

RSPCA shop move

Bold plan to help save pets

Hannah Martin

THE Queensland branch of the RSPCA has broken ranks with the organisation interstate by selling refuge animals in commercial pet shops.

Cats and dogs from RSPCA shelters go on sale today at Petbarn in Lawnton, just north of Brisbane, and the RSPCA's World for Pets Superstore at Springwood in Logan City, south of Brisbane.

If the trial is successful, other Petbarns and pet shops across the state will be offered RSPCA animals.

RSPCA Queensland chief executive Mark Townend said pets would be sold under strict guidelines, which aim to match them with suitable owners.

The cost will be the same as charged for pets from shelters, where kittens sell from \$80 and dogs up to \$300, to cover treatment and care, de-sexing, worming and micro-chipping.

Pet shops will not be allowed to add a profit margin to the sale of the animals.

Mr Townend said the pro-



LIFESAVERS: Petbarn's Melissa Pearce (left) with the RSPCA's Rhiannon Buglar and a furry little friend

gram could save the lives of some of the 12,000 animals put down in Queensland each year: "We need to try every possible avenue to reduce pet over-population.

"An RSPCA animal that is de-sexed, vaccinated, wormed and micro-chipped surely is more attractive to a potential owner."

Other state RSPCA branches and the national body say live-animal sales in pet shops should be banned because they promote impulse-buying. But sources say it is unlikely the Queensland branch will be censured or publicly criticised by others in the RSPCA, as many are inter-

ested in how the trial will go. Mr Townend said: "We can't have a shelter on every corner, so having our animals in pet shops makes it easier for people to find them."

Petbarn Lawnton manager Karen Hogan said staff had voluntarily done RSPCA adoption education programs. The

store had stopped stocking its own puppies in a bid to boost RSPCA sales.

"Now we're helping re-home abandoned, unwanted animals, not creating more," she said.

What do you think about the RSPCA selling pets through commercial outlets? Have your say at www.thesundaymail.com.au