

ANIMAL WELFARE

Statement by Minister for Agriculture and Food

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Agriculture and Food) [10.10 am]: Cabinet has recently approved the instigation of a review of animal welfare investment and administration. Animal welfare is a critically important issue and one that is often a highly emotive and subjective matter in the eyes of the public. This government has repeatedly said that it takes animal welfare seriously. This is evidenced by the \$2.5 million in resources that the Department of Agriculture and Food applies across Western Australia for animal welfare. This includes \$500 000 provided to the RSPCA through a grant agreement. Given the government's investment and the public's charitable donations, it is appropriate that this funding is used in the best way to achieve optimum animal welfare outcomes. The current investment in animal welfare needs to be reviewed to ensure it is directed to the best effect. I am also aware that concerns have previously been raised about inconsistency in animal welfare policy and practice between enforcement agencies. Continued investment in regulatory activity needs to be appropriate and driven by quality and outcomes. In short, this review will drive value for money and accountability in investment, identify all alternative service delivery methods and ensure public funding can be based on appropriate quality and consistency measures. It is expected to take three months from the commencement, and the animal welfare advisory committee, which includes representatives from the RSPCA, Pastoralists and Graziers Association and Western Australian farmers, will be consulted. The process will also include an opportunity for public submissions and key stakeholder consultation.