

**Submission
No 114**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name Suppressed
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Partially Confidential



08/06/2015

Parliamentary Inquiry into Pets in Pet Shops

Dear Joint Select Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to put forward my opinion on the matter of Pets in Pet Shops.

Firstly, I would like to point out that as I am an Engineer with Honours, and an MBA, I hold in great regard ethics and moral obligation to uphold professional conduct. My wife and I operate our business jointly, and together, we have built the business on these values to generate a reputation for providing quality advice and products (including pets).

Our business does not support nor deal with sub-standard breeders or “puppy farmers”. Yet, thanks to half-truths and miss-guided information from the animal activist groups, our shops get abuse based on fact-less claims. We educate those that really want or need to know the truth about how we operate – and the vast majority are satisfied with the true workings of a heavily regulated, transparent, in-the-public-eye business. The absolute minority who just don't like people “owning” pets in Australia are the ones who will never be swayed, and the ones who you will probably hear the most from on this topic – but having the loudest voice does not mean that they are the accurate ones, or the ones to listen to the most.

However, the greatest abuse and unfair treatment to our business would be the removal of pets in pet shops. This would lead to damaging impact on thousands of families around the state.

The damage such a decision would make would be:

1. Without the low margin / high value pets in pet shops, we would not exist in a Mall shopping centre with high rents.
2. Without us, our staff would be jobless.
3. Without us, families would not be able to “try before you buy” to test for family suitability, allergy reactions, nor have the option to investigate other breed options that we can offer through experience and knowledge.
4. Convenience shopping for pet accessories would be gone – leaving the consumer to seek products at inconvenient locations and/or national chain warehouse style stores – in the case of the latter: all of which send profit out of the NSW state.
5. Increased stresses for parents with kids in tow doing shopping. We offer a great distraction and soothing for young kids as a visit to the pet shop is

always valued and allows the family to stay shopping for longer. Without that, there could be a reduction in spend.

6. Breeders would be forced to expose themselves direct to the public or shut down. Exposing themselves leaves them vulnerable to attack from the activists, increasing the risk of theft, damage, abuse, etc. We operate in such a manner to protect breeders from excessive exposure – yet regulatory bodies (RSPCA, AWL, DPI) can obtain our breeders details simply.
7. Fewer ethical breeders would lead to a “black market” of pet production. Fewer good breeders would lead to higher costs for pets (supply vs demand), and sub-standard breeders would see this as an opportunity – so if you think it is hard to police sub-standard breeders now, how much more difficult do you think it will be when good breeders are forced to close?
8. Consumers would be uneducated as to where to look for a pet, and their choice would be limited. Good breeders have decent land size and infrastructure to cater to the pets needs, hence they are rarely in suburbia. Consumers would be forced to travel for lengthy periods of time out to breeders, yet very few breeders would have a selection of pets available so it would lead to decisions like “that one will do”. Would they really be getting the most suitable breed for them? If consumers did not want to travel, then they are forced to buy “online” which is a huge problem. These online traders are unregulated, and if they are not inspected, they can get away with very sub-standard practices indeed.

The benefit of having pets in our pet shops is that:

1. We selectively source our pets based on the quality of the breeder, the quality of the pet, and the supply/demand of that breed.
2. We are regulated by RSPCA, AWL, DPI, ACCC, Fair Trading NSW, and work to ethics and standards.
3. We are transparent and traceable. Any appropriate regulatory body can inspect our purchase history which contains the breeders identity, address and litter details for all our purchases.
4. We offer all clients a cooling-off period.
5. We offer vet support and a health guarantee.
6. We offer a 7 year re-homing policy.
7. All canines and felines are micro-chipped before sale to prevent dumpings.
8. We offer a desexing support program.
9. We focus through husbandry to give the pets the best start in life (parasite/disease control, food choices, etc).
10. Exposing young canines and felines to the public in a controlled manner allows them to become more socialised and this can lead to better pets.
11. We allow people the opportunity to choose. One breed may be a better match and through discussions, we can help clients with that decision making process. We are not after the quick sale – we want a valued client that extends beyond the life of the pet.
12. We expose Rescue pets in need of a new home to the greater public.

We support Rescue pets (we have re-homed over 220) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Our experience in doing so has taught us one thing: People who choose rescue are a different client than those choosing a particular breed. There is no ground to support the notion that one is a substitute for the other. Some families want/need a certain breed whereas others feel the need to

rescue.

We also realised that there is no profit to re-homing a rescue pet, and so we could not survive on these measures. Giving the client a choice of either a Rescue pet or the difficulty of navigating the unregulated world of online/classifieds/markets/breeders would lead to a reduction in pet ownership, bad/sub-standard breeders operating, and an increase in the difficulty to police such issues.

We are at a turning point in the industry, and it would be far more beneficial to look at it in its true, raw condition. The opinions of Pets Australia (my chosen industry association) are well supported by my wife and I. We believe that together, there is an opportunity to address the issues, give the public confidence in their local pet shop, and to increase jobs within the industry.

The alternative is to make some rash decision that leads to unemployment, job losses, breeders shutting down, increased sub-standard breeders with the same insufficient scale of funds to police them, and greater risk that future generations of Australians will grow up not being able to have the pet of their choice, not being able to share love, to know what 'responsibility' is, and to forego the health benefits of pet ownership. Notes on these points are on our website:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In summary – the action taken must be carefully selected, with a full understanding of the implications, impact, and effects on the supply chain and industry and well as social/cultural issues within Australia.

I highly recommend viewing the thoughts of Pets Australia and indeed, their proposal that addresses the issues in a positive manner (<http://petsaustralia.org/>).

Sub-standard breeders are bad for my business – they should be shut down. There are protocols for this to occur already and the fact that they are being shut down means it is working. Further funding could make this more efficient, but taking the pets out of pet shops does not address the matter of breeding standards or conditions. It simply removes the regulated outlet and takes the problem from the public eye and puts it into the underground, unregulated arena – kind of like sweeping the problem under the carpet.

I'd rather be a part of the solution and not viewed as part of the problem – because we are not. The focus should be more toward how to control the unregulated online/classifieds/markets outlets.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]