

**Submission
No 309**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Armidale Dumaresq Council
Name: Mr Greg Meyers
Position: Director
Planning & Environmental Services
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Introduction

Armidale Dumaresq Council (ADC) is a Large Regional Council of Local Government in NSW.

ADC is a credible, professional organisation regulating the Companion Animals Act within pursuant to the Local Government Act. in NSW. ADC prides itself on good public relations and competent services to Companion Animal owners and breeders within its local government area, and promotes responsible pet ownership to the community.

General

Armidale Dumaresq Council welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the inquiry of Companion animal breeding practices in New South Wales. Given the time frame for submissions, ADC has not had the opportunity to consult its close councils extensively on some of the more complex matters relating to this to provide a collaborated submission.

Calls to implement a breeders' licensing system

Currently purebred breeders of dogs and cats must register the animals with their appropriate body, such as Dogs NSW, NSW Cat Fanciers Association, etc. Working dog associations, such as the Working Kelpie Council and the Working Koolie Association are also required to abide by their associations code of ethics.

Dogs NSW breeders are already licensed by Dogs NSW and members must pass an examination before being accredited by Dogs NSW. These members abide by a strict and enforceable Code of Ethics. Members are accountable for their actions under this code and Dogs NSW has a well-developed monitoring process to ensure accountability.

If breeder licensing is implemented, this will multiply the amount of paperwork and licensing on the members of these associations. It is also unlikely that breeders of non purebred dogs will comply with licensing, as the sale of puppies or kittens is usually not advertised, and completed through word of mouth or via the internet. These animals are very rarely found to be microchipped or vaccinated before sale or given away.

Improvements in the regulatory regime

Armidale Dumaresq Council has identified a number of concerns over the Proposal to implement a breeders licensing system.

Without adequate regulatory education and enforcement funding, unresolved challenges are likely to come to a head with the inability to improve companion animal management. Councils struggle to deal with an under resourced system to regulate and improve companion animal management, without extra responsibilities.

If breeder licensing is introduced, the full cost of the resource would significantly increase the cost borne by councils. The cost would be of significant concern considering the increased time of enforcement required to resource and implement, due to the administrative capacity of the project to include licensing, inspections and any enforcement activities.

The appropriate training & employment of specialist persons in the area of Companion Animals Management would also be required. ADC feels that many Rangers / Compliance officers / Animal Control officers across NSW would not have the necessary skillset or qualifications to effectively regulate this area. The impact of upskilling all current Council officers is not considered a reasonable or viable option.

Regulatory changes that may be required

If breeder licencing is introduced in NSW, many changes will be required within the following Acts & Regulations:

Companion Animals Act 1998
Companion Animals Regulation 1998
Companion Animals Amendment Act 2013
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation

The Animal Welfare Code of Practice (Breeding cats and dogs) will also require changes to reflect changes in legislation.

Conclusion

Armidale Dumaresq Council is a strong advocate of increased education and regulatory enforcement of companion animal breeding practices in regards to puppy farming and recognises the importance of the inquiry. With major thought, consultation, and adequate resourcing, it is believed that the inquiry may deliver major improvements to NSW's breeding practices.

In principle, Armidale Dumaresq Council does not support the subjects in relation to implementing a breeders licensing system in NSW. The chequered history of licensing does not provide compelling evidence that licensing maximises benefits to consumers and taxpayers, and in the long run it is considered that it will not stop puppy farming within NSW.