

**Submission  
No 169**

# **COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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**Date Received:** 12/06/2015

As a lifetime member of RSPCA, Animal Welfare League and The Cat Protection Society and a long term supporter of The Lost Dogs' Home in Melbourne, I respectfully submit the following points for consideration.

Animal welfare organisations deal with the fall-out from purchases of animals sold in pet shops, often in shopping centres where cute puppies and kittens are displayed to tempt particularly children. As these cute puppies and kittens mature, people often discover they are unwilling or unable to look after them and so they are surrendered to an animal shelter or evicted to live on the street, causing a problem for local residents and ultimately the local Council. Banning the sale of animals in pet shops would stop purchases and would ease the problem of unwanted animals. Moreover a major distribution point for puppy farms would be closed and people who genuinely want a pet would be encouraged to adopt from a shelter.

Most of these animals sold in pet shops come from breeders. Puppy "farming" is a real problem because of the amount of money that can be demanded for pedigreed animals. It is imperative that a licensing system be established with no exceptions. Besides this the number of animals kept by individual breeders must be limited and enforced.

To prevent intensive breeding programs, microchipping must be compulsory for all animals offered for sale and breeders' details must be recorded on the microchip register. The Companion Animals Act contains some very good measures BUT unfortunately these regulations are often not checked or enforced. Owners and animals must be identified and traced. Microchipping means this can happen but the system fails when it is not properly monitored and enforced. Breeders must be part of the system. Up to date records must be kept, monitored and enforced.

Some legislative changes are necessary

1. The NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice – Breeding Dogs and Cats should be revised so the existing guidelines become enforceable standards and enforceable standards for other species must be developed.
2. All sellers should be required to display an animal's microchip number or the licence number of the breeder of the animal in all advertisements, and at the point of sale.
3. The Companion Animals Regulation should be amended to remove the existing provision allowing recognised breeders to sell unmicrochipped cats or dogs to pet shops.
4. Monitoring and enforcement operations should be shared between local government animal management officers and state and territory RSPCA Inspectors. Inspections must include both unannounced inspections and reactive inspections.
5. The prosecuting agency must be able to apply for effective court orders relating to the ongoing ownership of animals, the costs associated with ongoing care of the animals, and prohibiting the defendant(s) from continuing to engage in breeding activities while the matter is before the courts.