



Proposed new laws and changes to the *Dog Act 1976*

Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020

Background

The *Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2020* (the Bill) has been introduced into Parliament after overwhelming support was received from Western Australians for the proposed reforms.

The Bill delivers on the State Government's commitment to Stop Puppy Farming, transition pet shops to rehome unwanted dogs, improve the traceability of dogs and educate the community about dog purchase and ownership.

What is puppy farming?

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) defines a puppy farm as:

'An intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or physiological needs'.

Puppy farming can include small-scale and large-scale dog breeding operations.

Puppy farming leads to extensive long-term health and behavioural issues in dogs; both for the puppies that are bred, and the dogs used to breed.

What is being changed?

The following changes are proposed:



Dogs to be de-sexed, unless they are exempt, to prevent unplanned breeding or overbreeding.



Information on dogs (and cats) to be held in a centralised registration system to allow information to be readily shared across the State.



People who wish to breed from their dog will need to register, thus enabling dodgy breeders to be traced.



Pet shops that sell dogs to work with rescue organisations to transition to adoption centres which will provide more adoption opportunities for unwanted dogs.

Why is the government introducing these provisions?

The State Government is committed to 'stopping puppy farming' in WA and to ensuring the welfare of all animals.

Currently there are limitations on the numbers of adult dogs that can be kept without a kennel licence. This is not sufficient to prevent puppy farming. As a result, irresponsible dog breeders are able to:

- disguise their operations;
- avoid detection by authorities; and
- continue to breed irresponsibly.

The Bill aims to:

- increase the transparency of, and information on, the source of the dog;
- enhance the ability of authorities to identify and detect puppy farms;
- enhance the ability of authorities to prevent irresponsible breeders from breeding dogs;
- decrease the number of puppies and dogs that are bred indiscriminately; and
- improve community understanding about responsible purchase and care of dogs.

What other changes are being made?

The State Government is also removing the muzzling requirements for pet or retired racing greyhounds when in public places.

Changing the law will make greyhounds more desirable as pets and ensure a bright future for retired greyhounds.

Registered racing greyhounds will continue to be required to wear muzzles in all public places by application of the Greyhound Rules of Racing, administered by Racing and Wagering Western Australia.

When will the new provisions become law and take effect?

The Bill must firstly be debated and passed through Parliament.

The provision removing the requirement for greyhounds to be muzzled will be the first to come into effect.

There will be a lead-in time for the de-sexing requirements which will only apply to dogs born after the start of the legislation.

The other provisions that aim to prevent and stop puppy farming will come into effect once the centralised registration system is operational.

How can I remain up to date?

For more information on the stop puppy farming and retired racing greyhound provisions, visit the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website:

Stop Puppy Farming
www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/stoppuppyfarming

Greyhounds
www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/greyhounds

To follow the passage of the Bill, visit the Parliament House **website** and register for updates.

A public awareness campaign will be launched once the Stop Puppy Farming Bill has passed through Parliament to inform the community on what the provisions mean for dog owners, dog breeders and dog suppliers.