

Inquiry Into Puppy Farming in NSW

Hearing – Monday 23 May 2022

Supplementary Questions

Shirene Donnelly – Answers to Questions below, submitted 15 June 2022

1. Could you please outline the process of how foster carers are selected and any vetting criteria used?

Response:

Foster carers are selected based on their application form and their 'meet and greet' with carer coordinators. The application form is very comprehensive. You can also learn a lot about a person when you chat with them informally. A lot of people have quite the passion for fostering but not the resources to do so. For instance, you really need to have your own transport, to deliver and collect animals from pounds/vets and if for some reason we are low on food donations, you need to be in a financial position to be able to buy the food needed for your foster animal.

2. What training, if any, is provided to foster carers?

Response:

They do a comprehensive induction with their carer coordinator and are provided with a 'User Manual'. They are also required to become a financial member and sign a 'Code of Conduct' statement.

We also have the Carer (Portal) Pawtal on our website for foster carers to access where there are lots of resources. If they can't find the answer they need, they can then contact their coordinator.

3. Do you know of any instances of people being expelled from their role as foster carers?

Response:

Not personally but I'm aware that this does happen on occasion. Coordinators are very good at supporting new recruits and sometimes just chatting with foster carers can highlight issues. We also sometimes get feedback from our vets, and also from prospective adoptees.

4. If someone was interested in becoming a foster carer, how do they get involved?

Response:

Potential Foster carers can contact us via the Foster Inquiry tab on our website [Become a Foster Carer | Hunter Animal Rescue](#). We also use special activity days like 'Kitten/Puppy Meet and Greet Adoption days' at PetQuarters stores to chat with people and gain interest this way. We also run a stall whenever the opportunity arises, such as the RSPCA Million Paws Walk. I actually attended this one in May and spoke to a lot of people about becoming a volunteer or Foster. We need Volunteers to do transport of animals etc, so if people can't foster animals, there are a lot of other volunteer tasks that need to happen.

Once they have read all of the information on our website about fostering/volunteering and watch the YouTube video, we ask them to complete the inquiry form or contact us for a chat if they require

further information. Once the application form is received a Foster Co-ordinator in their area contacts them to have a meet and greet at their home or if needed they can do this via FaceTime or Zoom. This is to do a safety check of their home. We check fencing, security doors and screened windows and further discuss their application and answer any further questions they may have.

Just something that I would like to add to my parliamentary hearing notes.

We need to remember the stress and trauma that people are left with that have to deal with these situations. I can understand why people (such as RSPCA) don't wish to respond to complaints from the public when they know all too well they will have to go out there, see these terrible conditions and have to walk away from it, powerless to do anything, because they are 'working within the legislation'.

Also, when you are sitting by the fire tonight, or any night, together with your fur baby, think about all of the kitten/puppy farm animals and the terrible situation they find themselves. Not with a beautiful family, but trapped in a pen, no love or comforts, no stimulation, freezing from the cold living a life of pure misery with no happy ending, usually a bullet to the brain when they are no longer of value.

Here is our **opportunity** to put a permanent end to this horrible situation. It's up to us, to follow through, give these animals a voice and get them out of these hell holes!

Thank you for the opportunity to make a change that will make a difference in the lives of animals.

Shirene Donnelly