

**ANIMAL WELFARE ACT — INDEPENDENT REVIEW**

*Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food)** [1.02 pm]: In November last year I announced that cabinet had approved the instigation of an independent review of the investment in and administration of the Animal Welfare Act 2002 in Western Australia. Through the Department of Agriculture and Food this government spends \$1.9 million annually on animal welfare, with \$500 000 of this provided directly to the RSPCA. In all areas of government expenditure it is essential to ensure funds are always spent in the most efficient and appropriate ways. Any government funding to animal welfare expenditure must be used in the best way to achieve optimum animal welfare outcomes. The review set out to ensure that these funds are directed to the best effect, while at the same time maintaining consistency in animal welfare policy and practice between enforcement agencies. The review panel consisted of Brian Easton, chair of the Conservation Commission Western Australia and chief executive officer of the Zoological Parks Authority; Dr Ashley Mercy, veterinarian; Lynsey Warbey, senior solicitor, State Solicitor's Office; and Bruno Mezzatesta, executive director, regional services for the Department of Fisheries.

I am pleased to advise that that review has now been completed and a report prepared. I am now able to highlight some of the key recommendations, which include the following: the minister assisted by DAFWA to remain responsible for administering the Animal Welfare Act 2002; a review of the act to be undertaken; the director general of DAFWA to work with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan and overarching policy framework for animal welfare under the act; and a ministerial advisory council to be established to provide strategic and policy advice to the minister on animal welfare matters. The government supports these and the other 15 recommendations that are outlined in detail in the review. The review also noted that additional resources would be required to fully implement all findings. This recommendation will be addressed as a part of the 2016–17 budget. I now wish to table the report titled, “Animal Welfare Review—October 2015”.

[See paper 3698.]