



# Finding the Right Homes for Your Puppies

Although it may be hard to part with them, the reality as a breeder is that once you have selected the one or two pups you plan to keep, you will need to find suitable homes for the rest of your litter.

Your goal will be to find knowledgeable and caring homes where your pups will be valued family members, and where they will receive the required exercise, training and care to have a happy, healthy life.

## Plan ahead

Although many long established breeders will have a waiting list for their pups (from previous customers, show exhibitors and other breeders), this is often not the case with newer breeders.

There is also the risk that, regardless of your breed, there will be several litters all whelped about the same time, leading to lots of puppies all being available at the same time as your litter, and only so many suitable homes actively looking for a pup.

With toy and smaller breeds, the expected litter size can be relatively small, so it is usually quite easy to find suitable homes for a few pups. If you have a larger breed or one that regularly has larger litters, you may want to have some interested and suitable homes already lined up before you mate your bitch. It may also pay to find out if other breeders are also planning litters around the same time as yours.

## Get the word out early

Many breeders will announce future breeding plans via their website or social media pages even before their bitch has come into season. Because good breeders are always planning a litter or two into the future, this is one way to generate a bit of early interest in a litter. Similarly, it may be possible to share your breeding plans with friends, family and others within your breed in this way – well before the mating takes place.

Some breeders will hold off announcing a litter until the mating has taken place. After all, plans can change, maybe that stud dog you were planning on using is no longer available. Of course, there are no guarantees that your bitch will conceive and, at this stage, you will have no idea of how many pups you might end up with. However, once she is mated, you will have a timeframe of when you expect puppies to arrive, and when they will be ready to head off to their new homes.

Once you have confirmed a pregnancy (and have an idea of how many pups you might expect), you can start making sure that you have suitable homes lined up for your pups. You will want plenty of time to sift through the various enquiries, screen the potential puppy buyers, and make sure that your pups are going to the very best of homes.

## Finding suitable homes - where can I advertise?

### *Important!*

*There are rules in Victoria that relate to the advertising of pets for sale.*

*If you plan to advertise an upcoming (but not yet whelped litter), or the fact that you are a breeder, you can do so without restriction.*

*However, if you are advertising actual pups, you are required by law to provide your Source Number along with the microchip number of the pup or pups you are advertising.*

The first place to start advertising may simply be via **word of mouth** – your mentor(s) and the owner of the stud dog can help you spread the news of your litter via their connections. Friends and family can also be a source of potential homes through their wider circle of contacts.

The next place to generate some interest is via your **Breed Club**. Most breed clubs have a designated person who handles enquiries from the public regarding available puppies or litters.



# Finding the Right Homes for Your Puppies

This may be the Club Secretary or a designated 'Puppy Enquiry Officer' so make sure that you contact them and let them know you have a litter on the way or puppies on the ground.

*Note: You should also make sure that you let them know when all of your puppies have homes so that they do not keep sending prospective homes your way.*

Many breed clubs also have regular newsletters, websites or social media pages where available puppies can be advertised. You will need to contact your breed club to see what they offer, but this is often an excellent place to start. There may be a small fee to advertise, or it might be included in your membership fee. Some clubs offer a 'Breeder Membership' that includes both an ongoing listing on their breeder pages and a set number of puppy or litter adverts each year which may be a better option.

Another good place to advertise your litter is via online pure bred only websites such as [Dogzonline](http://Dogzonline). These require that you pay a yearly subscription, but this allows you to list yourself as a breeder and advertise both litters and older pups for sale through their pages. Dogzonline only allows Dogs Australia registered breeders on their site, so you will have to provide your Dogs Victoria membership number to register.

Of course, there are many other places you can advertise. From the local supermarket noticeboard to online listings through places such as Gumtree. Unfortunately, unscrupulous breeders, puppy farmers, and scammers also use some of these places.

Regardless of where you advertise, you will need to meet your requirements under Victorian Law. Many online advertising portals will not allow you to publish an advert without all of the correct details. If you are advertising elsewhere, make sure that you always provide both your Source Number and the Microchip Numbers of the pups you plan to sell.

If you are advertising pups for sale, **Dogs Victoria Regulation 20.1.26** also requires that you provide your Dogs Victoria membership number and the text 'Please contact Dogs Victoria on email: [office@dogsvictoria.org.au](mailto:office@dogsvictoria.org.au) to verify my membership.'

## Screening potential homes

Regardless of where the enquiry comes from, you will want to screen all potential homes to make sure they are suitable and can provide the right kind of home for one of your pups. You want to make sure that the person making the enquiry is fully aware of the amount of time, effort and cost involved in caring for and living with a pet. You also want to make sure that they have selected a breed that is truly suitable for their lifestyle and experience.

Sometimes people are drawn to the look of a breed, or have seen it in movies or television and do not have a realistic idea of the commitment required. You don't want any of your puppies going to a home where their needs are unlikely to be met, or the novelty will fade as the pup grows out of the cute and cuddly phase and becomes a typical 'teenager' and starts pushing the boundaries.

As you chat to potential puppy buyers, you will want to get an idea of their level of experience and expectations – do they want a family pet and companion or are they looking for a pup to train for hunting, herding, dog sports or other specific tasks? Do they have young children? Elderly family? Have they owned dogs before? If so, how long ago? And what breed? Do they have a definite preference for their puppy – male or female, or a specific colour? What sort of temperament do they think they would like – spirited and lively, calm and sedate, affectionate or a little aloof?

All of this information will give you a good idea of the type of home the family can offer and will give you a 'gut feel' about their suitability. Many breeders will tell you that they have had conversations with potential puppy buyers, and have immediately decided that that person would NOT be getting one of their pups. Others have spent ages educating the prospective puppy buyers about the breed, to have the people realise that the breed might not be for them.



# Finding the Right Homes for Your Puppies

If you are breeding a breed that is relatively common or 'popular', you will usually find that you have more enquiries than puppies – this gives you the luxury of being able to pick and choose the best homes. The downside of this is that you are also likely to get many enquiries from people who are not at all suitable, but who have been drawn to the breed simply because of its popularity.

If you have a lesser known breed or a rare breed, you may find that you have a lot fewer enquiries, but that the quality of the potential home is a bit higher. These are generally people who have either had the breed before (so know exactly what the breed requires, how large it will be and the time required for coat care and training) or who have spent a lot of time researching the right breed for them.

You will still have to spend time chatting to them, and in some cases, they really should meet some adults of the breed first (if they have not seen one) to make sure that they are prepared for what their cute puppy will grow into.

In most cases, where possible, you will want to meet the potential puppy buyers in person, before agreeing to sell them a puppy. You want to feel sure that they will provide a fabulous, loving home, and are as keen as you to ensure that any puppy that leaves your home have a long, healthy and happy life.

## **Dogs Victoria Regulation 20.1.20**

*A member shall ensure that persons acquiring dogs from that member understand the requirements for the care, welfare and responsible ownership of the dog, and that they have the time and facilities, e.g. adequate fences, sufficient room and proper shelter, to fulfil their responsibilities.*

## **How many homes do you need?**

Until you have your litter safely on the ground, you will not be able to know exactly how many homes you will need. Many potential puppy homes may have specific requirements – maybe they are after a male puppy, and are not interested in a female or vice versa.

Many breeders take 'Expressions of Interest' – this is where they have a list of potential homes ready to go before the litter being born. Each potential home will have indicated their preferences such as colour or sex, and there will be a priority based on what type of home is being offered and the person's relationship to you.

For example: You would like to keep the pick puppy. You have an enquiry for a puppy to show from another breeder so they will be assigned the second pick because you want the best pups representing your kennel and your breeding. Your aunt would like a pup so she will be the next in line. Then there are three homes wanting a male puppy, and two homes wanting a female, one of which wants a specific colour girl.

As you can see, you may not be able to fill everybody's requests – maybe your litter only ends up having one male pup, or there is only one girl of the specific colour requested, and it turns out to be the pick puppy, and you keep it yourself. Maybe you end up with only two or three pups in the litter, or there are not two 'show quality' pups in the litter, and the other breeder decides not to take one. There are many potential outcomes.





# Finding the Right Homes for Your Puppies

## **Remember:**

*Even if you do have interest from suitable homes before you have a litter on the ground, you must be prepared for things to change prior to your litter being born, and for potential homes to drop off your list.*

*Often families looking for a pup put their name down with several breeders (especially if litters are scarce) and may have already found their perfect pup before your bitch whelps. If families have expressed interest prior to your bitch whelping, make sure that you follow up with them as soon as you know how many pups you have.*

Once your litter is born, you can loosely assign puppies to homes, and let any potential puppy buyers know whether or not you are likely to have something for them. If you do not have the colour or gender of pup they expressed interest in you can ask if they would be interested in an alternate, or whether they would rather wait for another litter.

It is important if you plan to keep a pup from the litter yourself, that you do not promise specific pups to homes too early. You want to be keeping the best puppy for yourself – regardless of whether your plans are for showing, breeding or a specific dog sport.

Your communication skills will be critical. You need to be very clear about the order in which pups will be assigned, and remind your potential puppy buyers that you will have the first selection – even if that is not until the evaluation at eight weeks of age.

## **Taking deposits**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you take a 'deposit' for a puppy once you have your litter on the ground. Many breeders see a deposit as a way to establish some commitment from the purchaser, and to discourage those people who may 'pull out' at the last minute, well after you have turned away other potential homes.

The taking of deposits is an area where there are a great diversity of opinions. Some breeders insist on a deposit once the pups are born because they have been caught out before with purchasers changing their mind or obtaining a pup from another breeder at the last minute. They feel that the deposit provides them with some added security about the intention of the purchasers, and discourages the purchasers from shopping around for a pup, or backing out of the deal.

Other breeders refuse to take deposits. They don't want to have families whose circumstances have changed, feeling forced to take a puppy rather than risk losing their deposit, and they don't want to promise anyone a puppy before they have had a chance to fully assess their litter.

If you do decide that you want to take a deposit, you need to be aware that this constitutes a legal agreement between both parties – they are committing to purchasing a puppy from you, and you are committing to provide them with a suitable puppy.

You need to be very clear about whether or not the deposit is refundable, and if it is, under what circumstances. Does the deposit amount constitute a partial payment for a puppy, and if so, what percentage of the total cost of the puppy?

The terms of the deposit need to be very clearly outlined, documented, and both parties need to sign, indicating they are happy with the terms and conditions BEFORE any money changes hands.

## **Important!**

*Dogs Victoria does not get involved in disputes relating to deposits as these are private commercial agreements.*

*You should seek legal advice regarding what is considered fair and reasonable, what is enforceable under Victorian law, and what the implications would be should things go wrong before you draft any deposit related agreements.*