



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Love is blind, but it doesn't have to be

Join the movement to keep healthy puppies in homes, where they belong

Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) pedigree dog breeders are devoted to their dogs and want to see their puppies live long, happy and healthy lives in forever loving homes. Sadly, some dogs suffer from hereditary problems and require ongoing veterinary care, which can be expensive and heartbreaking for everyone.

The ANKC, the peak body for responsible and ethical breeders in Australia, has launched a public and breeder education movement to complement the RSPCA and Australian Veterinary Association's joint initiative, Love is Blind, to raise awareness of the animal welfare problems caused by exaggerated physical features and how these problems can be prevented.

"Love is blind, except, it doesn't have to be," said Hugh Gent OAM, President of the ANKC. "The ANKC considers the health and physical welfare of dogs of prime importance and does not support the breeding of dogs with exaggerated features to meet a puppy buyer demand for a certain look."

ANKC registered breeders who abide by the Council's [breeding codes and guidelines](#) give careful consideration to health issues, temperament and genetic screening, as well as individual care and placement of puppies in proper homes, explained Mr Gent.

"The ANKC continuously reviews Breed Standards to reflect their responsible breeding policy, as well as educating breeders and judges through ANKC membership to breed and exhibit healthy, sound dogs," he said.

Not all short-nosed breeds have health problems

Addressing concerns about the health and wellbeing of brachycephalic (short-nosed) breeds, veterinarian Dr Karen Hedberg, ANKC Canine Health and Wellbeing Committee Chair, said many brachycephalic breeds, such as Pugs, French Bulldogs and British Bulldogs, may be short-faced but not necessarily have breathing difficulties.

"The breeds that tend to have breathing difficulties have both short noses and loose skin folds. Current ANKC recommendations are not to breed with severely affected individuals," she said.

A recent ground-breaking study¹ at Cambridge Veterinary School, UK, showed dogs can be properly sorted into precise groups of degree of breathing difficulties which will make selection of breeding animals more reliable. The ANKC is considering importing similar testing chambers to Australia, said Dr Hedberg.

To promote the health, functionality and longevity of dogs, many ANKC Breed Clubs also run genetic health schemes, such as CHEDS (Canine Hip and Elbow Dysplasia Scheme) and ACES (Australian Canine Eye Scheme). Through the Canine Research Foundation, the ANKC also actively supports and funds scientific research with various Australian universities for the benefit of all dogs. Funding for the CRF comes from a levy on each puppy registered with the ANKC.



Educate yourself - give responsibility to buyers

“We want dogs to live long, healthy, trouble-free lives but part of that responsibility falls on their owners,” said Dr Hedberg.

“It is the duty of a prospective owner to educate themselves about the breed, inherited diseases - if any - and any recommended health testing for that breed. It is also their responsibility to find and work with a responsible breeder to ensure they are getting the healthiest and most suitable dog for their lifestyle.”

Dr Hedberg said the ANKC actively promotes efforts to ensure that the public is educated, understands the demands of responsible ownership and have access to healthy, well-bred dogs that are right for them.

“After they purchase their puppy, owners need to be diligent in the care and overall well-being of their dog by ensuring their exercise, nutrition, veterinary care, vaccinations and other preventative measures that aid in their dog maintaining its best health,” she said. “Given the ongoing demand for puppies, public education about choosing a pure breed suitable for their lifestyle and finding a responsible ANKC-registered breeder are paramount in stamping out irresponsible dog breeders and keeping dogs out of shelters and in homes where they belong.”

The ANKC affiliated Member Bodies and Breed Clubs help the public locate ethical and credible breeders of healthy dogs in about 200 breeds in Australia.

“The ANKC urges pet industry bodies and groups to join forces in assisting breeders to breed healthy dogs and assist buyers who wish to buy a purebred dog, to choose healthy puppies by using ANKC-registered breeders,” said Mr Gent.

For more information about the ANKC and affiliated Member Bodies, visit www.ankc.org.au. For updates on ANKC canine health screening initiatives, follow [ANKC Canine Health and Wellbeing](#). Also check out [Forensic View of Puppy Breeding in Australia](#).

VIDEO: ‘Puppies! Love will find a way – ANKC’

¹ <http://www.vet.cam.ac.uk/boas/research>

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Spokespersons for ANKC affiliated Member Bodies and a number of Breed Clubs are available for interview. Please contact Caroline for details.

About the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC)

The Australian National Kennel Council is the administrative body of purebred canine affairs in Australia with affiliated Member Bodies in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia. To discover more about ANKC and canine activities of all the Member Bodies, visit www.ankc.org.au

Looking for a purebred puppy?

• **Do not buy online! Do not impulse buy!**

- Do your homework
- Visit the breeder to meet the puppy and its parents
- Only buy puppies from ANKC-registered breeders
- Contact ANKC Breed Clubs for information

