

# Farm Working Dogs

## *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Act 2017*

### Background

The *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Act 2017* (PFPS Act) introduced a range of amendments to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DA 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 DA Act:

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

### I am the owner of a farm working dog, what does this mean for me?

The Government understands the unique role of farm working dogs in Victoria's primary production sector. As such, the PFPS Act included provisions to ensure these dogs have the recognition they deserve.

Farm working dogs that are registered with council are eligible for a reduced registration fee and are not required to wear an identification marker (such as a council tag) outside of the premises.

Further, farm working dogs do not count towards a property's fertile female dogs breeding limit. There is no requirement to register as a Domestic Animal Business (DAB) nor meet the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014 (revision 2015)* (the Code).

### What is the definition of a farm working dog?

A farm working dog is defined as a dog usually kept on rural land, by a primary producer, or a person employed by a primary producer and primarily kept or trained for the purpose of droving, protecting, tending, or working stock on a farm.

A primary producer is defined as someone whose primary source of income is generated from primary production as per the land tax definition, specifically in relation to animal production.

If your farm working dog does not meet this definition, it cannot be registered as a farm working dog. Owners of working dog breeds that do not meet the primary producer and farm working dog definitions are not eligible for legislative exemptions.

### How do I prove that my dog is a farm working dog?

Councils are responsible for determining if a dog is a farm working dog, as per the definition. Animal Welfare Victoria assists councils by providing guidelines on how to register a farm working dog, to ensure consistency across Victoria.

### I am a breeder of farm working dogs, what does the PFPS Act mean for me?

Fertile females registered as farm working dogs do not count towards a property's fertile female dog breeding limit. You are not required to apply as a DAB with local council nor meet the Code if you are breeding from a fertile female that is a farm working dog.

Owners of working dog breeds that do not meet the farm working dog definition must register as DABs with their council if they have 3-10 fertile female dogs (if they are not a member of Dogs Victoria), and apply for commercial dog breeder approval if they have 11-50 fertile females. They must also comply with the Code.

As such, working dog breeds, such as border collies or kelpies, bred for the pet market that are not primarily kept or trained for the purpose of droving, protecting, tending, or working stock on a farm are not captured in the definition and cannot be registered as a farm working dog.

### I own both farm working dogs and pet dogs, what does the PFPS Act mean for me?

Fertile females registered as farm working dogs do not count towards a property's fertile female dog breeding limit. If you also have three or more fertile female pet dogs, you must register as a DAB (if you are not a member of Dogs Victoria).

### I want to sell or give away a farm working dog, what do I need to do?

From 1 July 2019, the PFPS Act establishes a new register, to be known as the Pet Exchange Register (the Register). Owners of farm working dogs, both puppies and adult dogs, will be required to apply for a source number from the Register before advertising dogs for sale (or free).

The Register will generate a source number that must be included in any advertisements along with an individual microchip number. From 1 July 2019, it will be an offence not to include both numbers in an advertisement.

### For more information

Visit <http://www.animalwelfare.vic.gov.au> or email [pet.welfare@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:pet.welfare@ecodev.vic.gov.au) or call 136 186.

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