

Bill can help put an end to animal cruelty

ANIMAL lovers can look forward to an end to animal cruelty and abuse with the proposal by the Department of Veterinary Services to introduce the Animal Welfare Bill.

The decision by the department to brief all stakeholders about the bill is a step in the right direction.

It is appropriate for the department to engage stakeholders and also to post the concept draft on the department's website to allow non-governmental organisations and the public to voice their concerns, opinions and suggestions about animal welfare.

Public consultation is vital and is in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's oft-repeated statement that gone is the era when the government knows best what is needed for the country.

The bill should take into account the views of animal welfare groups and other stakeholders who have input in this regard.

Do not buy pets for fun. They must be treated as companions for life.

Be with them through good and bad times.

Love them and be loved unconditionally.

Pet shops must be better regulated and animals must not be crammed in cages as there are shops that provide space only for animals to stand and turn around.

Pet owners should always be mindful of their responsibilities. The abandonment of pets should be viewed as a serious offence.

Humane methods must be applied by the authorities when handling strays.

Our record of handling strays falls short of expectations in terms of stopping animal cruelty.

It is hoped the bill will put an end to inhumane acts against animals and improve Malaysia's standing in animal welfare.

The big challenge is to ensure that the bill gets to Parliament as soon as possible and is debated, passed and enforced.

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