

Names: Paul & Deborah (Debbie) Wilkes

Suburb: [REDACTED]

Post code: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED]

Breeding Prefix: [REDACTED]

Breed: American Cocker Spaniels since 1979.

Over the years, breeds previously owned and exhibited in the conformation ring are:

- Australian Silky Terriers (Paul),
- A Schipperke(Paul)
- Pointers (Paul)
- English Setters (Debbie)
- A Maltese (together)
- Afghan Hounds (together)
- Standard Poodles (together) and
- English Springer Spaniels (together).

Background that bring expertise:

- Dog lovers and breeders who have been involved since we were children (now both in our early 60's)
- Both of us are qualified ANKC dog judges Paul – All Breeds and Debbie 3 ANKC groups. Both of us have judged locally, interstate and internationally
- Both involved as volunteers in Conformation clubs
- Paul has served on the Dogswest Board for several terms (including currently) and is a former Vice President of the Association
- Paul currently also serves on the Dogswest Finance committee and Chairs the Fundraising working Party.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide a submission to the proposed 'Stop Puppy Farming Initiative'.

This initiative is something we strongly support however are concerned that the proposed legislative measures will still not stop unscrupulous people who breed dogs purely for commercial purposes.

In fact, measures such as "registering" breeders by government will only tend to legitimise their activities in the eyes of the general public.

**Pet shops:** We are not in favour of Pet shops being involved in the trade of cats and dogs.

Dogs and cats should be homed by the breeders with direct contact, not through a "third party" retailer, whose primary cause for having the dog is to sell to make a profit.

We provide everyone who acquires a dog from us that they are well informed about the health and welfare of the dog. We also provide them with food that the dog is currently being fed to enable a smooth transition to the new owner. (we use the terminology "acquire" rather than "purchase" as we will sometimes place an older dog at no charge).

We do everything possible to ensure that our puppies, and any older dogs that we may rehome, are going to an environment where they will be well loved and cared for and that the new owner is aware of the characteristics of our breed and are prepared to undertake the necessary grooming associated with keeping the dog healthy and happy.

We encourage prospective owners to go away and think about their new family member rather than to buy on impulse.

Anyone who obtains a dog from us always has our contact details and ongoing support.

This is something that is not available through pet shops that are commercial enterprises.

### **Pet shops to transition to Adoption centres**

This is not something we support.

**Pet shops rely on “impulse” buying and this would be the same regardless of whether the animals are obtained from breeders or shelters or welfare organisations.**

Very few pet shops still sell dogs and cats, yet they appear to still remain viable commercial enterprises.

The few that do sell dogs and cats, should be provided with time to transition, but no more than 2 years.

Genuine shelters and refuges have the same opportunity to meet and support prospective owners.

We say “genuine” as we have concern that shelters may become a “front” for breeders who are only breeding for commercial reasons..

These dogs can then become purely a commercial transaction and transitioned for sale through pet shops.

### **Mandatory de-sexing and “Breeder” registration**

From a breeders perspective we undertake health testing and this may not be conclusive until the dog is two to three years of age.

For this purpose we may maintain dogs ourselves or place them in a home to possibly be bred from after this age.

We ask you to carefully consider the needs of Dogs West breeders and members in relation to proposed legislation as not all people who own entire animals intend to breed.

**At the consultative meeting held at Dogswest, Paul raised the deferral of the requirement to register as a “breeder” for Dogswest members until such time as they had acquired a “prefix”.**

**Lisa Baker acknowledged that this was certainly something that should be included in our submission for consideration.**

To acquire a prefix to breed, a person must have been a member of Dogswest for a minimum of 12 months and pass an exam based on guidelines for breeders, code of ethics and other regulations.

**Dogswest members who are breeders are already “registered” as such with this Association and we request that you to consider that they should be exempt from also having to register as a breeder with their Local Government Authority.**

We have concern that the registration of breeders may, in the eyes of the public, “legitimise” those who breed dogs purely for commercial reasons.

Without other strict guidelines such as those contained in the Dogswest “code of ethics”, commercial “puppy farming” will continue the guise of being “a registered breeder” by the Government.

If the government is serious about stopping commercial puppy farming (and I am certain they are), then other issues included in the Dogswest Code of Ethics MUST also be addressed such as:

1. Minimum breeding age for bitches (not less than 12 months)
2. Maximum breeding age for bitches (7 years of age for bitches)
3. Number of litters any bitch may whelp (personally we believe 4 litters should be the maximum)
4. Frequency of litters a bitch may whelp (no more than twice in 18 months).

These guidelines would minimise commercial breeders exploiting animals for profit.

### **Central Registry**

We support the concept of a central registry and were surprised that this was not already the case within Local Government.

However we believe that this will do little to achieve you’re the primary objective to Stop Puppy Farming.

Legislation already exists to deal with those who keep dogs and other animals in overcrowded and poor conditions.

Further legislation will only place a greater burden on those who already comply.

In summary, we request that you consider the following:

- Include exemptions for Dogs West breeders to NOT have to register with their local Government as a breeder. Lisa Baker has acknowledged publically on numerous occasions that “We are the good guys” and that “we are the Gold Standard”, so requiring additional registrations is unnecessary to meet the required outcomes.
- Enable Dogswest members to place dogs out on breeders terms/agreements.
- Do not use the terminology ‘Registered Breeders’ for anyone other than Dogs West Breeders (this only legitimises those who breed purely for “commercial” purposes.
- Be aware that other internet based “registries” are being set up both within Australia and overseas, purely as profit making enterprises and again to legitimise commercial operations.
- Dogs West and the Working Dog Registry should be the only registries you recognise for this legislation.
- Please make all Shelters, Rescues, Fosters register all transitioning pets, identifying from where they sourced those dogs.

### **Mandatory standards.**

We have lived in the Southern River kennel zone for 35 years and established our breeding program on a properly accredited and licensed kennel property.

Our kennels have been approved by the City of Gosnells and until recently inspected annually to ensure they are well maintained and kept clean.

We have invested our life in our hobby (really it is a passion more than a hobby). Please keep in mind what we and many other people have invested in our properties to be able to breed dogs with peace of mind. We have fitted our properties out to ensure the best outcome for our dogs and our breeding program.

There is not one size that fits all in this area and we encourage that you are not too prescriptive.

Please use common sense when writing this. Please keep it simple, so people know when they are getting it wrong but please do not tell us how do what we what many of us have been doing for many years when you have little or no practical experience.

The lack of consultation in this proposed legislation is disturbing.

We believe that the following should be what is prescribed:

- Dogs shall have access to fresh water
- Dogs shall have access to shelter
- Dogs shall be well fed on good quality food
- Dogs must be provided with adequate Veterinary attention when required
- Dogs must be vaccinated in accordance with accepted modern standards and regularly wormed
- The breeding of dogs Dogs should be in accordance with a code of practice (as per Dogs West Code of Ethics)

# Appendix A

Wait, Wait, Don't Spay (or Neuter) ME!

Is a vasectomy or ovary sparing spay right for my dog?

Your decision to spay or neuter your pet must be made on a case-by-case basis. This decision should be made between you and your veterinarian, taking into consideration your pet's age, breed, sex, health status, intended use, household environment and temperament. While there are health benefits to spaying and neutering, the benefits must be weighed against the health benefits of retaining the sex hormones achieved by leaving your pet intact (not neutered or spayed). These advantages and disadvantages pertain not only to the canine athlete or performance dog, but to all dogs regardless of lifestyle. Each patient must be considered individually – we do not have a one-size-fits-all answer for whether it is best to remove or not remove the gonads (testes or ovaries) for your pet.

If you have determined you do not plan to breed your dog, male or female, you are now faced with other decisions.

1. Do I have another option besides a neuter or spay? What is a vasectomy? What is an ovary sparing spay?
2. If you chose surgery, at what age should you “alter” your pet?
3. Should you opt for a traditional neuter or spay?
4. What are the advantages of retaining the testes or ovaries?

Please feel free to discuss this information and ask for advice on asking these decisions with our doctors at Veterinary Village.

1. What is a vasectomy? What is an ovary sparing spay?

A vasectomy is a surgical procedure where a portion of the vas deferens, the tube that carries sperm from the testicle where they are formed, to the outside to fertilize the female, is removed. By doing this, even if the male dog mates with a female, the mating will not be a fertile one. The testicles remain in the scrotum and continue to produce testosterone. The male will still be interested in and can mate with females, may still lift his leg to mark territory, is still prone to benign prostatic hypertrophy, and could develop a testicular tumor, perianal tumor, or perineal hernia.

An ovary sparing spay is when one or both ovaries are left in the abdomen, near the kidneys, but the uterus and cervix are removed. Because the uterus is removed, the female will not be able to become pregnant, even if a mating occurs. The female will still have heat cycles and be attractive to male dogs. She will have little to no bloody vaginal discharge during her heat cycles.

2. If you chose surgery, at what age should you “alter” your pet?

If you opt for a non-traditional approach, the vasectomy or ovary sparing spay, when you leave the testes or ovaries but interrupt the reproductive tract to prevent fertility, you may consider doing this at any age. Because the male or female sex organs are left to function, your dog will still have his or her hormones. Research has shown that there can be positive effects of the sex steroid hormones. The sex steroids are hormones produced by the ovaries and testes, and are only present in intact males and females. For canine athletes, Dr. Christine Zink recommends waiting until after 14 months of age (the age at which the growth plates have closed) for males and females to be neutered or

spayed.

### 3. Should you opt for a traditional neuter or spay? At what age?

If you opt for a traditional neuter or spay, the age at which this is done is important. Removing the testes or ovaries interrupt the hormonal axis of the sex hormones with the pituitary and other organs. There are age-related conditions to consider when making this decision. Since gonadectomy prior to puberty or sexual maturity may make the risks of some diseases higher in certain breeds or individuals, the option to leave your pet intact should be available to you. If you opt to leave the gonads, the testes or ovaries, this can be done at any age, as young as 8 weeks of age. If you opt to remove the gonads, testes or ovaries, the age should be decided in a conversation with you and your veterinarian. Many times, we recommend waiting until at least 6 months of age, or older, usually past puberty, due to health and behavioral advantages.

### 4. What are the advantages of retaining the testes or ovaries?

The advantages of remaining intact include:

#### Health Advantages

1. Lower incidence of hemangiosarcoma (cancer usually found in the spleen or heart) in males and females.
2. Lower incidence of osteosarcoma (bone cancer) in intact male and females.
3. Lower risk of transitional cell carcinoma (bladder cancer) in intact male and females.
4. Lower risk of prostatic adenocarcinoma (prostate cancer) in intact male dogs compared to neutered male dogs.
5. Lower incidence of obesity in intact male and female dogs, which may be due at least partly to increased metabolic rate.
6. Lower incidence of urinary incontinence in intact females (equivocal if females are spayed after 5 months but before their first heat).
7. Lower incidence of urinary tract infection in intact females.
8. Lower incidence of autoimmune thyroiditis and hypothyroidism in intact male and females.
9. A reduced incidence of cranial cruciate rupture in intact male and females.
10. A reduced incidence of hip dysplasia in male and female dogs that are not neutered or spayed before 5 months of age.
11. Anesthesia and surgery are not appropriate for some patients with high risk medical conditions.
12. Lower incidence of adverse reactions to vaccines in intact males and females.
13. Evidence of increased lifespan in females left intact past puberty. David J. Waters, associate director of Purdue University's Center on Aging and the Life Course and a professor in the Department of Clinical Sciences. "Taking away ovaries during the first 4 years of life completely erased the female survival advantage. We found that female Rottweilers that kept their ovaries for at least 6 years were 4 times more likely to reach exceptional longevity compared to females who had the shortest lifetime ovary exposure."

#### Behavioral Advantages

1. Less aggression towards people and animals in intact females.
2. A decreased incidence of cognitive dysfunction in intact male and females.
3. Less fearfulness, noise phobias and undesirable sexual behaviors in intact males and females.

The sex hormones, by communicating with a number of other growth-related hormones, promote the closure of the growth plates at puberty, so the bones of dogs or bitches neutered or spayed before puberty continue to grow. Dogs that have been spayed or neutered well before puberty can

frequently be identified by their longer limbs, lighter bone structure, narrow chests and narrow skulls. This abnormal growth frequently results in significant alterations in body proportions and particularly the lengths (and therefore weights) of certain bones relative to others. This is related to increased orthopedic conditions in dogs neutered or spayed prior to puberty. In addition, sex hormones are critical for achieving peak bone density.

#### 5. What are the disadvantages of retaining the testes or ovaries?

##### Health Disadvantages

1. Increased risk of mammary (breast) cancer in intact females. This increased risk of mammary (breast) cancer occurs with each subsequent cycle and the benefit of spaying does not disappear until the animal reaches old age. Mammary cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in small animals. Mammary neoplasia is malignant under 50% of the time in dogs, but few dogs die from breast cancer due to low metastatic rates and early detection and treatment.
2. Increased risk of ovarian cancer in intact females. The incidence and mortality risk for ovarian cancer are very low.
3. Increased risk of testicular cancer in intact males. The incidence for testicular cancer is common but malignancy and mortality are very low.
4. An increased risk of pyometra in intact female dogs and this risk increases with increasing age. Varies by breed – review this with your veterinarian.
5. Risk of unwanted pregnancies if an OSS or vasectomy is not performed.
6. An increased risk of prostatitis, benign prostatic hyperplasia, prostatic cysts and squamous metaplasia of the prostate in intact male dogs.
7. An increased incidence of perineal and inguinal hernia and perineal adenoma in intact male dogs.

##### Behavioral Disadvantages

1. Inter-dog aggression may be due to competition for available territory or availability of cycling animals.
2. Increased risk of wandering and being hit by a car in intact dogs.
3. Increased incidence of urinary marking in intact males.
4. Ongoing sexual behaviors, including heat cycles in females who have had an ovary sparing spay.

##### Summary:

Dr. Villalobos, a well-respected veterinary oncologist states, "It is earth shattering to consider that some of the cancers we have been battling may have been enhanced by early neutering instead of the reverse." Based on the research available, it is clear there are a number of health benefits of the sex steroid hormones. This benefit varies with age, sex, and breed. Therefore, although surgically altering your dog to be unable to breed is the responsible choice for most dogs, it is in the best interest of each individual patient for its veterinarian to assess the risks and benefits of gonadectomy (removing the testes or ovaries versus vasectomy or ovary sparing spay) and to have your veterinarian advise you on what is appropriate for each individual pet at each stage of its life.