

INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE — ESTABLISHMENT

Motion

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [10.19 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house calls on the government to establish an independent office of animal welfare.

It is my pleasure to be able to speak to this motion today and to invite members to comment on it. As members would well know, for the last seven years I have been an advocate for improved animal welfare in our state. Most recently, of course, the Select Committee into the Operations of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Western Australia (Inc) was an opportunity to reflect again on the operations that the government and the various charities around the state undertake in an attempt to ensure that animals are cared for and that they do not suffer cruelty. The Greens, at a federal level, have introduced a bill to establish an independent office of animal welfare. This is the culmination of many years of trying to improve the current situation and the current laws and regulations and the enforcement of them throughout Australia.

In researching this speech, I had much more material than the 20 minutes permitted to me to introduce this motion today. I will just reflect on some of the animal welfare issues in this state. I have mentioned that the select committee into the RSPCA was one opportunity to examine our current laws and regulations. However, I go back to 2009 when I first asked about pig regulations in this state and the banning of sow stalls. Over several years in *Hansard* there is a record of me and other members addressing the issue of whether sow stalls would be phased out in the industry. At each of those junctures, in the case of 2009 the local government minister and, more recently, the Department of Agriculture and Food, which then had responsibility for the Animal Welfare Act 2002, answered the questions that I had about improvements to the conditions of pigs in pig farming. It was clear during that debate in 2009 that there was a conflict of interest with an agency that promotes agriculture and its various industries that involve animals.

[Quorum formed.]

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Should members apply themselves to the motion, I am sure they will find it very interesting and enlightening, so I welcome the fact that more of them have returned to the chamber. Thanks to Hon Samantha Rowe for calling attention to the state of the house.

I was just talking about questions I asked in Parliament about animal welfare and the conflict of interest with the Department of Agriculture and Food having carriage of the Animal Welfare Act. I draw members' attention to one of the answers I received in 2009. At that time Hon Robyn McSweeney was representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food. In answer to one of my questions, she stated —

Investigations of animal welfare matters in piggeries are led by the Department of Local Government and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in response to alleged cruelty or noncompliance with the Animal Welfare Act 2002. The Department of Agriculture and Food does not record, or have access to, information about inspections conducted under the Animal Welfare Act 2002. The lead agency for enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act is the Department of Local Government.

When that was true, there was no conflict of interest, apart from those local governments that offered shelter in the case of unwanted companion animals. However, now we have an entrenched system whereby, both at a state and federal level, the Department of Agriculture and Food's main duty, as I was saying, is to promote agriculture and to assist it with scientific information, and also in one sense to really work with the industry; in fact, its main duty is clearly to work with the industry. Most of DAFWA's work is involved in connecting with industry; there are industry advisory bodies across the agricultural industry in WA. We do not see a corresponding animal welfare advisory body in DAFWA. When it did have an advisory body, it did not meet but for maybe once or twice a year. This is another problem. The ear of the minister is clearly being addressed to the industry bodies rather than the animal welfare bodies. Since the Animal Welfare Act has fallen under the remit of the Department of Agriculture and Food, we have seen the number of inspectors that was first promised to be 14 has now dropped to about seven. It is very difficult for us to extrapolate that precise information about how many inspectors there are. One thing that we are clear about is that there have been no successful prosecutions. There have been very few across the years but I believe that this year the number is zero. The Animal Welfare Act clearly calls for prosecutions as a result of animal cruelty when animal cruelty is proven. In my view and in the view of the vast majority of my constituents, the Department of Agriculture and Food is not implementing the regulations under the Animal Welfare Act. This happens at a federal level as well. To address this, the Greens have proposed the introduction of this independent office of animal welfare. If we succeed in this motion and establish the office at a federal level, it would be appropriate for us to have a similar office in this state, which would work with it. It came up during the inquiry into the RSPCA that many members were not aware of the proposal and did not know the details of it.

I want to provide the house with an opportunity to reflect on whether we should establish an independent office of animal welfare and whether it would serve the Western Australian population better and also be much better at protecting animals and ensuring their welfare. It would mirror the office at a commonwealth level. I want to briefly outline what the office would do. The office of animal welfare would establish a CEO and assist the CEO in his or her functions, which would include the review, inquiry, monitoring and reporting of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock and the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System. That is an example of what it could do that is most relevant to what we are dealing with almost every day, which is the horrifying exposé of cruelty to the animals that we are exporting overseas. The CEO would also be responsible for undertaking inquiries and preparing reports about the activities and effectiveness of the live export advisory group. It would monitor, investigate and report on animal welfare issues that impact the commonwealth, report on the work of animal welfare committees, and review animal welfare law and policies. The CEO would also implement the commonwealth's animal welfare laws with the power to do all things necessary to perform his or her functions. The bill would also establish an office of animal welfare advisory committee to assist the CEO and his or her office of animal welfare in performing its duties to the best possible standards. The committee members would consist of the CEO and representatives of non-government animal welfare organisations, consumer groups, scientists and ethicists specialising in animal welfare issues, the department and commercial producers or purchasers of animals or animal products and two other members as considered appropriate by the CEO. The CEO would provide reports to the minister and recommendations that must be tabled in Parliament. The minister would be required to respond to any recommendations made in the report and to table the response in Parliament. These reports may review the work of key animal welfare committees and proposed reforms to animal welfare legislation and standards, and advise the commonwealth on the harmonisation of animal welfare laws of the commonwealth, states and territories. The bill directs the CEO to make the office a centre of excellence for the collection and dissemination of information about animal welfare issues that impact, in this case, the commonwealth. The CEO, supported by the office, would also undertake inquiries, commission research and prepare reports about general animal welfare issues. This would include protecting and promoting animal welfare in the export of live animals and the effectiveness of commonwealth laws that apply to the export of live animals. The examination of the sustainability and animal welfare issues that arise from killing kangaroos for commercial purposes also would fall under the CEO's remit. The CEO may also inquire and report on the commonwealth's animal welfare policy and scientific and legal issues and potential animal welfare issues that arise from that policy, and the importation of animals and animal products and the management of animal species introduced into Australia would also fall under their remit.

The bill has been tabled in the commonwealth Parliament and I will look at potentially introducing a similar bill in state Parliament to establish an independent office of animal welfare. I think there is good reason for it, because one of the problems we have found is that the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia is the regulator; and, if it is the regulator, how can it also effectively be in charge of compliance, enforcement and prosecution? That seems to be a conflict of interest. Every time we raise the issue, the minister tries to assure us that the department introduces mechanisms to try to separate the interests of the department. But, clearly, we are failing animals in this state because we have continuing and escalating prosecutions for animal cruelty by the RSPCA. There is a sense that the number of compliance and enforcement inspectors is inadequate to cover this wide state. One of the issues that have been raised on many occasions is the lack of inspectors in regional areas.

I propose that the way forward is to establish an independent office, and I would dearly love to hear what other members in this place think about that. I know that there is a similar proposal by the Australian Labor Party to reinstate an animal welfare inspectorate at a federal level. I believe that the point of difference in what we are proposing is that the office would be independent. We would like the office to sit entirely outside a government minister and report as an independent office, in much the same way as the Inspector of Custodial Services or, if you will, the Commissioner for Children and Young People operate. There is certainly a precedent for this type of office performing such a role, and I would say that the interests of Western Australia's agricultural industry would be well served by having an independent office that looks at animal welfare so that the agriculture and food department could focus completely on the industry and the promotion thereof.

I will need to summarise shortly, but I invite members to reflect on the current animal welfare issues in Western Australia. I have mentioned intensive agriculture, particularly the treatment of pigs in intensive agriculture. The use of sow stalls has been outlawed elsewhere in the world, yet our regulations have permitted it to continue. It is supposed to be phased out by 2017, but our regulations have been inadequate to stop that practice by the intensive industry.

I have mentioned live exports and members would know that I have gone into quite a bit of detail on many occasions about the cruelty that many of our animals suffer overseas due to live exports. Also, recently, under our shark mitigation policy, a shark was drowned. That is contrary to any animal welfare standard. When we had the drum line program, the RSPCA spoke out strongly against the method that the Department of Fisheries used

to kill sharks. The department said that the sharks had to be shot so that they did not suffer as they were dying. We can see that that is ongoing and there seems to be no way to stop that.

The culling of wild dogs also occurs in our pastoral industry. The licensed shooter industry is supposed to be performing that in a way that causes the minimum of pain and injury to those wild dogs. One of the other problems with that—I have asked about this—is how a wild dog is distinguished from a dingo. Dingoes are native wild animals in Australia and they should be protected, but there seems to be no way to do that under our current system. An independent animal welfare office could look at recommendations to improve that system.

Finally, I want to mention the live baiting incident in the greyhound racing industry. The relationship between the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor and the RSPCA was definitely put under pressure during the national exposé of live baiting, which was apparently inherent in the greyhound racing industry. Certainly, in many other states there was clear evidence that that occurred. Should we be placing a charity such as the RSPCA in the difficult position of needing to have a certain relationship with the racing industry but then challenging that relationship when it needs to seek information about cruelty that has been exposed nationally? If we had an independent office of animal welfare, it could have investigated the racing and wagering industry, which I understand initiated its own inquiry about which there is very little information in the public domain, and had all the imprimatur of an independent authority and therefore the racing and wagering industry itself would not have fallen foul of policing its own regulations or the racing industry.

These are some recent examples of a government department that is bound by the laws of the state—the Animal Welfare Act is one of them—coming into conflict with the community standards for animal welfare. We expect animals not to be treated cruelly. An increasing number of people enjoy companion animals and there are a large number of animals in intensive livestock and other livestock industries. All these animals have a right to be treated well and the law protects their welfare, but the animal welfare law is not being adequately implemented or enforced. I would argue that one way forward—I cannot see why every point of view in this chamber would not be the same as mine—would be to establish an independent animal welfare office in Western Australia that would do the same things as this national body would do, and it would benefit all of us.

Yes, a matter of appropriation would need to be considered, but I would argue that members of the Western Australian public have rated this issue very highly among the issues that are important to them. We have failed to demonstrate that we have a good system in place currently to enforce our animal welfare laws. I see it as a win-win situation for all political parties to support this model. Certainly, beyond supporting it, the Greens have been promoting this particular model of an independent office that could meet the animal welfare standards that we have set in society.

I have some of the comments made by the other parties about this matter. I eagerly anticipate some support for this motion and I would like members who respond to it to comment on the significance of the independence of this office and whether they think we are doing well enough in enforcing animal welfare laws in this state.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [10.40 am]: Honestly, it is not unusual for the government to put its position on the record after the motion has been moved, but I will stand and fill the space created by the inadequacy of Hon Jim Chown.

Hon Jim Chown: I was about to stand up.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I was watching Hon Jim Chown the whole time.

Hon Donna Faragher: He stood.

Hon SUE ELLERY: And then he sat.

Hon Jim Chown: I stood after you stood. Ladies first.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Pathetic!

A government member: He's a gentleman.

Hon SUE ELLERY: He is a lot of things.

I am happy to rise and speak on this motion, because this government really has dropped the ball on animal welfare, starting when it transferred the function and then effectively gutted the agency to which it transferred the function. It not only reduced the resources to be spent on animal welfare, but also gutted the Department of Agriculture and Food generally. While DAFWA has had responsibility for the animal welfare function, it has taken no prosecutions since 2011. The only cases that have been taken through to prosecution have been those that were transferred across when the function moved between agencies or those that have been brought by the RSPCA.

When the Department of Local Government was the responsible agency, some 12 full-time equivalent positions were dedicated to animal welfare. When the function was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Food,

it absorbed those positions and merged the FTEs with other field roles, such as livestock monitoring and others. There were no standalone FTEs dedicated directly to animal welfare. Since then, limited resources have been available to DAFWA to monitor the welfare of animals at Fremantle port. Indeed, we really saw a failure of leadership on behalf of the government when attacks occurred during the recent inquiry into the RSPCA. I really think that the government, and in particular the Premier as one of the patrons of the RSPCA, should have done more to express a positive point of view, rather than subject the RSPCA to the kind of reputation trashing that went on; it had to spend enormous amounts of money trying to address the attacks it was under during the course of that inquiry.

The RSPCA has provided the Labor Party with some information. It commissioned an independent market research study in August–September 2015 of some 1 051 members of the general public. It found that 71 per cent of those respondents rated animal welfare as important or very important. The top issue for the public is animal cruelty, neglect and abuse. More than eight out of 10 said that the RSPCA is essential to the welfare of animals in this state and 84 per cent of people had a positive and/or very positive impression of the RSPCA WA.

I refer to whether we still need to be devoting specific resources to animal welfare. The RSPCA's advice based on the calls that it gets would certainly tell us that that is the case. The RSPCA cruelty line receives some 16 500 calls. Some 6 300 incidents were investigated by RSPCA inspectors. That is 50 a day in the past 12 months. The RSPCA makes the point that —

WA lags behind other states in the development and implementation of key standards and guidelines and codes of practice—both livestock and companion animals ...

Key issues exist in **regional WA** ...

There is a sense of helplessness by community and local government authorities about how to respond to those issues. The RSPCA makes the point that I made at the outset that there has been a very significant —

Poor investment in, and administration of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*, leading to poor coverage and inconsistencies

The RSPCA states —

What's needed

1. Stronger commitment by government to animal welfare
2. Funding support to the RSPCA WA
3. Review of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002*; relocation to different government agency
4. Urgently improve regulations and codes of practice for farm animals, companion animals, wildlife and those used in sport and recreational activities

This government has a couple of ministers—one is a former minister now—who like to commission reviews and have them sit on their desks. While he was still the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Ken Baston told this house in December last year when he tabled the independent review of the investment in and administration of the Animal Welfare Act of 2002 that the review had been completed and a report prepared and he was able to highlight some of the key recommendations. One of the recommendations of the independent review of the administration of the act was that a review of the act had to be undertaken. Subsequently, in the budget this year a certain amount of money has been allocated to address, we are told, the recommendations of that independent review.

When a question was asked just last month by Hon Sally Talbot about how that money was to be spent, Hon Jim Chown provided an answer that included that that money would be spent on commencing the background work for a review of the act. Some six months after we were told that the government had accepted the recommendations of the independent review of the administration of the act that there needed to be a further review of the actual act—we were told that in December—we are told that there is money to be spent on commencing the background work for a review of the act. I am not sure how many reviews and how much background work needs to be done on conducting a review of the act. Why does the government not just get on with it and review the act?

We think the evidence is really clear. This government has shifted the function and then savagely cut the resources to the new agency with the function. It has reviewed the administration of the act, which recommended that the act be reviewed. Then last month the government said that it has started to commence the background work for the review of the act. In fact, it has not done very much to properly carry out the function of protecting animal welfare. It has gutted the agency and it has done review upon review and has shown absolutely no leadership in this area.

HON JIM CHOWN (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [10.48 am]: The government does not support the intention of the motion for an independent office of animal welfare. This is nothing more than a cut-and-paste exercise; a Greens member put forward a private member's bill on the same subject in the Australian Senate in 2015 and the Senate gave it some consideration and sent it off to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee. After its deliberations, that committee decided that it did not support the intention of the bill to have an independent office of animal welfare.

In fact, there is not one jurisdiction in this nation that has such an office—they all operate under their independent state acts as such. It is interesting that this matter has come forward at this time from the Greens, who have this as part of their manifesto on their website. It is part of their national campaign to pursue such an outcome of an independent office for animal welfare in this state. In fact, this government takes animal welfare very seriously. As has already been mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition in this house, an independent review took place under the administration of the former Minister for Agriculture and Food, Hon Ken Baston. That independent review looked at the Animal Welfare Act and came to the conclusion that the current act is more than adequate. A review may take place at some stage in the future, but that is in the future; we are talking about now. The review panel found that alternative models had a number of flaws from an operational perspective. It found that if the RSPCA were solely responsible, it would leave a gap in direct government involvement. Alternatively, if a government agency were solely responsible, it would likely result in a loss of community commitment, support and access, as well as funding, which this government gives to the RSPCA to work in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Food on these matters. The review panel found that the current act and model are most appropriate to meet community expectations and accountability provisions within the terms of the act and currently available resources. As has already been mentioned, all 19 recommendations of the review were endorsed by cabinet in November 2015 and funding of \$1.145 million was allocated in the 2016–17 budget for DAF to implement those recommendations.

I am more than happy to stand here as a past farmer and somebody who actually believes in the welfare of animals, whether they be companion or commercial animals. I, along with other members of this government, am absolutely devastated by some of the sights we have seen of what takes place with our animals when they go offshore. Those things certainly need to be addressed. However, that is not within the jurisdiction of the state government; that is on a national level. I am more than happy to stand here and say that the act as it stands today—its implementation and administration—is meeting community expectations. This motion should not be given any relevance in pursuing an independent animal welfare office from a Western Australian perspective. It would mean more red tape and more influence by independent minority groups pursuing a political ideology that might not benefit animal welfare across the board.

HON COL HOLT (South West — Minister for Racing and Gaming) [10.52 am]: On this motion to establish an independent office of animal welfare, I will make a few comments based on the portfolio of racing and gaming. I thank Hon Lynn MacLaren for bringing the issue to the house; it is a reflection of how all Western Australians perceive and reflect the need to look after our animals across the board. A couple of things have obviously come up in the racing industry in the last 12 to 18 months around greyhound racing in the eastern states. Those activities worry everyone and should absolutely never be accepted, and anyone pursuing those activities should be punished to the full extent possible. Obviously, at that time a spotlight and microscope were put on all greyhound racing activities across the nation. We have a much smaller industry here in Western Australia that is much more tightly controlled, but we needed to look closely at whether those activities might have been occurring in Western Australia. We cannot tolerate such activities, so we have to keep investigating and working on these issues. One of the pleasing things that came out of that was the partnership between Racing and Wagering Western Australia's integrity unit and the RSPCA, which both tackled this issue full on. The RSPCA offered a \$10 000 reward for any information that led to prosecution for live baiting in the greyhound industry. Some reports came in. They were fully investigated and no-one was ever charged with any of those activities, which is a pleasing thing.

From a racing and wagering perspective, I know that Racing and Wagering WA has spent a lot of time on the integrity unit and has put a lot of resources into it. It understands the community's issues with cruelty to animals and knows that it is potentially at the forefront of that. It continues to work hard on how it addresses those issues within the industry. Animal welfare is obviously at the top of its list, because that is what it has to do; that is the community's expectation. It needs to ensure that the industry looks after the animals that participate in it. I have to say that having been to see a few trainers—I know a few of them—across the board they probably look after their animals better than they look after themselves. One can go to a racetrack just about anywhere in Australia—to Ascot, the Roebourne Cup or the cup in Derby—and the animals that are presented on the racetrack are incredibly well looked after; they are incredibly fit and beautiful animals. Every trainer that I have ever known in that industry is absolutely committed to looking after their animals in the first instance. Racing and Wagering WA responded really well to those issues in the other states 12 to 18 months ago. It absolutely sees no place in its industry for activities like that. The RSPCA in that context did an outstanding job.

It is obviously an organisation that offers some independence outside government to give some approval. I have stood in this place and said that what the RSPCA offers in that space and the fact that it never found any activities to suggest that anything was wrong in the greyhound industry gives me some comfort because of the credibility it brings to it.

I do not think these issues are ever going to go away—they will always be there. While we have animals in close association with our society—in our homes and industries—these issues are always going to be at the forefront. Livestock is a big issue. I have some views around the live animal trade and export. I believe that Australia is much better off being in that space to ensure that our standards go into the international marketplace where no other country is doing similar activities. I think we are doing the right thing by staying in that market. We need to strengthen our animal welfare chains along that market. I would hate to think what would happen to the standards if we were to exit that market—that worries me more than us not being in that market at all. I understand that it is a fairly vexed issue in general society, but it is a main part of our industry and we need to support our export markets in that sense.

Just in conclusion, the racing industry absolutely knows that it is under the microscope with animal welfare and that it needs to continue to work hard in all aspects of it—from the very beginning of a foal being born to when they are retired from the industry. I know the industry is working hard to ensure that that occurs. The industry knows that it is on notice. It needs to continue to work hard to put the resources into it.

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [10.58 am] — in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the motion to establish an independent office of animal welfare. In particular, I thank Hon Sue Ellery, who reminded us of the number of people who believe that animal welfare is a top issue for them. Of course, the RSPCA is a good organisation to be able to chart that concern. Hon Sue Ellery also said that the resourcing of the animal welfare unit in the days when we had a different government was much stronger, and that in the past five to seven years it has been progressively less and less. In preparing my remarks I did look at the estimates hearings over that time. I saw that when Hon Terry Redman in the other place took over as the minister responsible for the Animal Welfare Act, there were lofty intentions of putting something like \$1.6 million into it and he did mention that responsibility for companion animals and their welfare was important to the government.

However, at that same time, the government also acknowledged that the RSPCA would be well compensated or granted moneys in order to fulfil that part of the obligations under the law. I question whether that is appropriate. I know that the RSPCA is doing a great job with what little money it gets to enforce the act. But it is clear that the responsibility for animal welfare rests with the government. Outsourcing a not-for-profit charity should not be the only thing that we do; there is much more we can do, such as improving our standards, monitoring and enforcement all around the state. The RSPCA does not have inspectors all around the state. We cannot rely on the RSPCA to enforce the law that is in effect all around the state, if it does not have the resources to do that. This is a way forward for that.

I also noted and was very disappointed to hear that the government will not support the motion and felt that everything was all hunky-dory, so to speak. The member who spoke mentioned that the act is okay. This really does not have anything to do with the laws that we have under the Animal Welfare Act; this has to do with the enforcement and monitoring of and compliance with those laws. This is about setting up an independent office that would do that; therefore, that was not really an appropriate response to this motion. It was no surprise that the government said that, because many members have been in support of the proposed ag gag laws that would prohibit and create extreme penalties for people who are blowing the whistle on animal cruelty around Australia. It is not surprising that people who support the ag gag laws would not support setting up an independent office of animal welfare, which would take on that role of monitoring and compliance and do it within the laws of the state that we have. It is not fair to say that it is not our business; it is completely our business because states have responsibility for animal welfare. The establishment of a national office would be a bonus to us because it could work on the harmonisation of laws across Australia. It was identified in 2008 that it did not make sense to have different laws in animal industries around Australia and that we had to have a harmonisation of laws. We have been working towards those national codes of practice. An office of animal welfare at a national level would be a resource for us to use with its wisdom, expertise and consultation across industry and amongst those groups that are focused on animal welfare, as I listed in what the office would do. This is a way that we can value-add to the efforts that we have in animal welfare.

I welcome the enlightened comments from the Minister for Housing, who is also the Minister for Racing and Gaming, about how people are really concerned about greyhound racing, and that it was a joint effort on behalf of the regulator and the RSPCA to try to uncover evidence of live baiting. It is important to remember that this live baiting was just the most abhorrent. These were live wild animals, even bunnies; some were native animals. The cruelty that was inflicted on those bait animals was just off-the-scale wrong and that is why the entire country went into surveillance mode about it. Any efforts that we can make to ensure that never happens in

Western Australia would be greatly supported by my constituents. One of the problems is having the racing industry being its own policeman. If the racing industry has an internal investigation, it does not have the outside respect that it deserves. Having an independent authority that can come and do an investigation to give it the tick of approval, is a much more appropriate way to approach these kinds of issues. That is one perfect example in which an independent office of animal welfare could assist all of us to be assured that that does not happen in Western Australia.

The minister mentioned that the industry should be involved in live exports. It is a very common statement on the part of government that we need to be involved in this because it improves animal welfare around the world. That has been completely discredited by all the evidence that we have had over the five years, since the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System has been in play. I cannot read it out, but I can show members this long list from Animals Australia of all the violations. No-one has been charged. No-one involved in the export of animals who has been clearly violating our regulations in that regard has been charged for all these offences that have occurred. Because it is the common thing, astoundingly, this industry's response to just about every exposé of extreme animal abuse is to talk about how sending live animals overseas to be killed is, "Positively influencing animal welfare". Those were almost the minister's exact words. In fact, Alison Penfold, the CEO of the Australian Livestock Exporters' Council, said —

People are pleased to see Australia stepping up to the plate and having this influence globally on animal welfare.

Members can look back five years to see what has happened since the regulations were introduced. The sledgehammering that was just exposed was just appalling. That was in Vietnam. I know that we export to Vietnam. That was a clear breach; those were Australian animals in the wrong place at the wrong time being treated horribly. There have been no prosecutions, no violations. Pakistan, Indonesia, Kuwait, Qatar—I go through this list and the same countries year after year are identified in there. I think the worst excuse is to say that it would be worse if we were not there, because it is clear that whatever we are trying to do to influence the treatment of animals overseas is not working for even our own animals, let alone animals that are endemic to those places or are bred and raised in those places. I wholeheartedly disagree with that, and I ask that members reflect on that and look at the evidence that shows that no, it does not make a difference to animal welfare. We are even breaking our own rules and no-one is paying for it.

Mr President, I do tend to get emotional about these issues with animals, but I am trying to be positive and proactive in suggesting a way forward. I suggest that we establish an office of animal welfare. We should have an office of animal welfare in Western Australia, regardless of whether it is adopted at a national level, to ensure that animal welfare laws in this state are upheld, enforced and complied with. Therefore, I really hope that this debate continues after we conclude the time to debate this motion this morning.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.