



31<sup>st</sup> of July 2018

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries  
Gordon Stephenson House  
140 William Street  
Perth WA 6000

### **Stop Puppy Farming consultation - PGA position on Farm Working Dogs**

Dear Sir/Madam

The PGA understands that the State Government plans to amend the *Dog Act 1976* to introduce mandatory de-sexing of dogs unless the dog is used for breeding purposes.

Dogs that are intended to be used for breeding purposes will be exempt from de-sexing, but owners of dogs intended to be used for breeding purposes will be required to register as a breeder for their dog to be exempt.

The PGA expects that these changes will result in increased compliance costs to all affected parties, although the extent is yet unknown.

The PGA notes it is common practise for farmers to breed an occasional litter from their current farm working dogs for future use on-farm, if they display good working dog attributes.

Farmers do not breed from their existing farm working dogs for commercial gain, but for future on-farm use.

Farm working dogs are not companion animals. They are bred for their ability to work stock on a farm.

The attributes required to work stock may not become apparent until after the age of mandatory de-sexing, and sterilisation will inhibit the dog's ability to work stock.

Consequently the PGA seeks an exemption from these legislative changes that would require the farmer to register as a breeder, should they wish to breed from their current farm working dogs, and would require farm working dogs to be de-sexed unless they are exempt for breeding purposes.

The PGA proposes that farmers would be exempt under the following conditions;



- ✓ A farm working dog is defined as a dog usually kept on rural land, by a primary producer, or a person employed by a primary producer and primarily kept or trained for the purpose of droving, protecting, tending, or working stock on a farm.
- ✓ A primary producer is defined as someone whose primary source of income is generated from primary production (specifically in relation to animal production) for tax purposes.
- ✓ Local government authorities will continue to be responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the registration and identification requirements under the *Dog Act 1976*; (dogs to be registered with the local government by the age of three months, and dogs to be microchipped by the age of three months).
- ✓ Farm working dogs are to be identified as such against their identification on the registry.
- ✓ Registered farm working dogs are not required to be sterilised until such time as they cease to be kept by a primary producer or reside on rural land.
- ✓ A primary producer breeding from a fertile farm working dog is not required to become a registered breeder, unless the number of fertile farm working dogs (not including its pups) exceeds six over the age of 3 months.  
This generally follows the current provisions of the *Dog Act 1976* with respect to the limitations as to numbers when keeping dogs.
- ✓ Fertile farm working dogs can be transferred to another person as long as that person is a primary producer, or a person employed by a primary producer and the dog will be primarily kept or trained for the purpose of droving, protecting, tending, or working stock on a farm. The registry must be updated when and if this happens.
- ✓ Fertile farm working dogs transferred to another person who cannot meet the definition of a primary producer, or a person employed by a primary producer, must be sterilised, and comply with the proposed Stop Puppy Farming legislation.
- ✓ Owners of working dog breeds that do not meet the farm working dog definition must comply with the proposed Stop Puppy Farming legislation.

The PGA notes that exemptions for farm working dogs are already in place in Victoria and Queensland following recent legislative changes (puppy farms and protecting puppies legislation).

The Tasmanian *Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016* also provide for exemptions for working dogs.

Yours Faithfully



Chris Patmore

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