

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Contact: Dogs NSW info@dogsnsw.org.au

BREEDERS WARN THAT ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY BILL WILL CRIPPLE DOG OWNERSHIP

(Sydney, February 7, 2022) Pet ownership, breeding, and the future of dog shows in New South Wales are all under threat from radical new laws proposed by the Animal Justice Party.

DOGS NSW, which is recognised by the NSW government as the peak purebred breeding body in the State, has warned that the AJP's Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill¹ would have a devastating effect on our way of life and the entire pet industry if enacted.

"This misguided, draconian Bill will decimate the breeding and exhibition of purebred dogs and cats, undermine our freedom to have pets, and have next to no effect on puppy farm operations, which we are absolutely against," said Ms Lyn Brand, President of Dogs NSW, which registers 25,000 purebred dogs every year.

"We are astounded by the Animal Justice Party's lack of insight. Their Bill would create huge incentives for unlicensed backyard operators that make it impossible to regulate breeding conditions and animal welfare. This badly flawed Bill has missed the mark – it will actually have the effect of being anti-animal, with destructive consequences for the professional breeders, owners and hobbyists represented by DOGS NSW."

The AJP has modelled its Bill for the New South Wales parliament on a similar attempt to dramatically reduce pet breeding numbers in Victoria.

Ms Brand said: "Both the NSW and Victorian parliamentary inquiries into puppy farms found that there is no benefit to animal welfare by simply banning pet shops and restricting breeders to 10 dogs. They recommended a tiered breeder and pet shop licence system with stricter regulation instead. Perhaps it is time to listen to the experts and the regulators."

The changes proposed for NSW will create a scarcity of pups and dogs, drive up prices, and foster a black-market trade that undermines animal welfare. Families will be forced online to buy pets, risk being scammed out of thousands of dollars, choose a dog from an unregulated breeder – the only source – and potentially end up with a poorly bred dog with health or behavioural problems.

DOGS NSW warns that the AJP's Bill has a toxic blend of far-reaching consequences which include: the demise of dog and cat breeding, dog shows and related sports; a clampdown on pet ownership for companionship; the risk of panic disposal or euthanasia of animals; and the extinction of many breeds of dogs and cats due to enforced decimation of the gene pool.

¹ Companion Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms) Bill 2021

The flow-on effects will also hit business hard, with significant job losses among suppliers and services such as veterinarians, feed establishments and other providers. The animal care industry was worth approximately \$13 billion in 2019, and more than \$21 billion when associated sectors are included.

Dog ownership – a freedom cherished by millions – is threatened by the AJP’s Bill. Australia has one of the highest pet populations in the world – 69 per cent of households have a pet. The demand for pups and dogs in NSW alone is estimated at 130,000 a year at least.

“Everyone knows pets play an important role in our lives, and there are many proven health benefits in having a family pet,” Ms Brand said. “The value of pets in supporting our mental health and well-being is well known. Studies show that families who own pets are less likely to suffer from depression, even heart disease or cancer.

“We submit this Bill is a blatant attempt to destroy a whole culture at the heart of the Australian way of life. It will have a seriously destabilising impact on society. For many members of DOGS NSW, breeding, exhibition and sporting activities provide the social network for their life. Losing it will lead to social isolation, loneliness and the loss of sense of community.”

Among the layers of ludicrous defects in the AJP’s Bill, DOGS NSW points to these as an example of astounding overreach:

- Banning pet shops – which account for **less than five per cent** of all puppy sales and are the most transparent sector of the pet industry
- A maximum of **two litters** for any breeding bitch/queen – after which they **MUST** be desexed
- Desexing of males at the age of six
- An enforcement regime with **fines/penalties of \$110,000** and **two-year jail terms**
- Criminalising the breeding of dogs and cats with no right of appeal
- Powers to invade homes and seize breeding dogs and cats
- Outsourcing of enforcement, compliance and registrations to local councils
- A staffing ratio of **one person to five animals** at registered breeding premises – which is higher than the human ratio of nurses to residents in aged care!
- Animal shelters are subject to the same ratio – which is now **1:20**. It means shelters must hire **four times** as many staff

“If we are to achieve good animal welfare outcomes, legislation must always be based on facts, science and experience, not on political motivations or spurious, ignorant agendas that threaten to undermine our industry and obliterate dog ownership,” Ms Brand concluded.

About DOGS NSW

Dogs NSW, whose professional heritage dates back to 1948, promotes and raises the standards of breeding purebreds, maintains the register of purebred dogs, encourages responsible dog ownership amongst members and the community, and supports contributions to canine veterinary research. The association also promotes ancillary activities such as dog shows, obedience and agility training, retrieving, sporting dog trials and more.

In order to become a registered DOGS NSW breeder, the member must pass a written theory exam and also require a physical inspection of their premises before they are issued with a DOGS NSW breeders accreditation.