

PRESIDENT:

Email:



SECRETARY:

Email:



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

SUBMISSION BY TENTERFIELD TERRIER BREED CLUB OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA STOP PUPPY FARMING PROJECT

The Tenterfield Terrier is Australia's newest breed, having been accepted by the Australian National Kennel Council in 2002. Formerly called mini foxies, the dogs have been around since colonial times and have developed from various terriers introduced into Australia for hunting rats and rabbits. They are now a popular pet with a name that was chosen because of its links to the Tenterfield Saddler in NSW who owned the dogs for over twenty years. There is a big demand for the breed because they are small, active, intelligent and loving. They make great pets for families, the elderly and people living in small properties.

The WA club was established in 1992. It now has a small but dedicated group of fifty members, but has only four DogsWest registered breeders trying to meet the increasing demand for this healthy, small, active dog. There are also clubs in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The Tenterfield Terrier Club of Western Australia is a breed club dedicated to the health welfare and promotion of the breed. We are affiliates of the National Tenterfield Terrier Breed Council, The Canine Association of Western Australia (DogsWest) and the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC). Our members include ANKC - registered breeders of Tenterfield Terriers, breed fanciers, trainers, behaviourists, health care/ veterinary professionals and pet owners.

Our ANKC-registered breeders are accountable for the health, parentage, breeding environment and registration of the puppies they produce, and there are a variety of mechanisms to ensure that accountability. They are bound by a comprehensive constitution that includes a Code of Conduct and agree to a Code of Ethics. These codes are enforceable by DogsWest.

The National Tenterfield Terrier Council is dedicated to breeding a sturdy and devoted terrier which has almost no health issues. With positive and quick action, and with extensive testing and selective breeding, we have significantly reduced the occurrence of two diseases that appear in smaller breeds - slipping patella and Primary Lens Luxation - to almost nil.

All our breeders are members of DogsWest and must register all progeny whether pets or kept for breeding stock. They must provide comprehensive information to each puppy buyer for the care, welfare, appropriate housing, training and socialisation of every puppy sold. As members of our State controlling body it is compulsory that all breeders must register all puppies born, and it is also compulsory for each puppy to be microchipped prior to going to their new homes. The breeder is also responsible for the transfer of the microchip into the new owner's name.

Mandatory desexing

We vehemently oppose the mandatory sterilization of our breed, and in fact of any breed, at any age, except where required for medical reasons because of the wealth of scientific evidence showing permanent desexing has adverse consequences for dogs, including the:

- a) Reduced lifespan of dogs which have been permanently desexed. The Government states that permanent desexing will increase a dog's longevity, but the scientific evidence does not support this position at all, and in fact shows their longevity is reduced,
- b) Increased risk of cancer in dogs that have been permanently desexed, particularly in bitches. The Government states that permanent desexing will improve the health of dogs, but this is not supported by the scientific evidence.
- c) Desexing at any age increases the risk of urinary incontinence in both dogs and bitches and the need to medicate dogs for the rest of their lives to manage this problem
- d) Scientific research shows that male dogs that are permanently desexed at a young age, are likely to develop increased fear aggression and anxiety later in life, increasing the risk that they will become unmanageable as family pets and be dumped in rescues and/or euthanised.

Certain medical conditions in the dog only develop or become apparent with age. Mandatory desexing will remove from the gene pool healthy dogs free of such conditions; which in a small state such as Western Australia is disastrous for our ANKC registered breeders' ongoing pursuit of the eradication of such medical conditions via breeding to dogs free of such conditions and traits.

We are also aware that all the surgical methods of desexing bitches have some downsides, and so many members do not want to desex their bitches once they are no longer at their peak for breeding and showing.

As experienced dog owners we are aware that there are many dogs which are poor candidates for surgical desexing, such as any aged dogs and dogs with heart conditions.

Conformation showing is principally based on exhibiting entire dogs/bitches from young pups through to fully mature adults and veterans. Mandatory desexing will destroy our sport in Western Australia and throughout Australia.

Our pure breed is the product of generations of selective breeding to produce a dog /bitch suited for a specific purpose living in association with its human family (which includes the mental stability and the physical health and endurance to undertake those designated tasks). While some people prefer a cross bred dog, many others love their pure breeds for their consistent temperament, character, working functions, size and confirmation. In a small State such as Western Australia, mandatory desexing will result in far fewer pure breed dogs being available which we feel is to the detriment of our dog-loving community.

Some of our members already have in place contracts requiring the sterilization of dogs sold as pets including the offer of incentives (monetary reimbursement) for the sterilization of their pets at a more appropriate age on the production of their veterinary sterilization certificate.

We believe that education and incentives are the most effective approach to preventing indiscriminate breeding of dogs.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Government's Consultation Paper which states:
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.

We believe this commonsense and practical approach is the way to go in terms of the issue of desexing dogs, and state again that we are strongly opposed to mandatory desexing of dogs.

Mandatory desexing – Breeder's terms

Members who are DogsWest breeders often place dogs in pet homes where the agreement is that the breeder retains the breeding rights to the dog. Those dogs should be linked to breeder registration numbers so their records can be kept up to date in relation to breeding and desexing. Many dogs live full and happy lives as companion animals in a loving home and are occasionally used by their ANKC Registered Breeder in their breeding program.

Dogs held on breeder's terms from a DogsWest breeder, should be exempt from mandatory desexing – they are part of the wider DogsWest community of dogs and may be crucial to maintaining a wide gene pool for the breeding of healthy pure breed dogs.

Restrictions under the WA Dog Act make it very difficult for many DogsWest breeders to maintain a breeding program, without the ability to have dogs in their wider community. Some dogs are also shown from that wider community, with the dog living in a companion home, but shown by the breeder of the dog. They must be exempt.

Registering owners of entire dogs as a 'Registered Breeder' with their Local Government

As ANKC registered breeders our members are required to meet the highest standards in housing, breeding and raising dogs, ensuring that we raise healthy, well adjusted pure-breed pups for a variety of purposes - as pets; as performance and working dogs; to maintain our breeds to be 'fit for purpose' and to protect them from extinction; and to enable the Western Australian dog-loving community to take part in our wonderful conformation and other dog sports.

My concern is that you are lumping all breeders in together, regardless of what they breed and how – and how are you going to police them?

DogsWest has set the bar high when it comes to the breeding of pure breed dogs – and we must be on the DogsWest / ANKC Register.

Why should DogsWest Members have to be on another breeder register, when they must comply with so many rules to become a Member and to remain one?

We are not opposed to others breeding dogs in a caring, safe and appropriate environment – DogsWest Members cannot meet the market demand to maintain dog ownership in Western Australia, but DogsWest members are already on the ANKC Register, recognised Australia Wide – they do not need to be on another register.

This is double red tape, an administrative nightmare for the Local Government, more costs for no benefit, and we cannot see any useful purpose in this proposal.

We urge the State Government to EXEMPT DogsWest Members and ANKC Registered Breeders from the requirement of also being registered by their Local Government as registered breeders.

Giving an exemption to DogsWest Members and ANKC Registered Breeders will provide a clear point of difference between them and other Breeders 'approved' by and registered with their Local Government: we must meet the highest standards of welfare, to breed our dogs and raise pure breed puppies with a pedigree guaranteeing their lineage and breed with these Regulations and Code of Ethics for breeding and selling puppies with an after sale service strictly enforced by DogsWest; while Local Government 'approved' registered breeders will only be required to meet (to date unknown) specified minimum standards for housing and selling their puppies – IF and only if these minimum standards are strictly and consistently enforced by the Government.

Transition pet shops to adoption centres sourcing dogs only from accredited rescue organizations and shelters

We vehemently oppose the proposal to transition pet shops to adoption centres to sell rescue dogs and puppies. We strongly believe that pet shops should be legally barred from keeping and selling any puppies and dogs; and from acting as an intermediary in the sale and purchase of puppies and dogs.

Our wealth of experience in raising pups and rearing and socialising young dogs tells us that a shop is not a good environment in which to keep them until they are sold; and is not a good environment in which to sell pups and young dogs. Our reasoning for this is that most puppies are being sourced from commercial producers and back yard breeders who are only after personal financial benefits and do nothing to ensure the betterment of any breed through even basic measures such as health checks or temperament testing prior to puppies being sold to shops.

ANKC Registered breeders generally have waiting lists for people wanting to purchase a puppy and contracts that require the return of the puppy to the breeder if no longer wanted to ensure the puppy is not on sold or given away by the purchaser.

Our members also provide puppy information packs that inform and educate purchasers to help ensure that puppies purchased do not end up abandoned or surrendered due to buyer ignorance about being a companion pet owner.

Our members also thoroughly vet and 'interrogate' potential purchasers of their pups long before pups leave the Breeder for their new homes; and if they are not happy about the circumstances of the potential purchasers or feel something is 'not quite right', then a pup won't be sold to them.

However, retail shops selling pups will encourage and promote impulse buying of a cute pup or a sad looking rescue dog, etc. It is a nonsense to suggest that potential purchasers will be adequately vetted and checked by the retailer to match the pup/dog to the purchaser. This in turn we think will lead to more pups/dogs being poorly raised and end up in a dog rescue/shelter situation.

Transitioning pet shops to sell only rescue dogs is a recipe for disaster in our view. Dogs which find themselves in a rescue or shelter facility have arrived there because of being neglected, abused, traumatised in some other way, lost, etc or because their loving owners can no longer care for them. All these dogs have and continue to experience extreme stress, anxiety with many also suffering ongoing medical problems.

Breed rescue services

The Tenterfield Terrier Club of Western Australia (as do many breed clubs) runs a breed rescue service that is fully resourced from fundraising through our club members, all of whom are volunteers.

This service is provided free of charge for any Tenterfield Terriers unable to be returned to the breeder for various reasons. eg. where we are unable to establish the identity of the dog (no microchip and or registration papers), where the breeder is unable to accommodate the return of the dog(s), or where the breeder is unregistered ie not a member of DogsWest.

The breed rescue service provides breed identification, shelter and food, veterinary care, spay / neutering, microchipping, temperament assessment and retraining as necessary prior to rehoming. Members and Clubs who run breed specific rescues must abide by DogsWest Rules and Regulations, so they cannot supply any dog, for any reason, to a pet shop.

Many DogsWest members and Affiliated Clubs use their breed experience and expertise which makes them ideal for providing rescue services, when they can, and some rescues have waiting lists of people who are looking for an older or second dog. DogsWest has rules and regulations that require a certain level of care, responsibility and ethics in relation to the dogs our members breed. If they wish to 'rescue' or rehome the dogs they have bred, or assist other breeders or the breed in general, then they should be exempt from accreditation by the Government.

There is a large demand for our breed, however, having been recognised only in 2002 we have a very low number of dogs in our gene pool compared to many other breeds. We run a Development Register which is managed by the National Tenterfield Terrier Council on behalf of the ANKC and this allows dogs that show Tenterfield Terrier type to be registered as first-generation Tenterfield Terriers. There has always been a concern about the low number of stock in our breed, however, our registered breeders throughout Australia manage their breeding to ensure pedigrees are as unrelated as possible. Any reduction in our gene pool due to the mandatory de-sexing legislation will be a disaster for the future of our breed.

Gary Fulton
PRESIDENT
TENTERFIELD TERRIER CLUB OF WA (Inc).

Via email.