

Title : Important to channel energy of animal lovers constructively

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SINGAPORE: Mr K Shanmugam, Law and Foreign Affairs Minister and MP for Nee Soon GRC, has said it is important to channel the energy of animal lovers towards constructive and feasible solutions to resolve concerns over the treatment of animals.

He was speaking at a public forum on animal welfare policies, the first such forum in Singapore.

More than 400 animal lovers turned up at the event at Chong Pang on Saturday.

They suggested the setting up of Miami-styled "Animal Police", micro-chipping for both cats and dogs and mandatory caning for animal abusers.

Mr Shanmugam said education for the young and public engagement is "the way to go" for a successful animal welfare programme in Singapore.

Could this forum signal a sea change in animal welfare actions in Singapore?

"Something like this would have been unthinkable five years ago, but the fact that we have a forum, a full house, all the animal lovers are here, yes, it is a huge step forward," said a participant.

"I was told that Singaporeans (have) no compassion, no feelings, very materialistic, so I hope after this, more people will come forward..." said another.

Saturday's event also saw the launch of the Chong Pang Animal Welfare Programme to mark the end of cat culling in the constituency.

Apart from sterilising strays, local animal welfare group ACRES says it will be engaging residents. It will also work with schools to reach the youth.

ACRES director Louis Ng said: "We're going house to house, to all the residents here, explain to them the policy, explain to them why we're doing this, and hopefully they will support it."

Organisers - ACRES and the Cat Welfare Society - said Saturday's forum will not be a one-off event. They hope to replicate it at other constituencies.

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