

Thursday 9 September 2010



Legislative Council  
**General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RSPCA RAID ON THE WATERWAYS  
WILDLIFE PARK**

The Chair of the NSW Parliament's General Purpose Standing Committee No 5, Mr Ian Cohen MLC, today tabled the Committee's report on the RSPCA raid on the Waterways Wildlife Park in Gunnedah.

"The report makes it clear that the decision by RSPCA Inspectors to remove animals from the Waterways Wildlife Park on 3 February 2010 was motivated by genuine and valid concerns about the welfare of the animals," Mr Cohen said.

"Moreover, there is evidence that these problems may have existed for some time before a complaint was made to the RSPCA," Mr Cohen said. "The Department of Industry and Investment identified significant problems when it inspected the Park in 2007. If the Department had acted more decisively to address its concerns, the events of 3 February 2010 may have been avoided." The report makes a number of recommendations to the Department to improve its regulation of facilities licensed under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

The report also recommends that the RSPCA review its agreement with the television program 'Animal Rescue' to ensure that written consent is obtained from property owners before any filming commences. "Without doubt, the presence of a camera crew during the 'raid' inflamed emotions about the RSPCA's actions," Mr Cohen said.

"The Gunnedah Shire Council and the Gunnedah community have shown great support to the Smalls since the removal of the animals. I hope that this translates into continuing support to create an environment in which the welfare of the animals is guaranteed," Mr Cohen added.

Ian Cohen MLC  
**Chair**

For further information, contact the Chair of the Committee, **Mr Ian Cohen MLC** on **0409 989 466**. For copies of the report see the committee's website at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc5](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc5), or telephone the Committee Secretariat on (02) 9230 2412.

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