



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

Our ref: CTS 18900/21
Your ref: A756509

16 September 2021

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 3 September 2021 regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 3455-21: *The cruelty of Puppy Breeding Factories, also called Puppy Farms*.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing legislation and standards that not only ensure effective animal management and protect the welfare of animals in Queensland, but that also meet community expectations.

Please note that the Palaszczuk Government has implemented a suite of provisions to regulate the welfare of puppy breeding. The *Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016* commenced on 26 May 2017 and introduced the compulsory registration of all dog breeders and the use of Breeder Identification Numbers (BINs) when advertising, selling, or otherwise rehoming dogs under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (AMCDA).

The requirement to provide a BIN when advertising and/or supplying dogs enables tracing back to the breeder in the event of an animal management or welfare incident. It also allows the public to contact the breeder should they want to seek information about a dog they wish to buy or have purchased. It is not intended to restrict breeder behaviour or opportunity but does provide a tool to identify a breeder that may fail to meet dog breeder requirements.

On 1 October 2018 a mandatory Code of practice for the breeding of dogs (the Code) commenced under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA) and supporting Regulation. It contains minimum animal welfare standards for all breeding dogs and their progeny, irrespective of the size of the enterprise. The Code outlines acceptable breeding practices and standards for breeding dogs. It was developed by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in consultation with Dogs Queensland, the RSPCA, and the Queensland Racing Industry Commission. The ACPA and supporting Regulation and the Code are available at: www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

The Code provides that a dog used for breeding must be physically mature, fit, and healthy, or has been examined by a veterinary surgeon who reasonably considers the dog is ready for breeding. This is deemed a more appropriate measure of a dog's fitness for breeding than placing caps on litter numbers.

The Palaszczuk Government is not aware of any evidence that larger dog breeding enterprises inherently deliver poorer welfare outcomes. Regardless of size, all breeders are subject to the same animal welfare standards, duty of care, and cruelty provisions outlined in the ACPA, the Code, and the breeder requirements in the AMCDA.

From an animal welfare perspective, the sale of animals through a pet shop does not represent a breach of the ACPA provided the animals are healthy and cared for properly. The Queensland Code of Practice for Pet Shops (Pet Shop Code) contains guidelines on how to achieve acceptable standards of animal welfare in a pet shop context. The Pet Shop Code was developed in consultation with industry, dog and cat interest groups, animal welfare organisations, and the Australian Veterinary Association. The community also provided input through a public consultation process. The code is available at: www.daf.qld.gov.au.

In the event of a pet shop failing to care for animals properly, the department considers the current provisions of the ACPA to be adequate in addressing the welfare of the animals and for prosecuting offenders if necessary.

There are also provisions in the ACPA about humane killing, care, exercise, and accommodation for breeding dogs. These are concerns raised in the petition. Moreover, the ACPA authorises government inspectors to enforce compliance using a range of tools pursuant to their statutory powers to investigate, collect evidence, and enforce.

I encourage anyone who becomes aware of specific incidents where breeding dogs are not cared for properly to lodge a complaint with the RSPCA on telephone 1300 264 625 or with Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 so the matter can be investigated.

While I acknowledge the petitioners and their concern for good welfare outcomes for dog breeding, I am satisfied the current provisions in the AMCDA, ACPA, Code of practice for the breeding of dogs, and the Pet Shop Code are sufficient to ensure the necessary protection and care of breeding dogs in Queensland at this time.

If your office requires further information, please contact my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely



MARK FURNER MP

**Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and
Minister for Rural Communities**