

Submission from:

Claire Jensen

Owner/Director, The Paw House Boarding Kennels



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**Pet shops** As I stated in my personal submission, I don't believe that pets should be sold from pet shops/ stores full stop. The existing rescue organisations carry out background checks on new owners, and do pre-adoption property checks. In the case of the Animal Protection Society of WA, they do this and combine it with vaccinations, sterilisation and vet checks to then "sell" the dog for under \$500. They do all of this to reduce the likelihood of these animals re-entering the rescue process in the future. What pet shop is going to be so thorough? They currently charge \$Thousands to anyone prepared to stump up the funds, and are one of the major sources of dogs who will be abandoned – yet you think they are a solution? This approach you are suggesting has failed EVERYWHERE it has been tried before. The issue is not with the type of pets available through pet shops - it is the fact that as it stands, and as it's proposed, people will still be able to walk into a pet shop and walk out with a pet, having given little thought or consideration to the responsibility involved. The only way I see this working is if the pet shops become a reference centre of sorts without physically having dogs on the premises available to instantly purchase – any enquiries for a dog that get made at a pet shop store front can be then directed to a reputable ANKC registered breeder, or to a registered accredited rescue, with the pet shop receiving a small commission on sales made perhaps? Or some kind of reciprocal referral service from breeders/rescues to send their new owners to said pet shop for food/supplies etc.

**Mandatory de-sexing:** My husband & I run a successful dog boarding kennel. We have a financially vested interest in this proposed legislation. We also breed & exhibit pure bred dogs and we have submitted personal responses in relation to that.

We would like to raise concerns in relation to compulsory de-sexing of dogs. We are very concerned that this will bring about a down-turn in business.

We have a varied customer base, some pedigree dogs, lots of x-breed dogs, some rescued, some raised from puppies.

We have invested in real estate in an area that is zoned for kennels. We have invested in infrastructure, personal education/training to keep relevant, we have built up a good reputation and have a modest but successful business. Our investment is significant.

We do not condone the concept of dogs being bred in disgusting conditions and we do appreciate that you are trying to eradicate that type of breeding however, your proposal is so wide sweeping that a lot of our boarders would not be in existence if your proposal had been implemented 10 years ago and the boarders I refer to were not bred by your target group.

A lot of people need dogs in their lives. For many of our customers their dogs are the only source of company they have during the day and sometimes the night. I ask that you rethink your proposal on such a blanket de-sexing policy.

Not only will it impact on small businesses like ours, with an estimated \$7b spent annually on pets in this Country it will also have an impact on many others.

To an extent I am generally in favour of de-sexing for most companion animals in pet homes - but most definitely NOT in favour of the blanket nature of the regulation proposed, particularly in regard to the recommended age stated in the proposal. At the DogsWest presentation we attended you conceded that this was a bad idea at the young age proposed. It was claimed that this was “the best information available in 2013”. This is clearly a cop-out – all current research, and indeed research from several years ago, supports the benefits of desexing when necessary **after** maturity. This does vary between breeds but in general I would suggest most dogs should not be desexed prior to approx.. 9 – 12 months of age, older for larger breeds.

Your paper suggests that de-sexing must be the removal of all reproductive organs, testes, ovaries, and uterus. I strongly believe the proposal should be amended to include ovary sparing spay & vasectomised dogs as being correctly sterilised – this is a much better option, especially in the case of larger breeds who require their hormones to develop normally. I have seen so many dogs over the 20+ years I have been working in and around the pet care/boarding industry that suffer from incontinence & hypoplastic (recessed/undeveloped) vulvas due to being desexed too young – which then cause life long maintenance & medication issues. We see on a daily basis the impact this has on our clients’ lives and we implore you not to contribute to this problem by making desexing at an early age mandatory.

**So to recap.**

- We believe mandatory de-sexing will have an eventual but inevitable impact on ours, and many other boarding kennel businesses.
- We believe that mandatory de-sexing will contribute to unwanted health issues as we already see the results of early de-sexing in particular on many of our customers in our boarding facility.

**Central Registry:** How will this work for us? We hold a kennel licence to keep up to X number of dogs. We pay a yearly registration fee which covers our dogs registrations and our kennel licence. We advise the shire every year of the numbers of dogs we have in our ownership and our personal dogs get recorded on a database. We pay a yearly fee of \$200 for our kennel/dog registrations.

If you do not maintain this practise we will suddenly have to pay a per dog licence which many of us may find prohibitive, especially as the very nature of boarding kennels is that it is seasonal. At some periods during the year we have very few dogs on the premises – changing our registration fees to a “per dog” charge will be costly, unwieldy, hard to implement & will target us unfairly. As Dogs West breeders our own dogs are already registered with Dogs West and we are seeking an exemption to having to register again as breeders on your database. We understand you will seek to extract that data from DW. I also ask you to maintain the current practice of the bulk registration, particularly where people in the kennel zones are dog breeders.

Historically the dogs in the kennel zone prove to be very little work for the local governments, with very few, if any, call outs in relation to dogs owned by residents.

**Mandatory minimum standards:** Kennel Zoning is unique to Western Australia. There is no information in previous models that would be applicable to us. We, in the kennel zones, have jumped through hoops, spent many thousands of dollars to build infrastructure which is compliant with Local Government By-Laws. Most of us have been subjected to some type of inspection from time to time.

A lot of us exceed expectations of the Local Government. The majority of us maintain our kennels to a high standard, as doing so is imperative to the health and safety of our dogs and our boarders. Please keep in mind the value of the kennel zones for those of us who provide a valuable service to the community in terms of boarding, dog breeding and also other businesses such as grooming, therapies, training etc.

We should not be adversely affected by your decisions in this space. What we have is a great working model for dog care. A place where breeders can live and boarding kennels can exist with very little impact on others and the environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into your proposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Jensen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Claire Jensen