



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

Our ref: CTS 17817/22
Your ref: A960681

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31/10/2022

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
petitions@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 13 October 2022 regarding the petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, No. 3825-22 tabled on 12 October 2022, on the subject of banning 'puppy farms'.

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.

Under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA), penalties of up to \$287 500 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, and 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 \$43 125 or one year's imprisonment. On 12 May 2022, I introduced the Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022 in the Queensland Parliament which, if passed, will provide a penalty of up to \$287 500 for the most serious breaches of the duty of care.

Animal welfare is front-and-centre of the Queensland Government's policy on the breeding of dogs.

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.

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 breeder identification number (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.

State and Local Governments work together on enforcement. 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.

If you require further information, please contact my office on 07 3719 7420.

Yours sincerely



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