

How does the Victorian “Puppy Farms and Pet Shops” Bill actually worsen animal welfare?

- 1. Consumers will be forced to buy from shonky operators**
 By shutting down audited, registered and licensed Pet Shops, the Bill will force consumers to buy from who-knows-where, including mobile phone numbers on classified ads and meeting in car parks to pick up the pet. Poor welfare will not even be spotted. Pet Shops keep their pets healthy and happy!
- 2. Tiny Baby Pets won’t get the attention and equipment they need**
 By shutting down audited, registered and licensed Pet Shops consumers will lose that unique ability to buy their pets and all their pet requirements from a single store, and having the store know their pet individually. This is particularly important for pets that have a high level of care requirements eg reptiles, birds, and “special needs” pets. Pets will not have their needs individually met at the time of purchase.
- 3. Consumers won’t be able to audit shonky operators**
 When pet shops are audited and licensed to sell pets, they inspect their breeders, and if a breeder is not having the highest standards of animal welfare they cease to deal with that breeder. Consumers buying online have no such way to understand the history of a given breeder or the welfare standards they have.
- 4. Breeders will be able to lie and get away with it, so pet welfare won’t matter**
 By shutting down audited, registered and licensed commercial breeders consumers will be forced to guess which are quality breeders and which are less than adequate as they will all be quoting a “licence number”. They can invent a different license number for each sale so they won’t be caught. The consumer will not be able to check if a license number is real. Therefore it’s “pot luck” for consumers and animal welfare will suffer.
- 5. Tiny Baby Pets won’t have to be cared for, or socialised**
 Councils have said they will not issue licenses, or will charge up to \$3000 for a license. So people will be forced to “invent” a license number and put the pet for sale online. There is clear evidence that online pet purchases have a higher rate of animal welfare problems compared to licensed breeders or purchases from pet shops.
- 6. Consumers will have to put their pets at risk before they even receive them**
 Modelling suggests that there will be a shortfall of up to 93,000 puppies/dogs per year for Victorian families that want pets. A whole new industry will develop, shipping tiny animals from interstate, in trucks to the airport from regional areas and then on planes in cargo holds. THAT is an Animal Welfare disaster waiting to happen.
- 7. Consumers buying sight unseen will result in poor animal welfare**
 If consumers are increasingly buying from interstate and classifieds rather than transparently and visibly from breeders and pet shops (regardless of size), then they are buying “sight unseen” and breaches of animal welfare will not even be identified. Pups and kittens could be infected with worms, fleas, unsocialised, and poorly fed and the consumer won’t even know until the pet arrives.
- 8. Shonky operators will not be punished, so they can get away with poor welfare**
 Councils have admitted that they will not have the resources to police the proposed regime. No resources have been allocated by the state government to enforce the regime. The current laws are already NOT enforced due to lack of resources. Those that obey the laws will be caught, those that choose to ignore the regime will get away scot-free.
- 9. Animal welfare is low priority compared to paperwork**
 With a requirement for a permit to have a market day or an adoption day, operators will simply not bother – or will not be able to get a permit due to Council issues. So animals will be sold “in the fast food outlet carpark” or left in shelters – neither is good for animal welfare!
- 10. Bureaucracy will overcome animal welfare**
 The way the Bill is written will require Councils to inspect, license, issue permits, hold databases. It is estimated that their workload will rise by at least 600% because there will be so many operators to provide administration for. This will minimise the time that Councils spend identifying breaches of animal welfare – a direct opposite of what is required!