

**Tara Moriarty**

Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional New South Wales  
Minister for Western New South Wales

**Ron Hoenig**

Minister for Local Government

**Media Release****Bill to strengthen puppy and dog welfare across New South Wales**

Thursday, 24 October 2024

The Minns Labor Government will today introduce a Bill to Parliament to strengthen puppy and dog welfare across the state by establishing clear guardrails and standards for dog breeders.

Committed to during the election this legislation has been developed through close consultation with experts, industry and animal welfare advocates, to ensure community expectations are reflected in New South Wales laws.

The Bill targets key risks to animal health and welfare associated with dog breeding practices that have been of concern for some time. Changes under this Bill include:

- Mandating that breeders must, for the first time, obtain a Breeder Identification Number through the NSW pet registry, enabling transparency of the sector and assisting people acquiring a puppy.
- Setting a lifetime litter limit for fertile female adult dogs (those over 6 months old) to five natural litters or up to three caesarean litters, whichever occurs first.
- Establishing a care standard of one staff carer for every 20 adult dogs ensuring sufficient care, food and water are provided.
- Establishing a maximum cap of 20 fertile female dogs (over the age of six months) at any breeding premise.
- A maximum penalty for individuals of \$110,000, two years imprisonment or both and \$550,000 for organisations will apply for breaches of this cap.

This bill seeks to stop puppy farming by providing a robust and modernised regulatory system for all breeders to deliver good animal welfare without imposing undue regulatory burden on legitimate breeders.

The Government is therefore enabling within the Bill that breeders with more than 20 fertile dogs will be able to apply for a limited exemption from this cap. This exemption will apply for ten years, giving breeders significant time to appropriately scale down their operations.

Currently in New South Wales there has been no compulsory registration scheme for breeders and no restrictions on the number of breeding female dogs that a person or business can have, or the number of litters a female dog can produce in their lifetimes.

Without these safeguards animal welfare has been jeopardised with unethical breeders in some instances establishing facilities of dozens or hundreds of dogs without providing essential care.

The majority of the changes will come into effect from December 2025, allowing time for the Government to rollout an education campaign for breeders, dog owners and those considering acquiring a puppy.

**NSW Minister for Agriculture Tara Moriarty said:**

“With half of all households having a dog at home there is significant community concern about the welfare of these dogs as puppies, and about the practice of puppy farms.

“Most breeders do the right thing, but there is a clear message from the community that large-scale, unregulated breeding practices are not acceptable, and breeders should be registered.

“We came to Government with a commitment to clean up the sector and to enhance animal welfare because it means a lot to everyone in our community and for our dogs.

“Our Bill ensures transparency, accountability, and appropriate animal welfare standards in all breeding operations across NSW.

“This Bill is about stopping the bad apples of this industry while supporting good and professional people who prioritise the health and welfare of their animals.

“These changes will be easy to understand for industry and will allow people to distinguish ethical breeders who promote responsible breeding practices from dodgy puppy farmers.

**Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:**

“People expect that any dog purchased from a breeder has been treated well and has not been exploited by dishonest puppy farmers to turn a profit.

“This Bill applies a strict regulatory framework to provide the government with greater oversight to ensure all breeders are complying with animal welfare standards and community expectations.

“All industry and animal welfare stakeholders agree that there is a need to clean out the bad actors and for better animal and customer protection against those few unethical breeders. That is what this Bill delivers.”

**Animal Welfare League NSW CEO Stephen Albin said:**

“The Animal Welfare League NSW strongly supports the Bill as it will crack down on breeders who are doing the wrong thing and improve animal welfare.

“It also sets a new regulatory framework that will deliver higher standards in the breeding industry and give established breeders time to meet those standards.

“We have seen a huge spike in breeding since COVID-19, with a big increase in dogs coming into the shelter, blowing out our waiting lists and making it extremely challenging to find new, loving homes for dogs, who are often just puppies.

“Sadly, too many dogs are not finding a new home.

“This Bill will help ease the pressure on our shelters and allow us to rehome dogs that have been surrendered or abandoned.”

**MEDIA:**

**Alastair Walton | Minister Moriarty | 0418 251 229**

**Clare Dowswell | Minister Hoenig | 0448 550 073**