

## **COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Protect Shoalhaven Dogs

Name: Name Suppressed

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Partially Confidential

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the founding members of 'Protect Shoalhaven Dogs' would like to put forward a concerning matter that has come to our attention surrounding the issue of dogs, and the increased irresponsible practices of backyard breeding. Backyard breeding in itself is a complex issue that can result in a severe detriment to the welfare of dog(s) involved.

Since setting up 'Protect Shoalhaven Dogs' petition in an attempt to gain community support, and local council awareness of issues concerning dogs. We have also set up the 'Protecting NSW Dogs' an extended petition to promote state awareness of changes needed to keep both people and companion animals safe. We have so far collected 568 signed paper petitions, 126 through online petition site Change.org, and 295 likes on Facebook from September 2014 to the present date. We have been in contact with the local community through social media and personal interaction. Other information, knowledge, and research, was gathered talking to the RSPCA of New South Wales and Victoria, and veterinary clinics. We have also obtained a supporting letter from the Guide Dogs Association Inc. In 2014 local and RSPCA state statistics show a significant number of dog related incidents in the local Shoalhaven region and NSW.

Backyard breeding can be explained as the act or practice of owners of a companion animal (dog), breeding their female for the eventual selling of the pups. They do this without having attained an approved breeding license. Neither would they be considered an eligible hobby breeder who has registered with Dogs NSW. Backyard

breeders can have one or more dogs in which they breed. Because they have not registered and/or attained an approved license they are not legally under any obligations as other approved breeders. They do not pay the yearly fee to be a breeder, and most often sell bred puppies without microchipping and vaccination. Cases of Parvo disease has returned to the Shoalhaven because not all owners are vaccinating their dogs. Most often than not backyard breeders give the puppies away to friends and/or family friends, or sell them online at sites such as [REDACTED]. Puppies are sold for as minimum as \$200. It is a great injustice to have backyard breeders breed their pets, and get the financial benefits without any rules, and without guidelines necessary for the health of the female companion animal. They should not be an exception from the legal breeders, who go through the necessary processes to make sure that their female breeds safely and successfully.

There are many concerns to be aware of when you wish to breed your companion animal. Some owners simply breed their pet with the simple thought of getting them pregnant, so they can sell the puppies and make a small profit. Protect Shoalhaven Dogs has heard reports of inexperienced owners who end up losing their female dog, or having the female suffer with their health, because the owner was either ignorant or neglectful in breeding. A common scenario is when owners do not desex their pet, and the pregnancy is unwanted and by accident. What makes the situation worse is that these owners may attempt to breed their female again and again. In these cases it is no better than the mistreatment of female dogs in puppy factories, which should also be stopped. The female suffers greatly without getting the necessary care in the forms of veterinary treatment, supplements, and in some cases even a proper warm, safe, and clean place to give birth to the puppies. In some cases even inbreeding can occur.

While speaking with the community, Protect Shoalhaven Dogs discovered that some breeds of dog should not be bred together. Most backyard breeders have no knowledge and experience mixing dog breeds. Owners then have no real guarantee of how the puppies will turn out, how big they will be, or if there will be any unknown birth defects or dangerous temperaments. People buy these puppies, only to discover that once grown, the dog is not ideal or what they wanted. Some of these dogs end up



being neglected, abandoned, turn into strays, or surrendered to the pound, because they were bought or given under different impressions, or the owner was not realistically ready to have a pet. One case Protect Shoalhaven Dogs heard was an owner buying a pet from a friend, and then discovering that their backyard was not adequate enough to contain the dog, which escaped many times. These dogs are then out in the public, and can cause chaos and damage. They can even attack other people and owners walking their dogs. To make matters worse there are cases of dogs being sold not micro chipped and/or vaccinated, so the dogs once captured by the rangers or animal control, cannot be traced back to their owner. The owner can then escape justice to offend again while the unfortunate dog is most likely euthanised. Backyard breeders can also offend by breeding dogs of a dangerous breed such as pit bull (which is illegal in NSW) with other dogs, so they do not have the dangerous dog breed physical looks but the size and/or other attributes. Such dogs can then end up in residential areas and cause problems. Certain dog breeds are not meant for a residential habitat as their main purpose for example may be for pig hunting. Backyard breeders breed dogs for size and then sell the 'runt of the litter' which in most cases are still dogs of large size. There is then a higher chance that the dog will escape and offend. The dog however, is not at fault as it is only doing what it is in its nature to do. Yet it alone faces the consequences. Dogs can also join together to become packs which can go wild in the bush and rural areas and attack livestock.

All these issues can result from backyard breeding. It has now gone out of hand where there are not enough homes to the amount of puppies that are being born. This results in more dogs becoming abandoned and strays. One way to prevent backyard breeding is to reevaluate and reorganize the responsibilities around buying, selling, breeding, and desexing your companion animal, as well as introduce new laws that help enforce new protocols into dog breeding and consequences if not done properly. Protect Shoalhaven Dogs recommends that a new breeder license should be established and the CA Act register updated, with a new category for desexed animals, as well as introduce new amendments around microchipping. Protect Shoalhaven Dogs supports the new laws which are being put into place in Victoria. These laws are: Pet shops can only sell dogs from animal shelters or qualified breeders, max number of breeding dogs



is ten, that female dogs can only have 5 litters, RSPCA given extra powers and funding. Protect Shoalhaven Dogs recommends that all breeders should have a local government and local council approved breeder license by law. If you wish to breed your dog only once as many owners wish, a one off approved breeding license should be established by the local government, and available to owners by their local council and distributed responsibly. Pet shops should also not be able to sell or buy puppies unless they have been microchipped. Random checks in residential areas to make sure a dog on the property is registered and microchipped should also be put into place, to ensure people to not try and cheat the system. As such it should be recommended that all companion animals should be desexed unless for breeding, this includes both males and females. Desexing can calm the dog down as well as ensure no accidental pregnancies occur. This can reduce the chance of the dog escaping or roaming, and becoming a stray. Veterinary practices though they are willing to microchip any pet/puppy, do not seem to be in any obligation to report that a puppy brought to them has been bought from a breeder without a microchip and/or vaccination. The new owner is doing the right thing by bringing it to the vet as responsible pet owners. They should keep the puppy, but, both veterinary practices and anyone who comes across an owner who is selling puppies without vaccination and microchip, should be reported to the necessary authorities.

Protect Shoalhaven Dogs would like to bring to attention the concerning issue of backyard breeding, and its negative implications when done unsupervised and not under the guidelines and rules of responsible dog breeding. In saying so Protect Shoalhaven Dogs would like the council and local government to take necessary action and steps to ensure the well being of companion animal dogs, and no irresponsible practices of breeding, buying, and selling of dogs and puppies continue.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED] 'Protect Shoalhaven Dogs'