

## Stop Puppy Farming Consultation Paper

Email is [puppyfarming@dlgsc.gov.au](mailto:puppyfarming@dlgsc.gov.au)

### Key points

Sentient is an independent, veterinary animal welfare association and we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Stop Puppy Farming Consultation Paper.

We applaud the WA Government's commitment to prohibit puppy farming and support the following proposed reforms:

- Mandatory desexing by 6 months of age unless vet certificate to delay or not perform desexing
- Centralised registration system
- Mandatory dog welfare standards
- Mandatory identification by 8 weeks or prior to sale/transfer
- Mandatory registration by 3 months of age
- Essential that any new initiatives are communicated effectively, implemented appropriately and resources are available for monitoring and enforcement of legal requirements.

### Specific comments:

- Anecdotal evidence indicates that a high proportion of dogs entering a shelter are neither microchipped nor registered. For any improvements in traceability and accountability, this needs to be enforced property. Similarly, no doubt the majority of these dogs are likely to be entire.
- If pet shops are no longer able to sell dogs from breeders, this may mean that there are more dogs sold online. How will this be controlled? Will inspectors be monitoring online sales including free to good home adverts?
- It is essential that all breeders registered with recognised dog breed societies are also registered under the government centralised database and that they are inspected and compelled to comply with mandatory welfare standards. Some states have granted exemptions to registered breeders but this is unacceptable on the following grounds:
  - Evidence that known puppy farm breeders have been registered with a breed society
  - Breed societies do not have mandatory or enforced high standards of animal welfare
  - Exemption from government registration will allow a significant loophole for unscrupulous breeders and will in fact protect them from scrutiny



- If breeders are currently meeting acceptable standards they should welcome third party scrutiny as a means to provide public assurance
- Those breeding farm or working (e.g. security, police etc) dogs must not be exempt from any of these provisions
- Greyhound breeders must not be exempt from any of these provisions including a requirement to be registered on the central database
- Also note that images of brachycephalic breeds (e.g. French bulldog) have been used in the consultation paper – we strongly advocate against use of such images due to the severe compromised welfare suffered by many of these types of dogs.

Contact:

Dr Rosemary Elliott, President



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