

Submission
No 242

**INQUIRY INTO ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY IN NEW
SOUTH WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To whom it May Concern,

I am originally from Europe, but have been a proud Australian citizen for approx. 5 years. I work full-time as a highly regarded manager, have a beautiful home that could be in any design magazine, and well maintained gardens. At the same time I am Dogs NSW registered breeder, member of multiple Australian state breed clubs, as well as International breed clubs.

I am writing to you as a dog hobbyist: along with the human family we have 5 very much loved furry family members (=dogs) in our house. My dogs live like any normal spoiled in-door pet: they sleep on the lounge while we watch TV, beg in the kitchen for food, etc. But at the same they are my hobby – they are show dogs, tracking dogs, and breeding dogs. This has been my hobby and passion for almost 3 decades. When I immigrated to Australia ofcourse my dogs were imported with me: not only are they family, they are also the bloodline I have worked on for years, which I want -and need- to continue on my hobby. I do every known health test to my dogs (DNA tests, hip&elbow xrays, heart examinations, etc) and only use healthy specimens to breed from. My puppies grow in the living room with air-conditioning and heating, and they have access to a grassed outdoor area for when they are old enough to spend some time outdoors (weather permitting).

Hearing of the Animal welfare Policy Draft 2022 where I could be classified as some “large breeder business” intimidates me, especially when there are no regulations established in this paper. My main questions and concerns lie around:

- I would like to question the definition of “commercial” and “business”. I breed to continue my dogs bloodlines, to get the next generation for me to continue my hobby. Every litter is planned years beforehand, with careful consideration how to get the next best hobby dog. It is not a case of using the closest male dog to get puppies, to get a profit. Naturally if many puppies are born then some are sold to pet families, but any income from puppies does not even scratch the surface compared to the actual accrued expenses: vet bills, laboratory expenses, medication, feed, grooming products, special cleaning products for the home, all the costs related to shows (entry fees, travel costs, etc), import costs (dogs and/or semen), costs related to breeding (travelling to the stud, taking unpaid leave to care for the mother and puppies, stud fees, etc), time and effort, etc.

- Related to the question above: being a breeder does not mean I am a “business”. For instance, I resent the idea that at the gate -for all passer-by’s to see- I would have to keep details of my name and phone number. I can only imagine how many drunk calls I would get on a Saturday night! Surely I have the right to privacy, just like anyone else, despite being a dog breeder!

- Would the proposed changes allow some unknown body at anytime to enter my home? My dogs and my puppies live in my home. Would You, my reader, like some total stranger to come barge in your door at any random time? Imagine being on a work zoom call, your day full of back-to-back meetings, and someone comes knocking insisting to visit right then! I am very happy to show my home and my dogs, but at a time when it suits me.

- Will there be limitations to how many litters/bitch? I generally never do more than 2litters/bitch, but the exception is imported bitches. To secure the bloodline I like the option to have 3 litters from an import. Consider importing a bitch to get new blood for your lines. The total costs to import are minimum \$25,000 (often almost double), and the bitch is approx. 1 year old when she arrives. First you show and get the 1st title, then have 1 litter, keep the pick puppy, wait another year to have another litter which happens to be a singleton male pup whose testicle doesn’t come down and has to be desexed (and usually then pet homed). Fast forward 2 years and the sire of the 1st litter suddenly becomes ill of a hereditary disease, for which there was no test to detect when the litter was born, but it means the 1st litter is now no longer suitable for breeding. By this point the imported bitch is approx. 6 years old, still a good age to breed from, but because of the limitation could not be used. Limiting to 2 litters also is unfair on breeds

which generally have only 1-2pups/litter (compared to others which constantly have 8-12pups/litter). Personally I don't think any bitch should need to have more than 3 litters, but maybe if there has been multiple singleton litters -and the bitch is determined healthy by a veterinarian- then a 4th could be considered.

- Would there be limitations/restrictions to how many litters can be bred/annum? I usually do not breed more than 1-2 litters/year. But if I happen to have 2 litters in January, and then one December, this pushes it over to 3, when the year before and the year after I have none. I cannot control when the bitches come into season, so I cannot guarantee to make it happen in a certain calendar year. And reality is if a bitch comes into season so that a litter is born around the end/start of the year, it is the best time for me, as with all the Christmas holidays I don't have to take so much time off work to care for the litter!

- What are the proposed changes to dog shows? Dog shows exist to evaluate the dogs to be as per the breed standard. Each breed standard encourages healthy dogs. Problems in breeding to enhance for traits which can cause health problems happen with or without shows, for instance the breeding of blue-coloured French bulldogs. This is not a colour recognized in the breed standard, they cannot be shown, no ANKC registered breeder would deliberately breed for them. Despite this blue French Bulldogs are becoming more and more common, as non-registered breeders are breeding for the colour, and subsequently increasing the amount of possibly ill dogs (the blue colour is caused by a genetic condition known as colour dilution alopecia - CDA)

- Would I need a separate "license" to breed? I am already "licensed" and pay an annual fee, as I am a registered breeder with Dogs NSW – part of the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC). Registered breeders are the minority of dog breeders (Source: <https://ankc.org.au/media/6598/a-forensic-view-of-puppy-breeding-in-australiav4.pdf>) despite they are accountable for their dogs and puppies health and wellbeing, as when becoming a registered breeder ANKC requires to sign an Ethical code of conduct. Perhaps consider working with ANKC to review the Code and allowing the ANKC registered breeders "license" to be sufficient enough.

I hope you take my points into consideration. Especially working together with ANKC, to ensure us ANKC registered breeders -the minority trying to do the right thing- aren't forced to quit breeding. I would not continue breeding if it means my home is considered a large business, or if I have to put my puppies in some shed so they are on a concrete slab! And I hope and believe You, my reader, would prefer to get your puppy from a breeder who ensures the puppies are as healthy as they possibly can be, and has kept the puppy in their home, socialising the puppies to normal household life.