



# Are You Ready to Become a Breeder?

Breeding dogs is something that many people consider doing, but it comes with quite a bit of responsibility, long hours, and considerable expense. You can expect moments of joy, life long friendships, tears and heartache along the way – it certainly is not for the faint hearted!

To do it well you need to have an excellent understanding of the physiology of the dog, comprehensive knowledge of genetics, breeding, and breeding strategies, as well the time and resources to put into nurturing a litter of puppies so that they can develop to their full potential.

You also need to have facilities that meet or exceed the minimum standards set out by the Victorian Government and an understanding of the laws that apply to dog breeders in this state. Dog breeding has become very highly regulated. It is no longer just a case of having a litter and putting a 'puppies for sale' sign on your front gate.

Before you start planning your first litter, you want to make sure that you understand what is involved. Remember you will have a life long responsibility for the puppies you produce, so you will need to do everything in your power to make sure that those puppies have every chance of having a long, healthy and happy life.



## Am I ready to become a breeder?

Before you rush into breeding, you need to take time to consider if breeding dogs is really for you. Statistics show that a large number of breeders only ever have a single litter.

When asked why, most will tell you they did not truly realise the amount of time, effort and cost involved.

## Do you have the TIME?

Breeding and raising pups takes a considerable amount of time. When you have a litter, you should expect to spend a good part of everyday cleaning, feeding, supervising, handling, and socialising your pups and their mother.

During the birth, you may have to stay awake through the night to supervise, and for the first few days, you will need to be checking on the litter constantly. Many breeders end up sleeping next to the litter for the first week so they can supervise through the night. Is this something that you are prepared for?

From the birth through to the day the puppies leave for their new homes you can expect to spend 3 to 4 hours (maybe more) every day cleaning out the whelping area, washing bedding, supervising, feeding, handling the pups, and providing enrichment, exercise and socialisation opportunities. A litter takes up a HUGE amount of time!

If you work, you may have to consider taking some time off so that you can properly care for the litter – can you afford to do this? Do you have family members who can assist you with the care of the litter? Are you prepared to put the rest of your life on hold for 2 to 3 months to have a litter?

If things do not go to plan, will you be able to devote even more time for additional care – for example, if your pups need bottle feeding every 2 to 3 hours?



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## Do you have the RESOURCES?

Although many people think breeding dogs is a way to make money, in reality, most breeders who do it properly struggle to break even. All of the costs associated with breeding and raising a litter come well before your first puppy sale, so you need to make sure you have the resources to do it well.

Before you even start thinking about a litter, there are the costs associated with pre-breeding health testing, veterinary care, preventative treatments, and nutrition to make sure the parents of the litter are healthy as possible prior to the mating. Then there is the stud fee and any costs associated with obtaining a successful conception.

Even if everything goes to plan, and you have a large, healthy litter, there are the costs of feeding good quality food to a lactating bitch and growing pups, supplementing, worming, vaccinating, microchipping and other preventative health treatments. Then there are the costs of registration, record keeping and preparing documentation and puppy packs.

Consider that you may need to purchase a whelping box, additional bedding, bowls, utensils, toys and other enrichment items. There are also the costs associated with heating (and potentially cooling) the whelping area, and depending on your home or property set up, a variety of other expenses to make sure your litter is kept warm, safe and clean right through to when the pups head to their new homes.

And then there are the costs involved if things don't go to plan or if the mother or pups get sick. An out of hours emergency caesarean can easily cost \$3,000-\$4,000. Are you prepared for these extra costs?

## Do you have the FACILITIES?

With dog breeding having been in the media spotlight in recent times, the Victorian State Government and Local Councils have become increasingly focused on members of the community who breed dogs. There have been several changes to legislation with the aims of stamping out 'Puppy Farms' and unscrupulous breeders.

Before you consider breeding a litter, you need to make sure that you are actually able to legally undertake breeding activities at your premises. Every property within Victoria is 'zoned' under the Victorian State planning scheme. The breeding of dogs and cats is only permitted in certain zones, so you will need to check well ahead of time.

You also need to decide if your premises are suitable for whelping and raising a litter. Although suburban homes and backyards may be adequate for small breeds or small litters, it is unlikely that you will have the space to be able to cope with a litter of ten or more seven week old large breed puppies without upsetting your neighbours.

Do you have adequate facilities for a whelping area? As the pups get older, do you have somewhere to house them





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that allows access to outside? Will you need to modify your fencing to house a litter safely? Can you keep the mother and litter safe from other pets and inquisitive children?

You will also need to make sure that all of your dogs are registered with your council and that you do not exceed your permitted numbers of dogs – both before and after the litter (especially if you are planning to keep a puppy). All pups must be registered with your local council by the time they reach 12 weeks of age and will count towards your total permitted number of dogs.

## Breeding with Dogs Victoria

If you are thinking about breeding purebred dogs, Dogs Victoria would like to welcome you and help you learn everything you need to know to be a responsible breeder.

Dogs Victoria acts as the registry for all purebred, pedigree dogs in Victoria, and is the state controlling body for Dogs Australia (previously the Australian National Kennel Council or ANKC). Dogs Australia is the internationally recognised body aligned with other purebred registries around the world.

### Note:

In 2021, the Australian National Kennel Council changed its trading name to 'Dogs Australia' to better reflect their role as the national body for purebred dogs.

Given that this is a fairly recent change, you may find that you encounter dog breeders and older breeder-related documents that still reference 'the ANKC', the 'ANKC Rules and Regulations', and the 'ANKC website'. It is important to note that 'Dogs Australia' and 'ANKC' are the same organisation.

You can visit the Dogs Australia website at <https://www.dogsaustralia.org.au/>

Dogs Victoria registered breeders are committed to preserving the unique heritage of their chosen breeds. They do this through careful selection of breeding stock, comprehensive health testing and screening for known breed conditions, and maintenance of genetic diversity through sharing of genetic material with like minded breeders from around the country and around the world.

Dogs Victoria registered breeders aim to produce healthy, happy puppies that are true to their breed standard in physical appearance and temperament, fit for the purpose they were originally bred for. They have a driving passion for preserving and improving the breed they love so that others can enjoy the unique characteristics that make the breed special.