

Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016

Pet Shops

Background

The Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016 (Bill) introduces a range of amendments to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act). These amendments deliver on the Government's election commitment to reform the dog breeding and pet shop industries in Victoria and better regulate the sale of dogs and cats.

Under the amended Act:

- there are limits on the number of fertile female dogs breeders can keep
- pet shops are only able to sell dogs and cats sourced from shelters, pounds or enrolled foster carers
- the role of foster carers is clearer
- there are new definitions for 'recreational breeders' and 'microbreeders'
- the definition of 'farm working dogs' is clarified
- the animal sale permit system is simplified
- traceability of cats and dogs is improved through the establishment of the Pet Exchange Register
- offences apply for publishing non-compliant pet sale advertisements.

Key changes:

- **Pet shops will be banned from selling dogs or cats, unless the animals come from an approved source.**
- **Pet shops will only be able to sell dogs over six months of age and cats over eight weeks of age.**
- The Bill has been amended following a Parliamentary Inquiry and further consultation with stakeholders.

What are the key changes for pet shops?

Pet shops will no longer be an outlet for illegal dog or cat breeders.

Pet shops will only be able to source dogs or cats from approved sources. These sources include from a registered pound, animal shelter or a foster carer registered with their local council.

Pet shops will only be able to sell dogs over six months of age and cats over eight weeks of age.

A new offence is created to prohibit pet shops from sourcing dogs or cats from a breeder or that are too young.

If I can't get a puppy from a pet shop, where can I buy a puppy from?

Victorians will continue to have plenty of opportunity to buy a puppy for their families. Puppies will be available for purchase directly from breeders or animal shelters.

By going directly to a breeder, prospective owners have the opportunity to meet the parent(s) and see where the puppy was bred and raised.

Can a pet shop owner also own a breeding business?

No. The Bill prohibits the co-registration of a breeding, shelter, pound and pet shop Domestic Animal Business (DAB).

This prevents illegal breeders establishing a supply chain to funnel puppies and kittens into a pet shop. It stops an illegal breeder setting up a breeding establishment in one municipality, an illegitimate shelter in a second, and a pet shop (to on-sell cats or dogs from the shelter) in a third.

Can pet shops advertise dogs and cats they have for sale?

Yes, however, the Bill introduces new rules for the advertisement of dogs and cats.

All DABs, including pet shops, will be included on a new register, to be known as the Pet Exchange Register (Register).

Pet shops will be enrolled on the Register by their local council, and a unique source number will be generated. The source number will enhance traceability of cats and dogs, and flag those who are not registered to sell or give them away.

Only authorised personnel will be able to access full details on the Register. This will include specific officers authorised under the Act who require information in the Register so they can investigate businesses that may be operating unlawfully.

From 10 April 2018 to 30 June 2019, pet shops must include both the microchip number and DAB number in all advertisements.

From 1 July 2019, it will be an offence to advertise a dog or cat for sale unless the advert includes its microchip number and the unique source number generated by the Register.

Offences apply to both the person selling the pet, along with the publisher that publishes a non-compliant advertisement.

These offences will make it harder for illegal breeders to sell cats or dogs through online sales.

When do pet shops have to stop selling puppies?

Pet shops have until 1 July 2018 to change their business models to only accept cats and dogs at the appropriate age and from approved sources.

The Register, and associated advertising requirements will become mandatory from 1 July 2019.

For more information

Visit www.vic.gov.au/pets or call 136 186.

Authorised by the Department of Economic Development,
Jobs, Transport and Resources

1 Spring Street Melbourne Victoria 3000

Telephone (03) 9651 9999

© Copyright State of Victoria,

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport
and Resources 2017

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork and
photography this document is made available under the
terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia
license.

This document is also available in an accessible format at
economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au

ISBN 978-1-925733-34-1 (pdf/online)