

20th November 2024

The Hon. Tara Moriarty, MLC
Minister for Agriculture
E: office@moriarty.minister.nsw.gov.au

RE: Staffing ratios for dogs

Jenny Thompson,
Principal Policy Officer
Policy & Industry Insights, Strategy and Engagement
NSW Department of Primary Industries | Regional NSW

Hello Jenny,

Animal Care Australia is being contacted by dog owners who have between 5 - 10 dogs (not all females) who are wanting to know how they can continue to go to work under the new laws.

As you are aware the new Bill requires you to divide the number of dogs by 20 and round up. This means that a couple who has less than 20 dogs MUST still have someone on their premises at all times. They can't work, they can't go shopping etc unless they hire or pay someone to stay on the premises while they are not there.

5 dogs divided by 20 equals 1/4 of a person rounded up means 1 person. So if just one of those dogs is an entire (breeding) female then they are required to get someone to dog sit.

That is not what we all agreed to when agreeing to 1 to 20. Discussions were that 1 person would be able to maintain up to 20 dogs - without needing to be on the premises at all times.

This will encourage everyone to not register for a BIN and to simply sell their dogs underground because the moment they do they will be identifiable as a breeder and will likely be inspected by the authorities. Please don't suggest that won't happen – the RSPCA did exactly that during the Puppy Farm Taskforce, using records from the pet registry and social media advertising and targeted registered/responsible breeders.

People who have up to 20 dogs and maintain their exercise, feeding, and living conditions BUT also need to be able to leave their premises should not be penalised because this government wants to stop 'puppy farmers'. The Minister, and yourselves all kept saying "*we don't want to stop the ethical breeders or those doing the right thing*".

In fact the Minister repeated that sentiment last Thursday when responding to other Members' concerns when she stated:

"We have engaged with breeders across the sector, either directly or through their representative organisations, to try to get the best outcome for dogs and puppies because that is the intention of the bill. It is not our intention to put good operators out of business. We want people to continue doing the right thing, but within reason."

This does not fit within that statement. **It is unreasonable to expect people with a hand full of dogs (breeding or otherwise) to maintain supervision 24 hours a day.**

24/7 staffing requirement is exactly what happened in Victoria. It saw a strong reduction in the number of smaller responsible breeders and a huge rise in unethical breeders who simply didn't and still don't register in the pet registry, don't register their dogs with Councils and don't microchip. Effectively there are more people doing the wrong thing.

Requiring to round up on less than 20 dogs is a major problem and one that will see strong backlash - likely at the next election.

I would like to hope that we could discuss this with the Minister and find a suitable and responsible resolution as quickly as possible.

Hoping to hear from the Minister soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Donnelly
President
0400 323 843

About Animal Care Australia

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation, Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale, and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species, including pets, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation, and in particular native birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers to lobby for real animal welfare. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation, and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare.

By educating our members and the public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of lobbying and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- advocating for stronger welfare outcomes
- advocating to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educate the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educate the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights