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Dangerous dog laws may cost owners

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IPSWICH City Council is being forced to put the bite on dog owners following court rulings and State Government decisions.

The fate of American Staffordshire Terriers (known as AmStaffs) in Ipswich is up in the air after a recent Supreme Court ruling.

A Gold Coast couple's fight to have their dog classified as an AmStaff rather than a banned American pit bull back-fired when the court decided the two breeds were the same.

That meant AmStaffs could face the same treatment as pit bulls, including de-sexing, muzzles and special enclosures.

Similar conditions now apply to dogs declared dangerous in Ipswich after the government ordered it had to follow state legislation.

It was also ruled to be retrospective and council says that could mean a financial hit of thousands of dollars to safety conditions.

The Supreme Court decision outraged peak breeding body Dogs Queensland, shocked owners and left councils scratching their heads.

The Gold Coast immediately announced it would no longer register Amstaffs.

Ipswich City Council this week resolved to seek advice from the State Government.

"The court is telling us they are pit bulls so that means we have prohibited dogs in our city," Cr Andrew Antonioli said.

He said there were 126 Amstaffs in the council area.

"Our legislation says we can't register a pit bull so if someone tried to register an AmStaff we would be going against our local law to do that," he said.

"We're wedged between a rock and a hard place.

"This is completely messy. There are going to be court hearings after court hearings."

Dogs Queensland manager Rob Harrison said AmStaffs had been improved over many generations and were now "far removed from what the community considers to be the typical pit bull.

"AmStaffs, whilst originating from a similar genetic background, were developed with an entirely different objective, to produce a well-socialised, sound dog suitable to urban living," Mr Harrison said.

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