



## The Hon. Ros Spence MP

Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Community Sport  
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Robert McDonald  
Clerk of the Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
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Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for your letter of 17 June 2025 regarding a petition tabled in the Legislative Council seeking mandatory desexing of breeding dogs by 6 years of age. In accordance with Standing Order 11.04(2), I provide the following response.

Victoria has some of the most robust dog breeding laws in Australia. These laws were introduced through the *Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Act 2017*, which set a national benchmark in safeguarding the welfare of animals in breeding.

Most breeders must comply with desexing requirements for dogs, as prescribed under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DA Act).

Domestic Animal Breeding Businesses (breeders with 3-50 fertile females) must be registered with their local council as a Domestic Animal Business (DAB) and must abide by the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses (the Code). The Code sets out retiring requirements for breeding animals. Under the Code, any breeding female dog who has had up to 5 litters or is no longer considered suitable for breeding must be retired from reproduction, thereby imposing strict limits for breeding females.

Recreational Breeders (breeders that have up to 10 fertile females and are members of an approved Applicable Organisation) must follow the requirements set by their organisation. To retain approval for self-regulation, Applicable Organisations must maintain a Code of Ethics that supports responsible breeding and animal welfare to an equal or greater standard than the Code. Applicable Organisations (such as Dogs Victoria) are responsible for monitoring their members' compliance. A key component of the approval process is to ensure that provisions are in place for the health and well-being of breeding animals, including retirement plans.

Microbreeders (breeders with up to 2 fertile female dogs) are not required to register with their local council as a DAB or comply with the Code, nor are they required to join an Applicable Organisation. This exemption reflects Recommendation 8 of [the Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment \(Puppy Farms and Pet Shops\) Bill 2016](#) (the Inquiry), which supported a differentiated approach for smaller-scale breeders. The Economy and Infrastructure Committee recognised that while regulation was needed to prevent large-scale unethical breeding, applying the same requirements to microbreeders could place an unnecessary burden on responsible individuals and they should be exempt from legislative requirements. This included the desexing requirements as listed in the Code.

It is important to note that while microbreeders and recreational breeders operating under an Applicable Organisation are exempt from the Code, all breeders in Victoria must comply with the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*, which sets minimum welfare standards, including for veterinary care.

The Victorian Government considers that current regulation for desexing dogs provides a balanced approach informed by the findings of the Inquiry and the interests of breeders and Victorian families for affordability and availability when acquiring a dog.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ros Spence', with a small flourish at the end.

**The Hon. Ros Spence MP**  
Minister for Agriculture

28/07/2025