



Hon Tim Mulherin MP
Member for Mackay

Reference: 08709/10



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Primary Industries,
Fisheries and Rural and Regional
Queensland**

12 OCT 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000


Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 15 September 2010 concerning a petition (Petition 1398-10) to prohibit the sale of cats and dogs in pet shops received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), through Biosecurity Queensland, is responsible for animal welfare standards for all animals in Queensland through the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA). The ACPA places a duty of care on all persons in charge of animals, including pet shops and breeders to properly look after their animals.

The ACPA provides a balance between the welfare of animals, community expectations, and the interests of persons whose livelihood is dependent upon animals. Banning the sale of dogs and cats through a pet shop would need to be justified. Such justification would need to demonstrate that the purchase of animals from pet shops results in a significantly higher risk to the welfare of animals than purchased from other sources and Biosecurity Queensland is not aware of any evidence which supports the case.

The prevention of the sale of dogs and cats through pet shops is likely to drive sales to other areas which are more difficult to monitor and have a higher animal welfare risk. On 8 June 2008, the Premier announced the Queensland Government's strategy to address the numbers of dogs and cats euthanased every year. The strategy included:

- the development of a voluntary Code of Practice for Pet Shops (the Pet Shop Code)
- the development of a legislative framework for the Statewide compulsory registration of dogs and cats with desexing incentives, microchipping at point of sale and the tattooing of animals when desexed
- two-year pilot studies by selected local governments to trial innovative measures to increase desexing rates in dogs and cats
- a six month public education program.

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The Pet Shop Code, which was released in December 2008, provides guidelines for the care and management of animals in pet shops and encourages pet retailers to source their animals from responsible suppliers. DEEDI is continuing to work with pet shops to ensure the appropriate guidelines are in place and animal welfare matters are appropriately managed.

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* was passed on 11 December 2008 and provides for the mandatory registration of all cats and dogs and for the microchipping of all puppies and kittens. All local government councils will need to comply with the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* by 12 December 2010.

Four local government councils were allocated a share of \$315,000 to conduct pilot studies aimed at increasing cat and dog desexing and encourage responsible pet ownership. These pilot studies include:

- Moreton Bay Regional Council (\$86,000) – working with local veterinary surgeons to promote cat desexing, using the RSPCA's Mobile Education Unit and Portable Animal Welfare Service
- Gold Coast City Council (\$77,000) – trialling an approved breeder permit scheme and an education campaign focusing on appropriate enclosures for cats
- Logan City Council (\$84,000) – constructing a dedicated community animal desexing clinic
- Townsville City Council (\$68,000) – restarting the CatScan program on Magnetic Island, which includes compulsory microchipping of cats over five months and an education campaign.

At the conclusion of the pilot studies, consideration will be given as to whether compulsory desexing is an appropriate next step. In the meantime, Councils must provide registration fee incentives for owners to desex their animals.

DEEDI, through the Office of Fair Trading, is also able to investigate allegations of false or misleading representations by traders, including those in the retail sector. Persons aware of any breaches are advised to contact the Office of Fair Trading on telephone 13 74 68 or visit the DEEDI website at www.deedi.qld.gov.au.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Robert Cassidy of DEEDI on telephone 07 3247 3359 or email robert.cassidy@deedi.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



TIM MULHERIN, MP
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