

**Submission
No 113**

INQUIRY INTO PUPPY FARMING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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The current framework regulating dog and cat breeders in New South Wales is clearly not sufficient to protect animals. The current rules establish no limits on the number of animals being bred on puppy farms or the total number of litters that an individual animal may be forced to produce. Breeders can simply apply for permission from their local council, which then approves or denies the application on planning and environmental grounds without any consideration for animal welfare. Regulations are needed to address animal welfare and community health issues created by factory-style breeding farms. There have been numerous raids on puppy farms across the state in recent years. The RSPCA seized 79 dogs from a farm in the Central West region of New South Wales last year, and all the animals were admitted to veterinary hospitals. In 2020, eyewitness accounts surfaced from a puppy farm in Inverell, where a 10-month-old boxer named Strawberry had allegedly rotted from the inside out after becoming sick during a pregnancy. The RSPCA raided this facility and another in Wagga Wagga. Each of these raids puts huge stress on the resources of veterinarians, foster carers, the legal system, and the RSPCA. I urge New South Wales to join Victoria and Western Australia by enacting amendments to restrict breeding and prohibit pet shops from selling companion animals not from rehoming organisations.

Both puppy Farming and kitten farming should be outlawed.

Laws to end puppy farms (and kitten farms) should involve the following:

- • Restrictions on the number of animals any individual can have and breed
- • Regular inspections of breeding facilities
- • Mandatory desexing of animals by 2 years of age
- • A centralised registration system that holds information on dogs and approved breeders, to assist with monitoring and enforcement. Further penalties and public register of those who have offended.
- • Bans on selling animals in pet shops and online
- • A plan to turn pet shops into adoption centres

Regulations governing puppy farming are desperately needed in New South Wales to protect animals, community health, and consumers. The Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill 2021 should be passed and made into law.

Animal protection issues

Puppy farms use mother dogs as breeding machines until their bodies break down – confining them without socialisation or veterinary care and forcing them to churn out hundreds of thousands of dogs every year into a world already bursting at the seams with homeless animals.

Environments which prioritise breeding large numbers of animals can often lead to severe crowding and unhygienic living conditions, not to mention the psychological damage inflicted on dogs by confining them to kennels or cages for long periods of time and the agony resulting when their babies are repeatedly taken away at 8 weeks of age to be sold.

Consumer protection issues

There are many examples in the media of people who have purchased puppies online or from farms who died or required thousands of dollars' worth of veterinary care. A recent article in the *Daily Mail Australia* told the story of Maureen Elvy, who spent \$200,000 on surgery to address the health issues of her French bulldog, Phoebe, which were brought about by breeding practices. In another case documented by the ABC, a beagle-cross named Nala nearly died after arriving at her new home because she was so infested with worms. A better legal framework is required to help protect consumers.

A significant proportion of the work of rescuing, fostering, caring for, and finding homes for the thousands of homeless dogs in Australia is performed by not-for-profit shelters, adoption groups, and networks of foster homes. These entities are primarily funded by community donations, state government grants, and bequests and are often heavily reliant on volunteers to sustain their work. Many are permanently overwhelmed and often refuse to accept animals because they have no room. Stopping puppy farming in New South Wales would help reduce the burden on volunteers and the community as a whole.