

INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: The French Bulldog Club of NSW Inc

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Affiliated with Dogs NSW

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Re: Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022

Thank you for the opportunity of sharing our concerns about the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022. Our breed club was established in 1983 and has for almost 40 years educated and helped our members breed healthy dogs. As an Affiliate of Dogs NSW we are already bound by strict and enforceable Codes of Ethics and follow the National Code of Practice for Hereditary Diseases. Our members are hobbyist breeders and/or exhibitors with a large proportion of pet owners.

We speak on our members behalf.

- Most if not all of our club breeder members are registered hobby breeders and we are extremely concerned for the future of the pure-bred dog world if this Bill is passed in its present form. With the help of our colleagues from the German Shepherd Dog Council of Australia, we have prepared a summary of the most pressing concerns we have with this draft Bill – see attached submission.
- Of particular concern is “Division 3 Prohibited and restricted procedures; Prohibited Procedures (1) (e) surgical insemination on a dog. Category 2 penalty.” As stated in the attached submission it is noted that the Minister has provided to the Greyhound Racing fraternity assurances that this has been withdrawn. We seek written assurance that this clause has been withdrawn across the board and that it will not be enforced under other prohibitions such as “unnecessary harm”.

Restrictions or bans may have the undesired result of the Bill in this instance. Registered breeders with Dogs NSW and members of their respective breed clubs as stated above are already bound by Codes of Ethics and follow the National Code of Practice for hereditary diseases. When there are breaches breeders/owners of dogs are dealt with accordingly.

Genetic diversity is essential for a healthy population. On welfare grounds it is far better to import fresh bloodlines via frozen semen than transporting live animals. Flying animals to Australia is not only expensive but it is stressful for dogs. The use of frozen semen eliminates this and allows breeders to maintain a healthy breeding program.

The Bill makes allowance for Transcervical inseminations (TCIs). Not all dogs are candidates for artificial insemination by TCI. If there is poor semen quality or quantity insemination by TCI may not be an option. To quote our vet Dr Karen Hedberg BVSc “A short acting anaesthetic and surgical insemination can be carried out in around 15 minutes. Pain medications are usually given as they would in any routine procedure with most bitches up and out within 30 minutes”. We respectfully request that the Bill be amended to allow for surgical artificial insemination by

qualified veterinarians. Veterinarians should be the ones to decide the best welfare option decisions.

- **Licensing** We are confused and seek clarification about whether Dogs NSW hobbyist breeders will require a licence – see pages 1 and 2 of our submission. Will an exemption be given to Members of Dogs NSW to the proposed licensing scheme and if so, what will be the nature of that exemption?

If we as hobbyists are going to be subject to this licensing regime, then breeders who breed dogs in their home would not be protected under the provisions of S67.1. The holding of a licence would automatically remove the protections for residential property. We seek clarification about this.

- **Exhibition of animals.** The Bill is not clear about the **Showing of Dogs**. Exemptions must be provided to approved activities organised and conducted under the regulation of approved organisations e.g. canine control bodies and agricultural societies.

The draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 does not differentiate between **Dogs NSW registered breeders** who are on the whole hobbyists and **unregistered commercial puppy farmers**.

- Dogs NSW registered breeders are visible, easily found, already bound by our strict Code of Ethics, National Code of Practice for Heritable Diseases, and custodians of pure-bred dog breeds.
- Unregistered puppy farmers are untraceable, the worst of them breeding solely for profit, no health testing, undermining everything Dogs NSW breeders are doing to breed healthy dogs.
- Dogs Australia (formerly Australian National Kennel Council) have publicly stated “Here lies the elephant in the room.” We ask how will this Bill solve this problem? Don’t make the mistake of targeting the very people who dedicate so much of their lives to preserving and protecting their chosen breeds.

Moving forward. We strongly recommend that Dogs Australia and Dogs NSW be afforded accreditation as primary stakeholders in the drafting of this Bill. There is a wealth of experience, both scientific and practical which should be given due consideration.

At the end of the day, we are all on the same side in putting in place legislation which will be fair for all stakeholders, especially for our beloved pets.

Yours faithfully

Liz Davidson on behalf of FBCNSW Inc