



Media release

Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Partnerships
The Honourable Desley Boyle

Confusion over American Staffies no longer: Minister

Local Government Minister Desley Boyle has today announced she will amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 to clarify once and for all that American Staffordshire terriers are not classified as “restricted dogs”.

This follows a Supreme Court case in April, Gold Coast City Council v. Chivers, which ruled the Amstaff involved was the same as a restricted American Pit bull.

Ms Boyle said pit bulls have been prohibited by many Queensland Councils under their local laws, listed as “restricted” under State legislation and banned from importation by the Commonwealth.

There are an estimated 4,000 Amstaffs in Queensland, some 230 on the Gold Coast.

“The amendment will state categorically that for the purposes of the Act, Amstaffs will not be considered the same as the restricted pit bulls,” Ms Boyle said.

“This will give Amstaff owners especially on the Gold Coast certainty about their rights and obligations yet it will give Queenslanders peace of mind that the legislation’s tough penalties remain for irresponsible pet owners whose dogs cause fear or harm,” she said.

“While it was never the State’s intention for the Act to classify Amstaffs as restricted dogs, the recent court case has meant the amendment is now necessary.”

It is generally accepted among experts that Amstaffs and pit bulls descended from Staffordshire bull terrier-type dogs however the restricted pit bulls were bred specifically as fighting animals.

Amstaffs on the other hand were bred almost exclusively as show and companion dogs, widely recognised as trainable and family-friendly pets.

Amstaffs are even used as therapy dogs including in hospitals. Well-known Brisbane Amstaff Nudie, owned by Mrs Melissa Greenall, visits aged-care facilities, special care and children’s wards.

“Importantly the proposed amendment to the legislation will not compromise community safety as owners of all dogs, including Amstaff owners, will be held accountable for the behaviour of their charges,” said the Minister.

“The same rules apply to all dog owners and you will feel the full weight of the law if your dog behaves badly or causes harm.”

If a dog bites someone, Ms Boyle said a fine of up to \$30,000 can apply under the Act and the dog can be seized by Council and declared as dangerous.

“If a dog bails someone up on the street, a fine of \$2,000 can apply and Council can declare the animal as menacing,” she said.

“Special provisions apply to animals declared as dangerous or menacing, such as fencing, muzzling and kennel requirements.

“I take this opportunity to thank Dogs Queensland President Barry Vickers in particularly and his team who have worked with departmental officers in sorting out the confusions flowing from the recent court decision and this amendment will put the matter to rest.”

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