

Parliament of Victoria



Case study: 'Oscar's Law'

Inquiry into the Domestic
Animals (Puppy Farms
and Pet shops) Bill 2016

Oscar's law

Oscar's Law is the common name given to the *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops Bill 2016)* which passed parliament and became an Act of Parliament in November 2017. The commencement of the Act was on 1 July 2018.

The passage of this bill was complex and included a committee inquiry process. Both the second reading debates and committee inquiry documentation can provide some good source material for younger students, that can be used to build on for students' understanding of how bills pass through parliament and the committee inquiry process.



Read the second reading debates on Oscar's Law from the Legislative Council. (Second reading debates are the process of discussing the different perspectives on a bill).

<https://vicparl.news/OscarsLaw-Hansard-LC>

Note: Some of the media coverage and discussions in parliament (including photography) describes and depicts animal cruelty.

The committee process

The committee process is an important part of making laws. It is where members of parliament conduct research and hear from community members, groups and individuals that may be impacted by the new law. Committees are a way for parliament to consult with the community and the community can have their say.

The inquiry was conducted by the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee. The inquiry site lists the:

- terms of reference
- people and organisations that put in a submission (272 submissions in total)
- people and organisations (witnesses) who participated in the hearings
- final response and reports

All material can be found on the inquiry site:

<https://vicparl.news/OscarsLaw-Committee-Inquiry>

Two sources of information that might be useful are the final Committee report and government response to the report, available on the ‘reports’ tab on the inquiry page.

Sections of the documents that might be most useful include:

- Government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016
 - 2. Response to Committee recommendations, pp. 3-4, provides an overview of the work the government had been doing and intend to do in relation to the bill.
- Report: Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016
 - 4.1 Dog breeder and rescue organisations, p. 27-35, includes the intention of the bill and provides an overview of the different positions taken into account.
 - 4.2 Impact on dog breeders, pp. 35- 42, provides an overview of some of the impacts breeding restrictions would potentially cause
 - 4.4 Issues for foster organisations/animal rescue, pp. 48-50, provides an overview of the impact for foster care for dogs.

There are also copies of the transcripts available from the hearings. The transcripts provide an opportunity for students to explore some of the different perspectives the committee heard during the inquiry. Some transcripts that may be useful, include:

- Banksia Park Puppies, Matt Hams & Kirstin Hams – Tuesday, 15 November 2016, 9am
- RSPCA, Dr Liz Walker – Tuesday, 15 November 2016, 10.30am
- Oscars Law, Debra Tranter – Wednesday, 9 November 2016, 7.45pm

Exploring case studies

The use of thinking routines can be a useful way to explore the different perspectives, needs and views of people and organisations involved in the inquiry.

- Circle of Viewpoints
<https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/circle-of-viewpoints>
- Compass Points
<https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/compass-points>
- Sticking Points
<https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/sticking-points>
- Ways Things can be Complex
<https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/ways-things-can-be-complex>

The [*Engaging perspectives card deck*](#) may also be useful in supporting students identifying stakeholders and their perspectives and/or identifying any gaps in the perspectives.