

**Future of American Staffordshire Terriers Dogs no longer in doubt.**

After an intensive campaign by Dogs Queensland, the Queensland Government Minister, the Honourable Desley Boyle acted to end the uncertainty in identification of the American Staffordshire Terrier to the enormous relief of dog owners and breeders throughout Australia.

In March this year (2010), the Supreme Court of Queensland handed down a ruling in the application brought by Ms. Kylie Chivers in respect to her dog "Tango" against the Gold Coast City Council (GCCC). Honourable Justice Martin decided that her American Staffordshire Terrier was in fact an American Pit Bull Terrier Dog (Supreme Court of Queensland (Brisbane) BS 6396 of 2007 Chivers-v-Gold Coast City Council).

There are more than 200 internationally recognised breeds of pure bred, pedigreed dogs owned and bred by Dogs Queensland members and these dogs have many generations of recorded registered pedigree data. American Staffordshire Terriers (often called AmStaffs) are a recognised breed and these dogs are bred specifically with the purpose of improving breed type and temperament. American Staffordshire Terriers are now far removed from what the community considers to be the typical "Pit Bull".

In 1991, the Australian Government decided to restrict the importation of American Pit Bull Terriers (along with 4 other identified dog breeds) into this country. This decision has been the subject of much criticism by dog enthusiasts over many years because it is generally believed by the majority of knowledgeable dog authorities that specific breeds should not be banned but the actions by a small number of aggressive dogs should be penalised. Indeed, aggressive dogs are typically the result of poor training and socialisation brought about by owners not understanding and accepting their responsibilities.

**BAN THE DEED AND NOT THE BREED**

All Queensland Local Authorities have banned the keeping of American Pit Bull Terriers (and Pit Bull Terrier types) since 1991 and following the Honourable Justice Martin's decision, the Gold Coast City Council are now refusing to register AmStaffs. Clearly the GCCC are interpreting the Supreme Court decision so that AmStaffs are now a prohibited breed, even though legally it may be argued that this is not the case.

American Staffordshire Terriers are a distinct and separate breed which, whilst originating from a similar genetic background, were developed with an entirely different purpose to that of the American Pit Bull Terrier. That purpose was to produce a well socialised physically sound dog suitable to urban living.

Dogs Queensland Government & Agency Liaison Officer, Mark Sheppard said that "our responsible Dogs Queensland members / breeders have worked tirelessly over many years to achieve this purpose working at all times within a clearly defined breed standard".

This unexpected Supreme Court decision seems to be contrary to all of the anecdotal evidence of our members / breeders and this may be supported by the scientific evidence of Genetic Technologies Ltd (a well respected and highly regarded Human and Forensic and Animal Genetics & Diagnostics firm). Whilst it remains to be proven, Genetic Technologies Ltd are confident and maintain that genetic testing will "accurately identify significant numbers of breeds based on breed specific signatures. The American Staffordshire Terrier has shown to have its own unique breed signature".

In early April 2010, the President of Dogs Queensland, Barry Vickers, along with the Government & Agency Liaison Officer Mark Sheppard, met with representatives from the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (Local Government & Special Delivery Group) to discuss the possible ramifications of this Supreme Court decision and what effect, if any it may have on our responsible members. In particular, they discussed the implications that any future management strategy could have on the estimated 1,500 pedigreed registered American Staffordshire Terriers in Queensland and the possible risk of a "domino effect" across all of the estimated 8,000 registered AmStaffs Australia wide.

Extensive consultation in the nearly four months since the Supreme Court decision has occurred between Dogs Queensland, who were fully supported by American Staffordshire Terrier Club of Queensland and their President, Melissa Greenall and the Queensland Government.

Dogs Queensland President, Barry Vickers congratulates the Honourable Minister Desley Boyle (Minister for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) and her staff for their decision to recognise the American Staffordshire Terriers (AmStaff) as a breed in its own right.

The Honourable Minister Desley Boyle, acting responsibly and in consultation with Dogs Queensland, has announced that she will amend the Queensland Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 by acknowledging that American Staffordshire Terriers are not classified as "restricted dogs".

This good decision was achieved in a consultative partnership between the Queensland State Government and Dogs Queensland, thereby allowing American Staffordshire Terriers to be recognised in this State as they are internationally.

Dogs Queensland President, Barry Vickers said that Queensland State Minister Desley Boyle has shown great wisdom and demonstrated good governance by acting so responsibly by seeking to correct this anomaly.

**Issued by Rob Harrison,  
Secretary / General Manager**