



Australian Federation of Livestock Working Dog Owners

Hon. Rick Mazza MLC

Office 1

1139 Hay Street

WEST PERTH W.A. 6005

Dear Mr Mazza

I am writing to you as chairman of the above committee.

To give you a bit of background of this organisation, the Federation for Livestock Working Dogs, has representatives from all State organisations which are involved in either the breeding and registration, or trialling of Livestock Working Dogs throughout Australia.

The AFLWD was formed with the aim of establishing an educated source of reliable information on behalf of all Australian Livestock Working Dogs, their handlers and breeders. This advice would be available to any who propose to make decisions which affect these dogs and their welfare.

The Federation of Livestock Working Dogs is made up of representative from

- the Working Kelpie Council of Australia
- the Australian Sheepdog Workers Association
- Queensland Working Sheepdog Association
- the New South Wales Working Sheepdog Association
- the Victorian Working Sheepdog Association
- the South Australian Working Sheepdog Association
- the Tasmanian Working Sheepdog Association
- the West Australian Working Sheepdog Association
- The New South Wales Yard dog Association
- the Victorian Yard dog Association
- the South Australian Yard dog Association,
- the Tasmanian Yard dog Association
- the Queensland Yard dog Association
- The West Australian Yard and Utility committee
- the Victorian Cattle dog Association
- the New South Wales Cattle dog Association
- the Queensland Cattle dog Association

These organisations have a combined membership of over three thousand.

With the review in some states, of Legislation regarding the Welfare and Breeding of dogs, primarily aimed the prevention of "Puppy Farms", it became obvious to the Livestock Dog workers and breeders attending consultations that there was a serious lack of knowledge amongst legislators, and the general public, about almost all facets of the husbandry and use of Livestock Working Dogs in rural Australia. This has come to light in Western Australia with the WA Labor party putting out their Consultation Paper to stop puppy farms.

[http://www.markmcgowan.com.au/files/Stop\\_Puppy\\_Farms.pdf](http://www.markmcgowan.com.au/files/Stop_Puppy_Farms.pdf)

In some cases there was no consultation whatsoever with those involved with Livestock Working Dogs in the formulation of the initial drafts of these codes. Livestock Working Dogs were included with Companion animals which are not kept, selected or bred with the same objectives in mind.

Regulations placed on Livestock Working Dog breeders, by those with little understanding of, or consideration for, the circumstances in which they keep, work, select and breed their dogs, could prove disastrous to the maintenance of the necessary genetic diversity and ongoing availability of dogs to farmers.

This threat to the welfare and performance of dogs used to work livestock was recognised by the leaders of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) group who encouraged its sub group responsible for working dogs to develop a welfare code appropriate for farm dogs in Australia.

In May 2012, the Working Kelpie Council of Australia released a Code of Welfare for Australian Livestock Working Dogs. It is now mandatory for members of all Livestock Working Dog groups throughout Australia. This Code was adapted from the New Zealand Government 2010 Code of Welfare for Dogs, with permission from the Animal Welfare Directorate, MAF Biosecurity New Zealand which is recognised worldwide for the quality of its work in animal welfare.

Prior to its release the WKC Code was discussed at length and additions were made with consideration to Australian working conditions and climate variability. Livestock Working Dog handlers and breeders with many years experience and from all states, took part in the discussion. It was agreed that the final draft was practical, workable, and offered a high level of welfare for Livestock Working Dogs. It has Minimum Standards and Recommended Best Practice which apply to all Livestock Working Dogs. This code has the support of bodies representing farmers throughout Australia. It has Minimum standards and recommended best practice which apply to all livestock working dogs and has a section on the extra requirements of breeding dogs. (Section 6).

The code can be viewed on the Working Kelpie Council of Australia web site.

<http://www.wkc.org.au/PDF/AnimalWelfare-LivestockWorkingDogs.pdf>

If there are to be any changes to legislation in the future regarding the breeding and welfare of dogs in W.A. I hope that the Australian Federation of Livestock Working Dog Owners be invited to have input into the formation of any policies.

Look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

Gordon Curtis

1 June, 2015

cc: Mr Dale Park, President Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc)

Mr Tony Seabrook, President Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia