

**Submission
No 79**

INQUIRY INTO PUPPY FARMING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Submission

Select Committee on Puppy farming in NSW

February 2022

Thank you for the opportunity of making a submission.

My family wants to see the intensive factory farming of dogs made ILLEGAL. There should be no need for this inquiry, because the bill introduced by Emma Hurst in the Upper House sets out exactly what my family wants. The bill must be passed, because it will end cruel puppy farming in NSW.

Currently in NSW there is no limit on the number of female dogs any breeder can have. There is no limit on the number of litters any dog can be forced to endure, and there are no mandatory vet checks or staffing ratios to ensure animals are given proper care. Someone can set up an intensive dog farm with 800 dogs and force them to produce litter after litter for their entire lives until they die. The facility could have one person assigned to care for all the animals – and this would be perfectly legal.

Therefore, it is most urgent that this bill is passed, because NSW has some of the weakest laws when it comes to protecting dogs from puppy factory cruelty.

Other states have cracked down on puppy farms – Victoria has acted, and WA is about to follow suit. However, it is essential that all states enact similar legislation, otherwise unscrupulous puppy farmers will move interstate where laws are weak.

It is most unfortunate that as a result of the Victorian legislation, puppy farmers are now and have been relocating to NSW to make the most of NSW's weak laws. NSW is about to become the cruelty capital of Australia. What a shameful title for your state.

Why we oppose puppy farming

Dogs and cats are our beloved companion animals; they are important family members. They are not breeding machines. It is vital we stop the shameful cruelty of intensive breeding establishments for our companion animals.

There must be regulation of the breeding, supply and sale of companion animals to help set minimum standards and stamp out puppy farms.

Consumers must be protected from unscrupulous puppy farmers. To make sure families do not fall prey to puppy farms, they should never be able to buy animals sight unseen over the internet. These farms produce all kinds of puppies: purebreds, crossbred and mixed-breed. Families must be educated to support pounds and shelters or, if they must buy a breed, they should visit a licensed and registered breeder and meet the puppy's parents.

Dogs on puppy farms are often kept in overcrowded and filthy environments. Breeding animals may be confined permanently in small cages, never being allowed out for a walk, to play or express normal behaviours. These dogs can suffer from a range of health problems and behavioural problems by not being socialised and being housed in conditions that fail to meet their needs.

Puppy farms are usually large-scale commercial operations, but inadequate and cruel conditions may also exist in smaller breeding establishments which may or may not be run for profit.

The law must change. Puppies from puppy farms may be sold via any avenue including the internet, newspaper ads, markets, car boot sales, pet shops, or sometimes at the puppy farm itself. Puppy farms may also use a house as a 'shop front' from which to sell their animals – this way customers avoid seeing the appalling and secret conditions in which animals are bred.

There is a lot of secrecy surrounding this dreadful 'industry'. We do not know exactly how many puppy farms there are in Australia, as many puppy farms operate in remote areas and are not known to authorities, but with the advent of internet sales it is a growing national problem.

I quote below some information and examples from the RSPCA Qld website. See link below:

<https://www.rspcaqld.org.au/blog/animal-welfare/puppy-farms>

"Puppy farms are essentially breeding sites that put profit of dogs they sell before the animals' welfare. Often, overcrowded and filthy are two words that perfectly describe puppy farms. But that's just touching the surface on what could be a defined as a puppy farm.'

"In 2019 a Bull Terrier breeder pled guilty to inappropriate living conditions for 110 Bull Terriers. A puppy farm where all the dogs were found living in horrible conditions, the situation greatly affected the mental health of the majority of these dogs, meaning a long road to recovery and rehoming. Find out more about this puppy mill case, how RSPCA Inspectors conducted their investigation and rescue of these animals, as well as the [disastrous conditions they were found in.](#)"

"When breeding of dogs occur on a large scale and conditions are poor, it is deemed a puppy farm. The same could be said for cats and kittens! Out-of-hand breeding and overpopulation of animals can not only cause severe behavioural and medical issues for these dogs, in the worst-case scenario sometimes rehabilitation is unsuccessful and sadly euthanasia is the only humane option left for their welfare."

"Puppies that come from backyard breeding and puppy farm sites are sold through any avenue, including the internet, pet shops and markets. But there are many ways that the

public can be duped by these breeders. The biggest warning sign is when you are unable to see the property where these dogs live, the parents and more”

“Good registered breeders follow a program and provide their dogs with the right resources, care and socialisation needed to set them up for life. Dog and cat breeders that are registered, are often members of a breed association or club. They are required to display a registration/ licence numbers in all advertisements. Thus, separating them from puppy mills and backyard breeders “

Some examples from the Victorian puppy farm act:

- limit the number of fertile female dogs breeders can keep
- restrict pet shops to selling dogs and cats sourced from shelters, pounds or enrolled foster carers
- clarify the role of foster carers
- define 'recreational breeders' and 'microbreeders'
- confirm the definition of 'farm working dogs'
- introduce the animal sale permit system
- improve traceability of cats and dogs through the establishment of the [Pet Exchange Register](#)
- strengthen pet advertisement offences.

We urge the NSW Parliament to enact legislation similar to that of Victoria. We think the Victorian act could be tightened much further to stop ‘recreational’ and ‘micro-breeders’ as well, but Victoria’s Act is streets ahead of the current animal welfare legislation in NSW.

And we stress, pounds and rescue organisations – large and small – always have a huge supply of healthy and sound animals that are looking for their forever homes. We do not really need breeders at all, because so many people hand in their unwanted animals (especially before going on holidays to avoid boarding fees⁰ or continue to keep pets that are not neutered and therefore add to the large population of strays. Please do not let puppy farms add to this problem. And, please, enforce the tightest regulation for all registered breeders. We love our companion animals, and we do not want them exploited by greedy people who care only about the dollar rather than animal welfare.

Jan Kendall and family