



Steve Austin - President PIAA, Steve Coleman - CEO RSPCA, Dr Harry Cooper

PIAA pet stores stamp out puppy farms and guarantee dogs for life

Pet stores will help stamp out dodgy puppy farms and reduce the number of abandoned dogs euthanised each year following a major industry policy announcement.

The Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA) today released its Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy on Traceability and Re-homing.

The PIAA policy, effective in NSW from 1 October 2012, guarantees that: Dogs purchased from PIAA member retail stores are sourced from PIAA approved breeders who meet animal welfare standards and whose operations are subject to independent audit by a veterinarian each year.

Any dog purchased from a PIAA member that is subsequently abandoned by its owner will be re-homed and saved from euthanasia. The first state to implement PIAA re-homing is NSW, where PIAA has partnered with RSPCA NSW.

Speaking at the launch at NSW Parliament House, PIAA Chief Executive Roger Perkins said consumers can now be confident that by buying a dog or puppy from a PIAA member store, they are helping stamp out dodgy puppy farms.

"Dogs and puppies sold in our stores will only be from PIAA approved breeders who care for their dogs," Mr Perkins said.

"The policy also guarantees that no dog sold from a PIAA member pet shop will ever be put down because it

is unwanted. We will pick up unwanted dogs, care for them, and re-home them.

"This policy shows that responsible pet stores are part of the solution towards more humane treatment of dogs and stamping out dodgy puppy farms," he said.

Between now and October 2012, the PIAA will work with its members, local government pounds, other animal shelter operators, dog breeders and state governments to ensure the industry is ready to deliver the new requirements. NSW is already finalised, with RSPCA NSW agreeing to re-home any PIAA dog that becomes unwanted.

RSPCA NSW CEO Steve Coleman said: "The RSPCA welcomes this major step toward saving many dogs from being put down." He added that "the PIAA's initiative in seeking to better control the breeding and sale of puppies is a significant advancement in improving animal welfare."

The PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy on Traceability and Re-homing requires that all PIAA member-sold dogs are micro-chipped before sale. PIAA are leading industry change by working with State Governments where this is not compulsory, including in SA and WA, to convince them of its merits.

Mr Perkins said: "Microchipping is necessary to trace the ownership of a dog. If the current registered owner of a dog cannot be found by a pound or animal shelter, and the chain of ownership shows the dog was originally purchased from a PIAA store, we will arrange for the dog to be picked up and cared for until it can be re-homed."

The PIAA is also in advanced discussions with Australia's only government-recognised

pet dog breeding Association, the Australian Association of Pet Dog Breeders (AAPDB), about its members becoming approved suppliers of dogs to member stores.

"PIAA-approved breeders will have agreed to adhere to a code of ethical conduct and open their premises up to yearly inspections by a registered veterinarian," he said.

AAPDB President Kate Schoeffel welcomed the policy. "We applaud the move by the PIAA, which will not only work to stamp out disgraceful practices among some dog breeders, it will give pet owners confidence they are making an ethical purchase and will more likely buy a dog that suits them and their families. This will also promote ethical breeders and pet shops, encouraging better industry practice across the board."

PIAA patron Dr Harry Cooper said the PIAA should be congratulated for implementing this policy. "It sets a high bar for everyone else in the industry when it comes to animal welfare and caring for dogs beyond the point of sale. The PIAA has taken a real leadership position that gives consumers confidence when deciding where to buy a puppy," Dr Cooper said.

Chair of the NSW State Government's Companion Animal Taskforce, the Member for Charlestown, Andrew Cornwell MP, applauded the PIAA Dogs Lifetime Guarantee Policy on Traceability and Re-homing. "PIAA's policy is a step in the right direction for ensuring the welfare of puppies and dogs, and eliminating cruel puppy farms in NSW. With this initiative, potential pet owners can be sure they are buying the right pet from a source that is ethical."