

STOP PUPPY FARMING! ■ Will it?

Where did all the dogs go?

In a state with already restrictive dog ownership laws and not many 'dog breeding' friendly councils, it's incredibly difficult to be a small ethical breeder in WA. With these new laws, it's about to get more difficult and much more expensive. Yet large-scale government endorsed commercial puppy farms will thrive as pet shops start snapping up kennel properties to reinvent themselves. In the future you will be likely to source your next pet from; a large-scale commercial breeding facility, breeders that live in the kennel zone, government "registered" backyard breeders, rescues or interstate purchase. But missing from this list, is the 'small-scale pedigree Dogs West breeder' who have dedicated their lives to the breeds that they love — they are likely to be the unintended victims of this legislation.

Here's why

There are many responsible breeders who live outside the kennel zone. Since they can't keep multiple dogs in their council area, small breeders need to home dogs in responsible pet homes for possible future access for breeding.

The mandatory desexing laws will shrink the already small gene pool. Under the new scheme to access their breeding dogs, a small breeder would have to:

1. Pay a yearly 'breeder permit' for each their pet owners
(so their pet owners can keep their dogs 'intact' incase the breeder may want to breed from that dog in the future)
2. Pay the difference of each non-desexed council registration for their pet owners.
3. Pay for their own yearly 'breeder permit'
4. Pay for their own dog registration fees
5. Pay for their yearly Dogs West breeders prefix registration fees.

That is, if the council allows them to register as a "breeder" — which they may not. You may not breed a litter for years, but you will still need to pay continual annual fees to the government. Doing this would be cost prohibitive for the average small ethical breeder, whose expenses are already high because when you breed puppies ethically, it is a very costly exercise.

So why not move to the kennel zone?

There are only two major kennel zones in Perth and kennel properties in Southern River are currently on the market for \$750,000 - 100,000+ (Source: Trovit 2018) which the average small breeder can not afford: 1. They don't breed their dogs for profit. 2. They already have a job and can not afford to run a dog boarding business to offset the cost of owning a kennel property. 3. They simply can not afford a \$750,000 mortgage to be able to breed a litter every few years. 4. Most of their money is poured into their dogs and their care.

Lack of dog-friendly Councils

The state government has stated in the consultation meetings, that councils may only refuse a breeders permit “if the person has been found guilty of an offence under the dog act, cat act or animal welfare act” but some councils already refuse the right to breed, even if you have a 3 dog permit (e.g.: City of Belmont ²) and more and more councils are removing/discouraging their multi or 6 dog license schemes (e.g.: Shire of Mundaring ³).

1. <https://australia.trovit.com/property/kennels-wa>

2. <http://www.belmont.wa.gov.au/Community/Rangers/Documents/Application%20-%20Keeping%20of%20Three%20Dogs.pdf>

3. <https://www.mundaring.wa.gov.au/News/Pages/New%20Dog%20Laws%20in%20Shire%20of%20Mundaring.aspx>

What can we do?

People still want ethically sourced pets and they should be allowed get them. Councils need to be more open-minded to the idea of small-scale breeders with dogs that live in the homes, not kennels. Perhaps a ‘small breeders license’ could be considered as long as they; pose no nuisance to neighbours, dogs are safely kept on the premises and waste is hygienically disposed of. I know number of breeders searching for a property suitable for breeding and have been searching for 18 plus months with no avail. These are the ethical breeders we should be supporting, yet they are unable to find anywhere to breed their dogs.

Will this legislation stop puppy farmers and backyard breeders?

Sadly no, but it is very possibly will stop a good breeders. Why? Small ethical breeders pour money, time and passion .. and more money .. into their dog hobby (of which breeding is only a part). They are continually reinvesting in their dogs future with; heath-testing, top vet care, grooming, premium raw home prepared diets, the best home environment, stimulation, training, time invested in raising systems such as ‘puppy culture’, importing dogs from overseas to improve the gene pool and the most important investment of all, love and care. Few make a profit or even break even after a litter and then placing their pups in the best homes, and if they do, it goes straight back into their breeding program.

Will this stop puppy farmers?

Backyard puppy farmers who are profiting from breeding, will continue to breed their dogs and dispose them when they stop being profitable. They sell to people who pay the most for the dogs — not to the best homes. They can afford to pay additional “breeder registration” fees as it’s a profitable business when you don’t invest anything back in and you treat your animals as ‘disposable breeding machines’. More likely though, they will just ignore the law, and keep on doing what they’re doing, moving from rented property to rented property, changing their names and exploiting animals. The only way to stop these people is catch them in the act and give them severe fines with jail sentences, for the abuse and cruelty incurred to these animals. A friend who’s an elderly pensioner, rescued one such dog. A nine year old bitch still lactating from her last litter before being tossed away. She had been kept in a cage all her life in a backyard puppy farm in Rockingham. I told my friend, that under the proposed legislation she would have to get her desexed, and her words were “no-one will EVER

touch this girl again, she's been through enough". And I do believe, she is quite right. Without a cap on litters and limits on age of breeding and rest periods, puppy farming will never ever stop. Should the only dogs available be the offspring of the irresponsible? The current proposal simply gives irresponsible 'breeders' a permit to breed for a fee. How is this really stopping puppy farming?

Education is key

Stop the market — stop the supply. Most people don't understand the implications of where they purchase their dog from. We hear new pet owners say "I saved it from that pet shop" or from "a horrible breeder", but the reality is that they just made room for another puppy in it's place and supported a puppy farm. Pet owners also need to understand their responsibilities in the purchase of a new life, for which they are responsible in its entirety.

WA has the chance to do something great for the welfare of dogs in our state, and study pros and cons of other states legislation.

Please don't stop those that are doing the best, to not catch those that are doing the worst.



I am a dog breeder. I spend a lifetime learning pedigrees, going over dogs, talking and learning from those in my breed and those outside it.

I raise each litter as if I gave birth to them and spend an equal amount of time finding them loving forever homes.

I only bring puppies into this world that I think will be the healthiest (mentally and physically) and best examples of their breed.

I support each family who chooses one of my puppies and let them know they are now a part of our extended family. I treat them all well.

I am there if one needs to come back and will aggressively pursue the return of one of my dogs if it's in the wrong place. I support my breed in rescue and education.

I hold them when they arrive and leave this world. I share my knowledge and socialize my dogs so that they will be the advertisement for my dedication. I don't keep track of the money and time I put in to my love of dogs, it would not be a true measure of how I feel.

The price I charge for my puppies is never profit, but investment in the next generation. I am not ashamed of who I am. I work hard at being a good dog breeder and encouraging others.

I am a breeder and I am proud of it.

Anonymous poem

