

**Supplementary
Submission
No 237a**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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ROYAL NSW CANINE COUNCIL LTD

(trading as Dogs NSW)

SUPPLEMENTARY Submission to

Sydney Public Hearing

Into

Companion Animal Breeding Practices





SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION
DEVELOPING BREEDERS LICENCES USING THE DOGS NSW MODEL

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES
INQUIRY INTO COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES
IN NEW SOUTH WALES

At Sydney on Wednesday 15 July 2015

Question from **The Hon BRONNIE TAYLOR:**

In relation to the rating referred to by another witness today, is it a good idea for someone who was surfing the internet who wanted to get a dog of a particular type to see that is as well understood as a star-rating? You talked about the breeders of shepherds with hip and elbow problems who have decided to set their own standards, which is internal to them. The star rating is more an external person setting the standards breeders have to meet to get an accreditation of five stars.

Response:

Whilst a star rating system may prove to be of some value in the future, Dogs NSW questions its ability to impact on the activities of the puppy factories proliferating in NSW.

Dogs NSW believes that the first step to identifying and controlling the activities of puppy factories is by enforcing that:

- **Only puppies proven to be from a licensed breeder may be advertised for sale on the internet or available for sale through pet shops.**

Secondly, we have strong doubts that the “puppy factories” operating under the radar, would be inclined to reveal their activities and locations in an attempt to obtain a star rating.

Thirdly, a star rating system in itself may be subject to corruption.

Finally, and of the deepest concerns to Dogs NSW, is that a star rating system, whilst may improve the environment in some facilities, fails totally to ensure the necessary safeguards to protect brood bitches from exploitation.

NOTE:

- **No enforceable minimum and maximum breeding ages.**
- **No enforceable limits to the frequency that bitches may be mated.**
- **No ability to monitor the amount of puppies being produced by a brood bitch in her lifetime.**
- **Therefore, no positive impact on the health and welfare of the brood bitch resident in a puppy factory.**

Consequently, Dogs NSW holds the opinion that a star rating would have little or no ability to impact on activities of the puppy factories operating in NSW. Particularly, it offers none of the desired measures to improve on the long term health aspects and quality of life of brood bitches, within these puppy factories.

Question from **Mr SCOT MacDONALD**:

Your chart shows registered breeders do not sell through pet shops. I think factories do. If we go to your system where everybody is licenced, do you advocate not selling dogs through pet shops?

Response:

Dogs NSW does not advocate that dogs should be allowed to be sold through pet shops. In fact, in accordance with our Code of Ethics our members are expressly prohibited from selling dogs through or to pet shops, however, if the practice of selling dogs through pet shops, that are the product of puppy factories, is going to be allowed to continue; we submit that:

- 1. Dogs may only be sold through APPROVED pet shops.**
- 2. That if a licensing scheme should be introduced in NSW then all dogs offered for sale through APPROVED pet shops:**
 - MUST be supplied only by licensed breeders.**
 - MUST be registered and microchipped PRIOR to the pet shop taking ownership or possession of the dog.**
 - That the Breeder license number, microchip number and registration number of each individual dog MUST be CLEARLY displayed on the enclosure of any dog offered for sale through any pet shop.**

Question from **Mr ALISTER HENSKENS**:

If you were to take over the function of registering all dog transactions in New South Wales what sort of fee would you be looking to charge per registration?

Response:

The “registering” that we refer to is linked only to the Breeder Licensing Scheme and in not intended to replace the Lifetime registering of dogs through Local Government Agencies.

In order for a Licensing Scheme to be effective, we believe that the Breeder must be required to also register all puppies bred and link the licence, microchip number and registration to each individual puppy. Without this requirement, a licensing scheme will have little if no effect on the activities of the puppy factories.

It would be for the Companion Animals Register and Local Government to continue the Lifetime register and updates. We have asked, and been declined several times, to be a “Recognised Organisation” for purposes of Companion Animals Register. Once we are a recognised organisation, we could assist with the transfer of dogs on the register and that service would be “free of charge”.

Question from **The Hon MARK PEARSON**:

Is it the opinion of Dogs NSW that this whole breeding process with breeders starting up is getting out of control and needs to have the brakes put on?

Response:

In relation to Dogs NSW members (Pure Bred Dog Breeders); in fact our numbers have reduced quite significantly. This, we believe, is a direct result of our members being strictly regulated. The situation is that Dogs NSW member breeders are unable to meet the demand to supply puppies within the community.

Another contributing factor is the success of encouraging pet neutering within the community, eg, reduced fees for Lifetime registration for neutered animals. Less puppies are now born as the result of accidental mating's and, consequently, less are available as cheap pets within the community.

In our modern society it is now considered normal for both parents be in full time employment. With the ensuing time constraints, families are less inclined to allow the family pet to have a litter, reducing the puppies available cheaply in the local community.

Largely, Dogs NSW members deter puppy buyers from breeding "back yard" litters, often insisting that puppies be neutered before 6 months of age as a term of sale.

Unfortunately, in response to the communities demand for puppies and the lack readily available, puppy factories have proliferated to fill the gap in the market!

Question 2 The Hon MARK PEARSON:

Purebred and crossbreeding—the whole industry, if you like. Is it really getting out of control and in getting out of control it is difficult to regulate and monitor and ensure transparency, et cetera?

Dogs NSW believes that it has provided, within its submissions, detailed measures that may be implemented to control, regulate and monitor the proliferation of puppy factories in NSW.

Dogs NSW firmly believes that public education is also an overriding factor to ensuring public awareness and a vital tool to curbing the very disturbing trend of the proliferation of puppy factories. The public MUST BE EDUCATED to be far more cautious and aware of the origins of any puppy they may intend to purchase.

The Role of Local Government in conducting Inspections

Local Government involvement in inspections should be paramount in any proposed licensing scheme, but there are a number of issues that would need resolving in the way LGA's operate if a system is to work. At the present time, unless they receive a complaint, their involvement with Dog Breeders is usually restricted to Planning and Environmental issues. There are a number of areas where Dogs NSW could work with LGA's to implement an effective compliance program, which could also involve other welfare agencies recognised under POCTA.

The issues that would need to be addressed are:

- **LGA's under resourced**
Any inspection program should be carried out by Council Rangers, however, a perusal of the day to day duties of a Council Ranger in a large LGA encompassing; abandoned Vehicles, advertising & signage, barking dogs & other animal nuisance issues, burning off in backyards and on rural land, footpath obstructions, illegal dumping and lost and roaming animals, indicate that inspections to check compliance with Licence conditions could not be a priority.
- **No legal obligation to inspect**
Neither the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW) or the NSW Department of Primary Industries' Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Breeding Dogs & Cats carry a requirement for an LGA to inspect.

- Councils depend on complaints before action
Currently, many LGA's are not proactive in inspections of dog breeders they depend on complaints before taking action.
- No follow up after DA Approved
There is evidence that some LGA's approve DA's and do not take any follow up action which allows Puppy Farms to flourish.
- Difficulty in locating Puppy Factories
Due to their desire to keep under the radar, Puppy Factories make themselves hard to find, but Dogs NSW Members have a good track record in finding them.
- Developing unnecessary LEP's instead of applying existing legislation or authority available to them (microchipping, registration)
In an attempt to control dog breeders LGA's are drafting new legislation instead of using the current ones effectively.
- Failure to follow up on existing complaints
Dogs NSW Members are frustrated by the failure of some LGA's to follow up information given to them.

Conclusion

When you consider the sheer number of breeders "as defined" throughout NSW it would be impossible for any agency to enact licence Inspections. Ideally a reporting mechanism should exist between Dogs NSW, inspectors, Local Government and animal welfare organisations.