

**Submission  
No 66**

## **INQUIRY INTO PUPPY FARMING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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**Date Received:** 22 February 2022

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Catherine Delaney

The Hon Mr Mick Veitch MLC  
Shadow Minister for Agriculture  
Member Legislative Council  
Parliament House, Sydney

Dear Mr Veitch

Response to Proposed *Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy farms) Bill NSW 2021*

I have owned Basenjis as pets for a few weeks off 50 years. I have also had a number of larger dogs in that time, rescues, including Basenjis, working breeds and a Doberman. I am a member of the Basenji Club of NSW Inc.

The following are a few thoughts on the proposed Bill. The points may not be in the strict order they are presented in the Bill. They are not necessarily thoughts of other owners or the Club, but my own, independently considered, responses

#### **1.. Banning breeding to bloodlines**

Reputable breeders of pure-bred dogs carefully select animals for breeding to enhance the breed and to eliminate any disorders of health or conformation that may be attached to that breed. With recent advances in genetic sciences and the ability to accurately identify gene markers in several of these disorders, breeders are routinely testing puppies and selecting breeding stock with the aim of eliminating problems and promoting healthy dogs which are not prone to some of these issues, For example: hip dysplasia in Labradors or Fanconi Syndrome in Basenjis. The Basenji brought Fanconi out of Africa. It was not a faulty gene “caused” by deliberate bloodline breeding. Western breeders are now confident of being able to eliminate the gene through careful testing and selective breeding, which will inevitably include breeding through unaffected bloodlines.

The testing for disorders is not a cheap exercise. Breeders remain committed to bearing this expense for the sake of their breed.

Pairing of animals within bloodlines is done with total commitment to the welfare of the breed, to enhance desirable traits, conformation and long-term health of the progeny. Random cross-breeding to produce a certain “ look”, as in the fashion for “designer dogs”, is reprehensible.

Rare breeds in Australia would cease to exist. The only people who could afford to own a Basenji would be those with resources to import one. This would not necessarily add an animal to “permitted” breed stock. Several modern breeds, such as the Doberman (late 1800s) would also be affected. Basenji numbers are inevitably affected by their natural cycle of 12 months duration, rather than the 6 of other breeds.

The Basenji in the West has been bred from a limited gene pool. Breeders may import dogs from other countries, or semen from selected animals in other countries. This is being

expanded by several breeders, including in Australia, who have borne the very high cost of importing native dogs from the Congo, often travelling there themselves to select stock. They do not seek to make any financial advantage by doing so. They seek only to advance their breed.

The myth of “hybrid vigour” is simply a myth. Dogs will be prone to diseases of dogs, cats to diseases of cats and humans to diseases of humans. It is akin to saying – my children won’t get diabetes because they had a Greek grandmother (which they do). Total nonsense!

Shall this sanction on bloodlines be applied to other species? The racing industry would cease to exist. 95% of all modern thoroughbreds in the entire world have a single foundation stallion in their pedigree, the remaining 5% carry his bloodline.



“Eclipse” foaled 1764  
George Stubbs

That is unlikely to happen. Instead, the anti-dog lobby, the designer-dog perpetrators and so-called “animal rights” groups seem only to be interested in persecuting the pure-bred dog people, people who are totally committed to the welfare of their animals and to their breed in general.

## **2. Breeders of pure breeds do not gain financial advantage from breeding.**

If any of them broke even on the costs of raising any litter, they would be pleased. Hobbies cost time, money and commitment. Dog breeding and showing is a hobby that costs time, commitment, and a lot of money. They are not charging unconscionable thousands of dollars for an animal that looks “pretty”. They are charging a reasonable price for a sound dog that will be fit for a long life in a loving home, while trying to recoup some of their expenses.

Puppies raised as companion animals are raised in a home. They are socialised and used to people and being handled. They are not confined to a sterile cage and cursorily checked on a couple of times a day.

Breeding pure bred dogs that are of quality in type, soundness of conformation, long-term good health and are well socialised, is a labour of love and dedication. Breeders also work for a living. They have jobs. They need them to provide the necessities of living, and to off-set some of the costs their hobby of dogs. The dogs are not their source of income.

Puppy farms, on the other hand, seem to be looking at profit, not the animals they are using simply as a commodity.

## **3. Pet shops only permitted to sell animals sourced from rescue organisations.**

A rescue organisation signing animals for re-homing over to a commercial enterprise? Who is kidding who?

A glass box of animals parked in the front of pet shop is a sad sight. Small birds may be raised in cages and fish can’t survive without their environmentally controlled aquariums, but puppies and kittens have no place in a noisy, brightly lit, confusing and frightening shopping centre. This practice should be stopped.

Sourcing a pet from a breeder who is registered with their canine or feline regulating body, or from a shelter, ensures the animal is healthy, socialised and, in the case of rescues, assessed for temperament and suitability to be re-homed. Breeders and shelters make every effort to ensure the animal is being matched with the right person and is going to a loving for-ever home. Picking one up with the groceries is a practice which urgently needs to cease.

#### **4. Puppy farms and the designer dog “industry”.**

The failed experiment that led to the burgeoning number of “oodles” is just that – failed. Some extremely misplaced pride seems to be taken in the fact that breeding is not to “type”. A Pug bred with a Poodle is not a new type of dog. It is across-bred mongrel that is likely to have problems. If I wanted a cross-bred mongrel, I would get one from the pound. I would be sure it was socialised and healthy, at the very least.

The Doberman, with the majority of other breeds, was originally developed by selective cross-breeding, seeking a healthy animal that was fit for purpose. Continued careful selection has maintained a dog that is true to type, remaining fit for purpose. The Basenji evolved of its own accord and has remained the same for many thousands of years. Careful selection maintains its ancient roots.

Pet shops and puppy farms have been hiding behind the legal principle of *restraint of trade* for too long. It is past time we looked at the welfare of animals, not persecuting responsible breeders and owners of pure-bred dogs. As members of their respective associations and breed clubs, they are already subject to a raft of regulations. Failure to adhere to these results in their inability to register their puppies (or kittens) with the governing association.

Breeding practices have been developed over hundreds of years, not simply arisen because somebody made a random, uninformed decision. The people responsible for developing this Bill have absolutely no idea, no understanding of what goes into breeding and owning pure-breds, or even the welfare of the animals that they claim to espouse.

If this heinous Bill is passed into law, it will demonise responsible breeders and encourage the breeding practices of puppy farms. Disreputable breeders will be forced underground. The perceived “problem” will be exacerbated, not resolved.

Sincerely yours

Catherine Delaney

The Roo and Jack Spratt

