

Australian National Kennel Council

Media Release

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Becoming a Dog Breeder in Australia

- Have you got what it takes? -

Dog breeding is a rigorous, time-consuming activity that requires a great deal of education and commitment. Registered breeders in Australia are passionate about improving the health of future generations of their breed, and go through stringent ongoing education programs. The **Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC)** calls for prospective owners to support this by asking for proof of registration upfront, and check that the puppies are bred in a clean and healthy environment.

A dog breeder is someone who intentionally mates dog specimens together for a specific outcome. Pedigree dog breeders plan their breeding from a long term perspective, and endeavour to improve the health of their breed's future generations. Registered breeders in Australia must abide by rules and regulations, and a Code of Ethics, determined by the **ANKC**.

Breeders are passionate about their breed. They must have kennels of sufficient size to handle the operation they carry out, and must have enough time to take proper care of their dogs and puppies.

“Dog breeding is a labour of love. It demands very long hours. There is little money in it, in fact, when done properly, the majority of breeders will be lucky to break even.”, says veterinarian and **ANKC** spokesman **Dr Peter Higgins**.

Registered breeders undertake a rigorous education regime. Breeders have to pass an examination just to get a kennel name. They meet regularly, and journals are published to ensure that new research developments are communicated and implemented as quickly as possible.

“Breeders know their dogs like the back of their hand, but dog judges are particularly knowledgeable about pedigree dog breeds. If they want to be an *all breeds* judge, they must pass a theory, and practical, examination for every breed of dog. This takes a minimum of 14 years of continuous study. They are, therefore, especially sensitive to genetic diseases facing dog breeds, and will not reward an unhealthy dog.”, states **Dr Higgins**.

Most importantly, breeders must strive for the future generation of puppies to be healthier than the previous. By intentionally mating certain dogs in an informed and educated way, it is possible for hereditary diseases to be bred out, or the severity of the disease reduced. This is a long-term process that requires a considerable amount of knowledge.

“Research projects funded in part by **ANKC** puppy registration fees have helped develop tests for a range of genetic diseases. For example, Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD), a painful joint disease, and Hip Dysplasia (HD), have both decreased in incidence significantly because of a 15 year programme partnering with the Australian Veterinary Association.”, **Dr Higgins** outlines.

Unregistered breeders pose a threat to registered breeders, dog owners, and to society because they are not required to abide by any ethical standards. They often cut corners to make a quick profit.

“These types of operations give registered breeders a bad name because they are often lumped into the same category. They are counterproductive to the majority of responsible breeders who aim to improve their dogs.”, says **Dr Higgins**.

“Ethical and responsible breeding has allowed most breeds to improve in structure and temperament. This depends on continuing education; show us the science and we will apply it. I would like to see prospective owners taking greater steps to ensure that the breeder they buy their dog from is fully registered with the ANKC. This would be the best thing for the owner, the dog, and our society.”, explains **Dr Higgins**.

*** ENDS ***

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