

**Submission
No 225**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Name Suppressed
Date Received: 14/06/2015

Partially Confidential

12 June 2015

To whom it may concern

I am the proprietor of [REDACTED] and am writing in response to the potential ban of sale of livestock in pet stores across NSW.

Employment of staff, students and special needs members of our local community

I have owned and managed my store for over 10 years now which employs up to 12 members of staff at any one time.

We also regularly accommodate students from our local schools and Tafe colleges for work experience programmes to give them hands on experience in the work force.

[REDACTED] works with several special needs groups in the area. We offer those who find it more difficult than others to find employment an opportunity work a few hours per week and acquire skills, experience and develop a sense of self-worth by contributing to our local community. The joy on their faces says it all!

Both myself and all the staff have dedicated much of our lives to the care and welfare of animals and would be devastated if the sale of pets was banned.

Our breeders

[REDACTED] has had an on going relationship with majority of our breeders for many years. The breeders animals are registered/licensed and treated as members of the family. Their animals engage with adults and children on a daily basis, are regularly seen by the vet, loved, stimulated and exercised . They are NOT caged, or kept under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the animals' behavioural, social or psychological needs (as defined by a puppy farm/mill).

As someone who has dedicated my life to animals both through work (Veterinary Nurse - [REDACTED] Vet Hospital, Cattery Manager – Cat Protection Society) and study (Bachelor of Science, Honours 1 Animal Physiology UNSW), I find it extremely offensive that those who have no knowledge of my business, claim that I am purchasing from puppy farms/mills.

Animal activists and lobbyists

My store has been the target of [REDACTED] and other activist groups, who have attacked the store or staff for no apparent reason. Their actions include defacing the store with stickers or scratching wording onto the store front, screaming and yelling abuse both from inside and outside the store at my employees, or discouraging customers from purchasing from my store claiming we purchase from puppy farms. The claims are unsubstantiated and defamatory to my

business, costing me time and money to repair damage but worst of all – devastating myself and my staff who have dedicated our lives to the animals in our care each day.

Similarly, various media campaigns also based on a lack of evidence have led to verbal attacks on our store by the public, who have been lied to by the activists.

Animal welfare within our store

All puppies and kittens are wormed, flea treated, micro-chipped, vaccinated and health checked by a registered vet prior to sale. They each go home with an Adoption Pack that includes discount vouchers for further vaccination and de-sexing, free vet visit, health guarantee and a care manual. Each pet must also go home with six months of parasite control and their current super premium diet. The customer must engage in a 45min-1 hour training session on the care of the pet prior to leaving the store.

██████████ engaged in a complete store re-fit approximately 18 months ago. ██████████ did not require a full fit out. We chose to undertake this huge financial pressure to optimize conditions for the welfare of our pets during their stay at the store. Both the animals and customers are extremely happy with the new design and we believe the experience for all parties is beneficial. Our animal enclosures are sterilized daily, with all pets being groomed and played with by our staff and members of the public.

Our store is a favourite amongst families who visit our centre and would be greatly missed, as the prevention of sale of live-stock would inevitably lead to our closure.

Animal welfare and Rehoming program

We also regularly engage in rehoming of rescue pets. These animals are purchased from Shelters, rescued from vet hospitals, various rescue groups or from members of the public who have had an accidental litter prior to de-sexing their pet. Eliminating the sale of live-stock from stores would increase the pressure on shelters/pounds leading to overcrowding and the unnecessary euthanasia of many more animals.

Regulation within our industry

Our store is strictly governed by the Companion Animal Legislation NSW and as a member of PIAA our store is a strong advocate for animal welfare. We fully support national reforms and stronger regulations, including the closure of puppy farms/mills, rouge pet shop traders and backyard breeders.

We feel that modern well-managed pet stores can be a part of the solution.

“RSPCA NSW, Animal Welfare League and Australian Veterinary Association believe that a total ban on puppies and kittens in responsible pet shops will terminate the only transparent part of the industry and drive the sale into an

unregulated market, making it much harder to enforce regulations and ensure the welfare of animals” (piaa.net.au June 2015).

According to the Australian Companion Animal Council pet shops sell less than 16% of the puppies sold across Australia each year. We operate a transparent business 7 days per week and can be scrutinized by the public at any time. We can be inspected by authorities of the industry at anytime and required to produce records of all our pets on the spot. All our puppies and kittens must be micro-chipped by law and can be traced back to us for the life of the animal.

As a member of PIAA our pups/kittens have a Life time Traceability Policy. A partnership with various welfare agencies allows for any surrendered animal sold though a PIAA store, to be accommodated at the relevant shelter at the expense of PIAA until rehomed.

Solution

████████████████████ suggests a self-funding licensing system for pet shops and breeders to enforce compliance through the appointment of an independent inspector. This will ensure that animal welfare is of primary importance when buying or selling pets.

████████████████████ supports the closure of puppy farms/mills and the termination of the unregulated on-line sale of live stock.

We look forward to and welcome any member of your committee visiting our pet store at any time.

Kind Regards

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Proprietor

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