

Submission
No 919

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

IA system needs to be developed which ensures that all dogs are registered and traceable to the person who bred the dog. This must include compulsory microchip identification of puppies to the breeder prior to sale or transfer to be implemented in all jurisdictions. Mechanisms for tracking breeder information should be explored, including utilising existing microchip registration systems to enable puppies to be traced to the breeder. The current Gold Coast breeder permit pilot project should be examined as a model for a potential national system. A national approach is required to ensure that puppies transferred across jurisdictions remain traceable. Such a system could be administered at the state or local government level

Standards need to be developed which are sufficient to provide for the welfare and health of breeding dogs and puppies and to ensure that puppies are appropriately reared to be suitable as companion animals. They must adequately address the psychological, behavioural, social and physiological needs of both breeding dogs and puppies. Standards must cover all aspects of dog breeding that have an impact on animal welfare including: staff competencies and training, staff to dog ratios, record keeping, dog care and management, breeding, rearing and socialisation, health and veterinary care, transfer of ownership and transport. Standards must be linked to existing animal welfare legislation. Standards should take into consideration the national Standards and Guidelines for Dogs through the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS)

Advertising and sale conditions for puppies must allow individual animals to be traced to their breeder. Potential mechanisms for this should be explored, including the disclosure of a breeder number, ABN and/or microchip number wherever animals are advertised and when they are sold or transferred. Regulation of the sale of dogs must require that all puppies are microchipped and vaccinated prior to supply. Potential mechanisms should be explored to ensure compliance, including vendors being required to record the microchip numbers and vaccination details of all puppies supplied. Regulation of the sale of dogs must assist in protecting consumers and enable action to be taken when problems occur after sale. This should include the following minimum requirements: A guarantee which allows the return of animals for any reason within a specified period; A mechanism for customers to make a complaint to the breeder and/or appropriate authority when problems occur after sale. This mechanism must be disclosed to the customer. The issue of responsibility surrounding the rehoming of returned dogs should also be explored. In the interim, exploring the feasibility of establishing a website for dog breeders that meet these requirements to advertise puppies directly to the public should be further examined. Explore mechanisms regarding desexing of dogs at time of sale to non-breeders

Discussions need to be held with AQIS to develop minimum standards for the export of puppies, similar to those currently in place for the export of livestock and native wildlife. The following requirements should be considered: All dogs to be microchipped prior to export; microchip details are recorded and made available to authorised animal welfare inspectors. A minimum age and weight for the export of puppies. Exploring strategies to prevent the export of puppies to puppy farms overseas. In the absence of these export provisions, breeder associations are encouraged to set minimum standards for export in line with these requirements.

Information should be collated to estimate the value of puppy farming and the potential cost of non-tax-compliant operators. Discussions should be held with the ATO to raise awareness of puppy farming, identify how information on puppy farming operations can be shared between relevant government authorities, and to encourage ATO investigation of puppy farming operations.

Action should be taken to develop best practices for enforcement of current and future regulations relating to the identification, registration, breeding and sale of dogs. Where gaps in current legislation are identified, changes are required to ensure that puppy farming activities can be identified and prosecuted. Changes to be considered include: Prohibition Orders in specific circumstances to prevent further ownership of animals where legal proceedings are not available, to prevent puppy farmers from continuing their business. Explore existing Australian legislation with a view to procedures that defendants to be required to pay court bonds prior to any litigation appeals or appeals in relation to the forfeiture of animals. The bond amount should be based on the financial cost of caring for the dogs on a daily basis, acknowledging that during this period such this care is being provided by RSPCA or other rescue group and not by the defendant. Where a court bond is not paid, the owner would be required to surrender the animals for rehoming. Penalties increased to reflect the economic value of the trade. Explore potential amendments to the Animal Welfare Legislation to specifically address puppy farming. As a general principle, State/Territory animal welfare legislation should include the concept of a 'duty of care', similar to that reflected in the Queensland Animal Care and Protection Act 2001, to assist in the prosecution of cases where enforceable standards are lacking. Governments ensure effective enforcement by allocating sufficient resources and enabling government agencies to play a greater role

Registration/licensing or other relevant authorities should ensure that owners of entire dogs and bitches are provided with information on their responsibilities as breeders at the point of registration. Stakeholders should undertake to raise awareness with their members and customers of existing legislation, standards and guidelines and to encourage members to support improvements in the regulation of the breeding and sale of dogs. Information should be developed and provided to vets, pet supply stores and others to help them identify possible puppy farm operators. Explore a process for vets, pet supply stores and members of the community to notify relevant authorities if they suspect one of their clients is running a puppy farm operation. Explore training and education opportunities for people involved in the pet industry and enforcement regarding puppy farms.