

**Submission
No 109**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name Suppressed
Date Received: 9/06/2015

Partially Confidential

SUBMISSION TO JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

June 8th, 2015.

Dear Joint Select Committee,

I am no lobbyist and I am not at all experienced in writing submissions to Government committees. I am just a retailer who is hoping to not have my livelihood and the business I have built on a reputation of finding loving, lifelong homes, for wonderful puppies, kittens and rescue pets, destroyed.

I am the proprietor of [REDACTED], in [REDACTED]. I have owned pet stores for twenty years. I would like to make a number of points as to why it would be devastating for you to ban the sale of pets through pet stores. Most of my information relates to my particular store, however having been in the industry for many, many years, I think I can accurately make points that are fairly representative of the industry as a whole.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU BAN THE SALE OF PETS IN PET STORES

- Firstly I think it's vital that you understand if we were not allowed to sell pets (or if we were forced to only sell rescue pets), **my store would go broke and close**. No "ifs" or "buts", without livestock I simply could not pay the rent in [REDACTED]. I therefore would be forced to close, I am in the middle of a 5 year lease, so I would lose my home (literally), my three animal-obsessed full-time staff and my half-dozen casual staff, who have all been with me for many years, would all lose their jobs immediately. That would be an absolute tragedy. My staff being retailers, just aren't qualified to do anything else and would struggle to find jobs elsewhere.

My situation would no doubt be echoed in shopping centres all over the state and pet stores would close in most shopping centres. That would decimate the whole industry, pet goods suppliers, breeders, vets, groomers, dog walkers, dog minders, pet transporters, etc. I would think thousands of people would lose jobs, in an industry already doing it very tough and NSW's economic activity will be hit severely.

Please do not be under the false impression that most stores will be able to trade as normal if you take away pet sales. We won't survive.

- If you ban the sale of pets in pet stores, you are effectively making breeders the only source of pets for families. This is giving all the power to the (nearly impossible to regulate) puppy farmers, internet sellers and backyard breeders, which would be the opposite of what you should do if you are concerned for animal welfare.

WHAT WILL BE LOST IF YOU BAN THE SALE OF PETS IN PET STORES

- Pet stores are a massive part of re-homing rescue pets and unwanted kittens. My shop itself has voluntarily re-homed well over 500 adult rescue pets which have come from shelters and vets (like [REDACTED]). We have rehomed pets which have been stuck at shelters for years. We also raise lots of money for various pet charities.
- Despite the mis-information spread by the very pro-active anti-pet ownership lobby, pet stores only represent **less than 15%** of pets purchased in Australia.
- Also despite the mis-information spread by the anti-pet ownership lobby, it has always been our policy to not support dodgy breeders, puppy farmers etc. We only buy off high quality breeders, who breed high quality animals and we then find them loving homes. All puppy farms should be shut down.
- Every pet we sell comes with –
 - Current worming, vaccinations and micro-chipping (so none can ever be anonymously dumped)
 - A vet check before and a free documented vet check after sale.
 - Free health coverage.
 - A written health guarantee.
 - A cooling-off period.
 - A 7-Year re-homing guarantee (so any we sell, if they cannot be kept, we take them back).
- If you take a trip to any pet shelter or the RSPCA and look at the dogs which have been given up or rescued (the ultimate test), they simply are not pet store dogs. Pet stores by their nature sell expensive, small, designer crosses generally. Cavoodles (Cavalier x Poodles), Spoodles (Cocker Spaniel x Poodles), Shih Tzu x Maltese etc. They are very sought after and make wonderful pets. Go to RSPCA or shelters and you will not see a single Cavoodle. You'll find Rottweiler cross Cattle dogs, German Shepherd x Staffys, or Kelpie cross some unknown parent. Not pet store dogs, but internet or cheap/accidental litter dogs.
- Pet stores are where thousands of people bring their kids for them to play with and experience pets. It's where they check for any allergies or aversions before deciding if they are ready to give a lifetime home for a pet. Come to my shop most mornings and there is a myriad of parents with kids and they are patting the rescue cats running around, the puppies and kittens, looking at our fish and generally having a ball. Stop us selling pets, my store won't be there.

- Our breeder records are fully accessible to RSPCA and other regulatory bodies. So despite the anti-pet ownership lobby trying to give the impression we all secretly buy off dodgy puppy farms, our records can be checked at any time. Every pet we buy, can be traced back to the breeder.
- As we are in the public eye, we constantly have customers, RSPCA etc scrutinizing our pets, our procedures and our staff. Unlike breeders, everything is on show.
- We are middle-men between quality breeders and customers. Our reputation is based on matching our customers and their family lives, to the perfect pets. Unlike most our customers, we have the expertise of dealing with breeders and then - assessing pets for temperament, judging health, negotiating fair prices and we don't ever have to push the benefits of any particular breed. Most breeders out there are ethical and love their pets, but some aren't.
- Our store is a great interim period between leaving a breeder and going to a new home, allowing them to socialise, get used to being handled and get over any separation anxiety.
- When somebody adopts a puppy, kitten or rescue pet from us, we are on call for those who often haven't had a pet before or if it's been a long time. We take a long time to explain the massive commitment involved and everything, grooming, training, feeding, worming etc. Customers have unlimited access to our highly trained, animal obsessed staff (and our vet).
- Despite the impression spread by the anti-pet ownership lobby, people who work in pet stores are the true animal lovers of this world (having foregone other opportunities simply to work with animals). For us, animal welfare is always our main concern and it's what our hard-earned reputation is based upon. And spoiling our pets rotten and the finding forever homes for them, is what my staff do.
- The current Code is working very effectively, from the pet store perspective. Everything is transparent, our shops are open to random inspections, our books are open to inspections and we keep our customers and breeders details for five years. What needs fixing is the selling of pets on the internet. The RSPCA also should be given more funding, to be able to chase and shut down any dodgy breeders.

WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN

I am simply a retailer and an owner of one store, but I believe what we really need a National Code of Practice, which amongst other things gives EVERY breeder of dogs a breeder number. Without that number breeders cannot breed and sell any dogs on the internet, in the newspaper or to a pet store. To get a number every breeder needs to be inspected annually by a veterinarian. The RSPCA and the other regulatory bodies can have access to every breeder's details and do inspections as required. I strongly suggest the recommendations of my industry body (Pets Australia) be looked at closely by your Joint Select Committee.

I know you will be getting thousands of submissions from the anti-pet ownership lobby, but please understand that they do not in any way represent the average person who frequents the average shopping centre and pet store. They are the loud, absolute minority who do not think anybody should

be able to buy pets from breeders or from pet stores, or anywhere else for that matter. I think an Australia where adults and more importantly children, cannot have a dog or cat at home and cannot receive the pure love which comes from a pet, is a lesser Australia. The massive health benefits of pet ownership are very well documented, but the wonder of having a pet, is un-quantifiable.

Very kind regards

 – Proprietor.


Pet welfare comes first with us. So we don't support puppy farms, have voluntarily re-homed well over 500 rescue pets and proudly give a 7-year Rehoming Guarantee and a Cooling-Off period on every one we sell.





