

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

## Farm Working Dogs

### What is the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016?

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:

- **Primary producers and those contracted by a primary producer are entitled to register their dogs with local council as 'farm working dogs', and are eligible for a reduced registration fee.**
- **A dog registered with council as a farm working dog will not count towards a property's fertile female limit for breeding purposes.**
- The Bill has been amended following a Parliamentary Inquiry and extensive consultation with stakeholders.
- Under the changes, Victorian pet owners are able to tell if their pet has come from a responsible source.

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

The Government understands the unique role of farm working dogs in Victoria's primary production sector. As such, provisions have been created in the Act 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 will not count towards a property's fertile female dogs breeding limit. There will be 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 (updated 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 will be responsible for determining if a dog is a farm working dog, as per the definition. The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources will assist 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 this Bill mean for me?

Fertile females registered as farm working dogs do not count towards a property's fertile female dog breeding limit. You will not be required to apply as a DAB with local council nor meet the Code if you are breeding from a fertile 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 a commercial dog breeder approval if they have 11-50 fertile females. They must also comply with the Code.

As such, working dogs 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 considered under the definition and cannot be registered as a farm working dog.

### Why do farm working dogs come under a unique category?

Farm working dogs provide a unique service to Victoria that is different to a companion animal. Allowing farm working dogs to remain fertile enables farmers to replenish their stock and allows the dog to be effective on the farm.

### I own both farm working dogs and pet dogs, what does this Bill 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?

The Bill establishes a new register, to be known as the Pet Exchange Register (the Register). From 1 July 2019, 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).

Registration will generate a unique source number that must be included in any advertisements along with an individual microchip number. It will be an offence not to include both numbers in an advertisement.

Only authorised personnel will be able to access full details on the Register. Members of the public will be able to access limited information on the Register, regarding advertisements of cats and dogs. This will enable prospective purchasers to determine if a seller is a legitimate supplier.

### For more information

Contact your local council, visit [www.vic.gov.au/pets](http://www.vic.gov.au/pets) or call 136 186.

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