



STATEMENT, FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Dogs Australia is responding to calls for some of Australia's most popular breeds to be banned, namely Pugs, British and French Bulldogs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.

The debate follows the recent decision in Norway to ban the breeding of British Bulldogs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. The Oslo District Court ruled that selective breeding had led to numerous health problems including breathing difficulties and heart and eye conditions.

Dogs Australia says the solution, rather than banning the breeds outright, is in eradicating irresponsible breeders who fail to do health tests.

The organisation believes that tackling the issue effectively in Australia requires regulation and research into the health status of the brachycephalic (brachy) breeds, including Pugs, French and British Bulldogs, to get a more accurate picture.

Dogs Australia President, Hugh Gent OAM, says a breeding ban on these much-loved dogs is not the solution, as it would serve only to drive the industry underground and exacerbate the situation.

“First, we must work to eradicate irresponsible breeding practices,” he says. “There are breeders who are not regulated. There are inexperienced and unscrupulous breeders in this country who do not do health checks and their litters are not part of the national register maintained by Dogs Australia.”

Dogs Australia registered breeders follow a strict code of ethics, conduct health checks and, for accountability, are supported by a database of inherited diseases --ORCHID¹.

“Second, we need to get a true understanding of the size of the problem in Australia. The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is responding to a situation in Norway with data that may not be relevant here.”

Leading Australian veterinarian Dr Karen Hedberg says: “There is very little relevant data on these breeds in this country. We need to use science, health checks and consumer education to ensure these breeds continue to be much-loved companions in Aussie homes.”

¹ ORCHID Officially Registered Canine Health Information Database



Dogs Australia is taking immediate steps to conduct a study into the health status of brachy breeds in Australia. The study, to initially focus on NSW and Victoria, will be officially announced soon.

Dogs Australia is calling on all breeders, vets, animal welfare groups and consumers to report irresponsible and unethical breeding practices.

“If you buy a dog from someone who doesn’t bother with health checks, you’re dealing with an irresponsible breeder,” maintains DA president Hugh Gent.

Popular TV vet, breeder and Dogs Australia Ambassador, Dr Rob Zammit, agrees.

“Dogs and owners are suffering at the hands of unethical breeders who bypass the checks that reputable kennels undertake, such as DNA tests to monitor bloodlines, so that most heritable defects can be avoided,” Dr Zammit says.

“Legitimate breeders are registered and regulated, so they can be easily identified. Illegal operators usually only have a mobile phone contact – they’re largely untraceable, so there’s no pressure on them to observe health and welfare issues.”

ABOUT DOGS AUSTRALIA

Dogs Australia (Australian National Kennel Council Ltd) is a not-for-profit organisation advocating for the preservation of purebred dogs through ethical breeding. It champions the highest standard of animal welfare through education and fostering dog-loving communities. Internationally recognised and established in 1958 as the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC), the organisation promotes responsible dog ownership; maintains the ORCHID heritable canine diseases database; funds research into canine diseases; and supports state and territory-based member bodies. Dogs Australia promotes breed conformation shows and community sports for dogs that fulfill a breed’s natural instincts. www.dogsaustralia.org.au