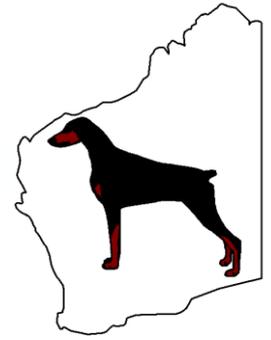


# THE DOBERMANN CLUB of WA (INC)



3rd August 2018

## Stop Puppy Farming

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

### **Submission by the Dobermann Club of WA (Inc) Stop Puppy Farming Project**

The idea of forming a Dobermann Club in WA was expressed by a number of Dobermann owners in October 1968 at a meeting held at Osborne Park RSL Hall. As a result of that meeting The Dobermann Club of WA came into existence. The sterilisation-legislation scare of 1970 brought Dobermann owners from near and far to prevent discriminatory action similar to that meted out to German Shepherds. Part of the current proposal is very similar, have we not learnt anything in almost 50 years.

The first application was made to the Canine Association of WA (Inc.) for affiliation in 1971. Several successful functions established the name of the Club in the dog world and interest in club training sessions increased. The Club still today holds Obedience Training every Tuesday night, a service we have provided for almost 50 years.

Immediately after affiliation in 1972 several show and trial dates were applied for and the club's inaugural Show was scheduled for 2nd September 1973. This was held at the Floreat Forum Shopping center. The following year, 1973, saw the first Obedience Trial was successfully held.

The Club today holds each year

- ✓ Championship Show
- ✓ Open Show (part of Judges Training)
- ✓ Obedience Trial
- ✓ Rally-O Trial
- ✓ Working Aptitude Evaluation
- ✓ 2 x Agility Trials
- ✓ 2 x Jumping Trials
- ✓ Weekly (during School Terms) Obedience Training. We are the longest running breed club to conduct obedience training.

Current membership stands at approximately 100 making the Club the largest Dobermann Club in Australia.

The Objectives of the Club are

- A) To educate and encourage members, breeders and owners to do all such things for the good, welfare and improvement of the Dobermann Breed and achieve such by individually contributing knowledge, experience and by selective breeding.
- B) To educate and encourage members, breeders, exhibitors and judges to abide by the requirements of the standard as accepted for the Dobermann by the Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc.).
- C) To promote, improve and foster goodwill in Canine affairs generally.

- D) To promote and support competition in all practical ways and to hold such fixtures as permitted by the Canine Association of Western Australia (Inc.).
- E) To promote good fellowship amongst the club members and further their knowledge of the Dobermann Breed by communication with interstate Dobermann Clubs and by obtaining material of all possible interest.

The Club through its members provides a Dobermann Rescue service, this service is for Dobermanns not bred by members of the Club. The Club's breeder members keep in contact with their puppy buyers, usually for the lifetime of the dog, and will always be involved in the rehoming of an animal if the circumstances of the owners change.

Our Breeder members, who are ANKC registered, take pride in producing responsibly bred puppies. Prospective owners go through a vetting process to ensure the new owners are aware of the responsibilities of dog ownership and that the new owners are the right people for our breed as not all people suit all breeds. Our breeder members are subject to both the Club's and Dogs West's Code of Ethics and Regulations. The Club takes the view that there is responsibility in being a breeder and an owner of a Dobermann to this end the Club strives to educate new owners both through the Club and its breeder members.

As our breeder members are also members of Dogs West they must register all progeny whether companions or kept for breeding. They must provide comprehensive information to each puppy buyer for the care, welfare, appropriate housing, training and socialisation of every puppy sold. Each puppy must be microchipped prior to going to their new homes. The breeder is also responsible for the transfer of the microchip into the new owner's name. The Club has since the 1980's insisted that all puppies bred by members be positively identified and traceable to the breeder. Prior to the introduction of microchipping this was achieved through tattooing. The Club knows the breeder of every Puppy produced by its members.

#### **Transition pet shops to adoption centres sourcing dogs only from accredited rescues and shelters**

We can not support the proposal to transition pet shops to adoption centres to sell shelter or rescue dogs

It is our belief that no dogs of any age should be sold through shops. This is treating dogs as a commercial commodity. Both the Dogs West and Dobermann Club Code of Ethics prohibit this behaviour.

We would urge the government to stop the sale of all dogs through commercial outlets. Selling dogs through commercial outlets means the motive for sale is profit, not welfare.

Responsible breeders vet and question extensively prospective buyers. Due to this process there is no 'impulse buying'. Walking past a shop then walking out with a dog is a practice that must be stopped, these are dogs that are more likely to end up in shelters and rescues as no thought has gone into the purchase.

Our breeders often have a list of people waiting to purchase a puppy which means these are not spur of the moment purchase decisions.

Our breeders have contract with the new puppy owners setting out such things as

- Feeding
- Care
- Housing
- Exercise
- Vaccinations
- Training

And importantly a clause that insists that the puppy is to be returned to the breeder not sold or given away if the people's circumstances change.

**Our Breeders do not contribute to the number of dogs in Shelters or Rescues.**

Transitioning pet shops to sell only shelter or rescue dogs is not sensible proposal in our opinion. Our two reasons for this are:

1. If a pet shop is not the right place to sell puppies it, it is not the right place to sell any dogs
2. Dogs end up in Shelters or Rescues for a myriad of reasons. Some of the reasons relate to people's personal circumstances changing while others relate to neglect or abuse. In either case these dogs are often traumatised and stressed. Placing them in a 'fish bowl' environment such as pet shop is not looking after the dog's welfare and may stress the dog further.

If pet shops want assist in the rehoming of shelter and rescue dogs we would suggest they become a source of information as to how to contact a shelter or rescue, but they must have the dogs there.

### **Breed rescue services**

Members and Clubs who run breed specific rescues must abide by DogsWest Rules and Regulations, so they cannot supply any dog, for any reason, to a pet shop. Breed specific rescue that is conducted by Dogs West Registered breeders should be exempt as they operate under the Regulations and Code of Ethics of Dogs West who have a proven compliance system in place.

### **Mandatory desexing**

We are most strongly opposed the idea of mandatory de-sexing.

De-sexing should be the choice of the owner and the timing should be determined with input from the owner's vet and the dogs breeder. There is wealth of scientific evidence that shows the harm that can be done to dogs through de-sexing and particularly when this happens early in the dog's life. In our breed early de-sexing leads to the dog not being square ie the legs are longer than the body. As a result of this these dogs are more likely to suffer from amongst other issues ligament damage.

The Stop Puppy Farming paper lists many benefits to de-sexing a dog. We question the correctness of these claims as the evidence we have both seen and experienced contradicts this. In particular we would like to point out:

- ⊗ De-sexed dogs have higher instances of bone cancers.
- ⊗ 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.
- ⊗ Early de-sexed dogs can develop fear and aggression issues, leading to dogs been unwanted and ending up in shelters.
- ⊗ Dogs de-sexed before sexual and physical maturity are more likely to develop muscle and ligament issues. These are very expensive to correct and will lead to more dogs either being dumped or euthanised if the owners can not afford the surgery costs.

We agree with the Government's Consultation Paper which states:

*Your veterinarian is the best person to discuss the pros and cons of de-sexing your dog, the age the procedure is done, and determine the best strategy for your pet based on breed, lifestyle, longevity expectations, concurrent diseases, cancer risks, and other considerations for intact and de-sexed dogs.*

We believe that where possible the dog's breeder and in the case of pure breed dogs this is known, should also be consulted as they have breed specific knowledge.

The Government should not be picking an arbitrary age – all breeds are different and dogs are vastly different than cats.

The proposal paper talks about exemption for breeding dogs but there are other reasons why Dobermann Club and Dogs West members have entire dogs.

### **Dog Sports**

Many of our members compete in Conformation and Performance events, these members are not breeders, will most likely never breed but need to keep their dogs entire. To make them de-sex their dogs would see this Club fold. This would occur as we would not have sufficient members with entire dogs to

survive. The Club has been providing services to the general community through obedience classes for almost 50 years and we support the pure breed dog world through judges education program and hosting a number of performance events throughout the year.

### **Breeder's terms**

Many of our breeders do not live in a Kennel Zone and under the existing Dog Act are limited to the number of dogs that can live with them. To keep a viable and diverse gene pool the breeder will often place dogs in the wider community under 'Breeder's Terms'. This means the dogs will be available to the breeder at a point in time in the future IF the breeder decides the dog has matured correctly, is an excellent example of the breed and can play a part in the breeding program. Not all dogs placed on 'breeder's terms' are ever used for breeding.

**These dogs must be exempted from any de-sexing laws.**

### **Central Registry and 'Registered Breeders'**

The requirement to register and be approved as breeder by your local government authority is of great concern to us.

We fail to see the rationale to register a breeder to keep your dog entire. The vast majority of our members have entire dogs and have no intention of breeding. They don't want to de-sex their dogs because they either compete or believe it's not in the best interest of the dog. Forcing these people to register as breeder would make additional work for the LGA and increase the costs of owning an entire dog, which you already pay a premium to register.

If the LGA refuses to register anyone as a breeder, they will be forced to de-sex, something we are strongly opposed to. This could see the end of small breed clubs like ourselves and the community would be worse off as the services we offer would be gone.

We urge the State Government to EXEMPT Dogs West Members and the owners of their dogs from the requirement of also being registered by their Local Government as registered breeders. Giving an exemption to DogsWest Members will provide a clear point of difference between them and other breeders just "registered" with their Local Government.

Lisa Baker MP has stated that Dogs West members are the **Gold Standard** when it comes to breeding and dog husbandry. This should be recognised by allowing our members and their dogs to continue as is. We are not the problem!!!

Des Kehoe  
President  
Dobermann Club of WA (Inc)