

**Submission
No 304**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: M/s Jude Costello

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

>>> To introduce myself, I am a very experienced breeder of purebred dogs already regulated by my breed societies who have their own code of ethics to which their members comply.

>>> Further to my submission I would like to speak at the inquiry when held in the Northern Tablelands particularly on section B) in your terms of reference, as I believe many of the committee would not have a true understanding of the genetic and animal husbandry implications of restricting numbers in a stud situation.

>>> From the terms of reference

>>> A) The systems introduced in Victoria and Queensland are way too restrictive to purebred dog breeders, what Pure Bred Dog breeders DON'T need is more paperwork, more costs and more restrictions. As breeders, our energy should be put into breeding and caring for our dogs not sitting in the office or worrying if the dog police are going to call. Our dogs are already able to be traced back to us and our costs are already significant. Breeders should have a choice of how they house their animals within reason.

>>> Breeders should have the choice of how they house their animals within reason. Keeping dogs on concrete or locked up all the time is not my idea of how dogs should be housed and should not be mandatory as was previously suggested by government.

>>> Spaying and desexing should not be compulsive for purebred breeders. The jury is still out on some of the health issues related to desexing and the timing of the surgery. Controlling numbers is counterproductive to the genetic side of breeding. We already have very good breed societies and Dogs NSW who regulate their members.

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>>> B) Limiting the numbers of breeding animals is not the answer, this would create several serious issues, if it is absolutely necessary to restrict the numbers of puppies produced, it would be far more sensible to restrict the number of litters per year.

>>> Restricting numbers would mean breeders would need to breed each bitch more frequently and at a younger age. This in itself is not something I would want to do for various reasons.

>>> Allowing breeders to have more bitches and dogs means they are not bred every year and the older bitches are able to be kept rather than rehoming them, it would also no mean not mating them before they reach maturity.

>>> I have a rarer breed with limited bloodlines in this country, restricting numbers means I have to be reliant on others for my genetics which does not always suit my program. To keep my pedigrees how I want them I need run several families concurrently and I do not want to make my pedigrees a mish mash by using outside bloodlines too often. As I am trying to breed from my best bitches, it is advantageous to run more than one on from a litter to see how they develop. I am proud to breed very good quality healthy dogs, every litter I breed is planned genetically as well as for characteristics, good breeders are always striving for improvement.

>>> Numbers are already controlled in suburban areas by council regulations which is why many breeders have invested in acreages so as not to bother their neighbours.

>>> C) As far as licencing is concerned I believe those who already belong to breed society or Dogs NSW are working within a good code of practice/ethics and do not need any further regulation. Those breeding unregistered and crossbred dogs certainly do need some regulation. The breed societies would need to have a code of ethics to which their breeders must comply to be exempt from further regulation. Breed societies have registered stud prefixes for all their breeders. Dogs NSW, for example, has a strict procedure in place for those applying to be breeders. Some purebred working dog breed societies include the Working Kelpie Council, Sheepdog Workers Association and Working Koolies.

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>>> D) I am certainly in favour of banning pet shops from selling dogs and cats. Good breeders, should and generally are, very careful checking out prospective buyers so their puppies and dogs are going to suitable and caring homes. Pet shops sell to whoever walks into the shop with no control over who buys them. Most reputable breeders will take back any dogs that can no longer be kept by the owners for whatever reasons and hence, never get surrendered or sold on. Very few pedigree dogs ever go into care or cause problems for the public.

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>>> E) There would have to be a well funded body to regulate all the backyard breeders and puppy farmers. I don't believe this should be organisations like the RSPCA as their point of view can be very biased and in cases misguided. It needs to be objective in its management, similar to the council rangers I have had contact with. I don't believe it would be advantageous to anyone to have breed societies' codes of practice being compromised or overshadowed as it is a system which works well for the vast majority.

>>> I have long experience with both the Working Kelpie Council and Dogs NSW. Breed societies with their own strong code of ethics and breeders with registered stud prefixes would need to have the ability to apply to be exempt from the regulations if not already recognised.

>>> Unfortunately no regulations are 100% effective but over regulation can be very counterproductive to those already doing the right thing. It is important that this inquiry has outcomes that regulate only those who are at present uncontrolled.

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>>> I believe my lifetime experience in livestock breeding and production, breeding horses, purebred cattle, sheep, poultry and dogs as well as studying animal production and genetics for my Bachelor of Science has given me a great understanding of animal husbandry and genetics and hope that adds credence to my points. Breeding purebred animals should mean you are always trying to improve the quality of your animals rather than producing large numbers of also rans. Many of the backyard breeders and puppy farmers have no concern for improvement and they do not screen their animals for health, physical and temperament problems. They also almost never get hold of quality breeding stock because no registered purebred breeders will sell them anything with the idea of breeding unregistered and cross bred puppies, so they tend to use poor quality animals they have sourced from people similar to themselves.

>>> Breeders selling to pet shops go to great lengths to make sure buyers can not track their dogs back to their breeders where as purebred breeders welcome ongoing contact and most take back

any animals they breed if required. Replacements are made if required.

>>> Public education programs need to be introduced so the pros and cons of buying from back yard breeders and puppy farmers or from registered purebred dog breeders can be easily compared, this would need to be funded by the new regulatory group. Public education should have high priority so the public become very aware of the lack of screening, poor quality breeding stock and lack comeback if there are problems in the future. I don't believe advertising should be banned, I hope we never live in a police state. I find it rather odd that animal activist groups are trying control animal ownership far more than the care of children!

Jude Costello

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