

Tuesday, 19 April 2022

PROTECTING OUR PETS FROM DODGY BREEDERS

The Andrews Labor Government is encouraging prospective pet owners to make informed decisions when looking for a furry friend to help combat scammers and dodgy breeders.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas was at RSPCA Burwood today alongside Authorised Officers from the RSPCA Inspectorate to launch the 'Choosing a Healthy Pet' campaign which helps dog and cat buyers avoid common pitfalls and identify the warning signs of illegal or unethical breeding.

Authorised officers from the RSPCA Victoria Inspectorate are responsible for enforcing Victoria's strict breeding laws – the toughest in the nation.

With demand for pets increasing during the pandemic, there has also been an increase in scams and illegal behaviour.

The Choosing a Healthy Pet checklist supports Victorian pet owners with important advice on steps they can take when selecting a new pet, as well as useful information about breeds, pet health and behaviour.

Finding the right pet for your family can be a difficult decision and it's important to ask the right questions to identify dodgy breeders and avoid pet scams:

- Do not buy pets from a car park or other public place – it is illegal to sell companion animals in public places without a permit and this is a common sign that a sale may not be legitimate
- Always meet the pet, and its parents if you can, and ask to see their current living conditions
- Check that the advertisement includes a source number and that the number is valid on the [Pet Exchange Register](#) website
- Make sure to get proof of vet checks, microchipping and vaccinations – it is a requirement to microchip all cats and dogs before they are sold or given away in Victoria
- Immediately update your pet's microchip details after purchase and register them with your local council.

Victorians who suspect illegal breeding activity should make a report to the RSPCA.

The Choosing a Healthy Pet campaign is part of the Labor Government's ongoing effort to improve the welfare of domestic animals and ensure that breeding practices across the state remain strictly regulated, humane and safe.

For more information about the campaign visit agriculture.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Animal welfare is everyone's responsibility and that's why we encourage people to ask questions which prevent dishonest pet sellers from abusing the trust of prospective pet owners."

"Getting a pet is exciting for the whole family but it's important to take the right steps and look beyond the cute face – everyone has a part to play in stamping out dodgy breeders."

Quotes attributable to RSPCA Victoria Chief Inspector, Michael Stagg

"From our work at RSPCA Inspectorate, we know animals bred by illegal breeders often suffer health concerns related to poor breeding practices or a lack of appropriate veterinary care."

"The Choosing a Healthy Pet checklist and will help future pet owners do their own research and avoid common pitfalls."

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