



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

Our ref: CTS 03070/22

11 March 2022

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie,

Thank you for your letter of 24 February 2022 regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 3638-21 on 22 February 2022 on the subject: Stop 'puppy farms' – review and strengthen current state legislation.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing legislation and standards that ensure the welfare of all animals in Queensland, and that meet community expectations. I thank the petitioners for bringing their views to my attention.

Animal cruelty is not tolerated in Queensland. Under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA), penalties of up to \$275 700 or three years imprisonment apply to a person who is convicted of being cruel to an animal. The ACPA also places a duty of care on any person in charge of an animal, including a dog breeder while the dogs are in their care. This duty of care requires a person in charge of an animal to provide appropriate food and water, accommodation or living conditions, opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour, treatment of disease or injury. A person with this duty of care must also ensure that any handling, including confinement and transport, is appropriate. The maximum penalty for a breach of the duty of care is \$41 355 or one year's imprisonment.

Animal welfare is front-and-centre of the Queensland Government's policy on the breeding of dogs. The petition recommends that mandatory standards be maintained and enforced. Since 2017, dog breeders have been required to comply with a mandatory Code of Practice for Breeding of Dogs made under the ACPA. The Code of Practice is set out in Schedule 3A of the Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2012, and includes specific requirements about food, water, accommodation, seeking veterinary treatment in certain circumstances, ensuring breeding dogs are fit and healthy, and grooming.

The petition calls for 'a rigorous Breeder Identification Number (BIN) with conditions, proof of expertise, cost and renewal fees'. Previous and current Labor Governments have acted to ensure that such a rigorous system exists.

In 2008, the *Animal Management Cats and Dogs Act 2008* (AMCDA) enacted by the Bligh Government established a registration scheme for dog breeders, including a BIN, with limited exceptions including if a breeder was accredited by an approved accreditation entity.

In 2016, the Palaszczuk Government built on this foundation by implementing its election commitment *Protecting Puppies – Labor’s Plan to Shut Down Cruel Puppy Farms*. The *Animal Management (Protecting Puppies) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2016* (the 2016 amendments) introduced an annual requirement to renew registration (with an associated fee). Provisions for the cancellation or suspension of registration were also introduced. A breeder may be suspended immediately if there is an immediate and serious risk to the welfare of dogs, or of harm to the effectiveness of the registration scheme. A show-cause process will follow and may lead to cancellation of the registration. A registration may also be cancelled if the breeder is convicted of an animal welfare offence in Queensland or another Australian jurisdiction.

The 2016 amendments also prohibited the advertising and supply of dogs without a relevant supply number (which could be a BIN, an accreditation number, an equivalent identification issued in another state or territory, or in limited cases an exemption number). This means that it is possible to identify any animals sold outside the breeder registration system.

The petitioners’ request for State and Local Governments to work together is fully supported and is indeed what happens in Queensland. The ACPA and the AMCDA both allow for information sharing between agencies. Local Government is empowered to enforce the registration and supply of dogs within their area in accordance with the AMCDA. Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Queensland Inc. (RSPCA) are responsible for enforcing the ACPA and proactively share information with respect to investigations and intelligence gathering on a continuous basis

Any person who has concerns about animal welfare in relation to a specific dog breeder, puppy or dog is encouraged to make a report to the RSPCA on 1300 264 625 or to DAF on 13 25 23, where there is no local RSPCA office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Furner". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MARK FURNER MP
Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and
Minister for Rural Communities