbrook, it was lovely to be greeted by so many dogs—some friendly and some not so friendly. I doorknocked at a property in Bullsbrook where the property owner was a fan of a minor political party. He set his dogs on me as I walked up. Nonetheless, I am sure he loves his dogs very much and encourages their appetite for budding politicians! Swan Hills people are dog people.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

GreyhoundAngels of WA is based in Bullsbrook. I was very pleased to secure some funding for GreyhoundAngels to develop its kennel complex and the wonderful work it does. I want to acknowledge the member for Forrestfield's deep commitment to greyhounds. In the semirural parts of my electorate, there are a lot of registered and very reputable breeders of purebreds who are members of Dogs West. In Ellenbrook, there is even an Instagram group called Dogs of Ellenbrook, which is awesome. Harry may have appeared on the pages of Dogs of Ellenbrook every now and then. My electorate is very diverse. It abuts the member for Moore's electorate and goes through almost to the wheatbelt. A lot of the properties out there are working farms where there is a high proportion of working dogs. When I looked at this bill, it was as someone who not only lives in the very urbanised part of my electorate, but also thinks about what it would mean for the people in the semirural parts of my electorate, where I used to live, and also the very rural parts where there are a lot of active farms. In representing such diverse communities, it is interesting to consider the ways in which this legislation affects them all separately.

I would like to discuss the problems that this legislation seeks to address. Others have quoted the RSPCA's definition of puppy farming as —

'an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or physiological needs'.

The first issue that this legislation intends to address is the inhumane conditions in which breeding stock is kept. They live in cramped, unsanitary and very unnatural conditions, with very poor access to veterinary care. The member for Belmont referenced the Kellerberrin case from back in 2014 when 50 dogs were seized, including 12 that were kept in underground bunds, which is absolutely disgraceful. There was no light or ventilation for these poor creatures. In Gingin in early 2018, there was another raid in which 46 dogs and puppies were seized, and 20 cats and kittens. Only last week in Bullsbrook, in my electorate, Ellenbrook police conducted a raid and seized 20 dogs. That matter is now before the courts.

When I bought my two miniature schnauzers, Poppy and Harry, it was a long time ago now, but, as I suppose everybody does, I visited a lot of breeders. I really wanted to make sure I got lovely little ones. One of the breeders I visited had a beautiful house with a lovely garden. A little black schnauzer was running around—it was gorgeous. Because my parents had bred dogs and people had come to our house—we used to raise the puppies as part of the household—I asked this particular breeder whether she would be willing to let me see the mother. She would not. I kept insisting, saying, "I want to see the parents—at least the mother." In the end, she acquiesced. There was an extraordinarily high Colorbond fence and we stepped through a gate. Behind the gate, it was atrocious. It was basically a shed just stuffed full of crates on top of one another with different purebred small dogs. The bitch who had whelped this puppy I was looking at was already pregnant again. It was disgusting. I may have said a few unsavoury comments to the breeder, and promptly left. I bought Poppy and Harry from a wonderful woman. When we walked into the house, the mother was there with all her puppies. The litter box was in the living room. The puppies were part of the family and, indeed, became part of mine. That is the type of responsible breeding that we want to encourage. We want to discourage the absolutely disgusting practice of exploiting these poor dogs in such a cruel and indiscriminate way.

That is the second thing this legislation addresses. These dogs are bred far too young. They are bred repeatedly. They pump out litter after litter. They have a very limited ability to recover. It breaks their poor little bodies. When they are done and their utility as breeding stock has expired, they are disposed of summarily—these poor dogs.

Beyond that, the third thing we want to address is the issue of the puppies produced on these farms. Puppy farmers do not care where their puppies end up; they just want to make money. Puppy farmers do not even consider whether the breeds that people are buying are appropriate for their living conditions. If a person has a tiny backyard, they should not buy a kelpie or a blue cattle dog. Indiscriminate puppy farmers do not consider that type of thing. They do not think about whether the person involved has the right sort of personality match for the puppy. Reputable breeders do. Backyard puppy farmers do not consider whether the person buying a puppy has the means to support them. They do not care whether it is an impulse buy and, in a few months when the puppy has chewed through their third pair of Jimmy Choos, it will be dumped or, in the worst case, euthanased—as so many are, unfortunately. Puppy farmers provide no support or training and instruction in how to rear puppies, including how to provide for their nutritional needs. They do not provide any guidance and they are not there on an ongoing basis for advice on animal husbandry, which is what responsible breeders do. That leads to unintentional cruelty by owners. It is rarely malicious but, rather, abuse through neglect because people do not understand what they need to do to support these poor little puppies. If they have behavioural issues, the puppies end up dumped.

There is also a major problem about the quality of the puppies produced by puppy farmers. It is no secret that many purebred dogs have some forms of genetic defects, but reputable, knowledgeable breeders take care and are deliberate in the way that they select the sire and the dam. They consider the way that particular bloodlines might knit together to produce dogs that are far less likely to carry genetic defects. Breeders breed for type, temperament and soundness. It is deliberate selection as opposed to indiscriminate breeding just to get a few grand through the door. The

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

consequences of indiscriminate breeding without recourse or regard to the outcomes of the breeding process mean that, very often, behavioural issues will be reinforced. Dogs will naturally be predisposed to being nervous, aggressive or hyperactive. Breeders who do not adequately consider the way in which they breed, produce dogs that carry these behavioural issues. They often have medical issues and physical defects that manifest very late in a dog's life—joint problems, heart conditions or autoimmune diseases. By that stage, people have come to love their dogs; they are a part of a family. It is not as simple as taking them back and getting a refund. They have to watch the creature that they care about suffer. They are exposed to considerable expense in vet bills. It is not like taking a toaster back to Kmart; it is far more complex than that, but backyard breeders do not care about that. Indiscriminate breeding consciously produces animals that will suffer. It is a form of cruelty. These poor dogs are ill-suited to their homes, have poor health outcomes and are often abandoned and euthanased.

The government's framework seeks to address many of these issues. Firstly, I want to go through mandatory desexing because pet owners, dog breeders and working dog owners have made representations to me. I want to tease this matter out so that those constituents of mine who take an interest in this matter are able to read this in *Hansard*, or watch the vision or hear how it is that we have sought to address many of the concerns that they have raised. I mentioned previously that the state government had undertaken a consultation process with more than 4 700 respondents. Mandatory desexing is the first pillar of this legislation and 77 per cent of respondents supported mandatory desexing and said that dogs should be sterilised within two years of their birth unless they are exempt. Sterilised dogs must also be registered, and unsterilised dogs can only be registered annually. There is a direct incentive to sterilise a dog. Sterilised dogs will still be eligible for three-year and lifetime registration. They are important provisions of the bill.

The exemption from sterilisation requirements are important for those who take an interest from a Dogs West or traditional breeder perspective, and also for livestock working dogs. Exemption from sterilisation applies to dogs that are registered before the act commences; dogs exempted for health reasons, which requires veterinary certification; livestock working dogs; greyhounds registered with Racing and Wagering Western Australia; or dogs owned by people with an approval to breed.

This brings us to breeder registration, which is a second key pillar of the legislation. Ninety-one per cent of respondents to the survey supported restrictions on dog breeders, particularly around property conditions and ensuring that dog breeders have no history of abuse or neglect. That is an incredibly important point. Breeders must apply for an approval to breed. They must own a non-sterilised dog older than two years and intend to breed, or if their dog does breed, they must register it. Approval can be granted by a local government and will continue indefinitely. Registration can be refused on a very narrow range of grounds, which include: if the applicant is under the age of 18 years; if the applicant has been convicted of an offence under the Dog Act, the Cat Act or the Animal Welfare Act, which is absolutely appropriate; if the applicant does not have sufficient facilities to breed dogs; and if the applicant is not a fit and proper person to breed dogs. The government will be able to cancel an approval to breed if a person breaches the law. This is a mechanism by which we shut down puppy farms. There will be a centralised registration system, which has been discussed quite a bit tonight, that will be maintained by the state government using information that local governments already collect as part of their animal registration process. It will be able to track unsterilised dogs, breeders and sterilised dogs, and really monitor the provisions of this bill.

Mandatory standards will be introduced through the Animal Welfare Act, which will look at breeding, housing, husbandry, transport and sale. The whole idea is to improve animal husbandry and address many of the issues that we discussed earlier.

Probably the highest volume of constituents' concerns that I fielded were about the implications on Dogs West members. People raised concerns that they will not be able to show their dogs after they turn two years old because the dogs that are shown must be entire. The second most common concern was that owners or show dog participants will be forced to develop kennel complexes or to keep their dogs in kennels and not in their home, otherwise they will be prevented from registration by local government. That is not correct.

[Member's time extended.]

Ms J.J. SHAW: Dogs West members will be able to keep their dogs entire and continue to enjoy showing their dogs as long as they apply for an approval to breed. That will not force them to breed their dogs; it will just allow them to keep an unsterilised dog. Dogs West members will merely be required to register their dogs. Once registered, it applies indefinitely. The process is intended to be very easy. As I said, there will be a narrow range of grounds under which local government authorities can refuse the application, so show dogs can still be kept, and, if the owner so desires, the dog can be bred in the family home with dog breeder approval. There is no requirement to build kennels, although dog breeders must comply with general dog housing requirements to be introduced under

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

the Animal Welfare Act. This is all intended to improve animal welfare outcomes. It is very respectful and acknowledges and encourages the sort of responsible dog breeding and ownership that I discussed earlier.

For livestock dogs, 46 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposition that livestock working dogs should be exempted. Working dogs are very important to the people of Swan Hills. There is a livestock industry and a number of working dogs out there. I acknowledge, as other members have, that a lot of the time livestock dogs need to grow up before they are put to work and they need an opportunity to demonstrate that they have the capacity to undertake the tasks that will be assigned to them. That can take time to emerge. Some late bloomers need more than two years and can end up being absolutely fabulous. The legislation acknowledges that. If livestock dog owners want to breed dogs, they will be required to obtain an approval to breed and register. Again, that is lifelong registration, and their dogs will be exempt from the two-year age limit for sterilisation.

The final pillar of the legislation I would like to discuss this evening is the conversion of pet shops into adoption centres. Pet shops will need to be approved by a local government, can stock only dogs from approved rescue organisations, and can find homes for those dogs. Health certification and history of the dog must be provided and pet shops will not be allowed to sell dogs from registered breeders.

I am not a fan of live animals being sold in shops, full stop. I hate seeing those poor animals in glass boxes and kids just banging on the glass all day. I do not like it. But, at the end of the day, a good outcome of this provision is that they will be a conduit through which a lot of dogs who do not have homes or who have been abandoned can, hopefully, make their way into loving families. It is a silver lining on the existence of pet shops.

Ms L.L. Baker: With the pet shop model, the one they choose are the ones like Pet Barn and the like. They have a Saturday adoption day. The dogs do not stay on the premises; they come once a day and it is advertised widely that they are going to be there.

Ms J.J. SHAW: That is great and it deals perfectly with my concern about those horrible boxes in which dogs just sit there.

Ms L.L. Baker: Absolutely.

Ms J.J. SHAW: It is not fair.

Finally, and this is something the member for Forrestfield spoke about at some length, is the end of greyhound muzzling. I think this is a wonderful outcome and one so many of my constituents care very strongly about. I mentioned the GreyhoundAngels. Two constituents in particular, Rob Watty and Linda Villiers, have constantly talked to me about the importance of changing this law so that greyhounds do not have to be muzzled. This is a great development.

In closing, I think this bill strikes the right balance. It is disappointing that certain provisions have been, at best, misunderstood and, at worst, disingenuously presented. I really think that the opposition may be a little tone deaf on this matter. I think it has misread its constituents. The bill acknowledges the fabulous work that so many people in associations like Dogs West do.

It also acknowledges and addresses the livestock working dog concerns. If this is how members opposite choose to try to score political points, shame on them. Animals are suffering. Families are suffering financially, because they have to live with and pay the consequences of the indiscriminate, unethical and disgusting practice of puppy farming. Animals are suffering. Members opposite could do something about that. They could show some leadership. They could listen to their people. We have been consulting on this matter for eight years. This is one of the biggest issues that people have spoken to me about in the four years in which I was a Labor candidate and am now the member for Swan Hills. Members opposite should not be tone deaf to their constituents. That is a continuation of the sort of arrogance that we saw under the previous Barnett–Harvey Liberal government. It is regrettable. I strongly encourage members opposite to reconsider their position.

Congratulations, member for Maylands. I acknowledge your work, and fully support the bill.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River) [9.40 pm]: I rise to also support the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. This is a very important bill. I am very proud to have in the Southern River electorate a fantastic kennel zone. Many members of Dogs West live in my electorate, in both the kennel and residential areas, and I want to thank them all. Their behaviour is responsible and ethical, and has been for years. They love dogs. They breed dogs, and they show dogs. They all want to stop puppy farming. I know that because in 2018, leading into the puppy farm consultation, I doorknocked half of my electorate to help get more puppy farm consultations done. I am very happy to see that input in the bill. In February–March this year, I doorknocked the other half of my electorate. I gave the correct information about this bill. I will talk later about correct information, because a lot of lies and wrong

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

information is being peddled about this bill. Therefore, I was honoured to doorknock the other half of my electorate with correct information about the bill.

Not everyone agrees with everything in the bill. I note that a number of Dogs West members who own dogs, pure bred and non-pure bred, live in the residential parts of my electorate. They are all very passionate about puppy farming. People should be passionate about puppy farming, because dogs are beautiful animals, and this is a very important matter. As this bill progresses, I will keep listening to the people in my electorate, in my kennel zone and my community.

The goal of this legislation is to stop dodgy and unethical puppy farmers who harm animals. The goal is not to stop the great and responsible Dogs West members who care for and love their animals. Overall, under the proposed laws, little will change for kennel zone residents who are members of Dogs West and the Australian National Kennel Council. Exemptions from sterilisation will be relatively easy to obtain. Kennel zone residents are not the intended target of these laws. The council in my area does not intend to expend more resources in the kennel zone to stop puppy farming. If this bill passes, existing council laws will remain for boarding kennels, registration of dogs, and inspections. Most of them will simply roll over into the new system. I say again that the majority of my kennel zone residents and non-kennel zone residents are responsible and ethical dog owners and lovers, and have been for years.

The member for Cottesloe said in his contribution to this bill that there are no cases of puppy farming in Western Australia. We know that is not the case. However, we know also that there are no current laws to stop puppy farming in Western Australia. Under current laws, a dodgy puppy farmer can keep a dog regularly pregnant, so long as it is fed and watered. The proposed standards and guidelines for the health and welfare of dogs in Western Australia state the minimum requirements and recommended practices to protect and promote the welfare of dogs. I am very happy that these standards and guidelines adopt the Dogs West guidelines of a maximum of two litters in any 18-month period, and a maximum of five litters in a lifetime. I am not quoting from *Hansard*, but the member for Cottesloe said in his speech that he would be happy for people to educate him. Member for Cottesloe, puppy farming does occur in Western Australia.

Point of Order

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Acting Speaker, I think I heard the member for Southern River say that he is quoting from *Hansard*. I do not believe that is so.

Mr T.J. Healy: I said I am not quoting from *Hansard*.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney): I thought the member said he was not quoting from *Hansard*.

Mr T.J. HEALY: I am not quoting from *Hansard*. I am quoting from a speech that the member for Cottesloe gave a couple of hours ago.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you very much. I apologise for that.

Debate Resumed

Mr T.J. HEALY: The member for Cottesloe said that puppy farming does not exist in Western Australia, because people are not being charged with it. I think he said there have been only two prosecutions. He said there is no evidence of puppy farming in Western Australia. There certainly is. He also said that Dogs West was not consulted and given a role. Dogs West was consulted. I am not saying that Dogs West is happy with every aspect of this bill, but it was part of the consultation.

I am very honoured to have in my electorate a number of people who fight against puppy farming. I will not name the relevant breeds, but I want to tell members what a number of people have said happens. They say that they call the council and report puppy farmers, and the council sends out rangers. However, under the current laws, because the dogs are being fed and watered, it does not matter that they are being kept permanently pregnant. Under the current laws, that is legal. That is what we are seeking to change. I want to quote from one of my wonderful constituents about the good work they do in rescuing puppies from these abhorrent circumstances. They have said to me in an email —

Can you simply say, “our office has identified a pattern of advertising puppies”—

That will become illegal under this bill —

and we have reported him to Gos Council as a potential back yard breeder following complaints from concerned constituents? These ads were in The West and The Sunday Times online.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

There are 7 litters advertised here in an 18month period. All cross breeds. He has potentially made over \$50K in 18 months using these dogs. The Council only officially has him with 2 dogs registered, ... but clearly he has more than 2 to be able to have this many litters.

I also have a photo, which I will not provide, because I do not want to alert the breeder. However, people would have seen similar images. They would have seen the filthy bedding and disgusting conditions. They would have seen the facilities in which people keep these beautiful animals permanently pregnant. It is abhorrent. I will come back to this later. This is something we all agree on. We all know it is disgusting. We all know it is inappropriate. The council and the RSPCA have not been able to do anything to shut this guy down. These people were told that the council could only do something about this if someone was willing to go to court to say they had witnessed more than two dogs on the property. No-one is willing to do this.

If we pass this bill, it will create a system with registration and with a maximum number of litters so that when a person like this tries to keep a dog permanently pregnant and goes above the regulations, there will be a consequence. I was told that just this weekend, this dodgy, horrible person made \$1 200 out of six dogs, as advertised. The facilities are not clean, and the dogs are permanently covered in fleas and sores, but their puppies are fed, washed and cleaned up to be provided for sale.

I acknowledge again the many kennel zone residents who are members of Dogs West and AMKC and who are setting an example by their ethical and responsible care of their animals. They have put in some fantastic submissions that have helped guide the proposed legislation.

There are some things that we all agree on. I want to emphasise those things. It is possible for everyone in this chamber to vote for this bill and stop this abhorrent behaviour. We all agree that we need to stop puppy farming. Dogs West agrees. Apparently the Liberals and the Nationals agree. We all agree that we want to stop pet store sales. We all seem to agree that two litters in 18 months is about the right number in terms of regulation. We all agree on those things.

I note that not every Dogs West member supports this bill. After doorknocking, I found a mix of support. Not every person in my kennel zone is a Dogs West member. It includes automatic exemption or inclusion; it does not suit all those people. There is also a mix of support from Dogs West members. When I doorknocked, I found that a number of Dogs West members do not want Dogs West to automatically be registered and therefore provide their details to the government. There is not unanimous support for all those aspects. We will keep meeting with Dogs West and we will keep working with it. It is a great organisation.

A number of other facts need to be clarified. Members have spoken about creating registered breeders. That is not part of what this bill seeks to do, and nor can it do so. This legislation will not create a registered breeder; it will create an approval to breed. Therefore, breeders' dogs do not have to be desexed. That process is quite simple. There are a number of purebred dogs. People spend tens of thousands of dollars on beautiful purebred animals that they can trace back hundreds of years. There is some speculation that we have to stop breeding those animals. People think their business will stop and they will not be able to breed because their dogs will automatically be desexed. That is not the case at all. Under this legislation, we have put in place a process for someone to simply apply for an exemption. They can get a health exemption from their vet or go to the council and say they want an approval to breed. That does not mean that they have to breed. Some of my constituents have said that that term could probably use more clarification. There does not have to be an approval to breed. People said that it sounds like, once they have approval to breed, they have to do it quickly—go and buy some chocolates and roses for the dogs, they have two weeks! That is not the case at all. It is simply an approval to breed, therefore the dog cannot be desexed. It is relatively simple for those responsible dog owners who do not want to desex their dog to obtain that exemption. There will be no registered breeders under this legislation.

There are people in the Canning zone of my electorate who may carry out the actual breeding but the dogs will be on breeders' contracts or in forever homes. A dog might live in another house with another family on the agreement that in six months, 12 months or two years, the breeder might like that dog back for a breeding purpose. The dog will be raised in a loving house, as all dogs should be. I have also heard lies from some opponents of this bill that that will stop. It will not. Dogs can continue to live in forever homes. There will be no change to these contracts. If breeders want to keep that dog available and not desex it—if they want to keep it entire—for two or three years down the track, they can simply apply for an exemption, for the approval to breed. The forever homes continue. There is no risk. People need to know that. Again, the exemption from desexing is relatively simple. It does not mean that a person has to breed. It also means that all those beautiful rare breeds in my electorate are safe.

I learnt so much from doorknocking the different parts of my kennel zone. I met so many wonderful families and so many wonderful animals. I want to confirm to them that their animals and pure breeds are safe. People spend tens of thousands of dollars on dogs. There are life spans and hereditary family charts for these animals that go back hundreds of years. I say to the Nova Scotia duck tolling retrievers—there are only 90 of them in Western Australia—that they are safe. The German Shepherds from Cormorant Court are safe. The papillons are safe. The cocker spaniels

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

and the English springer spaniels on Cairn Road are safe. The Alaskan malamutes are safe. The golden retrievers are safe. The Welsh cardigan corgies on Matison Street are safe. The Pomeranians on Furley Road are safe. The Chihuahuas on Corncrake Court are safe. The flat-coated retrievers, the Jack Russells, the huskies, the mini schnauzers and the Australian terriers on Talbot Road are safe. The newfoundlands, the Shih tzus and the Maltese terriers—all pure breeds in my electorate—are safe. The Cavalier King Charleses are safe. The Shetland sheepdogs, the Australian kelpies, the red cloud kelpies, the roo dogs, the Irish setters, the cockers, the Creswick whippets, the dachshunds, the beagles, the American Akitas, the Weimaraners and the griffons are safe.

Every family gets to keep their dog. No-one will be forced to desex their dog and lose the purebred history. Because pet shop sales will stop, no-one will be deprived of a dog. In fact, we will create more dogs that are healthy and happy and that do not have to be raised with the trauma and the horrible things that they go through. We never realise these things. When we buy a dog, no-one tells us that they have been raised in abhorrent conditions.

No bill or law can ever unconditionally stop something. Puppy farmers are doing the wrong thing. They will probably try to divert this law and do something else dodgy. We will chase them then. If they try to lie about how many dogs they have and if they do not register their dog, there is a consequence for them. There is a process in place. The rangers from the RSPCA can enforce a consequence for the first time. Puppy farming is not currently illegal. This bill makes puppy farming illegal. There is a consequence if people keep a dog permanently pregnant. I will give an example. We cannot stop every car from speeding on our streets. However, if there is a law that says if someone speeds, there is a fine, there is a consequence. This bill creates that consequence.

To the members of the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA, I reach out and say that they have an incredible opportunity to step forward and be part of a symbol and say, “We respect our dogs. We love our dogs. We want to keep them safe in the future.” I ask members to choose their votes wisely. My electorate is listening to members. Members’ electorates are listening to them. Please just tell the truth about this bill. Do not spread the wrong information that is out there. This is important for my community. It is important for anyone who loves dogs. Let us all save some animals. Let us do the right thing. As I said, let us focus on what we can all agree on. We want to stop dogs living in deplorable conditions. It is something that we can do. The vote is coming up. I encourage all members to vote yes.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Parliamentary Secretary) [9.57 pm]: It is getting late in the evening so I will not spend a whole lot of time speaking. I want to thank the member for Southern River for his contribution. I think he missed one dog. I would like to think that the bitzer on Baldvis Road is safe as well.

I wanted to say a few words about the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020 because of the particular preponderance of pooches in Baldvis. I also thank the minister for his very hard work on this bill and his exhaustive consultation with stakeholder groups. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Maylands for being the leader in this place in her compassion for all sorts of animals. I thank her for her contribution as well.

I have always been a dog person. I grew up with a German shepherd that we called Cilla. As a kid, she was my best friend. She occupied a permanent place on the end of my bed. Whenever I tried to move my feet at night, I got a growl or a nip, but I would not have had it any other way. As a father, my kids were always on my back to get them a dog. I relented for so long until the last couple of years, when I was a candidate at the last election. Many other members might share this experience. It can be a bit of a task to convince our children to go along and be part of the political world, maybe to pose with their dad for a photo. Part of my bribe tactic for the children was to say, “Once we get through this election, kids, we’ll get a dog.” It enabled the kids to be in a number of photographs during the election campaign! After the election, we finally got the dog. I always thought I would get quite a large dog like a labrador or a German shepherd like Cilla, but it was not to be. My wife and youngest daughter had control of the choice, and it was not the kind of dog that I envisaged having. We now have a dog. His name is Jimmy Chew. I heard the name Jimmy Choo referred to earlier. My dog’s surname is spelt C-H-E-W. He is a purebred Maltese second-hand show dog from South Australia. Jimmy is an adult male dog but virtually everyone he meets assumes that he is a female puppy. Jimmy served under the stage name “Hot in the City” in his short show career in South Australia. Unfortunately, that glamorous life was cruelly cut short when judges decided that he had crooked teeth and could no longer be a show dog. Jimmy was destined for the canine scrap heap and was a rescue dog. The Whitby family intervened, and Jimmy was placed on an aircraft and flown to Perth. I remember going to the airport with my wife armed with an old beach towel that we did not mind throwing out after the journey, if necessary. I went to the cargo section at Perth Airport and stuck my head in the cage. I thought it was empty, but cowering timidly in one corner was a tiny ball of fur, which was Jimmy. When we got Jimmy home, we discovered a few things about him. One was that he had never been on grass before. He had obviously been kept inside. I am not sure of the circumstances, but it has taken a long time for Jimmy to come out of his shell. Today, he is a much-loved member of the family. It is for Jimmy and all those other dogs that I support this legislation.

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

I am also proud to represent Baldvis, which, if the member for Maylands does not know, is the dog capital of Western Australia. It is a canine kingdom. It is “dogville WA”, and there are some cats, too. We also have a proud horse history in Baldvis. It is home to many horse trainers and streets are named after Melbourne Cup winners. My office is in Phar Lap Parade. If members are in the area and want to look me up, just find Phar Lap Parade. Dogs dominate our community. When I go doorknocking, there is virtually not a house without a dog staring at me through the front window or a house that I do not hear the bark of a dog. Dogs are everywhere in our community. Of course, we are not alone. Most Australian households own a pet, and of those pets the majority are dogs. In Western Australia, close to 60 per cent of people own a pet; I think it is 90 per cent in Baldvis and Wellard. There are 4.8 million dogs in Australia. According to Animal Medicines Australia, Australians spend an enormous amount of money on their dogs, an estimated \$12.2 billion—billion with a “b”—a year. The RSPCA also estimates that the average dog costs roughly \$13 000 over the course of its lifetime. Taking into consideration all pet costs including food, veterinary services and more, the average dog will cost a householder almost \$1 500 a year. If people invest that amount in their pets, and dogs in particular, it is obvious to me that people in Western Australia, whether they live in Baldvis, Maylands or wherever else, are committed to the welfare of their pets. That is why I believe this legislation is important.

Dogs are a thriving industry in Baldvis, as members can imagine, with so many local customers. I want to mention one person; his name is Dylan Anderson. He is probably the biggest dog lover in Baldvis, if not in Western Australia. In 2017, he started a company called Get Barked. At that time, Dylan estimated there were 3 500 registered dogs in Baldvis and probably double that amount that were unregistered. Dylan has made a living providing a range of canine services. He often provides his time without charge. He is very compassionate and often intervenes when there is a need to rescue dogs and find new homes. Get Barked is a local small business built on high dog ownership in Baldvis. Dylan gets involved in dog walking, dog taxi services, pet photography, as well as selling food, sweets, toys and equipment for pets. Pre-COVID-19, Dylan and his team were doing 70-plus dog walks a week. They are now down to about four dog walks a week. That tells us a couple of things. It tells us the huge economic impact that COVID-19 has had on some businesses and that many people are at home and taking their own dogs for a walk. It probably proves what we already knew, which is that dogs absolutely love COVID-19 and have never had it better than over the past number of months! I always speak to Dylan about a range of dog issues, and Dylan has agreed that we need to stop backyard breeders and people breeding for profit, as it is the dogs that suffer, and often they have associated health problems.

Recently, we ran a competition on Facebook to find the cutest mutt in Baldvis under the hashtag “Whitby’s woofers”. We received 363 entries as well as thousands and thousands of page reach. The idea is to send a photo of a cute mutt and people online vote for their favourite. We have narrowed it down to 20 pooches. Unfortunately, COVID-19 intervened before we could hold the grand final and pick a couple of key winners, but now that the Premier is managing to get things open, we envisage holding that event soon and making good on our promise to name our winner.

Getting back to Baldvis and how popular dogs are, in June 2018, we opened Barri Barri dog park that uses existing space at a park with large trees and gardens and 3 000 square metres of enclosures. It has two dog enclosures: one for large dogs and one for dogs like Jimmy. Believe it or not, it also has in those areas a shelter, seating, a water fountain, sand areas and nature-based agility play for dogs. We know that dogs are very important to our community. They are good for our mental health and for companionship. They are always valued family members. I meet many people who count their dog as a family member, particularly seniors in the electorate. Sometimes the dog is the best buddy in the world for those seniors who are alone. Those dogs and those dog owners deserve this legislation. We owe it to our best friends.

A lot of the detail of the legislation has been talked about this evening, so I will not go into it. I also will not enter into the debate about what this bill apparently does or supposedly does not cover, but I will mention one important point that has particular relevance to the people of Baldvis. We have a big greyhound community in Baldvis and Rockingham. The part of the bill that no longer requires retired greyhounds to be muzzled is a huge issue for them. This has been raised with me many, many times. It is fantastic news. It never stopped being mentioned whenever I was at a market, an open day or some sort of event where the local greyhound adoption agency would come along and show off a greyhound to try to find it a new home. They are loving, docile animals that would rather sleep and probably do not much else. The muzzle on them misrepresented the breed to a very large degree. Greyhound Adoptions WA and all the greyhound agencies and supporters of that breed will be very happy to know that this legislation, hopefully, will be passed. With that, I commend the bill and thank the member for Maylands and the Minister for Local Government.

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.09 pm]: I am very pleased to support the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020. This legislation is about responsible dog ownership and, of

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

course, stopping puppy farming. I absolutely support that, as I think every member in this house would. The very cruel practice of puppy farming leads to all kinds of terrible problems such as ill breeding, genetic issues and damage to an animal's temperament. Another dimension to the terrible practice of puppy farming is that it tends to feed into the impulse buying of dogs in the community. I am afraid I cannot support that. I do not believe that a dog should be an impulse buy. A family should research buying a dog because, as we have all said, a dog is a family member and should be treasured as such. It is feasible that a dog bought on impulse can transition to become an important member of the family, but I think it is better to start from the position of people wanting to embrace an animal as a member of their family and doing the research. That is why an organisation like Dogs West, the Canine Association of Western Australia, is so important. Dogs West members play an important role. They do a brilliant job matching up potential owners with breeds. I have heard of a situation in which a responsible breeder said to someone, "Your lifestyle and family set up is not suited to this particular breed of dog." They discussed the choice of breed, counselled and advised, "Perhaps at this stage another breed would be better." That is a very important part of the dog ownership process. Occasionally, in my electorate, I see people with dogs that are too strong for them and dogs that are not happy in their very limited backyard. Those sorts of things have to change.

I want to recognise the important role of Dogs West. It can exist in other segments as well. There is a trend towards designer dogs. People cross labradors and poodles to get labradoodles, and golden retrievers and poodles to get gooddles and what have you. I am concerned that there is not the same degree of breeder integrity with designer dogs, so my inclination is very much towards supporting the role of Dogs West. I want to recognise president of Dogs West Pam Campbell, vice president Des Kehoe and CEO Ann Rushby. They are providing good, strong leadership. I have spoken to them and know that they have had a lot of representations from their members who are concerned about and perhaps have heard misguided interpretations of the implications of the detail of this legislation and what that might mean for them. I hope that through this process the Dogs West leadership will be able to reassure people that there are no demons in this legislation for good responsible dog owners.

On the contrary, this legislation is about respecting and elevating the status of good responsible dog breeders in the community and recognising their role in providing a match of the right dog for the right family. To me, that is a key element of this legislation. So many breeders who are members of Dogs West are not in it for profit, and I think that is perhaps a defining term. I heard in the debate some discussion about backyard breeders. I think that some very good, noble breeders who are members of Dogs West probably breed one or two litters a year in their backyard, so the term "backyard breeder" is a bit vexed and can be confusing. A better way to describe the very negative outcomes that we do not want to see is to consider those people as, indeed, puppy farmers. They are in it just to make money. They do not care at all that they are lumbering a family—which has embraced and fallen in love with a little pup—with an animal that has all sorts of congenital illnesses that, if they take the dog to the vet, will cost them thousands of dollars to repair. The family has to go through the heartache of seeing the dog perhaps not quite recover despite having spent a fortune on vet bills. Those terrible circumstances have to be avoided.

The role of a breeder registration system in Western Australia will be very important to good responsible dog owners. I was inclined to the view that Dogs West was the ideal body to be given the responsibility of managing the breeder registration system. I was very keen on that idea. I thought it would be a good, efficient way to deliver that system, but, as I think was touched on by other speakers, there is a problem that the constitution—the values—of Dogs West requires that it deals with only pedigree dogs. We know that a very substantial percentage of dogs are not pedigree, so they could not be covered by a registration system provided by Dogs West. That would be a problem if we were to ask Dogs West to manage the registration system. We are proposing a situation in which, yes, breeders are registered with Dogs West but they would also be registered with the centralised state system. There is a view that that would mean there would be a degree of duplication. If we look at a breeding dog's registration numbers, we see they potentially could have a microchip number, their Dogs West registration breeder number and their centralised breeder registration number. Perhaps we can work on creating an efficiency there to avoid that duplication or triplication.

I will touch on a few other aspects of this legislation. I fully support comments made about the complete removal of the requirement to muzzle greyhounds. It is essential and long overdue. Mention was made about exemptions for working dogs. There is probably a lot of merit in that; however, I have seen situations in which working dogs—incredibly energetic kelpies with a natural instinct to round up sheep, which they do brilliantly—are kept in conditions that are not ideal. I have seen dogs kept in very small crates and things like that. I know that some working dog owners are perhaps more responsible. A former neighbour of mine Don Robertson, who might well be one of the people who has been lobbying the member for Moore, would have some comments to make on that. We have to make sure a dog's housing is good. The energetic working dogs out in the field do not ask for much. That is one of the amazing things about dogs, is it not? All the unconditional love that they give us. They do not ask for very much so I think the least that we can give them are reasonable sleeping quarters with a bit of space to stretch out. I have seen racing greyhound kennels in the same condition. Even the people who respect all the rules that Racing and

Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Shane Love; Mr Kyran O'Donnell; Dr David Honey; Ms Lisa Baker; Mr Stephen Price;
Mr Peter Rundle; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Cassandra Rowe; Mr Zak Kirkup; Ms Jessica Shaw; Mr Terry Healy; Mr
Reece Whitby; Mr Chris Tallentire

Wagering Western Australia imposes on them, sometimes have such kennels. My last dog's racing name was Awesome Farewell. I got the impression that when he was a fully fledged athlete racing, the condition of his sleeping quarters was very tight. Of course, when he was at my place, he had the run of the house so he was able to stretch out and there were no problems there.

Dogs are tremendous animals and they deserve the greatest amount of respect, love and affection that we can give them, and they deserve the protection of good regulation. It is necessary because they are unable to speak up. I think that makes it all the more important that we provide that regulation for them. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.R. Michael**.

House adjourned at 10.18 pm
