

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report No. 26 on the

Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

10.9.13

LAID UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE	
No.:	5413 T 3398
10 SEP 2013	
MP:	McVeigh
Clerk's Signature:	

INTRODUCTION

On 21 May 2013, the Honourable John McVeigh MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, introduced the *Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013* (the Bill) into the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill was subsequently referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee (the Committee) for consideration and report to the Parliament by 19 August 2013.

On 19 August 2013, the Committee tabled its report (No. 26) about the Bill (the report).

The Queensland Government response to the Committee's recommendations as outlined in the report is provided below.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Queensland Government thanks the Committee for its detailed consideration of the Bill and its recommendations.

Recommendation 1 –

That the department examines options to increase compliance activities in relation to the sale of dogs and cats not implanted with a personal identification device (micro-chipped) as required under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*.

Queensland Government response:

The Government accepts the Committee's Recommendation.

The relevant provisions of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* are enforced by local governments, so liaison between Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and local governments is required to ensure more effective and consistent application of the law.

DAFF will prepare a fact sheet on microchipping and supplying cats and dogs specifically directed at education of local government officers, pet shops and cat and dog owners (including breeders) about how the requirements of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* impact on the supply of cats and dogs that are less than eight weeks of age.

The fact sheet will be published on the DAFF website and DAFF will encourage local governments to use it to educate their communities. DAFF will also liaise with the Local Government Association of Queensland to promote consistent enforcement of the relevant provisions by local governments.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry liaise with the Veterinarian Surgeons Board to establish a process for veterinarians and applicants for registration to nominate their most appropriate point of contact for receiving biosecurity alerts.

Queensland Government response:

The Government accepts the Committee's recommendation.

DAFF has discussed this matter with the Veterinary Surgeons Board (VSB).

The VSB has advised DAFF that the current process for registration and renewal of veterinarians, whose contact details are required to be submitted to the VSB via the existing registration and renewal forms, is sufficient to obtain emergency contact details as required under the proposed legislation.

The VSB further advise DAFF that renewals of registration for the 2014 licence year will be forwarded in approximately November 2013. Subject to passage and assent of the Bill, the renewal process will provide a convenient opportunity to collect emergency contact details.

Recommendation 3 -

The committee recommends that the Agriculture and Forestry Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 be passed.

Queensland Government response:

The Government thanks the Committee for its consideration of the Bill and appreciates the Committee's recommendation that the Bill be passed.

RESPONSE TO ADDITIONAL MATTERS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE:

Point for clarification -

The committee acknowledges the importance of swift communications between Biosecurity Queensland and veterinarians in the event of a biosecurity emergency. The committee also acknowledges the practical and privacy concerns and sensitivities raised by the Australian Veterinary Association on behalf of its members about the proposed laws. The committee invites the Minister to clarify whether the legal obligations on veterinarians to provide emergency contact details proposed in the Bill could be satisfied by veterinarians providing the most appropriate contact details for their practices or clinics, or after hours paging or answering services instead of providing their personal mobile phone numbers or email addresses.


The committee also invites the Minister to clarify the safeguards that will be put in place to ensure that veterinarians' private contact details will only be used for the purposes specified in the Bill.

Queensland Government response:

The Bill proposes to amend the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936* to require veterinarians to provide emergency contact details. The Government's understanding is that a veterinarian who provides after hours contact details of the veterinary practice or clinic at which they work, or an after hours paging or answering service, will comply with this requirement.

The proposed amendments constrain access to emergency contact details by the chief executive and chief executives of other State Government departments in that access may only be given for the purpose of providing information about controlling, eradicating or preventing the spread of exotic or other diseases or declared pests.

The proposed new section 29C specifically states that a chief executive may only use emergency contact details for these purposes. To do so otherwise would be a breach of the legislation. The Government considers that the legislation as drafted safeguards this information and provides that it must only be used for the stated purposes.

	Paper No.:	
	Date: 10-9-13	
	Member: Hon M. Veitch	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated, by leave	<input type="checkbox"/> Remainder incorporated, by leave	
Clerk at the Table: 