

Please accept my submission on stopping puppy farms and back yard breeders.

I understand the proposal is a two-part system (shown below) which while I agree with it, I feel it really doesn't give adequate welfare protection to the animals involved.

Their proposal is a two-part system:

- 1) A breeder ID system, mandatory for any persons with one or more breeding dogs, will permanently be implemented on microchips in puppies. These will need to be displayed at any point of sale, allowing tracking back to places of birth. This will ease tracking of breeders associated with any complaints associated with any particular ID number.
- 2) A public education program has also been suggested to outline about the dangers of purchasing a dog without said breeder identification number, and to insist on viewing of the puppies original home and parents.

I have witnessed firsthand the dreadful conditions dogs live out their lives as breeding machines just so the so called "owners" can make money. The people involved in these puppy farms, and yes the person who only has one or two dogs in their backyard - continually and irresponsibly breeding them without thought or knowledge of the health requirements, genetics, hereditary diseases and general welfare are also puppy farmers. Responsible breeders know of any hereditary or genetic diseases or problems which may arise from breeding two dogs and usually only breed a few litters from a female, and then only once a year or maybe eighteen months. Puppy farmers do not, they forcibly breed their dogs each and every season, regardless of the adult dogs health, and don't care about any possible health or welfare issues the puppies may have later in life. Their sole aim is to make money.

In brief I believe there should be a standard set of guidelines which must include:

- mandatory regular health checks for breeding dogs and all puppies before sale by an independent vet;
 - capping litter numbers per breeding female to a maximum of 3;
 - mandatory desexing for puppies sold (and not just for those over 12 weeks of age) and retired breeding dogs, as well as a responsible rehoming program (don't just take the dog to a rescue group or the pound and let someone else deal with the animal/s);
 - adequate housing/space, exercise, nutritious food, water, access to fresh air and sunshine, enrichment allowing for normal behaviours, as well as regular human contact;
 - mandatory record keeping; and capping total number of breeding dogs on any property to a maximum of 10.
- The legislation should cover all dogs (no exemptions for working dogs, for example).
- Anyone guilty of animal welfare offences, including having unregistered breeding animals, should have their permit revoked (including the associated property), strong financial penalty to act as deterrent, and animals seized.
- Additional resources need to be made available to the RSPCA Qld or/and Queensland Police to investigate and enforce these animal welfare laws.
- The sale of pets in pet shops should be banned (unless they are sourced from reputable shelters/rescue groups).

Expanding on the above I believe there are many key issues which are absent from the current amendments:

1. A puppy farm stand-alone code of practice/standards - to ensure comprehensive standards are upheld for animal welfare it must include:

- Maintaining physical health via nutrition, access to water and food and vet checks, and mental and social health via enrichment, positive human contact, exercise, capping litter and animal numbers, housing and allowance of the ability to display normal behaviours.
- Provision for **mandatory vet checks** prior to breeding, after each litter, yearly for males and after their litter cap is reached. It should also provide a mandate for checks prior to sale of puppies.
- It is imperative to both physical and mental health to establish **breeding rules** that would **including the ban of inbreeding** (ie no breeding siblings / with parents etc).
- **Capping of litter numbers** to 3 litters per breeding female in their lifetime, and introducing **mandatory desexing**, micro chipping, vet checks and **rehoming plans** on retirement. Fraser

Coast has been the first council in Qld to implement changes regarding desexing, and I urge all councils to follow suit.

- **Mandatory record keeping** of all information pertaining to every dog must be kept, including **Establishing Breeding rules** that would include the **ban of inbreeding** (ie. not breeding siblings, or breeding off-spring with parents, etc.) this is imperative to both the physical and mental health of dogs. I know that some responsible breeders do use line breeding, BUT they have knowledge of the family trees of the animals involved, including any genetic or hereditary diseases, for example dogs which have a recessive gene or the merle gene for coat coloration or dogs with naturally occurring stumpy tails. **Puppy farmers DO NOT possess this knowledge** and I have heard of at least some who have irresponsibly bred two dogs with recessive genes only for the puppies to suffer severe physical deformities. I won't distress you with what happened to the hapless puppies.

2. Widening / changing council rules and responsibilities:

- **Capping numbers of breeding females** per breeder - bring in new legislation to only allow council permits for 10 females for all breeders, with a Government ID or Dogs Qld entity registration to ensure standards are upheld.
- **Compliance checks** - of all breeding facilities before ID numbers are approved, with **random annual compliance** checks made which would be paid for by breeding registration application fees.
- **Proven compliance to standards** - All breeders must abide by the introduced legislative changes and standards of practice; those already belonging to a breeder association should not be exempt, and proof of pre and annual compliance checks of standards, in line with the government standards, must be obtained. Any found illegally housing more animals than permitted, should immediately have them seized by the RSPCA, and given directives on welfare standards and fines issues.
- Indefinite ID cancellation if found guilty of any animal cruelty and all animals seized - any person under suspicion of animal cruelty is to have their ID suspended, their animals seized, and removed indefinitely if found guilty. They then must have their permit and ID cancelled indefinitely to both their person, and property associated with where the cruelty occurred.

3. More funds directed to aid work of RSPCA and other Animal Welfare groups:

- **Education scheme** - ensure public knowledge of the public registry system of ID numbers, and to ask to visit the premises, never at a different meeting point, so as to view the parents first hand, the conditions their potential puppy lived in and where to make complaints when suspicious.
- **Extending the reach of the RSPCA or task force**, and allow employment of more officers, to aid complaint handling, and investigations. And giving RSPCA Inspectors increased powers to enter properties upon suspicions of animal welfare issues, along with increased powers to seize animals from these premises.
- **Help house seized animals** - pounds and shelters are at capacity a lot of the time, which makes the re-homing of surrenders or seized animals difficult. Use of funds from registrations / application could be directed at implementing help from private kennels (boarding) and rescue groups (fostering) for any potential increase of seizure of animals, would be a necessity in this amendment.

4. Banning the sale of all animals in pet stores, unless supplied from a registered charity or rescue group:

- This would effectively **change pet stores into adoption centres**, thus helping to minimise the exhaustive numbers through shelters and pounds, and aid in minimising euthanasia rates across the state. **This change has occurred overseas, (Las Vegas very recently changed these laws) and also in Victoria.** Victoria is leading the fight thanks to the tireless efforts of Oscar's Law and has made major changes to legislation that will effectively end puppy farm cruelty there.
- With optimal laws in place, an issue of increased number of animals seized could put an exhaustive load on pounds and shelters as mentioned above. Making pet shops new "adoption centres" would help to house rescued animals.
- This would also limit the necessity to rely on pet shops "here-say" information on standards at a breeders business, and allowing only reputable rescues and shelters would offer more

safety to consumers and animals alike. More social, healthy puppies with happier owners means less end up in pounds and shelters!

- I also feel the “sale” or “giving away” of animals (dogs, cats, birds, etc) via the “free” ads in newspapers, shop notice boards, signs stuck to power poles, flea markets, and the internet should be regulated. I have seen puppies stuck in cramped cages at markets with no water or shade with signs saying “free to good home”. These puppies did not appear to be old enough to leave their mothers, nor be in the best of health – running eyes, nor is there any way to guarantee a good home when an animal can be picked up at a whim with no financial outlay.

I also feel that Local Councils should be more responsible and proactive with regards to registration, desexing, microchipping of not just dogs but cats also, including have cats confined indoors of a night. I lived in Brisbane where my dog and cats were all registered, desexed and microchipped. My cats were also confined indoors at dusk and not allowed out until after sunrise – until such a time that I could afford an enclosed run so they had access outdoors during the day but were not able to roam onto neighboring properties or injury or kill wildlife or be injured themselves.

When I moved to a rural area near Brisbane I registered my dog and wanted to register my cats but was told that they didn't do that as it was far too hard to police and “the government brings these laws in and we have to follow through without any money to do so”. And yes my cats are still confined to a run which gives them access to the sunlight, fresh air, opportunity to view their surrounds and the wonderful birdlife which call my property home, but they cannot kill wildlife or be injured themselves from roaming dogs, other people's cats straying onto my property, being on the road, etc.

Thank you for taking the time to review my submission.

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