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**Breathing easy – addressing health issues in Brachycephalic breeds**

*DOGS Victoria & DEPI working together for the health of Brachycephalic breeds*

**Melbourne, VIC:**

With breeds such as the Pug, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Boston Terrier and French Bulldog becoming increasingly popular, DOGS Victoria, the peak body for all canine related matters in Victoria, is taking pro-active steps to address health issues in brachycephalic breeds.

Brachycephalic breeds include breeds such as the Pug, French Bulldog, British Bulldog, Boxer, Boston Terrier, Pekingese, Japanese Chin and King Charles Spaniels. The one thing that these breeds have in common is that they are bred with a wide, short head and have a shorter muzzle resulting in a flatter face.

With this in mind, DOGS Victoria commenced work in 2014 with the Department of Environment & Primary Industries, Victoria with a view to providing more resources to educate owners and 'would-be' owners of brachycephalic dogs in relation to potential associated health issues, whilst taking steps to implement policies to develop more stringent health testing specific to 'Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome' (BOAS) via the introduction of a measurement scale that could be used in the same way that hip scoring is used to address hip dysplasia. Valuable information that registered breeders utilise when planning litters to reduce the risk of such health issues arising in resulting puppies.

Unfortunately due to the popularity of flatter faced breeds, many are being purchased from breeders and puppy farms who are not registered with DOGS Victoria and are operating in a non-regulated environment.

Ms Sylvia Power, Chair of the DOGS Victoria Canine Health & Wellbeing Committee, emphasised the concern that DOGS Victoria has in relation to brachycephalic breeds being purchased from non-regulated breeders and commercial puppy farms and advised that *“DOGS Victoria represents breeders of pure bred dogs throughout Victoria”* advising that, *“breeders registered with us are governed by a strict code of practice which takes steps to ensure responsible breeding practices are adhered to.”*

Responsible breeding practices include a thorough knowledge of the breed standard specific to the breed, health testing and an in-depth understanding of any potential health issues associated with that breed . Ethical breeders also know and understand the importance of statements such as in the Pug standard which states - *“Nose fairly large with well open nostrils. Wrinkles on forehead clearly defined without exaggeration. Eyes or nose never adversely affected or obscured by over nose wrinkle. Pinched nostrils and heavy or over nose wrinkle is unacceptable and should be heavily penalised.”*

Ms Power added that , *“The goal of DOGS Victoria and our breeders is to breed happy, healthy predictable puppies whilst preserving and promoting pure bred dogs that provide owners and their families years of companionship and love.*

In closing, Ms Power advised *“People seeking a puppy or dog need to ensure that they do their research on the breed they wish to purchase and also ensure that they are obtaining their new puppy or dog from a breeder who is registered with DOGS Victoria. It is always better to seek a registered breeder and to place your name on a waiting list. It may take a little longer to welcome your new puppy or dog into your home however in the long run it is worth the wait.”*

**About Your Company:** DOGS Victoria (Victorian Canine Association Inc.) is the peak body representing owners and breeders of pure bred dogs in Victoria and has a history dating back to 1877.

More than 280 individual clubs representing a single breed, a group of breeds or all breeds are affiliated with DOGS Victoria.

For more information about DOGS Victoria go to [www.dogsvictoria.org.au](http://www.dogsvictoria.org.au)

DOGS Victoria is a member of the Australian National Kennel Council Ltd (“ANKC”).

For more information about the ANKC go to [www.ankc.org.au](http://www.ankc.org.au)