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12 November 2021

The Hon. Emma Hurst MLC  
Animal Justice Party

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Dear Ms Hurst,

### Companion Animals Bills

I write in relation to the Companion Animals Amendment (Rehoming Animals) Bill 2021 and Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill 2021 recently introduced into the NSW Parliament by the Animal Justice Party.

Councils are committed to promoting responsible pet ownership and ensuring animal welfare is paramount as they undertake their education and regulatory responsibilities for companion animals. Councils take their obligations seriously and view companion animal breeding practices that are safe, ethical and meet community expectations as central to good companion animal management.

At the 2020 Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Annual Conference, councils resolved to support a motion from Hawkesbury City Council (refer attachment) calling for legislation to prevent the establishment of puppy farms in NSW and the establishment of a common database and better coordination between enforcement agencies across jurisdictions. A 2017 resolution (refer attachment) also called for a review of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice – Breeding dogs and cats to be expedited, but the Standards and Guidelines for Pet Shops and Breeders does not appear to have progressed past the 2018 consultation phase.

In relation to the **Companion Animals Amendment (Rehoming Animals) Bill 2021**, the changes proposed by the Bill are straightforward and reasonable, and the additional notification and record keeping requirements for councils are not onerous. LGNSW supports the Bill.

In relation to the **Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill 2021**, the changes proposed will increase the role and regulatory responsibilities of councils in registering companion animal businesses and checking their compliance with the legislation.

LGNSW supports the bill in-principle, subject to:

- The proposed registration fees being set at a level that is reflective of the additional resources and time required by councils for the more detailed regulatory responsibilities as noted above (which may be significant). If these fees are not set at a full cost recovery level, the NSW Government must commit to additional funding to councils across NSW to support these additional regulatory activities.

- The NSW Government upgrading the Pet Registry to enable the business registration, eligibility checks and council reporting to occur. Without these upgrades the proposed new arrangements will not be feasible.

If these commitments cannot be made by the NSW Government, it is our view that regulating puppy farms should sit with the NSW Government rather than local government.

To discuss this matter further, I'm available on 0412 272 746 or please have your staff contact Susy Cenedese, Strategy Manager Environment on 02 9242 4080 or at [susy.cenedese@lgnsw.org.au](mailto:susy.cenedese@lgnsw.org.au).

Yours sincerely,

*Linda Scott*

Cr Linda Scott  
**President**

## **2020 Resolution 139 - Hawkesbury City Council - Ban puppy farms**

That Local Government NSW:

### 1. Notes that:

- a) animal welfare and the care and control of companion animals are state responsibilities in NSW but that these responsibilities are largely met by local councils,
- b) unscrupulous breeding in puppy farms financially impacts on councils due to increased compliance costs and shelter, rehabilitation and rehoming costs, and
- c) puppy farms are cruel and inhumane.

### 2. Notes that:

- a) the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Act 2017 (Vic) prohibited the sale of breeders' puppies in pet shops and restricts the number of fertile female dogs kept by breeders in Victoria,
- b) Victoria's tougher regulations resulted in large-scale breeders indicating they are seeking sites in NSW to continue their activities, and
- c) there is significant community concern that puppy farms have moved their operations to NSW to avoid regulation and scrutiny.

### 3. Urges the NSW Government to strengthen NSW Legislation to:

- a) transition pet shops to registered not-for-profit adoption centres to rehome dogs and puppies from approved rescue organisations and shelters,
- b) limit animals kept by breeders and owners, including by limiting numbers of fertile female dogs on premises,
- c) ensure breeder identifications numbers are required for all litters, including the removal of loopholes for "one-off litters", and
- d) instigate a common database and better co-ordination between enforcement agencies across jurisdictions.

### 4. Notes that euthanasia is a significant concern to councils and residents across NSW and is an animal welfare issue, and urges the NSW Government to act to reduce the rates of unwanted and abandoned animals by:

- a) funding free desexing programs and education programs for pet owners, especially in areas with high dumping rates, and
- b) supporting more "pet-friendly" rental accommodation.

## **2017 Resolution 69 - Gwydir Shire Council – Dog breeding guidelines**

That the Local Government NSW Annual Conference call on the Minister for Primary Industries to expedite the review of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice – Breeding dogs and cats to incorporate the recommended improvements put forward by both the NSW Companion Animals Taskforce Report (2012) and the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in NSW (2015).