

**Submission
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COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales: PETA's Submission

The 2012 “NSW Companion Animals Taskforce Discussion Paper” by the Division of Local Government states that from 2010 to 2011, in New South Wales alone, over 30,300 (approximately 64 per cent) of all cats and over 21,600 (approximately 33 per cent) of all dogs in pounds and animal welfare facilities were euthanised. The organization Getting 2 Zero looked at 2009–10 euthanasia statistics for NSW pounds, the RSPCA and AWL and determined that 24,709 out of 73,168 dogs taken in at these shelters in NSW were euthanised and that of all those, 17,389 were “healthy/treatable”. Similarly, out of the 49,626 cats taken in, 32,475 were euthanised, and of those, 27,504 were “healthy/treatable”.

Shelters throughout Australia house a staggering number of animals, and many are warehoused in cages for weeks, months or even years. All breeders fuel this animal overpopulation crisis, because every time someone purchases a puppy or a kitten instead of adopting from an animal shelter, a homeless animal loses the chance of finding a home. The only way to reduce the incidence of euthanasia is to prevent breeders, puppy mills, pet shops and irresponsible guardians from bringing more dogs and cats into a world that does not have enough good homes for them—and the only way to do that is to pass mandatory spay-neuter legislation and implement a full-scale ban on breeding.

Most breeders do not require animals to be spayed or neutered prior to purchase, and the animals they sell can soon have litters of their own. One unaltered female dog and her offspring can produce 67,000 puppies in only six years. In seven years, one female cat and her offspring can produce an astonishing 370,000 kittens.

On puppy farms, dogs are bred for quantity, not quality, so genetic defects can be passed on from generation to generation. This situation results in high veterinary bills for buyers and, consequently, a greater likelihood of inhumane “disposal” of unsociable or maladjusted dogs. Puppy farms often supply pet stores, which go on to sell the puppies at a profit. With tens of thousands of unwanted dogs ending up in animal shelters every year, it is simply unjustifiable for animals to be bred and sold in the pet-shop trade.

Desexing dogs and cats benefits them because it eliminates the risk of ovarian and testicular cancer. It also makes them more content. And neutered males are less likely to roam or get into fights.

As New South Wales and Victoria account for 60 per cent of all companion animals in Australia, it is imperative that the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices set an example for the country by banning companion animal breeding. The only way to prevent hundreds of thousands of healthy and treatable cats and dogs being abandoned and killed in pounds, shelters and vet clinics each year in Australia is to ensure, by law, that every companion animal is desexed and, most importantly, a stop is put to companion animal breeding.

A related issue is the ability to identify companion animals who have escaped and gone missing through the use of micro-chipping. This is essential so that in the event of an accident during which dogs or cats escape, they can be quickly and easily reunited with their families. This will decrease the number of animals who end up in shelters and even get euthanised because they are mistaken for strays.