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COMPANION ANIMALS ACT – NEW LAWS TO BE INTRODUCED FOR RESTRICTED DOG BREEDS

The NSW Government today announced moves to ban Pit bull terriers and American pit bull terriers from NSW – the first time any breed has been banned in NSW.

This follows two dog attacks in the last week at Illawong in Southern Sydney by a Pit bull terrier and another by two Pit bull terrier crosses at Strathfield.

Under the plan, new laws will be introduced into Parliament later this year that would make it an offence to breed, sell, give away or acquire:

- Pit bull terriers
- American pit bull terriers
- Japanese tosas
- Argentinian fighting dogs and,
- Brazilian fighting dogs.

These five breeds are classed as “restricted breeds”. They are currently prohibited from import into Australia and owners must be over 18, erect dangerous dog signs and these dogs must be held in a childproof enclosure and be muzzled when in public.

There are currently around 3,300 restricted dogs registered in NSW, of which the majority are American pit bulls and pit bull terriers.

From the introduction of the new laws, all current owners of these restricted breeds will have to have their dogs desexed.

The Government will also give councils the power to ban the ownership of any restricted dog in its area unless the owner has obtained an approval from the council. In addition the Government will work with councils, vets and scientists on ways to identify potentially dangerous cross breeds to look at future bans.

The Minister for Local Government will meet with the LGSA and Ranger's Institute representatives this week to discuss how to strengthen the enforcement provisions of the laws. The Minister will also approach his interstate counterparts at the next Ministerial Council meeting seeking a national approach on dog bans. Currently there are two jurisdictions – Queensland and South Australia – that have certain bans relating to restricted breeds.

The Government acknowledges that previously, experts had advised that any dog is capable of an attack, not only dogs of restricted breeds. The Act recognises this and allows councils to declare any dog dangerous if it is threatening or harassing another person or animal.

The Department is currently planning the implementation of the changes announced by the Government today and will keep councils informed as these changes are planned and implemented.



Garry Payne
Director General