



The Hon Mark Furner MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries

Our ref: CTS 04609/20
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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Services
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 18 February 2020 regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 3234-19: *Improved management of companion animals*.

The petition calls for restrictions on the number of dog breeders; mandatory de-sexing of cats and dogs; to prohibit the advertising of animals on sites such as Gumtree and the Trading Post; educating the community about dogs; and harsher penalties for animal neglect and abuse.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing standards and legislation to ensure responsible animal ownership and management.

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* provides Local Government with a range of tools to effectively manage cats and dogs in the community. The Act aims to reduce the numbers of unwanted cats and dogs by providing for identification and registration systems that allow animals to be reunited with their owners.

When the Act was drafted, it did not include mandatory de-sexing of cats and dogs because the ability to enforce such provisions was considered impractical. The Act does promote de-sexing through offering incentives such as reduced registration fees for de-sexed animals. These incentives aim to reduce the breeding population of dogs in the community and reduce the number of unwanted dogs being potentially euthanased by shelters and pounds.

The Palaszczuk Government has implemented a suite of provisions to regulate the welfare of puppy breeding, including: registration of dog breeders and the use of unique supply breeder numbers (Breeder Identification Number) when advertising, selling or otherwise rehoming dogs; standards and guidelines for the breeding of dogs; and mandatory welfare standards for dog breeding. In addition, Local Governments may set standards for domestic and commercial keeping of dogs within their local areas. All breeders, irrespective of the size of their enterprises, must meet mandatory welfare standards, comply with breeder registration obligations and observe council requirements.

The requirement to provide a Breeder Identification Number for all advertising and supply of dogs, including sites such as Gumtree and the Trading Post, allows tracing back to the breeder regardless of the method of advertising. The number also allows the public to contact the breeder to seek information about a dog they wish to buy or have purchased.

All dog breeders in Queensland are subject to the compliance standards, duty of care and cruelty provisions outlined in the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA). The mandatory welfare standards for dog breeding are prescribed in the *Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012* under the Act. The ACPA has significant penalties compared with legislation in other Australian States and Territories. A breach of the duty of care provisions can potentially result in a fine of \$40 035 or one year's imprisonment. A breach of cruelty can potentially result in a fine of \$266 900 or three years' imprisonment.

The Palaszczuk Government endorses responsible pet ownership and works hard to achieve positive and sustainable improvements through educating the whole community on pet ownership, duty of care obligations and standards of care. The Government provides the school based 'Help an Animal Smile' program to educate the next generation of animal owners on how to properly care for their animals.

While I commend the concerns of the petitioners for good welfare outcomes for dog breeding in Queensland, I am not satisfied the suggested changes in legislation are warranted at this time.

If you require further information, I encourage you to contact my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely



MARK FURNER MP

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