

Stop Puppy Farming
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
PO Box 8349
Perth Business Centre
Western Australia 6849

Submission - Stop Puppy Farming Project

I am an owner of a 4 year old entire dog who is a pure breed from a registered DogsWest Breeder. A dog who is registered with DogsWest, registered for his lifetime with the local government and I myself am an active member of a Breed Club and DogsWest.

I have never bred my dog nor allowed him to be in a position where "accidental" puppies could occur. I have no intention of breeding him and my reasons for maintaining him entire are so I can participate in Conformation Dog Shows for sport and enjoyment and for the reasons outlined below.

Mandatory Desexing

I strongly oppose the mandatory sterilisation of dogs except for cross breed and rescued/rehomed dogs.

The proposal to introduce mandatory desexing is extremely flawed for the following reasons:

- Scientific and anecdotal evidence shows, permanent desexing has adverse consequences for dogs such as;
 - desexing prior to maturity (which is between the age of 2-3 years for most large breed dogs) has been shown to have adverse health outcomes for joints. This results in abnormal bone development for hips and elbows leading to dogs suffering prematurely from arthritis and significantly increasing the risk of damage and tearing of cruciate ligaments requiring costly surgery and difficult and painful rehabilitation. Desexing prior to maturity has resulted in disproportionate growth patterns leading to uncharacteristic structure, shape and gait contrary to breed standards.
- Scientific research shows that male dogs that are permanently desexed at a young age are likely to develop increased fear aggression and anxiety later in life, increasing the risk that they will become unmanageable as family pets and be dumped in rescues and/or euthanised.
- Desexing at any age increases the risk of urinary incontinence in both dogs and bitches and the need to medicate dogs for the rest of their lives to manage this problem. This we believe also contributes to the large number of dogs dumped.
- Reduced lifespan of dogs which have been permanently desexed. The Government states that permanent desexing will increase a dog's longevity, but the scientific evidence does not support this position at all, and in fact shows their longevity is reduced.
- Increased risk of cancer in dogs that have been permanently desexed, particularly in bitches. The Government states that permanent desexing

will improve the health of dogs, but this is not supported by the scientific evidence.

- Certain medical conditions in the dog only develop or become apparent with age. Mandatory desexing will remove from the gene pool healthy dogs free of such conditions; which in a small state such as Western Australia is disastrous for pure breed club members, ANKC and DogsWest registered breeders' ongoing pursuit of the eradication of such medical conditions via breeding to free dogs of such conditions and traits.

I believe that education and incentives are the most effective approach to preventing indiscriminate breeding of dogs, not mandatory desexing of all dogs.

I fervently believe that the breeder, owner and veterinarian should collaboratively consider whether desexing dogs is in the best interest of the dog.

This proposal will once again solely target and impose unrealistic conditions on dog owners and registered breeders who do the right thing now and into the future.

Mandatory desexing – Breeder's terms

Proposed restrictions under the WA Dog Act will make it very difficult for many DogsWest breeders to maintain a breeding program (which is already heavily regulated), without the ability to have dogs in their wider community.

Registering owners of entire dogs as a 'Registered Breeder' with their Local Government

I fail to see how this will stop puppy farming. You are effectively giving anyone a licence to breed. The proposal is lumping all dog owners and breeders in together, regardless of what they breed and how.

ANKC registered breeders follow strict standards set out by the ANKC and Dogs West. These standards are enforced by Dogs West. You are going to give the title of "breeder" to an owner of an unsterilized cross bred dog who may breed without any of the stringent conditions we as registered ANKC breeders are required to follow. Who and how are you going to police these 'breeders'?

ANKC registered owners, breeders and DogsWest Members, having to be on another breeder register is superfluous and has additional cost implications.

This is double red tape, an administrative nightmare, increased costs for no benefit, and I cannot see any useful purpose in this proposal.

Importantly, by giving a non ANKC and non DogsWest member the title of "breeder" through this proposed register, you are encouraging unregulated breeding which counteracts your aim of stopping puppy farming.

Focus should be on legislating and **enforcing** the sale of puppies from non regulated breeders and all dogs rehomed through accredited rescue shelters.

Central Register

This proposal has some merit whereby a statewide Dog Register is conducive to the effective management of dogs in the community. Whilst I have concerns for the cost implications, I do believe access to a central register will assist local governments.

Transitioning of pet shops to adoption centres sourcing dogs only from accredited rescue organisations and shelters

This is probably the only proposal I think is on target to meet the Project objectives. All pet shops should be legally barred from keeping and selling any puppies and dogs; and from acting as an intermediary in the sale and purchase of puppies and dogs.

Reasons for this include;

- A shop is not a good environment in which to keep dogs until they are sold; and is not a good environment in which to sell pups and young dogs,
- It encourages impulse buying with little or no research on the part of the purchaser. We are not confident that pet shops have capacity to inform and educate purchasers to help ensure that puppies purchased do not end up abandoned or surrendered due to buyer ignorance about being a companion pet owner.
- Dogs which find themselves in a rescue or shelter facility have arrived there because of being neglected, abused, traumatised, lost or because their owners can no longer care for them. All these dogs have and will continue to experience extreme stress and anxiety with many also suffering ongoing medical problems. Transitioning pet shops to sell only rescue dogs is a recipe for disaster.
- Pet shops will continue to be driven by the commercial dollar resulting in disregard for matching dog to owner.

Project Consultation

Whilst the government has actively promoted the Project and sought professional advice from existing, well governed and regulated bodies such as DogsWest, I have concerns that should the Minister determine legislation be drafted to meet the Projects aims, then that legislation in its specific form should be consulted further before being tabled in Parliament.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.