



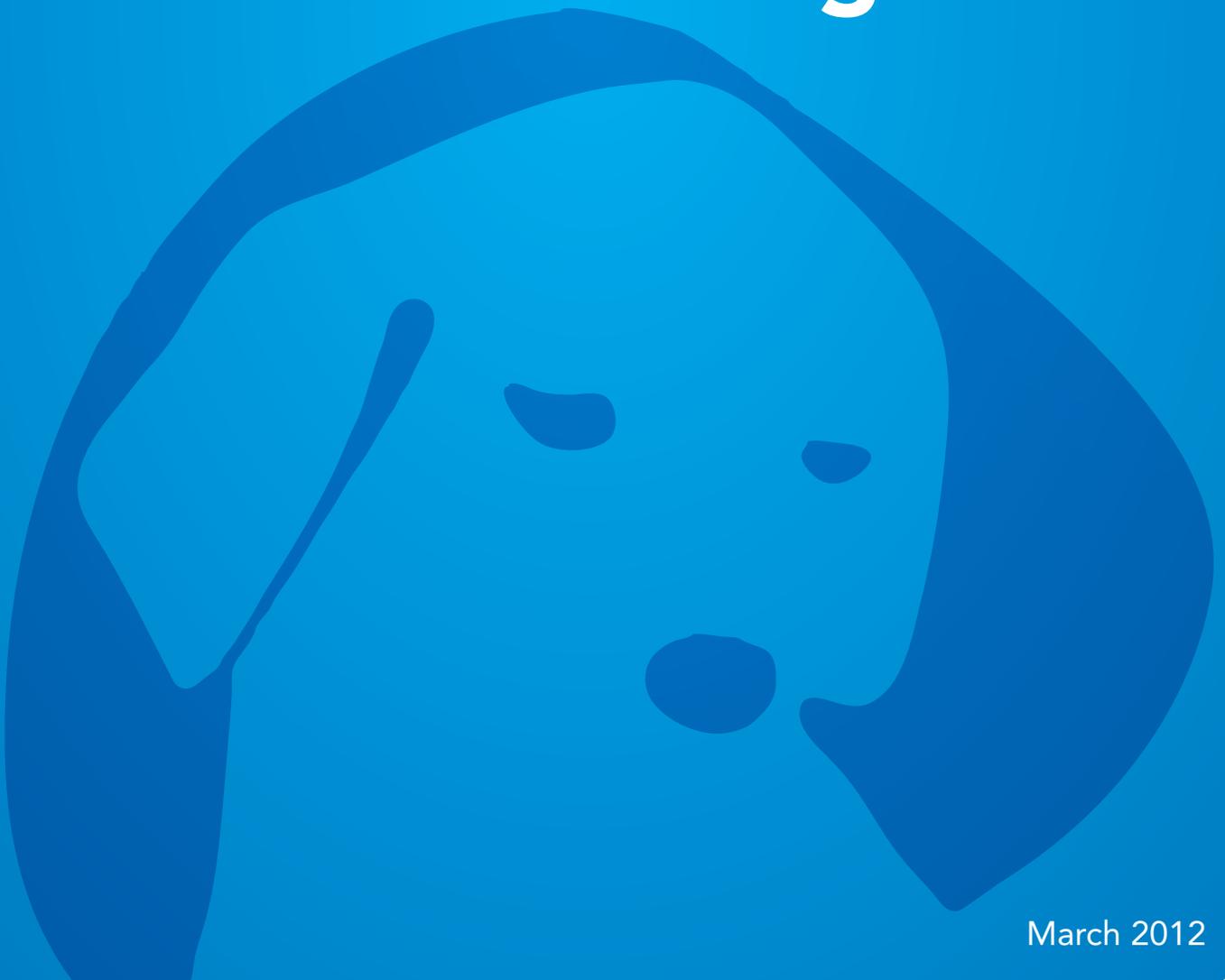
PIAA

PET INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Pet Care Professionals



PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy On Traceability & Re-Homing



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Executive Summary

As the peak body for the pet industry in Australia, the Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA) believes that the welfare of animals is paramount.

The PIAA supports responsible breeders who provide high standards of care and prioritise animal health and welfare.

The PIAA does not condone puppy farms, and supports the RSPCA's definition: a puppy farm is "an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or physiological needs¹."

The PIAA demands exacting standards from members in the care, management and trade in companion animals. All PIAA members must comply with PIAA National Code of Practice and Code of Ethics that define quality standards for the operation of businesses beyond current regulatory requirements.

As a sales channel, pet retail stores account for only 15% of animal sales each year. However, the PIAA believes the pet retail industry can be an agent for positive change.

The PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy on Dog Traceability & Re-Homing guarantees that:

- ▶ Dogs purchased from PIAA member retail stores are sourced from responsible breeders whose operations are subject to independent audit each year.
- ▶ Any dog purchased from a PIAA member that becomes unwanted or abandoned at any age is re-homed.

The PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy on Dog Traceability & Re-Homing means consumers can purchase with confidence from a PIAA member retail store, knowing that their dog is not the product of a puppy farm and that should the dog become unwanted at any point in its lifetime, PIAA will ensure the dog is re-homed.



¹ RSPCA (2010). "End Puppy Farming – The Way Forward"

The Issue

Pet retailers are under pressure from campaigns to ban the sale of dogs from pet shops.

Campaigners against pet retail stores argue that pet shops:

- ▶ Profit from the impulse purchase of pets;
- ▶ Are outlets for puppy farms and;
- ▶ Contribute to the problem of unwanted pets and euthanasia of pets in shelters.

The policy environment is muddled by different activist groups and political figures arguing for different outcomes.

The RSPCA Australia is running a strong campaign against puppy farms (also known as puppy mills and puppy factories). More radical groups are arguing for retail bans. They believe pet shops directly provide an avenue for puppy farms to sell pets.

The Australian Veterinary Association supports regulation for pet stores but does not wish to ban pet sales in retail stores².

State jurisdictions, including Victoria, have proposed looking at tightening regulation around retailing of dogs. Queensland has recently proposed the introduction of a breeder identification system with industry to give consumers a “pro-welfare choice”³ when it comes to buying a dog.

PIAA does not condone puppy farms. The Association supports responsible breeders who provide high standards of care and prioritise animal health and welfare.

The following outlines the PIAA’s actions on sales of dogs in pet retail stores to give consumers confidence in their dog purchase from PIAA member retail stores.



² The Australian Veterinary Association Limited (2007). “Sale of Pets through Pet Shops”

³ <http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/mms/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=73112>

PIAA Policy Response – PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee

The PIAA has developed this policy response to address community concerns about unwanted pets and puppy farms and re-establishes the legitimacy of pet retail stores as a vital link in responsible pet ownership.

The PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee has three components:

1. PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme.
2. PIAA Dog Traceability System from breeder to pet shop to owner, enabling trace-back for any animals that end up in an animal rescue facility and/or local council pound.
3. PIAA Re-Homing Strategy that ensures any animal purchased from a PIAA member that is subsequently unwanted, is re-homed. This policy will be for the animal's lifetime and the policy will ensure they are not euthanased unless in the opinion of a veterinarian the animal suffers from health and behavioural problems that cannot be otherwise managed and the veterinarian deems euthanasia necessary and in the best interests of the animal.

PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme

The bulk of dogs sold in pet retail stores are non-pedigree and come from commercial breeders.

The PIAA opposes the operation of puppy farms as defined by the RSPCA: a puppy farm is "an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or physiological needs⁴".

To create a clear distinction between a puppy farm and a responsible breeder who provides high standards of care and prioritises animal health and welfare, the PIAA has created a PIAA Approved Breeders Scheme.

This scheme applies to breeders who wish to supply dogs to PIAA member pet retail stores, and would operate in conjunction with PIAA's Retail Code of Conduct for Members, which binds members to ethical standards of conduct.

The PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme allows the PIAA to discriminate between what is a responsible breeder compared to a puppy farm and other irresponsible breeders.

Under the PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme:

- ▶ A PIAA Code of Conduct for Breeders outlines standards of ethical operation for breeding establishments.
- ▶ Only breeders whose operations are subject to independent audit – and comply with the Code of Conduct standards – are eligible to supply PIAA retail stores.

–Administered by the PIAA, the annual audits are to be conducted by a registered veterinarian and accompanied by a statutory declaration signed by the veterinarian.

⁴ RSPCA (2010). "End Puppy Farming – The Way Forward"

- ▶ Approved breeders will also include members of associations that are recognised by PIAA as having a code of conduct for ethical operation, as well as independently audited inspection regimes as an annual condition of membership. The Australian Association of Pet Dog Breeders (AAPDB) is a PIAA recognised organisation.
 - PIAA-approved breeder associations will publish an independent audit report on their inspection regimes each year.
- ▶ PIAA retail members can only purchase stock from breeders meeting the above conditions. A list of approved breeders (including AAPDB members) will be available for members view only on the PIAA website.
- ▶ A feedback loop will enable breeders to receive information about any health or behavioural problems seen in the dogs. This enables the breeder to remain informed and continually improve their breeding practices.

The scheme also provides for a 'short term' registration for an accidental breeding, allowing an individual to sell the progeny of an accidental mating once in the life of a bitch. This ensures the integrity of the system and of the supply of stock to PIAA member retail stores.

To complement the PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme, the PIAA is amending its current retail code for members to compel PIAA members to only source dogs from approved breeders.

PIAA members will also be required to display generic information about their breeders' operations such as photos and description of parents (not individual dogs for sale) at point of sale.

PIAA Dog Traceability System

The PIAA Dog Traceability System will ensure 'identity preservation' for a dog: from the breeder, to pet shop, to owner, and ensure if the animal is abandoned or sent to a shelter, pound, veterinary clinic or other rescue group, it can be traced back to the breeder as the original source of the animal, and any subsequent owners including retail outlets.

To achieve this, the PIAA believes that breeders supplying PIAA retail shops should microchip dogs before sale or transfer to a PIAA member retailer. While this is currently legislated in several states, actual practice varies.

Ensuring dogs are microchipped before they reach a pet retail store will assist the integrity of pet traceability and in tracking the supply of pets into retail stores. It will ensure that the breeder's details are permanently attached to each individual dog via the dog's microchip number on the microchip database register, giving vital traceability.



Microchipping for dogs is currently compulsory in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. While the system is designed to assist local governments, veterinarians and pet shelters trace the origins and/or owners of a pet, industry commentary is that in practice not all animals are microchipped before leaving the breeder, and in some cases the breeder microchips the dog but does not register their details, impacting traceability. The system also generally relies upon the owner of the pet to register the animal's paperwork after purchase.

Under the PIAA Dog Traceability System, PIAA member pet retail stores nationally will:

- ▶ Accept only dogs from breeders registered under the PIAA Approved Dog Breeders Scheme.
- ▶ Accept only dogs where the breeder has supplied the pet store with appropriate paperwork identifying them as the original owner, plus a change of owner form identifying the pet store as the new owner. This will ensure the breeder's contact details are permanently attached to each individual dog and the dog's microchip number on the microchip database register.
- ▶ Ensure store details are added to the dog's microchip.
- ▶ Submit council copies of change of ownership forms to the local council/s.
- ▶ Provide consumers with a change of ownership form, transferring ownership from the store to the consumer.
- ▶ Request that the new owners register paperwork when they purchase an animal.

In South Australia and Western Australia, where microchipping is not compulsory, the PIAA can drive industry change by insisting any dogs sold through PIAA members stores must be microchipped at breeding source.

PIAA Dog Re-Homing Strategy

The PIAA Dog Re-Homing Strategy will ensure that any dog purchased from a PIAA member that becomes unwanted or abandoned at any age is re-homed.

The PIAA will either house the animal in a care facility or fund its care in an affiliated facility until it is re-homed.

The PIAA Dog Re-Homing Strategy will ensure the continued welfare of all dogs purchased from a PIAA member pet store.

No pet will be euthanased unless in the opinion of a veterinarian that the animal suffers from health and/or behavioural problems that cannot be otherwise managed and the veterinarian deems euthanasia necessary and in the best interests of the animal.

The PIAA Dog Re-Homing Strategy will be written into the PIAA Retail Code, but will also become a branded point of difference for member stores.

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