

1 August 2018

Stop Puppy Farming
Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
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**SUBMISSION BY WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BEAGLE CLUB (INC)
STOP PUPPY FARMING PROJECT**

The Western Australian Beagle Club (WABC) was established in 1985 and is a breed club dedicated to the health welfare and promotion of the Beagle breed. With a membership base of 50 members. In 1959 the club became affiliated with the National Beagle Breed Council, and is also affiliated with the Canine Association of Western Australia (DogsWest) and the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC). Our members include ANKC - registered breeders of Beagles, breed fanciers and pet owners.

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

Our breeders are members of DogsWest and they register all progeny whether they are placed in pet homes, in show homes or kept for breeding stock. Our breeders also carry out some health testing although this is not compulsory. They provide comprehensive information to puppy buyers 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:

The WABC vehemently opposes the mandatory sterilization of our breed, and in fact of any breed, at any age, except where required for medical reasons.

Conformation showing is principally based on exhibiting entire dogs/bitches from young puppies 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. 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.

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

Your veterinarian is the best person to discuss the pros and cons of desexing 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 desexed dogs.

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

Mandatory Desexing – Breeder's terms:

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.

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, they should 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 dogs for a variety of purposes - as pets; as performance and working dogs; to maintain and protect the breed; and to enable the Western Australian dog-loving community to take part in our wonderful conformation and other dog sports.

We vehemently oppose any requirement for ANKC registered Breeders and DogsWest Members to also be required to be registered by their Local Government as Breeders simply because we do not want to sterilise our dogs.

The Local Government already holds records of the dogs registered in their municipalities and whether they are entire or desexed. Owners of these dogs pay registration fees based on them being entire or desexed. This will add another layer to the bureaucratic and administrative nightmare for the Local Government, with additional costs for no benefit, 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.

Transition pet shops to adoption centres sourcing dogs only from accredited rescue organisations 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.

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

Our members also thoroughly vet 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 then a pup will not be sold to them.

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

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

The WABC hopes that the comments contained in our submission are received favourably.



Sue Langmair
Secretary
WA Beagle Club (Inc)

