

**Submission
No 222**

COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission to the Inquiry on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. With regard to Terms of Reference a) to e).....

Companion Animal breeding practices certainly require a new hard-line approach to effect adequate welfare outcomes for companion animals, and it is very important that the government is focused on achieving more positive outcomes through legislation and supporting a changing public attitude.

There is a huge focus on animal welfare around the globe, and countless Australians are now very much aware of and concerned about the problems of puppy-farms, backyard breeders and pet shop sales.

The owning and breeding of companion animals needs to be regarded as a **privilege**. The culture of greed and insouciance and the lack of ethics and compassion surrounding the breeding, selling and buying of companion animals needs to be addressed.

Minimum standards and Codes of Practice are only worth implementing if they contain adequate welfare principles at their core and teamed with sufficient enforcement and regulation.

There is a massive over-population of companion animals in Australia, and as a result hundreds of thousands of animals are being dumped at pounds and shelters and subsequently euthanised every year. Prioritising humane euthanasia as a solution to welfare problems is not sufficient. "Humane" being characterised by compassion, kindness and mercy; and "euthanasia" being the practice of ending a life to relieve pain and suffering. **There is nothing kind nor compassionate about killing a healthy, young dog or cat simply due to unchecked overbreeding and because there is not enough room in a shelter or enough time cannot be given to rehoming.**

We all know that humans have long given themselves rights and privileges over other species but it is time to ensure that our duty of care is legitimised and the welfare of animals is given appropriate significance in all aspects of interaction, and particularly in our society's sad exploitation of animals for profit.

To date, commercial vested interests have presided over animal welfare efforts and outcomes. Our governments have been guided and advised by groups and individuals that represent commercial and industry interests and, of course, they therefore DO NOT provide recommendations that are simply targeted at what is best for animals.

The core problem is an over-abundance of animals and this must be the focus of the government – to significantly reduce the numbers of dogs and cats being bred.

Everything unfortunately revolves around the almighty dollar – so perhaps ensure it is a privilege to breed dogs and cats by introducing a national breeders' licensing system that allows only a set number of breeders who pay for this privilege. Weed out those who do not deserve the privilege and support those that are willing to put the time, effort and finances into doing it properly, with regular inspections and routine registration obligation checks. Ensure sufficient regulations, policing, penalties and punishments are put in place for those that breed animals without the appropriate licence, or that fail to meet the standards.

Mandatory desexing and/or the increase of the pet registration payment system for owning undesexed dogs and cats should serve as a deterrent for overbreeding, and an adequate assistance scheme implemented to support lower income families and pensioners to have their pets desexed. The impulse buying of pets, particularly cute puppies and kittens, can be prevented by the banning of the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. Online sites should not be permitted to advertise the sale of companion animals.

I support the following solution (from Animals Australia)....

Nationally consistent Breeder Permit system

Since animals are traded across borders, a nationally consistent Breeder Permit system is needed for anyone who breeds cats or dogs. This should include:

1. Anyone who breeds cats or dogs (from a family pet, backyard, pure-breed or mixed-breed).
2. An independent inspection on application for a permit and routine every 1-2 years.
3. Inspections based on compulsory Standards including limiting frequency of breeding and rehoming breeding animals.
4. Breeders pay for the Breeder Permit to cover costs of inspections, providing certification and keeping records.
5. Compulsory publishing of Breeder Permit numbers so consumers can make more ethical choices when looking for a new companion animal.
6. Desexing of puppies and kittens before sale or transfer. All puppies and kittens required to be desexed prior to sale or giving away at 10 weeks of age, unless the animal has a health problem or is being transferred to someone with a breeder permit.

I do not believe that our society accepts the routine killing of thousands of healthy companion animals, and therefore it is imperative that solutions are implemented by the government to stop the unrestricted breeding and selling of companion animals and establish life-saving rehoming and desexing strategies. Unfortunately the endless deaths of homeless animals are witnessed by those who care most — the employees and volunteers of animal shelters and groups, which takes a terrible personal toll.

In other related matters (f), with regard to an over-abundance of certain breeds, I wish to comment on the largest group of puppy-farmers in our country... the Greyhound racing industry. Whilst puppy-farming has gained much focus around Australia as a major animal welfare concern, with many key animal welfare groups and government representatives advocating the abolishment of puppy mills, the Greyhound racing industry, the biggest government-sponsored puppy mill, has continued to go unchecked.

The nature of this industry - using dogs for a large-scale commercial betting platform, on the economic basis of state wagering revenue and profits for participants, forms an unethical foundation to which problems of regulation, compliance and corruption, along with over-breeding, wastage and other animal welfare problems, are interminable issues.

The hideous crimes of live-baiting are not the only problems in Greyhound racing. To many people, commercial dog racing and the negative consequences for the dogs, is a crime in itself. Every year the Greyhound Racing industry in Australia breeds nearly 20,000 Greyhounds for racing and gambling. It is a breeding lottery for the fastest dog, with the only possible outcome for this continual overbreeding being an early death for most of the dogs.

This exploitation and routine killing is reason enough for an end to this industry.

Wastage, mass graves, live baiting, doping and injuries – this industry does not reflect the values of today's society.

The Greyhound racing industry in Australia is made up of around 30,000 participants – killing up to 17,000 dogs annually. ...A minority of people, responsible for major carnage, all for a small percentage of the total wagering revenue.

The use of animals in entertainment and sport, where their well-being and safety is at risk, is at odds with the changing values of modern society. Australian's are fast becoming aware that thousands upon thousands of Greyhounds are bred every year only to be killed when no longer a viable asset to the racing owner or trainer, they are learning that there are countless injuries, and even deaths, suffered on the track by these poor dogs, and that just under half the dogs bred never even make it to a track.

Australia is one of only 8 countries in the world where dog racing exists.

Dogs are one of the world's most favoured companion animals. It is unreasonable and conceited to expect that the Australian public should not be concerned about the breeding of thousands of one breed of dog every year for gambling. Community acceptance of Greyhound racing in the past has primarily been the result of widespread ignorance or lack of knowledge about the welfare concerns and negative consequences for the dogs. However this has been steadily changing, due to over a decade of rehoming Greyhounds into the community and raising awareness about their plight, and more importantly, promoting the breed as a gentle, affectionate, sociable companion dog. Recent media focus on the rot permeating throughout the industry has played a huge part in assessing its current social licence or lack thereof. Opposition to this dog-killing industry is growing rapidly for good reason.

Racing dogs face short, harsh lives. Money, as a justification for activities considered immoral, archaic or inexplicable, generates levels of social activism and advocacy. Dog racing is one such activity. The overbreeding and the negative outcomes for the 'products' of this sport must stop.

Greyhound racing must end.

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