

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

**A Submission to the
Department of Local
Government, Sport and
Cultural Industries by the
German Shepherd Dog
Association of Western
Australia (Inc.) on the subject
of STOP PUPPY FARMING.**



The German Shepherd Dog Association of W.A. (Inc.)



Who are we?

The German Shepherd Dog Association of WA Inc. of Western Australia is a breed club dedicated to the health, welfare and promotion of the German Shepherd Dog breed. We are affiliates of the German Shepherd Dog Council Of Australia Inc. - **our National Breed Council**, The Canine Association of Western Australia (DogsWest) and the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) - **our State and National registering and controlling bodies**.

History

The German Shepherd Dog has been in existence for over 100 years – the vision of Captain Max Von Stephanitz was to carefully breed dogs that were utilitarian and they could be of benefit to mankind – his vision certainly has come to fruition with our breed being involved not only as a shepherding dog, a guide dog, service dogs in the armed forces, drug and bomb detection, search and rescue dog, champions in the show and obedience rings and most of all a beloved family companion.

The German Shepherd Dog Association of W.A. was originally an obedience and training club we became an incorporated body on 27th February 1964. For many years restrictions were placed on our breed throughout Australia. W.A. was not allowed to have any entire (not sterilised) males or females until the lifting of the ban in 1976.

We became affiliated to the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia (G.S.D.C.A.) in late 1969 early 1970. The German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia is a national body of clubs throughout Australia. As a combined group and support of our breeders we have managed to steer the breed towards many breed improvements – x-raying and breed surveying to ensure the soundness of body and character in stock we intend to breed with.

Membership

Our members come from all walks of life not only ANKC registered breeders of German Shepherd Dogs - the majority of our members are not just pet owners – they are lovers of our breed that join our association and become trainers and volunteers for the benefit of the German Shepherd Dog. We encourage our members to socialise with each other at our training grounds after training sessions - this helps everyone to share our experiences and advice.

As at the end of our financial year we have 408 financial members.

Supporting for our breed

Our webpage has an array of information booklets and flyers to enable interested parties to understand our breed and its requirements. Topics such as “Before” and “After you get your puppy”, house training, exercising,

children and dogs, training etc. Many breeders offer an after-sales service and we hand out a 4 week free training certificate to set puppies on the correct path with socialisation being the number one component of all training.

Our role in the canine world is to ensure that our dogs can live up to the tasks that they were bred for and to be good members of our community. A German Shepherd Dog should be of sound in mind and body.

Breeding

Our ANKC-registered breeders are accountable for the health, parentage, breeding environment and registration of the puppies they produce, and there are a variety of mechanisms to ensure that accountability. They are bound by a comprehensive constitution that includes a Code of Conduct and agree to a Code of Ethics. These codes are enforceable by both the German Shepherd Dog Association and DogsWest.

At 12 months of age all breeding stock is x-rayed for good hips and elbows. These results must be submitted to DogsWest (Canine Association of W.A.) before any puppies can be registered. Following this at 18 months+ the dog can be breed surveyed which is a test of its soundness and willingness to work – during this temperament and gun testing occurs to show a sound condition of nerves. Within our breed the pedigrees of dogs are researched and restrictions have been placed on close line-breeding. At our shows where a German Shepherd Dog Specialist judge is adjudicating the dogs are given gradings depending on their age, conformation and character. This year we have imposed a rule which ensures a dog has been successfully shown under a German Shepherd Dog Specialist judge has given a grading of at least Good. This will further tighten the criteria for breeding.

The restrictions **WE** have placed on our breed have allowed us to make a huge improvement in the recent past with careful and planned breeding guidelines via our Breed Survey scheme – where the pedigree is looked at by judges and surveyors who are at the forefront of viewing the breed today they are able to recommend dogs which enhance your dog's traits. Our Specialist judges and surveyors are required to attend the G.S.D.C.A. National shows and meetings to ensure they are fully aware of the breed and its development in Australia. Most states contract judges from Germany and Europe to adjudicate at events in order to get an overview of our standing within the development of our breed within the world.

As members of our State controlling body it is compulsory that all breeders must register all puppies born, and it is also compulsory for each puppy to 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. We expect our breeders to provide comprehensive information to each puppy buyer for the care, welfare, appropriate housing, training and socialisation of every puppy sold.

Rescue Groups

When a dog requires rescuing – maybe an owner has passed away, marriage break-up, it may have suffered abuse and has had a miserable life we are fortunate to be able to work hand in hand with S.A.F.E. Perth. Initially if we are contacted we check with the breeder if they cannot re-home them Suzanne Campbell and her expert team take them in – they are assessed on temperament and given health checks – to adopt or foster one of these dogs is subject to stringent conditions – we need to ensure they are going to forever homes. Our identification officer can find a breeder of a registered puppy or adult dog via the A.N.K.C. database. This way a breeder can be contacted and we can build a history for a new owner.

Mandatory sterilisation

We had held talks and information days on Early Neutering of German Shepherd Dogs and circulate information of the dangers of early neutering/sterilisation for our breed. It is detrimental to the development of young dogs of this size. It has been shown to cause many problems - it can increase the risk of certain cancers, incontinence and cause anxiety and fear aggression in young males.

Past commentary on this matter is seriously flawed and certainly is not recommended for a German Shepherd Dog in its early life. Certainly any form of mandatory sterilisation would be the downfall not only of our breed but also the Canine fraternity – thus driving puppy farms underground.

Our registration papers for puppies indicate restrictions on breeding etc and the new owners must agree to follow them at the point of transfer of ownership.

We would recommend that sterilisation (neutering) only be undertaken in consultation with the breeder and a veterinarian experienced in our breed and its developmental needs.

Some breeders prefer to place their puppies in family homes to ensure they receive everyday socialisation but retain breeding rights **IF** they fulfil the requirements are outlined above, these puppies should be exempt from any mandatory sterilisation. We would not support mandatory sterilisation of ANKC Registered Breeders' dogs and would seek exemption from this.

Registered Breeders Programme

The German Shepherd Dog Association of W.A. and DogsWest have strong rules and regulations in place at this time and we feel that the Registered Breeder programme would be best left in the hands of DogsWest. To hand this to Local Government is just another burden on our local councils who have a huge task trying to educate and maintain good relations with dog owners within the community.

We would support the State Government in exempting DogsWest Members and from this requirement of being registered by their Local Government as registered breeders. ***This suggestion should only apply to non-registered breeders as a way to restrict puppy farmers and to make them responsible for quality care and breeding.***

Pet Shops as Adoption Centres

We do not agree with the proposal to change pet shops to adoption centres – this would still mean impulse buying would be likely and proper checks could not be undertaken.

Properly established and approved rescue groups should be the only avenue for dogs which require new homes – often these dogs have been raised poorly and possibly abused and/or traumatised from loss of their family. These dogs require expert and knowledgeable teams to find that forever home.

Pet shops should be kept for selling pet products and IF they wish to support rescue groups they can do this via advertising and donation of goods.

Breed rescue services

The rescue group we are aligned with complies with the requirements of a not-for-profit organisation and a charity. We direct any enquiries looking to give a home to a rescue or older dog to S.A.F.E. Perth and their excellent group of volunteers.

Many DogsWest members and Affiliated Clubs use their breed experience and expertise which makes them ideal for providing rescue services, when they can, and some rescues have waiting lists of people who are looking for an older or second dog

We offer you the invitation to speak with us and attend one of our shows or training days to experience the work which is done by our association in furthering progress of our breed.

Kind Regards

Anna Mitchell

Anna Mitchell

Secretary GSDA of WA