



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**



STOP PUPPY FARMING

CONSULTATION PAPER

May 2018

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Minister's Foreword

The McGowan Government has committed to introducing laws to:

- stop puppy farming and the supply chains that support this industry;
- improve the health and welfare of dogs in Western Australia; and
- stop the overbreeding of dogs.

Luckily we do not have puppy farming to the extent of other Australian jurisdictions. To ensure we improve and retain our good systems, we need your support and commitment to prevent puppy farming in WA.

We are now seeking your feedback on a range of measures needed to implement key elements of the Government's Stop Puppy Farming Policy, including:

- the transition of pet shops into adoption centres that will only sell puppies and dogs from approved rescue organisations and animal shelters;
- mandatory de-sexing of dogs unless an exemption is requested for breeding purposes or for reasons stated by a registered veterinarian;
- a centralised registration system to ensure every dog and puppy can be identified at the point of sale or adoption, including in advertisements for sale; and
- mandatory standards for dog breeding, housing, husbandry, transport and sale.

In addition to these measures, the Government intends to introduce a targeted education program to educate consumers on where to source their puppies and dogs.

Let's work together to stop puppy farming and improve the health and welfare of all dogs in Western Australia.



**Hon David Templeman MLA,
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Message from Chair of the Stop Puppy Farming Implementation Working Group

Companion animals occupy a very special place in our lives. In Western Australia 33% of households own a dog and 64% of owners consider their dog a member of their family.¹

Our dogs cheer us up, keep us active, provide friendship and companionship, and love us unconditionally.

Unfortunately, though, not all dogs have good lives, and this places a huge emotional and financial burden on individuals, veterinarians, local governments and rescue groups and charities such as RSPCA (WA), Dogs Refuge Home WA Inc., and SAFE.

Western Australians now have a real opportunity to improve the lives of so many dogs from exploitation, over breeding, and being unwanted or homeless. There are simply not enough good homes for the number of dogs being born, and some of these dogs are harder to rehome because of poor breeding, early trauma, poor socialisation, and injury and disease.

Consequently, the euthanasia rate of dogs is unacceptably high.

One important way we can help end this is to stop the cruel practice of puppy farming and the supply chains that feed this industry, by instigating laws that improve the welfare and health of all dogs by regulating the breeding and sale of dogs.

I would like to thank the members of the Stop Puppy Farming Implementation Working Group for their continued commitment to this policy, and for giving their time to provide invaluable advice and expertise.



**Lisa Baker MLA,
MEMBER FOR MAYLANDS**

¹ Pet Ownership in Australia 2016, Animal Medicines Australia.

Having your say

Submissions

Western Australia is a vast state, unique in its geography and service delivery. We know any proposed changes need flexibility to respond to local needs and be accountable to the WA community.

That is why the State Government is seeking feedback on what Western Australians expect from this policy.

We welcome your help to stop puppy farming and to improve the health and welfare of dogs in WA. People and organisations are able to provide ideas, comments or feedback. A number of workshops are also planned.

Written submissions can be received by:

completing the online survey at:

www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/stoppuppyfarming

email:

puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

post:

Stop Puppy Farming
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
PO Box 8349
Perth Business Centre
Western Australia 6849

Your submission will be made public and published in full on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website unless you ask for it to be confidential. Submissions that contain defamatory or offensive material will not be published.

Submissions close on Friday 3 August 2018.

For more information on workshops, please refer to the website: www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/stoppuppyfarming



Image courtesy of Oscar's Law.



Targeted Consultation

In conjunction with seeking feedback on the consultation paper, the Department will be undertaking targeted consultation with the following stakeholders:

- the local government sector
- the pet shop industry
- the veterinary profession
- dog breeders, including dog breeding associations
- animal welfare groups (including rescue organisations, dog shelters and foster care organisations).

For more information on the targeted consultation, including how you can be involved, please contact:

email:

puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

post:

Stop Puppy Farming
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PO Box 8349
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Western Australia 6849



Introduction

The McGowan Government is committed to stopping puppy farming and the overbreeding of dogs, and improving the health and welfare of all dogs in Western Australia (WA). This paper summarises the proposed actions to stop this practice.

The Government's commitment to introduce measures to stop puppy farming stems from a report released by a Steering Committee convened in 2015 by Lisa Baker MLA, Member for Maylands. The report investigated the effectiveness of the current legislative and regulatory framework in WA and made recommendations to end puppy farming. The Steering Committee report noted that while there were already legislative powers to investigate and prosecute those who are cruel to animals, legislation relevant to puppy farming was needed to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of this trade in WA, and to regulate the breeding and sale of dogs.

Currently, cruelty to dogs is addressed through the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (Animal Welfare Act) and restrictions on dog numbers through the *Dog Act 1976* (Dog Act). There are however, currently no legal provisions that deal specifically with the overbreeding of dogs in WA or which encourage responsible breeding.

This paper summarises the implementation of:

- the transition of pet shops into adoption centres that will only sell puppies and dogs from approved rescue organisations and animal shelters;
- mandatory de-sexing of dogs unless an exemption is requested for breeding purposes or for reasons stated by a registered veterinarian;

- a centralised registration system to ensure every dog and puppy can be identified at the point of sale or adoption, including in advertisements for sale; and
- mandatory standards for dog breeding, housing, husbandry, transport and sale.

This paper has been prepared in conjunction with advice and feedback provided by the Stop Puppy Farming Implementation Working Group (SPFIWG) which is convened by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (the Department) and Chaired by Lisa Baker, MLA.

Members of the SPFIWG include representatives from the following organisations:

- Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs
- Australian Veterinary Association
- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (Consumer Protection division)
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Animal Welfare Regulation division)
- Dogs Refuge Home WA
- Dogs West
- Local Government Professionals Australia WA
- Oscar's Law
- Pet Industry Association of Australia
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (WA)
- WA Local Government Association
- WA Rangers Association.

Transitioning Pet Shops to Adoption Centres

It is estimated that there are approximately 15 pet shops in WA that sell puppies and dogs.² Currently, there are no restrictions on where pet shops can source the dogs they sell. While pet shops are subject to Australian Consumer Law, purchasing a dog from a pet shop means that the consumer is unable to trace, or know with any certainty, from where the dog was sourced. Currently, dog breeders who are members of Dogs West (an association for pure bred dogs) are not permitted by the Dogs West Code of Conduct to sell the pedigree puppies and dogs they breed through pet shops.

It is intended to amend the Dog Act so that pet shops will only be able to source puppies and dogs from 'properly accredited' rescue organisations or shelters. Dogs sourced in this manner will be properly assessed for health and behaviour. This is expected to help break the puppy farm supply chain and to address the unwanted dog problem.

Dog rescue organisations and shelters will be accredited by the State Government. Pet shops will be transitioned into adoption centres to allow time for pet shops to make arrangements with dog rescue organisations and shelters, including whether the dog will be housed at the pet store or dog rescue organisation or shelter.







Online transactions are another means by which puppy farms supply the market. A targeted education campaign will be introduced to educate consumers on where and how to source their puppies and dogs, including highlighting the risks associated with purchasing a dog online.



Image courtesy of Oscar's Law.

² Survey by Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, November 2017

What does this mean for me?

	PET SHOPS	<p>Pet shops will only be able to source dogs from accredited dog rescue organisations and shelters after a specified date.</p> <p>Pet shops will need to ensure that each dog has a health and behavioural certificate supplied by a veterinarian.</p>
	POTENTIAL AND CURRENT DOG OWNERS	<p>People looking to purchase a dog can still buy a dog from a pet shop, but the dog will be sourced from an accredited dog rescue organisation or shelter and assessed for behaviour and health.</p> <p>Owners will not be able to give unwanted dogs or puppies to pet shops.</p>
	DOG RESCUE ORGANISATIONS AND SHELTERS	<p>Dog rescue organisations and shelters will be invited to apply for accreditation as potential suppliers of dogs to pet shops in Western Australia.</p> <p>Every dog to be supplied must pass a health and behavioural assessment undertaken by a veterinarian.</p>
	DOG BREEDERS	<p>Dog breeders will not be able to supply dogs to pet shops.</p>
	STATE GOVERNMENT	<p>The State Government will need to put an accreditation framework in place for dog shelters and rescues.</p>
	ENFORCEMENT AGENCY*	<p>The enforcement agency will need to monitor pet shops to ensure they are only sourcing dogs from accredited dog rescue organisations and shelters.</p>

*The enforcement agency will be a body that will be responsible for enforcing relevant legislative provisions. This agency is yet to be determined.







What are the benefits, issues and costs of this?

Benefits	Issues	Costs
It is anticipated that a greater number of surrendered or abandoned dogs will be rehomed, meaning less dogs needing to be euthanased or kept permanently/long term at dog rescue organisations and shelters.	Pet shops will be reliant on the health and behavioural assessment certificate provided by the rescue or shelter for the dogs and puppies that they sell.	Potentially there will be a cost to pet shops in fitting out their shop to house bigger dogs and ensuring that the dog's health and welfare is not compromised.
This will assist dog rescue organisations and shelters rehome abandoned and surrendered dogs in Western Australia, lessening the burden on these organisations.	The demand for older dogs may be lower and pet shops may not be able to sell as many older dogs as they did puppies.	There will be a cost involved in negotiating and drafting agreements between pet shops and dog rescue organisations and shelters.
Puppy farmers will not be able to supply and sell puppies to pet shops.	Some pet shops may cease to sell dogs entirely.	Pet shops will likely experience a loss in revenue as they will be unable to meet demand for pups and particular kinds of breeds.



What are the benefits, issues and costs of this?

Benefits	Issues	Costs
	Dog rescue organisations and shelters may not want to become accredited.	
	Dog purchases online may increase as a result of consumers being unable to purchase dogs from pet shops. There are risks associated with purchasing a dog online.	



GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

1. Would you purchase a behaviour and health checked rescue dog from a pet shop?
2. What background information would you want on the rescue dog?
3. Do you think transitioning pet shops to adoption centres is beneficial?
4. If you are a pet shop owner or operator, what impact will this have on your business?

If you would like more information on transitioning pet shops to adoption centres and would like to provide further feedback on how this provision should be implemented, please email puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

Mandatory Dog De-sexing for Non-Breeding Dogs

The Government made an election commitment to introduce mandatory de-sexing of dogs unless the dog is used for breeding purposes or an exemption is requested for reasons stated by a registered veterinarian. To achieve this, the Dog Act will be amended. The adoption of mandatory dog de-sexing in WA follows the adoption of mandatory dog de-sexing in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia.

There are approximately 300,000 dogs in WA. In 2015-16, 2,554 dogs were rehomed in WA by the RSPCA, Dogs Refuge Home WA Inc. (Shenton Park) and SAFE.³ In addition to these dog rescue and shelter organisations, there are numerous other smaller dog rescue organisations, shelters and foster carers that work to rehome surrendered and abandoned dogs. Recent data compiled by the Department indicates that more than 500 dogs are euthanased annually at dog rescue organisations, shelters and local governments.⁴

The primary objective of mandatory dog de-sexing is to reduce the number of unwanted or unplanned dogs being born, many of which end up neglected, abandoned, surrendered to dog rescue organisations or shelters or picked up by rangers. While some of these dogs and puppies are able to be rehomed successfully, many are euthanased.

Under the Dog Act, **sterilised** currently means ‘made permanently infertile by a surgical procedure’ (**sterilisation** is the same thing as **de-sexing**).

In Australia, this usually means by the removal of the ovaries and uterus in female dogs (spaying), and the testes in male dogs (castration). The primary reasons for de-sexing dogs are population control and other societal and owner benefits including absence or reduction of behaviours associated with sex hormones (such as marking, roaming, fighting in males, and signs of oestrus or “heat” in females).

Other benefits of de-sexing for the health and welfare of dogs include:

- increased longevity
- reduced risk of cancer and other diseases affecting the reproductive organs
- prevention of pregnancies in female dogs, which can cause exhaustion and other medical issues.

³ Data provided by Shenton Park Dog Refuge, RSPCA WA and SAFE, October 2017.

⁴ This figure is a combination of data provided to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries by Shenton Park Dog Refuge, RSPCA WA and SAFE, October 2017, and from the DLGSC Dog and Cat Management Survey, (Results as at 25 October 2017).

There are, however, some risks associated with de-sexing including the small risk of complications from the surgery itself, and an increased risk of some cancers and diseases in some breeds of dogs (in part related to the age the dog is de-sexed).

This is why the Government has included an exemption to mandatory de-sexing when there is veterinary advice that an individual dog should either not be de-sexed or not be de-sexed at a young age. Your veterinarian is the best person to discuss the pros and cons of de-sexing your dog, the age the procedure is done, and determine the best strategy for your pet based on breed, lifestyle, longevity expectations, concurrent diseases, cancer risks, and other considerations for intact and de-sexed dogs.

In addition to veterinary exemptions, dogs that are intended to be used for breeding purposes will be exempt from de-sexing. Owners of dogs intended to be used for breeding purposes will be required to register as a breeder for their dog to be exempt (further information on dog breeder registration can be found in this paper in the 'Centralised registration system' section).

Greyhounds that are registered with Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RWVA) will be exempt from the requirement to be de-sexed as they are regulated under the *Racing and Wagering Western Australia Act 2003*. Greyhounds that are not registered with RWVA are not part of this class of dogs, and will be subject to the de-sexing provisions under the Dog Act.







Image courtesy of Oscar's Law.

The Government will also be consulting directly with dog breed associations such as Dogs West, and owners of livestock working dogs, to consider how these provisions will apply to them.

A recent survey of WA local governments, with 43 out of 137 local governments responding, found that 82% of registered dogs were de-sexed.⁵ A significant number of WA dog owners are already doing the right thing. The introduction of mandatory dog de-sexing will ensure dog owners consider the benefits of de-sexing their dog and preventing unplanned litters of puppies.

⁵ DLGSC Dog and Cat Management Survey, October-November 2017. Survey of WA local governments undertaken by Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

What does this mean for me and my dog?



	DOG OWNERS	<p>All dog owners will either have to have their dog de-sexed or apply for an exemption.</p> <p>All dogs will be required to be de-sexed by the time they reach a particular age. Dog owners must provide proof of de-sexing to their local government.</p>
	DOG BREEDERS (includes any person whose dog has puppies)	<p>Dog breeders will need to register as a dog breeder on the centralised registration system in order to exempt their dog/s from being de-sexed.</p>
	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	<p>Local governments will continue to be responsible for enforcing the Dog Act, including approving dog registration applications, checking a dog's de-sexed status (as evidenced by a veterinary certificate), and updating the de-sexed details of a dog's registration.</p> <p>Local governments will be able to refuse to register a dog on the grounds the dog is not de-sexed (unless it is otherwise exempt).⁶</p>
	VETERINARIANS	<p>A veterinarian carrying out a de-sexing procedure on a dog, will be required to provide a certificate to the dog's owner confirming the dog is de-sexed.</p> <p>Where a veterinarian assesses a dog as being exempt from dog de-sexing on health and welfare grounds, they will be required to provide an exemption certificate to the dog's owner.</p>

⁶ If the owner does not de-sex their dog or obtain an exemption, they will commit an offence.



What are the benefits, issues and costs of mandatory dog de-sexing for non-breeding dogs?



Benefits	Issues	Costs
A reduction in dog breeding will lead to a reduction in the number of unwanted and unplanned dogs.	Dog owners in regional and remote communities may have limited or no access to veterinary services.	There will be an increase in demand for dog de-sexing.
A reduction of the financial and emotional burden on dog rescue organisations and shelters, dog foster carers, veterinarians, and local government authorities.	Dog owners may not want to pay the cost of de-sexing their dog, or may not be able to afford to de-sex their dog.	There may be an initial increase in the number of abandoned or surrendered dogs as a result of existing dog owners not wanting to bear the cost of de-sexing.
	Cost of de-sexing a dog can vary between veterinary practices and also varies based on other relevant factors such as the weight of the dog.	

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

5. How do you feel about mandatory dog de-sexing for non-breeding dogs?
6. Exemptions from mandatory de-sexing will apply for health and welfare reasons as assessed by a veterinarian, and if the dog owner is a registered breeder. Are there any other reasons why a dog should be exempt from being de-sexed?
7. Should mandatory dog de-sexing apply to all dogs, including existing dogs, or just dogs born after a particular date?

If you would like more information on the mandatory dog de-sexing provision and would like to provide further feedback on how mandatory dog de-sexing should be implemented, please email puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

The cost of de-sexing a dog is dependent on a range of factors including the dog's weight, age, and breed. The location of veterinary services will also impact on the cost of de-sexing a dog.

Centralised Registration System

Currently the difficulty in identifying puppy farms hinders the enforcement of relevant legislation against puppy farmers.

The Government made an election commitment to introduce a centralised registration system to ensure every dog and puppy could be identified at the point of sale or adoption, including in advertisements for sale.

The centralised registration system will be used to identify every dog or puppy by recording:

- dog registrations
- dog breeder registrations
- any change in ownership of dogs or puppies.

Essentially, the system will be a one-stop-shop for dog information. This will allow authorities to identify and monitor all dog owners and dog breeders for compliance with all relevant laws.

Dog registrations

Dog registration is one of the primary methods in establishing dog ownership in WA. One of the benefits of dog registration is that a dog can be identified and returned to its owner if found lost or wandering.

Currently, all dog owners must register their dog with their local government if the dog is aged three months or older. Every local government in WA maintains their own record of dogs registered in their district.

Under the proposal to introduce a centralised registration system, existing local government dog registers will be transitioned and absorbed into the centralised registration system.

Dog owners will be able to register their dog online on the centralised registration system, and dog registration applications can be approved online by the local government through the system.

Under the system, each dog will be issued a 'dog registration number' and all dog owners will be issued with a 'dog owner number' that is unique to the owner.



Image courtesy of Oscar's Law.

Dog breeder registration

Currently, there is no government register that records dog breeders in WA. Dog owners are not required to notify or obtain permission to breed dogs.

Following the introduction of the centralised registration system, every person who has a dog that breeds, or a dog intended to be used for breeding purposes that is not de-sexed, will be required to register as a dog breeder.

Under the Dog Act, dog owners are required to microchip their dog:

- by the time the dog is three months old; or
- before transferring a dog to another person (even if the dog is younger than three months old).

Under new provisions, a dog breeder will be required to record their details and their unique 'dog owner number' (which is issued when they register a dog) alongside the microchip details of every puppy bred from their dog/s. This will ensure that the breeder's details are permanently recorded for each dog.

Registering dog breeders, and recording the dog breeder's unique 'dog owner number' alongside the dog's microchip details, will allow authorities to identify dog breeders so they can be monitored for compliance with the law. Breaches of the Dog Act, Animal Welfare Act, dog breeding standards⁷ or any relevant Dog Local Law or By-laws could result in breeding operations being shut down by authorities and dog breeder registration cancelled. Authorities will also be able to

trace a dog back to its breeder if issues with puppies or dogs are identified, such as genetic health concerns.

The Government will be consulting directly with dog breed associations such as Dogs West, and owners of livestock working dogs, to consider how these provisions will apply to them.

Transferring a dog

Clarifying where a dog has come from can ensure that any puppy farm supply chains can be identified and stopped.

Under new provisions, any person who sells, gives away, transfers or advertises a dog will be required to provide their 'dog owner number' and the dog's microchip number. Both numbers must be provided in any advertisement that advertises dogs or puppies for sale.

If the person selling, giving away, transferring or advertising a dog alleges to have bred the dog, a consumer can verify if they are a registered breeder on the centralised registration system by searching the 'dog owner number' provided by the breeder. Consumers will be educated about only sourcing dogs from dog owners that provide their dog owner number and the dog's microchip number.

This will help members of the public source dogs and puppies from registered dog breeders that can be identified and held accountable.

⁷ These are currently under development (refer to 'Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding, Housing, Husbandry, Transport and Sale' for further information).

Registration fees

Currently:

- Owners of dogs that are not de-sexed pay a higher registration fee than dog owners of de-sexed dogs.
- Owners are able to register their dogs for an annual period, a three year period, or for a lifetime period.

Dog registration fees are expected to increase to cover the costs associated with enforcement and maintaining the centralised registration system.

Owners of dogs that are not de-sexed will only be able to register their dog annually, and will continue to pay higher registration fees than owners of de-sexed dogs. This will act as an incentive to owners of dogs that are not de-sexed to get their dog/s de-sexed. This will help to reduce the risk of unwanted or unplanned litters of puppies being born.

Dog breeders may need to pay a fee when registering as a dog breeder, to cover the costs associated with monitoring and enforcing dog breeder compliance.






What does this mean for me and my dog?

	DOG OWNERS	<p>Dog owners will be able to complete their dog registration online.⁸</p> <p>Each dog owner will be issued with a unique 'dog owner number'.</p> <p>Dog owners will be required to provide their unique 'dog owner number' and the dog's microchip number when advertising, transferring, selling or giving away their dog.</p> <p>Dog owners will pay higher dog registration fees than what they are currently paying.</p>
	DOG BREEDERS	<p>Dog breeders must register as a dog breeder on the centralised registration system.</p> <p>Dog breeders must record their 'dog owner number' on the microchip database for any puppy that is bred from their dog.</p> <p>Dog breeders will be required to provide their unique 'dog owner number' and the dog's microchip number when advertising, transferring, selling or giving away their dog.</p> <p>Registered dog breeders will be searchable on the centralised registration system.</p> <p>Dog breeders may be required to pay an annual fee to register as a dog breeder.</p>

⁸ Dog owners will also be able to mail a hard copy registration form or register in person at their local government.







What does this mean for me and my dog?

	LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	<p>Local governments will no longer be required to maintain and resource their own dog registration record system.</p> <p>Local governments will process and approve dog registrations and dog breeder registrations online.</p> <p>Local governments will be responsible for issuing registered dog breeders with a certificate which contains their unique 'dog owner number'.</p> <p>Local governments will be able to update and include information on the centralised registration system.</p> <p>Local governments will be able to identify dogs from all local government districts.</p> <p>Local governments will be responsible for enforcing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dog breeder registration • recording the dog owner number on the dog's microchip database when provided with the information.
	ENFORCEMENT AGENCY*	<p>An enforcement agency will be responsible for enforcing the requirement for a dog owner to provide certain information when advertising or transferring a dog.</p>
	STATE GOVERNMENT	<p>The State Government will be responsible for developing and maintaining the centralised registration system.</p>

*The enforcement agency will be a body that will be responsible for enforcing relevant legislative provisions. This agency is yet to be determined.



What does this mean for me and my dog?

	PUBLIC	<p>Members of the public will be able to use the system to verify whether a dog owner is a registered dog breeder.</p> <p>Members of the public will be able to report advertisements for dogs or puppies that do not contain the required information.</p>
	DOG MANAGEMENT FACILITIES AND DOG RESCUE ORGANISATIONS AND SHELTERS	<p>Facilities will be able to register dogs in their ownership and care online.</p> <p>Facilities will have online accessibility to search and update the details of dogs in their care.</p> <p>Facilities that receive abandoned or surrendered dogs will be issued with a 'dog owner number' to be recorded alongside the dog's microchip details where the breeder is unknown. This number will assist in tracking the dog.</p>
	MICROCHIP IMPLANTERS	<p>Microchip implanters will be required to provide the dog owner number of the dog's mother, and father if known, to the microchip company.</p>
	MICROCHIP COMPANIES	<p>Microchip companies will be required to record the dog owner number alongside a dog's microchip details on the microchip database for all dogs born after a particular date and to retain this information.</p> <p>This may require the addition of another field(s) in the microchip database.</p>




What are the potential benefits, issues and costs of this?

Benefits	Issues	Costs
A centralised system will make information accessible to local governments and enforcement authorities, and identify dog owners and breeders to assist local governments and enforcement authorities in monitoring and enforcing compliance with relevant laws.	Transitioning existing dog registrations onto the system will be complex.	The State Government will be responsible for the development and ongoing system support and maintenance of the centralised registration system.
The online system creates an efficient means for dog owners to register and local governments to review and process dog related applications online.	Local governments will still need to maintain their own cat registers. This may change when the Cat Act is reviewed.	Dog registration fees are likely to increase to assist in covering the costs of monitoring, enforcement and system maintenance.
The system creates the ability to trace dog breeders for enforcement purposes and to stop puppy farming.	There is the potential that consumers will continue to source dogs from unidentified dog breeders and suppliers.	The enforcement agency will be responsible for enforcing compliance with the requirement to provide particular information when transferring, selling and advertising a dog.



What are the potential benefits, issues and costs of this?

Benefits	Issues	Costs
Limiting dogs that are not de-sexed to one year registrations will be an annual prompt to the owner to reconsider de-sexing their dog, thereby potentially limiting unplanned breeding.	Enforcement against non-complaint online advertisements will be difficult to enforce. Online advertisements do not always indicate where the person who has posted the advertisement is based.	Consumer education will be required to encourage consumers to only source dogs from dog owners that advertise and provide their dog owner number and the dog's microchip number.
There will be increased dog traceability across the State and increased consumer confidence when buying a dog from a registered breeder.		Local governments will be responsible for processing dog breeder registrations, and enforcing compliance with dog breeder registration.



If you would like more information on centralised registration system and would like to provide further feedback on how this provision should be implemented, please email puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

8. How will a centralised registration system benefit you?
9. Do you think it is reasonable to increase dog registration fees for dogs that are not de-sexed to encourage de-sexing?
10. Do you support increasing dog registration fees to fund a streamlined centralised registration system and to fund enforcement activities?
11. Do you think it is reasonable for dog breeders to pay an annual registration fee to cover the cost of monitoring and enforcing dog breeder compliance?
12. Are there any other benefits, costs and/or issues associated with breeder registration that are not captured in this table? Please detail.
13. Should there be any restrictions on who can register as a dog breeder? If so, what should these be?
14. Do you think local government is best placed to enforce dog breeder registration? Why, or why not?

Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding, Housing, Husbandry, Transport and Sale

The development of mandatory standards for dog breeding, housing, husbandry, transport and sale is one pillar of the Stop Puppy Farming policy. The purpose of these standards is to ensure that the care and management of dogs and puppies provides for their health and welfare, and meets their physical, psychological and social needs.

Western Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs

Western Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs are currently under development by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). These standards will establish the minimum level of care and management required to meet dog welfare, safety and health needs and encourage the humane treatment of all dogs kept in WA. The proposed standards will be based on current scientific knowledge and reflect, as appropriate, recommended industry practices and community expectations.

The Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding are part of the WA Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs currently being developed by DPIRD.

Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding

The new Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding will establish minimum requirements for the health and welfare of dogs used for breeding, and for their puppies.

The physical, psychological and social needs of dogs used for breeding are at risk when they are kept in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, given inadequate food and water, or deprived of positive experiences and denied necessary veterinary attention. Female dogs can suffer health problems from an intense ongoing breeding cycle, and a poor early environment may affect the future physical and mental health of puppies. For these reasons, Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding are an important component of the Stop Puppy Farming Initiatives.

Under the Dog Breeder Registration proposal, every person who has an entire dog (a dog that is not de-sexed) whether used currently, or intended for future breeding purposes, will be required to register as a breeder and comply with the Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding.

Content of Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding

1. The selection of dogs for breeding

Matters that will be considered include:

- maximum and minimum age of bitches
- frequency and total number of litters
- behavioural characteristics of breeding dogs
- the presence of undesirable genetic characteristics.

2. Care and management of dogs

Matters that will be considered for adult dogs and puppies include:

- food, water and housing requirements
- health and veterinary care
- socialisation/familiarisation with other dogs and with people
- opportunity to exercise and express natural behaviours.

Proposed additional standards for commercial dog breeding establishments

The Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding are intended to apply to all dog breeders. However, consideration is being given to introducing additional requirements for breeders who keep large number of dogs and breed puppies for commercial purposes, as implemented by a number of other Australian jurisdictions. The community may expect that such commercial establishments be held accountable to higher standards.

Consideration is being given to the number of dogs that could be used to define a commercial dog breeding establishment and whether there should be an upper limit to the number of breeding dogs that a commercial breeder is allowed to keep.

As an example of an additional standard that could be applied in WA, the mandatory Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Breeding Dogs and their Progeny (Queensland) require the keeping of records on each dog for facilities that house 5 or more entire bitches of breeding age and maturity.




Similarly, Victoria has recently passed a law that limits the number of breeding dogs to be held by a business; for example by 2020, no dog breeding business may keep over 10 fertile female dogs on a property with council approval alone. For a commercial dog breeder to keep between 10 and 50 breeding dogs, Ministerial approval is required.

The community's view is sought on whether additional standards should apply for breeders who keep large number of dogs and breed puppies for commercial purposes.

Consultation

In addition to this consultation on the Stop Puppy Farming initiatives, DPIRD will provide an opportunity for public comment on the WA Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs. Comments submitted to this Stop Puppy Farming Consultation Paper will also be taken into account in the drafting of the standards and guidelines document.

What does this mean for me?

	DOG OWNERS	<p>Under the proposed WA Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Dogs (once developed), all dog owners will need to comply with minimum standards for housing, husbandry, transport and sale to ensure the health and welfare of their dog.</p>
	DOG OWNERS THAT WISH TO BREED A DOG OR DOGS	<p>Under the Dog Breeder registration proposal, dog breeders will be required to register as a dog breeder on the centralised registration system.</p> <p>Registered dog breeders will need to comply with the Mandatory Standards for Dog Breeding, and give regulatory authorities reasonable access to their premises to check compliance with the Standards.</p> <p>It is proposed that commercial dog breeding establishments will need to comply with additional standards.</p>
	VETERINARIANS	<p>New requirements for veterinary health checks of breeding dogs are proposed.</p>











What are the benefits, issues and costs of mandatory dog breeding standards?

Benefits	Issues	Costs
Better health and welfare of breeding dogs and puppies.	Need to establish legal requirements for dogs to be used for breeding (breeding age and frequency, physical and mental health, checks by veterinarians).	Increase in the cost of puppies and dogs may be seen if there is an insufficient supply to satisfy demand.
Increased consumer confidence that a dog has been bred in accordance with mandatory breeding standards that support dog health and welfare.	Dog owners and carers in regional and remote communities may have limited or no access to veterinarians.	Costs of buying and keeping dogs are higher due to regulatory requirements.
Reduction in number of unplanned puppies.	Breeding dogs may be surrendered or abandoned if compliance with standards is not feasible or too costly.	Increased cost for dog breeders e.g. if mandatory veterinary health checks are required.
Reduction in number of surrendered or abandoned dogs.	Reduced consumer choice because there are fewer puppies available for purchase, especially of mixed breed.	Additional cost to enforce the new requirements.



What are the benefits, issues and costs of mandatory breeding standards?



Benefits	Issues	Costs
Reduced burden on relevant government and non-government organisations e.g. dog pounds and shelters.		
Dogs are more suitable as companion animals due to better conditions of production and sale.		
Reduced number of dogs with behavioural problems due to poor care and socialisation.		
Reduced risk to human health and welfare as a result of dog behaviour (aggression, road accidents, etc.)		

GUIDANCE QUESTIONS

15. Should people who breed dogs have to comply with minimum standards for the health and welfare of their dogs?

16. Should there be any restrictions on who can register as a dog breeder? If so, what should these be?

17. Should the number of litters that a bitch can produce be restricted by law?

18. Should people who breed dogs for commercial gain be required to meet additional Mandatory Dog Breeding Standards?

19. If you said 'yes' to question 18, should this be based on:

- a. keeping a defined number of breeding dogs?
- b. if so, what number?
- c. any other criteria?

Next Steps

The Government will be undertaking targeted consultation to determine how each option will be implemented. To find out more information about implementation, email puppyfarming@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

The stop puppy farming provisions will be reviewed after their implementation to determine their effectiveness in preventing puppy farming and reducing the number of unwanted and unplanned dogs.



