The Politics of Dogs in Victoria: Breed, Breeding Practices & 'Ethical' Acquisition

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Abstract

In December 2017, the parliament of Victoria, Australia, passed into law the landmark *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill*. Catalysed by increasing community concern about the ethics of certain dog breeding and selling practices, the legislation marked a particular historical juncture; a disruption to widely held, and until then largely unquestioned understandings about dog acquisition, dog breeding and dog breeds. Drawing on the Victorian case study, this thesis asks how discourses about breed and breeding have historically produced – and continue to produce – knowledges about specific categories of companion dogs, and the extent to which these discourses influence dog carers' understandings of 'ethical' breeding and acquisition. As part of a 'multi-sited' ethnography, the project triangulates data from three sources, including two online surveys with Victorian dog carers, interviews with dog shelter and rescue group workers and critical discourse analysis of the ways in which dog breeding and acquisition is represented in political, commercial, activist, media, and social media spheres. The Foucauldian conceptual tools of biopolitics and governmentality are applied and extended to examine the ways in which dogs' bodies are materially impacted by human discourses about breed and breeding, and the ways in which these discourses gain and lose legitimacy in different socio-historical contexts. The thesis finds that logics surrounding which breeds and breeding practices are considered 'ideal' and 'ethical' have shifted in line with changing human subjectivities. While pedigree breeds have long been legitimised through historical breeding lineages and official recognition processes, the ethics of pedigree breeding has been increasingly called into question. By contrast, dogs that have been traditionally stigmatised as 'non-breeds' – namely cross breed (or 'designer') dogs and mixed breed rescue dogs – have become increasingly sought after as companions. Further, as notions of 'ideal' breeds have become disrupted, so too have traditional avenues for dog acquisition. Calls to acquire dogs in 'ethical' ways such as through adoption or finding 'reputable' breeders are being internalised by Victorian dog carers to some extent. However, historical, socio-cultural, emotional and market factors all influence what is deemed 'ethical' breeding and acquisition in any given context. This serves to obfuscate the debate over ethics and makes dog acquisition in practice a contested and complex space. Thus, this research highlights that educational responses to this issue – whether through the work of animal advocacy groups or government – can only do so much to address the problems inherent in dog breeding, which are at their core often governed by human subjectivities that, in turn, intentionally and unintentionally produce arbitrary standards of 'idealness' against which companion dogs are measured and expected to adhere.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of this thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of animal degree of diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Clare Brealey
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Introduction

In December 2017, the parliament of Victoria, Australia passed into law the long-awaited *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill*, to put an end to the problematic puppy farming trade. The world-first legislation, an amendment to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994,* was passed following several years of heated political debate which included a parliamentary inquiry and an eventual redrafting of the Bill. The legislation itself was catalysed by increasing community concern about the ethics of certain dog breeding practices, namely puppy farming – an industry that participated in the cruel treatment of breeding dogs and puppies. Tracing back to 1993, when 'the first puppy farm' was revealed to the Victorian public, a gradual shift in attitudes towards puppy farming and other contentious practices related to the breeding, buying and selling of companion dogs marked a particular historical juncture; a disruption to largely unquestioned understandings about dog acquisition, breeding and breed.

Using the case study of puppy farming in Victoria (1993-2017), this thesis asks, how do discourses, both historical and contemporary, about breed and dog breeding produce knowledges about specific categories of dogs, and to what extent do these discourses influence current and prospective dog carers' understandings of 'ethical' companion dog breeding and acquisition? The following chapters highlight that concern around puppy farming both produced and reinforced shifting ideas about dog 'idealness', which saw dogs that have been traditionally perceived as non-breeds (such as designer dogs and mixed breed rescue dogs), become sought-after companions. The problematisation of puppy farming equally forced Victorian dog carers and prospective carers to reassess some previously routine methods of dog acquisition and reflect upon their assumptions about ethical dog breeding practices. While these discourses about dog breeds, breeding, and acquisition are ultimately human social constructions, they nevertheless have material impacts on the lives and wellbeing of the dogs they represent – a central concern in this thesis.

In this introductory chapter, I firstly outline the case study of puppy farming both globally and locally, tracing the social processes through which this and associated issues such as pet stores, numbers of dogs in shelters and designer dog breeding became collectively problematised as sites of concern and intervention in this period. I then contextualise this project within the broader intellectual and conceptual histories of human-animal studies, critical animal studies and breed studies. Finally, I provide an outline of the chapters included in this thesis.

The problematisation of puppy farming

Around the world, puppy farms have developed an infamous reputation for their often industrial-scale breeding of companion dogs. Sometimes termed puppy mills or puppy factories, puppy farms are thought to have emerged in the United States following World War Two (Fumarola 1999, Tushaus 2010, Maher 2017). The farming of dogs was promoted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as an alternative to farming conventional crops that had begun to fail in the post-war years (Fumarola 1999, Tushaus 2010). The raising of 'dog crops' as they became known, saw the supply of purebred dogs in the United States grow, leading to the emergence of the retail pet store trade as a means of increasing consumer demand for pet dogs (Fumarola 1999). Today, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) estimates there are around 10,000 puppy farms operating across the country (HSUS). Aside from the United States, puppy farming operations have been found across East Asia, the United Kingdom and Europe (Maher 2017).

Awareness of puppy farming as a significant animal cruelty issue arose in Victoria, Australia in the 1990s. Graphic stories, images and videos of sick, injured dogs living in abhorrent conditions circulated, particularly through news media – and in the latter years, social media – and thus became part of the public imaginary. This began in 1993, when animal activist Debra Tranter, who was then volunteering with Animal Liberation Victoria, reportedly received an anonymous tip-off about a dog breeder keeping over 100 dogs on a property near Ballarat (Mitchell 2011), a regional city approximately one hour from Melbourne. Tranter and a friend spent around three months searching for this property, eventually locating a farm near Learmonth, a town north-west of Ballarat. Entering the property covertly at night, the pair took footage of the conditions on the farm and released the footage to the media. Video recordings and photographs showed hundreds of dogs living in squalid conditions with a range of preventable diseases such as mange and kennel cough. Most dogs were covered in fleas and were later found to have intestinal worms. Their living conditions were unhygienic with many dogs living in pens filled with their own excrement with no shelter or suitable bedding (Mitchell 2011).
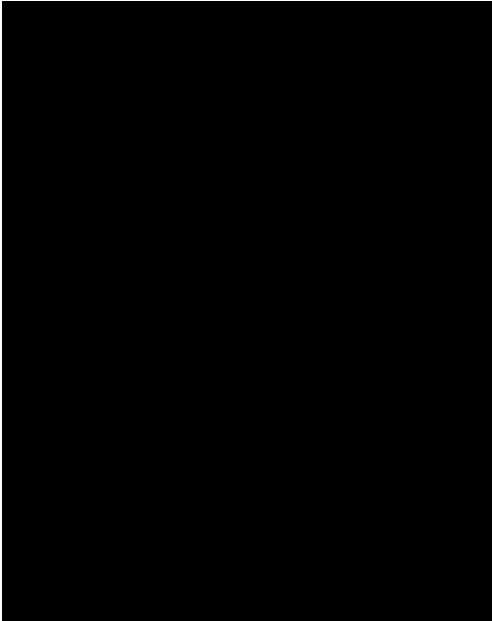
Figure 1.1: A photograph of 'Nobby' a breeding dog found from the Learmonth puppy farm. This image was used by the RSPCA and Oscar's Law in their anti-puppy farm campaign material.
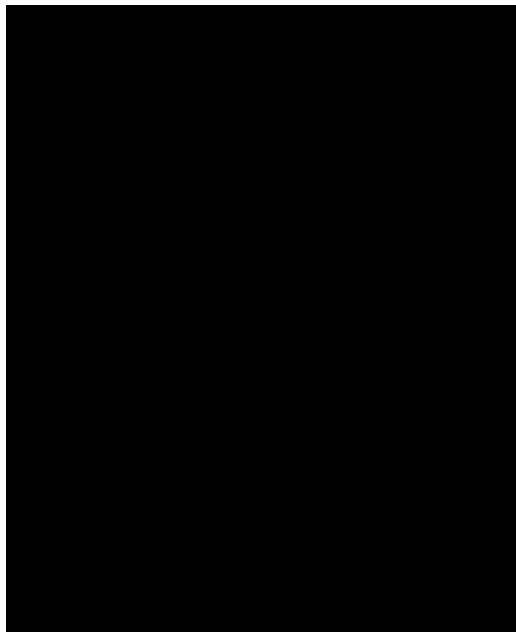

Figure 1.2: An example of the conditions at a puppy farm (Pyramid Hill). This whelping mother and her litter of puppies have not been provided with suitable bedding and shelter.

The Learmonth puppy farm was at the centre of media and public scrutiny in Victoria for several years following. The scrutiny endured not only because of the conditions that were uncovered, but because of the status of the property's owner, Dr Ron Wells, a former veterinarian and at the time a prominent Victorian Liberal Party politician (Talbot 1996). The images from this puppy farm of dogs living in squalor and in need of veterinary treatment established puppy farms to be a notable and pressing animal cruelty problem in Victoria, and eventually puppy farms were uncovered in other states across Australia.

Over the following years, several other puppy farms rose to notoriety in Victoria, all exhibiting conditions that mirrored those found at the Learmonth farm. This suggested that puppy farming was somewhat widespread and easily concealed. Over the course of the early 2010s several high-profile puppy farms came to the public's attention. For example, the Beremboke puppy farm, a property which was found to have kept dogs in conditions described by the local council and animal activists as "horrific" (Rayner 2010a). Like other puppy farms, the property was found to be unhygienic; dogs and puppies were provided with minimal shelter and very little access to water (Stephens 2010; Hobbs & Whalley 2010, p.1). Moreover, dogs were found to be covered in their own excrement and several dogs were also discovered dead and decomposing at the end of chains (Rayner 2010b). A few years after the outrage over the Beremboke puppy farm, a puppy farm discovered at Pyramid Hill garnered further public outrage after being described by RSPCA Victoria Inspectors as "one of the worst cases of animal cruelty in history" (*The Courier* 2013). Over three years, RSPCA Victoria Inspectors and Victoria Police found 235 dogs and puppies kept at the property. The dogs exhibited various health issues ranging from emaciation, dental diseases, ear infections, untreated open wounds, heart murmurs, prolapsed eyelids and skin irritations, burns and matting fur a result of constant exposure to their own urine and faeces (Holmes 2015; Minear 2015, p.2; Pedler 2015).

Further complicating revelations about puppy farms was 'backyard breeding', which also entered the public discourse during this period. A generalised term used to describe the breeding of one's own pet dogs, either intentionally or accidentally (RSPCA 2019a), backyard breeding became associated with the puppy farm and pet store trade as an equally dubious, unethical and irresponsible avenue for acquiring a dog.

Stories about the severity of conditions found at these and other properties, and the suffering that this caused for breeding dogs and their puppies, became the basis for the anti-puppy farm movement in Victoria and later Australia-wide, with activists and advocacy organisations regularly using images of diseased and distressed dogs to elicit government and public support. While

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puppy farming has always existed on the periphery – supplying pets to Victorians, operating covertly and to some extent without dispute – the problematisation of puppy farming was actively shaped and made visible through the wok of animal activists collecting covert footage and highlighting the issue through various media channels.

Contested definitions: defining a puppy farm

Animal welfare, activist and advocacy organisations, government, veterinarians, dog breeders, the pet industry and the general community all agree that puppy farming is an animal welfare problem that requires intervention. However, how to define what is and is not a puppy farm has become a site of contestation among these groups.

In 2010, the RSPCA, recognised as Australia's leading animal welfare authority, developed a definition of a puppy farm, defining it as "an intensive dog breeding facility that is operated under inadequate conditions that fail to meet the dogs' behavioural, social and/or psychological needs" (RSPCA 2019b). They go onto describe the characteristics of a puppy farm as being traditionally large in scale and providing unhygienic living conditions and confinement for dogs. This representation of a puppy farm is consistent with the videos and images released by organisations such as Oscar's Law, an anti-puppy farm activist group established by Debra Tranter[1], who regularly used footage of dogs living in squalor, visibly sick as part of their campaign material. However, Oscar's Law has actively rejected the RSPCA definition of a puppy farm, labelling it as a "flawed definition that allow[s] puppy farms to be completely acceptable" (Oscar's Law A). They go on to argue that because of this definition, many puppy farmers are given license to label themselves as reputable breeders.

Contention about how to define a puppy farm was evident in the first draft of the Victorian Government's *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill 2017.* The Bill initially sought to cap the number of breeding female dogs on any property to ten, a decision which suggested that puppy farms were only a problem if they were larger in scale. Following outcry from breeders, breeding bodies and many Liberal and National party politicians, an *Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farm and Pet Shop) Bill* saw the cap eventually revised to 50 breeding females with the Agriculture Minister's approval. When the Bill passed through parliament in December 2017, media outlets celebrated the end of puppy farming in Victoria. However, organisation such as Oscar's Law saw the 50 female breeding dog cap as a way for puppy farming to continue with legal authority in the state.

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[1] Tranter established Oscar's Law after rescuing 'Oscar' a former puppy farm stud dog.

Several large-scale dog breeders in Victoria began to refer to themselves as commercial breeding facilities. They rejected the premise that they were puppy farms, as labelled by animal activists, because they operated following the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses*, were registered with local council, audited by local government and, as Chapter 5 will explore further, adopted the ethical rules around puppy breeding and selling laid out by animal welfare groups. As this research demonstrates, the definition of a puppy farm and, moreover, an ethical breeder, remains a subject of heated contestation, not only for groups invested in animal welfare, but for the dog caring community in Victoria.

Pet shops: fuelling the puppy farm trade

Once seen as the routine place to purchase a new dog, pet stores as an avenue for selling companion dogs has also become a site of concern. Over the course of the puppy farm debate, activists made explicit connections between the puppy farm and pet store trades, framing them as symbiotic institutions. They argued that pet shops across Victoria were predominantly supplied by puppy farm facilities, and additionally that the conditions of living in a pet store were harmful to a puppy's psychological and behavioural development, a claim that has been supported by research (see McMillan et al. 2011; McMillan et al. 2013; McMillan 2017). Thus, pet stores steadily became designated as a distinct problem of their own because of their role in fuelling the puppy farm trade.

Dr Ron Wells, whose puppy farm was uncovered in Learmonth, was also found to operate the company Eurovision Pty, Ltd, a business that included an export trade of puppies to China and Japan and a pet shop (Talbot 1996, p.4). Wells' pet shop, Dr Doolittle's Pets, then located in Lygon Street, Melbourne, became the first pet shop to be connected to the puppy farm trade. Former employees of both Wells' puppy farm and pet store began making accusations to the media about the conditions of puppies sold through the store. One former staff member claimed many puppies sold at Dr Doolittle's Pets would get sick and die and recalled arriving to work several times to find puppies dead on the premises (Daly 1996, p.17). The staff member further claimed that puppies were often sent to the store "dirty", with injuries and several puppies sold at the store died within days of their sale (Daly 1996, p.17).

By 2011, the RSPCA estimated that around 95% of dogs sold in pet shops across Australia were coming from puppy farms (O'Brien 2011, p.26). Therefore, selling puppies through a pet store became an indicator for defining and detecting a puppy farm (Ryan 2012, p.5). Pet stores were not only

scrutinised because of their connection to the puppy farm trade, but also because the pet store model was argued to encourage the impulse purchasing of pets (O'Brien 2011, p.26). Oscar's Law, Animals Australia and the RSPCA often argued that pet stores led to the impulse purchasing of companion animals, suggesting people who purchased animals from pet stores gave little thought to the long-term commitments of pet ownership, instead purchasing their pet on a whim, which this research illustrates can occur when some people acquire their dog (see Chapter 5). Because of this, groups began to suggest that many dogs that occupied Victoria's pounds and shelters were likely bred in puppy farms and eventually discarded to pounds due to lack of thought and consideration by their carers (Animals Australia A).

These claims did not go uncontested. Pet shop owners and the Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA), the peak body representing pet industry businesses, disputed claims made by animal welfare groups arguing that they were based on little evidence and driven by emotion (PIAA 2016a). The PIAA argued that pet shop sales of dogs and cats only supplied less than 10% of the market (PIAA 2016a). Further to this they suggested that pet shops did not contribute to dogs in shelters as animal welfare groups had suggested, arguing that the breeds found in shelters were not the same as those often sold in pet shops (PIAA 2015). During the 2016 *Inquiry into the Domestic Animal Amendment (Puppy Farm and Pet Shop) Bill* the operator of the pet store Upmarket Pets, made a similar point, arguing "Upmarket Pets predominately sells cross bred puppies...breeds of dogs that are rarely found in pounds and shelters..." (p.48). Further, the PIAA argued that their pet store members were "responsible", "embraced good welfare practices" and did not purchase their puppies from puppy farms (PIAA 2016b), comments that are partly enabled by the contested nature of the puppy farm definition. And yet, despite disagreement from the pet store industry, the passing of the landmark *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill 2017* into law in Victoria saw pet stores banned from selling any dog or cat unless it has come from a pound, shelter or rescue organisation.

Companion dog adoption: "check your pounds and shelters"

The growing concern about puppy farms and pet stores also shed light on another issue affecting companion dogs, that of their growing numbers in pounds, shelters and community rescue groups (CRG). The idea that puppy farms and pet stores were affecting the numbers of animals entering pounds and shelters, many of which would eventually be euthanased, was a concept which gained traction amid this debate. Media stories which surrounded the abolition of puppy farming began to

refer to animal adoption, encouraging prospective pet owners to "check their local pounds and shelters" before buying a puppy (*The Courier* 2008*;* Rayner 2010c; Beck 2011, p.3; Gervis-James 2011, p. 8; *Dandenong Leader* 2012, p.26). The RSPCA was one of the first to make the connection between puppy farming and dogs in shelters, stating in 2008 that excessive breeding in puppy farms was occurring while "thousands of dogs were being euthan[a]sed" in pounds (Sobey 2008).

The aforementioned animal activist, Debra Tranter, began encouraging the public to adopt from pounds, shelters and rescue organisations in media interviews (Rayner 2010c). Promoting adoption as an alternative to buying a puppy also become one of Oscar's Law's central aims (Oscar's Law C; Seedy 2015, p.8). Groups such as Animals Australia also contributed to this association, launching their 'pledge to adopt, not buy' website where they encouraged members of the public to sign their name to pledge to commit to adopting their future companion animals. Animals Australia made connections with the "overbreeding" occurring in puppy farms and the fate of "death row" dogs in Australia's pounds and shelters arguing that adopting a pet would be the best way to end the puppy farm trade (Animals Australia B). Thus, adoption here was not being problematised but actively promoted. However, what was being rendered problematic was how purchasing a dog from a puppy farm or pet store can inhibit successful adoption outcomes for dogs in shelters and can lead to their euthanasia.

Designer dogs & the puppy farm trade

Designer dog breeding - that is the intentional cross breeding of two pedigree dog breeds - became inextricably linked to the puppy farm trade in this period. The breeding of designer dogs has led to tensions around how we define a breed and how we define an ideal companion dog, as I explore further in Chapter 3. However, their associations with the puppy farm trade both in Australia and internationally is a reputation that has endured. Specifically, in an Australian context, designer dogs have become understood to be primarily bred in puppy farm facilities, both those that operate legally (who, as noted above, now refer to themselves as 'commercial dog breeders') and illegally (i.e. breeders that are not registered with their local council as a domestic animal business). Moreover, many puppy farms are argued to breed designer dogs precisely because they are fashionable and in-demand, meaning they charge large sums and make significant profit from cashing-in on the trend in designer dogs (Sundstrom & McDonald 2019).

The popular designer dog, the puggle (a pug crossed with a beagle), has the reputation of being the first designer dog to be 'invented' in a puppy farm. Wallace Havens, owner and operator of Puppy

Haven Kennels located in Wisconsin, United States began breeding puggles in the later 1980s. However, these dogs did not garner much popularity in the US until around 2005 (Mooallem 2007). In a 2007 *New York Times* article, journalist Jon Mooallem describes touring Haven's property detailing a "...dim, 4,300 square foot building hous[ing] about 400 dogs, more of them puppies, in 120 elevated cages" (p.42), one of three total whelping houses at the site. Despite Haven's willingness to promote his breeding business to the public though media such as the *New York Times* article, his large-scale production of these dogs has earned his business the label of 'puppy mill' in the United States, even being investigated by the United States Department of Agriculture for leaving dogs in wet, freezing conditions, sick and sometimes injured (Van De Kamp Nhol 2009).

In the Victorian context, designer dogs are often at the centre of stories about puppy farm raids, pet shops and questionable, profit-driven breeding practices. For example, in 2009 RSPCA Victoria investigated a breeder in Anakie following several complaints about the conditions of the dogs on his property. The breeder, who primarily bred designer dogs, denied he was a puppy farmer telling the media he cross-bred dogs to "improve them because a lot of dogs have problems" (Hobbs 2009, p.24). Designer dog breeding as a solution to the health problems experienced by some pedigree breeds is a theme that repeatedly arises to justify the breeding and acquisition of designer dogs (see Chapter 3). Moreover, the Beremboke puppy farm bred designer dog puppies that were reported to be covered in filth and ridded with worms and fleas (Hobbs 2010, p.3).

These and similar reports became more commonplace in the early 2010s and eventually the breeding of designer dogs became a way to distinguish a puppy farm from a reputable breeder. For example, in 2011 Oscar's Law founder Debra Tranter accused a dog breeder of being a puppy farmer specifically because they were selling designer dogs (Mason 2011, p.7). Even as recently as 2018, media reports were widespread about the operation of an illegal puppy farm in Gippsland where thirty-nine cavoodles (a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel crossed with a poodle – a popular type of designer dog) were found locked in greyhound trailers suffering from several health conditions (Lazzaro 2018). Moreover, as well as being bred in puppy farms, designer dogs also became associated with being sold through pet stores. On their website, Oscar's Law make a distinct connection between designer dogs, puppy farms and pet stores by stating "...puppies with fun names like 'cavoodle', 'labradoodle' and similar are more often than not bred and raised in puppy farms, even if they are not from a pet store" (Oscar's Law B).

Overall, for the purpose of this thesis' analysis and exploration, it is notable that these four issues (puppy farms, pet shops, dogs in shelters and designer dog breeding) became an interconnected

set of problems in the public imaginary, which constructed the collective problem as something that required intervention.

As the data in this thesis illustrates, this problematisation ultimately led to calls for legal reform, and to some extent, a shift in dog carer attitudes and approaches when acquiring a new companion. The dust, however, has not settled. What constitutes an 'ideal' dog breed and 'good' dog breeding remain sites of disagreement and sometimes confusion, seeing contested notions of ethical dog acquisition emerge. Moreover, competing knowledges about breed and good breeding can have tangible impacts on human-dog relations and the treatment of companion dogs. It is this crucial site of analysis that forms the central focus of this research.

Conceptual background

This thesis sits at the nexus of human-animal studies, critical animal studies and breed studies. While I have taken the stylistic approach of infusing these theories and ideas throughout this thesis, these fields of inquiry nonetheless require brief context. Human-animal studies (HAS) is a bourgeoning interdisciplinary field of research that considers the relations between humans and animals, the spaces they occupy and the social and cultural intersections of human and non-human animal worlds (De Mello 2012, p.6). Unlike science-based disciplines, HAS does not seek to understand *the animal,* in terms of their physiology, health, reproduction, or behaviour. Rather, HAS studies human animal interactions, how representation and discourses about animals influence these interactions, and how normative discourses about animals are ultimately used to justify exploitative ends.

Emerging out of HAS, critical animal studies (CAS) similarly promotes the analysis of the historical and socio-structural factors that contribute to the mistreatment and oppression of nonhuman animals (Nocella et al. 2014). Drawing upon critical theory that has explored the disenfranchisement of human groups such as critical race theory and gender theory, CAS considers the extent to which normalised and routinised practices towards nonhuman animals lead to abuses of power (Taylor & Twine 2014, p.4). CAS promotes critical reflexivity about our entanglements with nonhuman animals and seeks to change the material conditions to which animals are subject, ultimately pursuing the political goal of abolishing human misuse of nonhuman animals.

This thesis makes contributions to both the HAS and CAS fields of inquiry by considering the normalised socio-cultural conditions that inform our relations with companion dogs. Through using Foucauldian theories, explored in further detail in Chapter 1, I deconstruct normalised categories and

discursive mechanisms that structure breed and good breeding to examine the material impacts that these categories can have for companion dogs. Companion dogs – that is, dogs primarily sought for the role of 'pet' as opposed to working, assistance or sporting dog – have received considerable attention in the HAS and CAS fields, as well as disciplines such as anthrozoology, psychology and animal welfare science. This thesis draws on research from these various fields in informing its exploration and analysis.

At face value, the treatment of companion dogs in Western societies is seemingly privileged when compared to the treatment of farmed animals, those used for sport or in scientific research. Companion dogs are routinely framed through the lens of best friend, fur baby and member of the family, meaning the problematic aspects of pet keeping, such as harmful breeding, adverse training techniques or relinquishment of dogs to shelters, may go unrecognised. For some scholars researching companion dogs or pet keeping more broadly, the assertion that pets inhabit a marginalised position is generally accepted (Rollin and Rollin 2001; Palmer 2006). For example, Rollin and Rollin (2001) argue that "often our treatment of companion animals is as egregious, shocking, immoral and unacceptable – indeed more so – than any animal use in society" (p.10). Moreover, other scholars (Francione 2000; Andreozzi 2013) have argued that the keeping of animals as pets is wholly unacceptable and unethical. In many ways, the issue of puppy farming brought to the surface the egregious treatment that dogs can suffer in their journey to becoming a companion. Those who may not have previously considered where their puppy had come from, were now being faced with the realities of an industry that was routinely and without scrutiny proliferating the mistreatment of dogs on an often-industrial scale.

Throughout this thesis, it is not my central aim to debate the marginalisation of companion dogs or the ethics of keeping them as pets. Rather, I am predominantly interested in discourses about the mistreatment of dogs in the context of breeding and the extent to which such knowledge 1) shapes the thoughts and behaviours of current and prospective dog carers and 2) materially impacts the lives of dogs. The issue of puppy farming has revealed broader considerations about where Victoria's companion dogs are coming from and how companion dog carers should navigate the process of acquiring a dog. In sum, I do not set out to adopt the approach of classic pro-animal theory such as Singer (1995) or Regan (2004) to determine what is the most ethical means of dog acquisition. Such a philosophical project involves determining the shared characteristics of humans and nonhumans, for example sentience, intelligence, and capacity to suffer, to establish how dogs ought to be treated in relation to rational ethical norms. Rather, through my use of critical theories, I demonstrate the ways in

which relations of power shape how ethical dog acquisition is framed, internalised, and acted upon by dog carers and other groups who purport often competing knowledge and expertise in Victoria.

This thesis also builds on an emerging body of work that has examined the puppy farming phenomenon. Research about puppy farming has primarily been based in the United States and has focused on legal solutions to the industry's regulation and closure (see; Fumarola 1999; Savino 2010; Burger 2014; Montgomery 2015). Some studies have sought to understand the impact that a life in a puppy farm can have on breeding dogs and puppies, finding that the conditions of a puppy farm can lead to detrimental health impacts for dogs (McMillan et al. 2011). In an Australian context, research on puppy farms has been less prevalent. Like the United States, Australian studies have focused on the current gaps in dog breeding regulation and how to better regulate the industry (see Cooke 2011; Blackman 2017). This body of work is useful to examine the laws adopted to manage problematic breeding practices and the extent to which such laws have effectively brought about the better treatment of dogs. For example, the Victorian Government's *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill 2017* saw the transformation of pet shops into adoption centers facilitating the turn towards animal adoption. However, in adopting a governmentality approach (see Chapter 1) I consider that analysis of traditional means of governing dog breeding, breeds and means of acquisition (I.e. through legislation, regulations and codes of practice) are limited. My research highlights that equally impactful are the ways in which nonpolitical actors, such as animal activists and advocacy groups, industry, breeders, and veterinarians produce competing knowledges regarding dogs, their breed, breeding and acquisition and how these knowledges guide human conduct towards so-called ethical acquisition. Thus, in using the term 'regulation' regarding dogs and their bodies, this is not purely focused on legislative instruments which seek to govern how dogs are used, but also the knowledges that influence human attitudes and conduct towards dogs.

This research also advances the scholarly conversation about the factors that influence acquisition of dogs. Research has highlighted how the impact of trends in breed popularity (Herzog 2006, Ghirlanda et al. 2013, Ghirlanda et al. 2014), dogs' physical appearances (Teng et al. 2016), behaviour and health (Bir et al. 2017) influence dog acquisition decisions. In addition, some work has explored what dog carers consider to be the 'ideal' dog that they might acquire. For example, a 2009 Australian-based study by King et al. questioned participants on a range of ideal dog behaviours such as being able to sit on command, not jumping on people, not barking at people and so on. They found that Australia's ideal dog is desexed, has short to medium hair, is of medium size, acquired as a puppy, is safe around children and is not destructive as well as several other

characteristics (King et al. 2009). My research highlights the ongoing salience of 'ideal' dog qualities in factors that influence acquisition decisions, such as safety around children when adopting a dog (see Chapter 4) and hair length and shedding (see Chapter 3). Moreover, a unique finding in this thesis is the increasing influence of notions of 'acting ethically' for those who are seeking to acquire a dog.

Dog 'idealness' here requires a definition. Dog idealness is often aligned with good breeding practices and normative constructions of breed, which can be, as Wallen (2017) describes "known in advance" (p. 3). This renders both breed and good breeding an indicator of a dog's quality, reliability and ultimate idealness as a companion. The myriad of socio-historic discourses which have formulated what we now understand to be a breed of dog, operate to exert a dominant ideology about dogs, denouncing other ways of knowing and maintaining authority (See Chapter 2). Thus, in considering the category of breed and its function in determining how people conceive dogs, in the context of this thesis an ideal dog not only enacts certain behaviours but conforms bodily and discursively to constructions of breed. Rich qualitative data explored in the following chapters demonstrates how choices in companion dogs are often grounded in normative assumptions about breed and good breeding, while also being driven by lifestyle factors and attempts to act ethically.

Breed studies is a critical area of inquiry that sits within the HAS and CAS fields and is central to this thesis. The concept of breed has shaped human and animal experience, yet in ways that are not stagnant and differ across different epochs, geographic locations, social and economic conditions (Guest and Mattfeld 2018). Breed studies has not only explored breed in relation to dogs, but other species such as horses (Derry 2006; Swart 2007) cows (Derry 2003) and chickens (Derry 2015). While on the surface, the issue of puppy farming appears to be solely an issue about the ethical treatment of dogs, I suggest that it also generated conditions which have challenged traditional notions of breed and by extension 'ideal' dogs. As is detailed in the case study section above, the puppy farm debate also drew attention to the growing trend in designer dogs. Despite these dog's association with the puppy farming industry, they have nonetheless increased in popularity becoming a profitable dog commodity. Designer dogs have scarcely been explored in the context of breed studies, HAS or CAS only receiving mere mention as a dog trend. Thus, this thesis makes an original contribution to scholarship by exploring the phenomena of designer dogs in the context of breed, while also examining factors that drive their acquisition.

Growing concerns about rescue dogs within the puppy farm debate also has relevance to the category of breed. Calls to 'adopt don't shop' drew attention to the number of dogs in need of homes in pounds, shelters and community rescue groups, most of which, as Chapter 4 explores, are

mixed breed. The rise in popularity of designer dogs and mixed breed rescue dogs respectively leads to questions about if breed matters, how it has evolved within and following the period of the puppy farm case study (1993-2017) and how it is influencing human and dog relations. Thus, I will demonstrate how the category of breed functions as a socio-cultural artefact that shapes, and is shaped by the prevailing social, economic and political ideologies of a given era. Breed and good breeding are shown to be a contested domain whereby competing claims to truth about the supposed 'idealness' of a dog breed and the ethics of certain breeding practices and methods of acquisition play out within various institutions and discourses of regulation.

Chapter outline

In Chapter 1, I detail the methodological and theoretical framework of this thesis. Having conducted critical discourse analysis and qualitative and quantitative data from surveys with Victorian dog carers, I draw upon Foucauldian theories of governmentality and biopolitics in order to analyse the ways discourses about breed shape human-dog relationships.

Chapter 2 conducts a genealogy of dog breed discourse by exploring the assemblage of knowledges that have laid the foundations for how humans understand breed, good breeding practices and the ideal companion dog. Drawing upon the research of animal historians such as Ritvo (1986), Derry (2003) and Wallen (2017), this chapter contextualises how themes of scientific rationalisation, class relations, race relations and the commodification of dog's bodies have generated specific understandings of correct breeds and breeding practices. I argue that these genealogical formations, which largely occurred during the late 18th and 19th centuries have become embedded in our thinking about breed and our attitudes towards specific categories of dog, setting the conditions for how dogs are regulated in contemporary Victoria and beyond.

In Chapter 3 I explore the growing popularity of designer dogs as companions in Victoria. I detail how despite their growing popularity, designer dog's status as a 'breed' and the ethics of their breeding has become debated, namely due to their association with the puppy farm trade. I explore how traditional breed paradigms are drawn upon to both legitimise and delegitimise the breeding and ownership of designer dogs. Moreover, I suggest that designer dogs, like other dog types, are bred to meet changing human subjectivities; namely, to be the 'ideal', modern family pet.

Chapter 4 turns its focus to mixed-breed dogs, particularly those that have been surrendered to pounds, shelters or community rescue groups (CRGs). I argue that historical breed discourses, namely

those of class and scientific rationalisation have seen these dogs positioned as unknowable companions, which means some dog carers are unwilling to adopt them. Much of this uncertainty arises from the notion that they have been bred via 'irresponsible' avenues and are therefore more likely to be problematic. In the absence of a regulated and socially acceptable breeding practice, mixed breed rescue dogs are managed through relations of biopower, which seek to regulate and lock down their 'breed' to reorder them into knowable canine subjects.

Chapter 5 explores shifting understandings of 'ethical' dog acquisition in practice in Victoria. Using a governmentality approach, I trace how the problematisation of puppy farms, pet stores and other controversial avenues for the breeding, buying and selling of companion dogs led the Victorian community to reevaluate their previous ideas about where their dogs were coming from. I argue that this led to governmentalities which looked to shape dog carers conduct to ethical and responsible ends but has given rise to some unintended consequences.

In essence, this thesis highlights how social change has occurred in the ways Victorian's perceive, relate to, and acquire companion dogs – change that has largely occurred in the midst and wake of the puppy farm issue. Yet despite this change, traditional and often competing knowledges about dog breed and breeding continue to shape and constrain human's known ideas about dogs. This occurs to varying degrees but nonetheless can generate different conditions, treatment and understandings of dogs based on their belonging to a specific category.

Chapter 1 - Method & Theory

Critical research concerning nonhuman animals examines the nature and implications of human's entanglements with nonhuman animals with a particular focus on power and injustice. In this thesis, I draw on critical theory to analyse data collected through surveys, interviews, and public discourses about companion dogs in Australia. In particular, I am interested in the nature and material impacts of discourses related to breed, breeding and acquisition of companion dogs in the state of Victoria.

In this chapter, I firstly detail the ethnographic methods that were used for my principal data collection. These include online qualitative and quantitative surveys with Victorian dog carers, and semi structured interviews with shelter and rescue group workers. I then map out the critical discourse analysis approach that is adopted throughout this thesis, highlighting the ways in which texts and cultural artefacts have the power to shape and constrain human's attitudes and behaviours towards nonhuman animals. Following this I turn to an exploration of the theoretical tools used for analysis throughout this thesis, namely Foucauldian theories of governmentality (1997), ethics and biopolotics (1990).

Methods

Ethnographic methods are often drawn upon to explore relations between humans and nonhuman animals. These types of methods have been especially utilised for the study of humans and companion animals notably by sociologists such as Sanders (1990;1993;2003), Arluke (2002;2006) and Alger and Alger (1999; 2003). The main ethnographic method used within this sort of research is participant observation, which in this context includes the observations of both human and nonhuman subjects in the field. For example, in their study of a no-kill cat shelter, Alger and Alger (1999) observed a distinct socio-cultural structure between the humans and cats, wherein the social structure was often instigated by the actions and decisions of the cats who lived in the shelter. Whereas, Robins, Sanders and Cahill (1991) have used similar methods of participant observation to observe the interaction between dogs, their carers and other dog carers in a dog park setting.

My interest in this space was driven by my work as an animal shelter volunteer and foster carer to several dogs and cats. My role as carer to my own dogs, but also to hundreds of other dogs that entered the shelter over the course of my four years of volunteering has shaped my positionality as a researcher in the space of critical animal studies with a specific focus on companion animal research.

Working in the animal rescue space, I have witnessed many acts of animal neglect, which have no doubt shaped my personal views about dog breeding and where dogs should be acquired. However, in conducting this research it has been essential to be critically reflexive and question my positionality so as to not silence or disregard the knowledge and experiences of my participants (Jack & Westwood 2006), nor to ignore or overlook the complexities and nuances of the subject matter. Thus, oftentimes throughout the research I was required to challenge my own thinking, assumptions, and knowledge about specific issues.

The point of departure for the focus on breed in this thesis primarily emerged from preliminary observations I made at my own local dog park about people's response to certain types of dogs, or where dogs had been bred and acquired. I came to observe that some dogs, for example designer dogs, were sometimes deemed problematic by other dog carers, particularly those who categorised their own dog as a pure breed. Moreover, I observed how dogs who had been adopted from shelters or rescue organisations were framed as unpredictable by some park goers, due to perceptions of erratic or aggressive behaviour. And finally, I witnessed how other dog carers were publicly shamed within the park if they disclosed that their dog was acquired from a place that was deemed to be problematic, such as a puppy farm or pet store.

These personal observations and experiences served as a point of inspiration for this research. However, while participant observation can yield rich contextual data, instances of commentary about a dog's breed or where they were acquired are often situational or sporadic, which means it can be difficult to build substantial, generalisable data using the participant observation method. To capture broader community perceptions about dog breed, breeding and acquisition, I used a three-pronged methodological approach: a two-part online survey of Victorian dog carers, interviews with shelter and community rescue group (CRG) workers, and a critical discourse analysis, each of which are addressed in turn below. The research was approved by the La Trobe University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval E16-055).

Recent approaches to human-animal studies, for example Sutton (2020) have advocated for the visibility of animals in ethnographic research in an effort to conduct research *for* companion animals rather than about them. This includes conducting species-inclusive interviews and documenting animals' vocalisations, bodily activity or social-spatial conditions. My methodological approach does "take animals seriously" (Madden 2014, p. 279) as minded, social actors who have perspectives and generate experiences that are worthy of inquiry (Arluke & Sanders 1996, pp. 41-41). In saying that, dogs were not

formally involved in this research in the same way that Sutton (2020) has proposed. Rather, I am more interested in the systems, institutions, and programs through which we build our knowledge about dogs, their breed, breeding, and acquisition. Therefore, this project's central focus considers how competing discourses govern dog carers and breeders' attitudes and behaviours and how this materially impacts on the lives of dogs. Thus, the treatment of companion dogs by humans – and the broader socio-political context underlying this treatment- is a central concern of the thesis.

Surveying Victorian dog carers

Two online surveys were conducted for this project. While the project focuses on discourses from a range of stakeholders immersed within 'dog-worlds' (i.e. breeders, vets, welfare groups and carers) to address its research question, I made the decision to focus the two surveys on carers exclusively. The voices of dog experts are the ones commonly heard within these debates and it is these experts who shape the prominent discourses about dog breeds, breeding and acquisition. However, little is known about how dog carers internalise and comprehend these discourses.

The first survey was made using the Qualtrics online survey software platform and survey questions were designed to gauge participants' experiences with their own dogs(s), such as: where they acquired their dog(s) and why; and their perceptions about different avenues of dog acquisition; adopting from a shelter, purchasing from a pet store, breeder, puppy farm and so on (see appendix 1 for full survey). The survey included some questions that were measured quantitatively, but several of the questions invited qualitative responses to measure diversity of views, attitudes and experiences in the participant group (Jansen 2010 p.3). While the quantitative results enable a grasp of broader trends, such as the number of people who are willing to adopt versus purchase from a breeder, the qualitative data provides more contextualised and in-depth information that reveals rich insights into the rationale that dog carers use to make decisions about dogs and the way these decisions are influenced by broader socio-historical discourses and trends.

The survey was open to all Victorian residents over the age of eighteen who currently owned one or more dogs. It was first shared in 2017 on several Victorian based dog-related Facebook pages and was open to responses for a six week period. The survey link was evenly dispersed across pages that related to dog adoption, pedigree dogs and designer dogs to target these groups evenly. It was also shared to *Dogz Online,* which is a pedigree dog breeding forum. People were also encouraged to share the survey with others they knew who were eligible.

The survey initially received 223 responses. Of these, 27 responses were excluded as participants resided outside of Victoria, Australia. This left 193 responses for analysis. Following the closure of the survey, a content analysis was undertaken of the qualitative responses with a particular focus on analysis of the perceptions and experiences of dog carers (Fink 2003, p.5). The content was coded for key themes and issues related to the formation of breed and ideal breeding practices and companionship, for example identifying references to class or race (see Chapter 2). Responses were also coded to identify discourses related to morality, ethics, and responsible pet ownership. Over the course of the project, coding was consistently reviewed to ensure its ongoing salience and validity.

Survey 1 demographics

Of the 193 final respondents to survey one, just over 90% (n= 177) identified as female, whereas just under 10% (n=19) identified as male. This gender breakdown is not surprising as other surveys focusing on human-dog relations have seen a higher response rate among women (see; Dotson & Hyatt 2008, Power 2008, Charles 2016). This reflects other research that has suggested women are often the primary carers of the dog in the home (Animal Medicines Australia 2019). People in younger age demographics responded to this survey at a higher frequency than older age groups. Those aged 18-24 represented the highest response group at 26% (n=52), followed by 25-29 at 16% (n= 32). People aged 45-49 made up the third highest response age group with 13% (n= 26). The survey did not attract any respondents over the age of 69. This is one of the limitations of online surveying, as research has shown mail-out, paper surveying can be more effective in reaching older populations (Huyser de Bernado & Curtis 2012). However, online surveys were the preferred survey method used for this research due to their ease of use for majority of participants.

Most participants, 53% (n=104), stated they owned one dog, with two dogs being the next most common at number of dogs owned representing 35% (n=68). Participants were also asked to identify the type of dog they had in terms of how they would categorise the dog (I.e. A pedigree breed, cross breed, mixed breed, designer dog) and were asked to respond to this based on each dog they currently owned. Therefore, this question, as well as responses about where the dog was acquired and why, received 320 individual responses. The most common category of dogs owned by participants was a pedigree breed, 42% (n=135), with mixed breeds the next highest at 24% (n=77). Only 6% (n=19) of dogs identified by participants were designer dogs, despite other data suggesting that designer dogs have grown in popularity (Animal Medicines Australia 2016 & 2019).

Surveying designer dog carers

A second follow up survey was designed to specifically target the carers of designer dogs. In constructing this second survey, adaptations were made from the content in the first survey. I identified several issues about designer dogs that were contentious in mainstream discourse, such as where designer dogs have been acquired, perceptions that designer dogs are a 'fad', and criticisms about these dogs in relations to 'breed' - namely that they cannot be considered breeds. New survey questions specifically addressed these broader debates about designer dogs, their breeding and acquisition (see appendix 2 for full survey).

The second online survey was conducted in 2018. Once again designed using the Qualtrics online survey software platform, the survey included qualitative and quantitative questions, again predominantly focusing on qualitative questions to measure diversity of experience amongst the participant group. This survey was open to all Victorians over the age of eighteen who currently owned one or more designer dogs. The survey was shared on a variety of designer dog specific Facebook pages for example 'Pugaliers of Victoria' and 'Labradoodles of Melbourne' and remained open for responses for six weeks. People were once again encouraged to share the survey with others they knew who were eligible. The survey received 84 responses all of which were eligible for analysis. Manual content analysis of qualitative responses was again undertaken and grouped in key themes and issues.

Survey 2 demographics

Much like the first survey, participants who identified as female made up the majority of respondents at 94% (n=78). Due to designer dogs' association with higher socio-economic status and the nuclear family (see Chapter 3), this survey included more demographic based questions to ascertain whether these associations did in fact reflect designer dog carers' lives. Just under half of the participants, 42% (n=35), had a bachelor's degree or equivalent and were in full time employment – 46% (n=39). A third had a total household income exceeding $150,000 per annum (33% n=28) and a large majority owned their own home (77% n=65). Many participants also declared that they lived in a family including with children (46% n=39) or a family with their partner (38% n=32).

Interviewing rescue dog workers

To complement the survey of Victorian dog carers, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Victorian shelter and community rescue group (CRG) workers, with a total of five interviewees. This relatively small number was due in part to the small community of shelter dog workers in Melbourne, and partly because the nature of the dog shelter and rescue sector is often volunteer-run and understaffed (especially in the case of CRGs), which means many organisations expressed their interest in participating but ultimately could not find the time to participate or did not respond to repeated requests for interview. Shelter and CRG workers were an important group to interview, as key informants and an alternative voice to dog carers, particularly regarding changing patterns with respect to dog choice over time, and perceptions about shelter dogs (see Chapters 4 and 5). Research around the shifting status of shelter dogs, that is their growing popularity as companions, at the time of the project's design was limited. As many of these workers have been on the frontline of companion dog rescue for many years, it was important to garner expert perceptions about if there is a shifting status around companion dog adoption.

The interviews consisted of sixteen questions designed to gather each worker's experience in companion dog rescue as well as their personal experience pertaining to dog relinquishment, types of dogs in shelters, limitations to successful dog adoptions and finally if they thought there are changing perceptions around dog adoption (see appendix 3 for full list of questions). Using a semi-structured interview style, rather than conducting a more formal interview, allowed me to develop a list of predetermined questions, while also allowing participants to discuss issues they felt were important (Longhurst 2003, p.107, Adams 2015, p. 494). All participants were contacted via email and given the option of conducting an interview face to face (at a location convenient to them), online (via zoom) or a telephone interview. Of these five interviews, two took place on location at the shelter the participant worked at, two took place via telephone and one took place at the La Trobe University campus. All interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed.

Of those who responded and who were subsequently interviewed, three people worked for open-admission shelters located in Melbourne, that is, shelters that will willingly accept any animal into their care. Of these three shelters, one identified themselves as being a no-kill shelter, a term used to describe shelters that only euthanase animals on the basis of a serious health or behavioural problem. The other two people interviewed were CRG workers who ran their respective rescue group. CRG's differ to shelters in that they do not have a central location where animals are housed and cared for but operate using networks of volunteer foster carers who care for animals in their own homes. CRG's are

also not required to be registered with local councils in Victoria – unlike shelters - or follow relevant codes of practice. The CRG's also exclusively rescued companion dogs, whereas the shelters also worked with cats and sometimes small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs.

Like the qualitative responses collected from the survey data, the responses from the interview data was coded for reference to specific themes and issues such as reference to ethics and morality. This data was also manually entered onto an Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and consistently reviewed against survey data and the data from the cultural tests collected for the research to ensure its ongoing relationship with the research.

Discourses on dogs

Critical discourse analysis, a method of analysis largely influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, is characterised by an interest in deconstructing the ideologies and power relations that are imbued within socio-cultural texts and social practice (Wodak 2001, p.9). This approach recognises that discourses, be they written or verbal, have the power to shape and constrain thought and behaviour. This qualitative approach is a fundamentally different epistemology from scientific inquiry as it rejects the notion that there is a standardised reality that can emerge from studying this particular site, but rather means to deliver knowledge about this social world (Avis 2005, pp. 11-12). Discourses about dog breeding are socially constitutive, socially conditioned and act to reproduce, sustain (and sometimes disrupt) a specific status quo. Discursive practices can also have ideological effects in that they can reflect and produce unequal power relations (Wodak 2011, p.51). This is especially apparent for the study of nonhuman animals as discursive structures situate nonhuman animals in most instances as lesser, which therefore lays the conditions for their continued exploitation. By adopting a 'critical' approach to the analysis of discourse, I challenge these privileged ideologies and surface meanings, in order to subvert taken for granted 'truths' about dogs. This is consistent with the 'political agenda' (Kress 1996, p. 19) of critical discourse analysis, and critical animal studies and focuses on altering inequities and promoting social justice for nonhuman animals.

Throughout this thesis, I explore the myriad of discourses that represent and purport the "truth" about various categories of companion dogs. I specifically examine the moments where – and the reasons why – certain discourses about dogs gain traction and legitimacy, while others are silenced and subjugated. I have sought to analyse the existence and dynamics of these discourses not only in the interview and survey data outlined above, but also in the public sphere in a multi-sited ethnography

(Marcus 1995). This approach focuses its objective of study on a social phenomena which cannot be secluded to a single site (Falzon 2016). As such, I collected, consumed and analysed 60 news articles, 26 dog breeders' websites information pages, 10 information documents developed by animal advocacy groups, a television program, a documentary and Victorian parliamentary inquiries and debates, as well as several other online information pages. As an assemblage of cultural artefacts, all of these texts have coalesced to form specific 'truths' about dog breeds and how they should be bred and acquired – albeit in changing and contested ways.

Power/knowledge

The critical discourse analysis method has been strongly influenced by the work of French thinker Michel Foucault. The question of power was a central, recurring theme across Foucault's work. His analytics of power shifted throughout his writing from a concept of power that is a destructive practice to one that is productive (Garland 2014). These different mechanisms of power, according to Foucault, are constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, knowledge that is ratified and cast as 'true' by institutions and authorities of expertise. Foucault challenged ideas that power is distinctly exerted by 'sovereign' acts of domination, but that it is diffuse, embodied and enacted.

Thus, the term power/knowledge signifies the ways in which power is established through accepted forms of knowledge. Within this framework, discourse can be a site of both power and resistance to power. As Foucault (1990) explained:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it… We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (pp. 100-101).

How power operates in human's thinking about and treatment of companion dogs is a central concern of this thesis. Analysing how discourses about dogs operate and function through institutions of authority and expert knowledges is essential for exploring how human relations with dogs are ordered and shaped at the site of their breed, breeding and acquisition.

Analytical framework: Governmentality, ethics, biopolitics & dogs

The concepts of governmentality, ethics and biopolitics offer ways to conceptualise the management of dog populations, but also to explore how technologies of power have emerged to shape dogs at the site of their bodies. In this section, I outline each of these analytical tools and how they can be usefully engaged in the analysis of human dog relations.

Governmentality

Over the course of his 1970s lecture series at the *Collegé de France,* Foucault theorised a number of ways to comprehend and analyse the nature and reach of political power in neoliberal societies. Specifically, Foucault's work on the 'analytics of government' or governmentality began to observe the nature of power and rule in modern society, inspiring a range of studies across different social sciences such as crime and criminal justice (Bull 2008; Garland 1997), education (Fimyar 2008), nursing (Holmes & Gastalso 2002; Thompson 2008), policy (Mckee 2009) and genetic science (McWhorter 2009). Here, I extend the application of governmentality further to supplement an analysis of dog breeding and acquisition.

Governmentality is not an approach that is focused on establishing what is 'true' or 'false' within any given time period. Rather, governmentality is a tool of analysis – or a methodology containing a set of questions to ask – for analysing the ways in which human conduct is problematised and subject to regimes of regulation. Governmentality seeks to understand who is granted authority to govern in particular contexts, the ways in which knowledge is produced, disseminated and connected to power, and the ways subjects may internalise, resist and/or challenge this authority (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde 2006).

Foucault (1997) described government as "an activity that undertakes to conduct individuals throughout their lives by placing them under the authority of a guide for what they do and for what happens to them" (p.68). In analysing the art of governing, Foucault was, at least in some part, concerned with understanding the birth of liberalism, situating it as not a theory or an ideology but as a political rationality (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde 2006). For Foucault, liberalism is not an instructive ideology on 'how to govern', but rather an 'art of governing'. This reformulation of governance

recognises the limits of traditional, top-down power (such as violence and coercion wielded by monarchs). Instead, it also looks to the more subtle and diffuse ways in which power works, where people are coerced into thinking and behaving in certain ways – through internalising discourses designed to make them comply, conform and police their own and other's conduct.

Foucault (2004) commented that, "state is only an episode in government" (p.248). Thus, Foucault also identified the importance of non-political actors and authorities in this project of governance; for example, religious organisations and licensed experts who are granted the authority to define social problems and their solutions. Governmental rationalities in this context are less concerned with the sovereign power of maintaining territory, but have shifted to the biopolitical intervention (a concept that will be explored below) of controlling the population, maintaining their welfare, health, longevity, legal compliance and economic productivity, albeit in unequal ways.

Despite its usefulness, the concept of governmentality has not been applied extensively in human animal studies and critical animal studies. There are a small number of notable exceptions, however. In Borthwick's (2009) work on companion animal legislation in New South Wales from 1966 to 1998, she traces a shift in the legislations focus from one that governs human's management of their pets to own that prompts humans to govern their own behaviour, such as picking up dog poo or walking their dog on lead. Wadiwel (2015) draws on governmentality to conceptualise how our treatment and management of nonhuman animals may have produced rationalities for the treatment of humans or in other words, "how it is that a governmentality of a nonhuman life might have been transferred systematically as a rationality of organisation to govern human populations" (p.108). Advancing this field of study, I am interested in how biopolitical rationalities have coalesced with notions of ethical breeding to govern human conduct towards certain forms of dog acquisition.

In particular, the focus is on how current governmentalities about dog breeds, breeding and acquisition have taken shape, and been shaped by, specific socio-historical and politico-economic processes. As outlined in the introduction, puppy farming, pet stores, designer dogs and the numbers of dogs in shelters have become collectively problematised in Victoria as sites ripe for intervention. As in Miller and Rose's (2008) theorisation of governmentality, if the conduct of an individual or group appears to require adaptation, this is because in the first instance, something is seen as problematic to someone (p.14). The rendering of these activities as 'problematic' set the conditions for intervention and subsequently led to different mentalities of government focused on shaping the conduct of individual dog carers to specific ends. Central to this process have been non-government actors

(veterinarians, animal welfare organisations, animal activists) who have sought to bring about human behaviour change towards dogs using both large scale campaigns (for example ' I Want Oscar's Law'), alongside other techniques such as dog buying guides to govern prospective carers to acquire dogs in agreeable ways. The governmentalities are liberal in nature because the goal of these actors has been to produce rationalities which focus on individual 'choice' and 'responsibility' around dog acquisition while also "cultivat[ing] the appropriate knowledge within the citizenry" (Wadiwel 2015, p. 106). Moreover, this issue is distinctly neoliberal due to its ongoing relationship with economic systems – as I will go on to explain - and its entanglement with a kind of moral behaviouralism.

Ethics

Debates over the ethics of dog breeding and acquisition centre on contested notions of what is 'good', 'right' and 'responsible'. In this thesis, I understand 'ethics' to be a set of social norms that guide an individual's conduct. What constitutes an 'ethical' life is socially constituted and formed by our relations with institutions (Foucault 1984, pp. 352-355). In line with Zygmunt Bauman's (1994) theorisation, my interest is not in determining what is ethical and what is not like some pro animal scholarship (for example Singer 1995; Regan 1984). Rather, my interest is in engaging in a kind of 'ethnoethics' in which I describe "what certain people ('ethnos') *believe* to be right or wrong" (Bauman 1994, p.1) in relation to dog acquisition, and, furthermore, what this ethic means for everyday decision-making and the impact this has on dogs. I use the closely connected concept of 'morality' to explain the ways in which ethical conduct is rationalised through culturally defined - and individually mediated – discourses of goodness, responsibility and what is 'right'.

As Dean (2013) notes, governmentality is central to the process by which ethical and moral notions are codified, negotiated, adhered to, rejected, or adapted. Human conduct is subject to self-regulation, and morality is an attempt to make oneself accountable for one's own actions (p.19). As this thesis will demonstrate, dog breeding and acquisition has become a site in which people's behaviour has been increasingly moralised. For example, in the case of dog adoption (see Chapter 4), this moral work is grounded in the notion of encouraging individuals to view dog adoption as an action that is *good* not only for the individual dog being adopted, but also *all* dogs, as it denounces breeding trades that are deemed problematic, and are associated with animal cruelty. Furthermore, the moral work of adopting a dog or acquiring a dog from an 'ethical' breeder is framed as distinctly good for individual dog carers. In taking ethical actions and making themselves responsible in relation to specific discourses, dog carers

engage in technologies of the self, whereby they "transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immorality" (Foucault 1988, p. 18). In this thesis I specifically identify how these 'technologies of the self' function around dog adoption, where the act of adopting a dog can lead to self-transformation and fashion individuals into a moral "subject of their own actions" (Foucault 1988, p.352).

Importantly, these ethical actions are strongly connected to the contemporary neoliberal climate, in which governments – at least in rhetoric – intervene less on the freedom and choice of individuals, yet in turn individuals are increasingly considered 'responsible' for their own, and their family's welfare and compliance (Wacquant 2008; Joseph 2013; O'Malley 2014). The notion of the individual responsibility here, extends to the family pet, as demonstrated in Borthwick's (2009) work mentioned above, wherein people are increasingly expected to perform prescribed responsible dog-caring behaviours. Thus 'being a good citizen' in this context includes 'responsible' pet acquisition, a concept that is repeatedly salient in this research. Yet what this research highlights is that what constitutes being 'responsible' in terms of dog acquisition is changing, contested even among experts, and an ongoing site of confusion among the dog caring community in Victoria.

Biopolitics

Governmentalities around dog acquisition are distinctly biopolitical in nature. Foucault's work on the concepts of biopower and biopolitics focused on the regulation of living things as distinctly biological entities to know and control. This includes, but is not limited to, regulation of vital processes such as nutrition, illness, reproduction and death. As with governmentality, biopower was associated with a shift away from the rule by sword that characterised sovereign power in western societies. Rather, Foucault suggests that in the modern period, the logics of power turn towards a focus on biological power and the productivity of the population. Power becomes less associated with a logic of "the ancient right to take life or let live" but instead shifts to a focus on the "power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (Foucault 1998, p. 138). Overall, biopower centres on:

> "the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls…" (Foucault 1990, p.139).

This biopower features two poles of operation. The first pole focuses on the 'anatamapolitics' of the human body, which seeks to maximise its forces and integrate the body into efficient systems of

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productivity and prosperity through individualisation, surveillance, and regimes of training (Foucault 1990, p. 139). The second pole focuses on regulatory controls or the "biopolitics of a population", focused on the body and its mechanisms of life including birth, morbidity, mortality, and longevity (Foucault 1990, p.139). These poles, he argues, historically became associated with 'great technologies of power' establishing a new kind of political struggle that saw life become a political object. This has seen the term 'biopolitics' emerge, utilised to encapsulate specific strategies and contestations over human life and the knowledges and mechanisms of authority which seek to regulate that life. Trajectories of biopolitics can be identified through the concept of governmentality, as we can trace biopolitical techniques for regulating biological populations, while at the same time tracing the pastoral techniques of power which produce certain rationalities of government and influence the ways individuals govern themselves (Wadiwel 2018, p. 82).

Foucault himself did not consider the animal in his work, something that Matthew Cole has labelled as "species blindness" (p. 90).[2] In fact, the study of biopolitics across a range of disciplines such as philosophy and political theory have furthered this problem by not taking animals seriously as subjects of biopolitical interventions. However, despite this broader anthropocentric focus in studies of biopower, other scholars have argued for the extension of this theoretical concept to nonhuman life (Rutherford 2007; Youatt 2008). Critical animal studies scholars have increasingly drawn on these concepts as tools to explore the nature of our thought and behaviour toward other animals in relation to factory farming (Wadiwel 2015), cattle and sheep breeding (Holloway 2007, Holloway et al. 2009, Holloway and Morris 2012a & 2012b; 2015; 2016), zoos (Chrulew 2017) and laboratory animals (Kirk 2017). Chrulew (2012) argues that animals should be taken seriously as objects of biopolitical interventions because "modern apparatuses of government administer not only human life, but *all* life: seeds, crops, animal individuals and populations, ecosystems and the earth itself" (p. 54). Modern societies and populations, including nonhuman populations, are known and regulated at the site of biological life though a range of instruments working to control, monitor, optimise and organise populations.

Biopolitics is a useful tool through which to examine dog breeding and the management of dog's lives. The choices that are made about where to acquire a dog influence the broader management of

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[2] Foucault did use the analogy of the shepherd and the flock in his examination of pastoral power (a power of care). However, as Meyes (2010) points out, Foucault's analogy ignores the violent relationality which informs the shepherd's relationship with the flock.

dogs' lives, such as which dogs are bred, by whom and under what conditions. Such discourses are also often influenced by perceptions around the biological qualities of a dog and how this determines their behaviour and capacity to be good companions. Dogs are carefully managed through biopolitical relations whether that be breeding practices to enact specific physical and behavioural qualities, desexing to control reproduction, behavioural modification, or euthanasia, which can either be on compassionate grounds if the dog is severely sick or injured, because the dog is deemed as dangerous, or, as is often the case, because the dog is unwanted. As Wadiwel (2015) argues, our relations with animals are distinctly biopolitical because they are characterised by "a balance struck between life and death, where the minute and organised management of the life of populations is key to understanding the dynamic of this relation" (p.101).

This dynamic is especially applicable to the management of dog life, and this is the first study to consider this. As I will explore throughout this thesis, socio-historic discourses which are considered to speak the "competent truth" (Rabinow and Rose 2006, p. 197) about dog breeds and breeding, are a persistent feature of modern human-dog relations. Scientific expertise about dog breeding today manifests in various forms of genetic testing, and scrupulous record keeping continues to dictate and order the biological and social lives of dogs, while also greatly informing social notions of the 'ideal' companion. The various biopolitical strategies of intervention that exist for the management of dogs are often dependent on their belonging to a 'biosocial collectivity' – a term which in the human context is understood as 'belonging to a race or gender group', but which I use here to consider different categories of dog (I.e. pedigree, designer or mixed breed). For example, the reproductive control of dogs differs depending on their belonging to a biosocial collectivity. Pedigree dogs used as breeders will often be left unsterilised, whereas dogs not belonging to a breed are problematised (as are their carers) when not sterilised, as this is seen to be irresponsible and a health risk. Humans make these choices about how they will regulate their dogs' bodies in relation to specific discourses of truth, which themselves are embedded and interpreted within complex social structures of meaning. For example, research has identified that male dog carers often disagree with the sterilisation of male dogs (Fielding et al. 2002; Cocia & Rusu 2010) which has, in part, been associated with a perceived loss of masculinity.

In other words, dog breeders and dog carers manage their dogs' bodies through specific modes of subjectification that are tied to certain flows of knowledge and socio-cultural norms. Usually, modes of subjectification refer to the ways in which humans work on themselves in response to truth telling claims. However, this is a problem when extending the concept of biopolitics and governmentality to

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nonhuman life. As Holloway and Morris (2007) encountered in their work on the geneticisation of livestock breeding in the United Kingdom, it is difficult to determine how animals 'work on themselves' to produce self-regulating subjects (see also Danaher et al. 2000). The authors suggest that to counter this problem, scholars might extend notions of subjectivity to explore how biopower is constituted through human-animal relationships. They adopt a more relational conception of biopower, wherein they analyse how humans 'work on animals' alongside their work on themselves. Consistent with this relational conception of biopower, a central focus of this thesis is to explore the ways in which powerful discourses about dog breeds are internalised by dog breeders and dog carers and shape how dogs are bred and managed at the site of their bodies.

As will be shown throughout this thesis, humans' regulation of their own populations and selves has greatly shaped and constrained dog breeding practices, namely through notions about appropriate reproduction, which have been significantly influenced by class and racial norms. As humans came to regulate themselves in relation to prevailing notions of racial purity and class superiority, these modes of subjectification informed, and were informed by the practices of dog breeding, which remain prevalent in our thinking about dogs today. Moreover, contemporary human 'regimes of self' which involve corporeal and genetic individual responsibility (Rose 2007, p.65) are implicit in 'ethical' dog breeding and acquisitional practices. As Chrulew (2017) describes, the geneticisation of non-human animal breeding, in this case dog breeding, governs dogs through similar goals of the human population, goals that seek to promote health, wellbeing and that attempt to mitigate risk and protection from hazards. From this perspective, it is thus the individual dog carers' responsibility to act ethically through engagement with various technologies of expertise to acquire a dog that embodies these qualities. Concepts of breed and 'good breeding' are therefore not natural but are socially constituted forms of knowledge. Ultimately, this leads to the human regulation of dogs in such a way that dogs must also be transformed into 'good subjects' or, in the case of pet dogs, 'good companions'.

Biopolitical interventions are also closely tied to logics of capitalism. At its core, dog breeding, and to an extent dog rescue is a *business*, where dogs are a commodity. Interventions upon the lives of dogs are clearly linked to economic processes and market trends, such as desirable morphologies or behaviours. Governmentalities that seek to shape conduct in ways that are deemed ethical and responsible intersect with the biopolitical management of dogs as commodities. Rather than breeding in ways that are perceived as uncontrolled, 'risky' and 'inhumane' (such as puppy farming), for the dog breeding industry to maintain their social licence with prospective customer, they must be seen to be

tightly controlled and regulated. To some extent, this limits risk and hazard and optimises dogs as more efficient companions within neoliberal economic systems.

Ultimately, using the Victoria puppy farm debate as a case study, I draw upon these critical theories to examine shifts and contestations in knowledge about dog breed, breeding and acquisition in Victoria.

Chapter 2 - A genealogy of breed discourse

Breed has become the prism through which we conceptualise, speak about, and engage with dogs in Western societies. This means that human-dog relations are strongly influenced by socially constructed notions of breed. Even if a dog is not understood as a singular pure breed, terms such as cross breed, mixed breed, mutt, mongrel, or cur are drawn upon to distinguish the 'breed' of dog from the 'other'. Breed discourse then, sees dogs shaped and constrained by the morphological and behavioural characteristics of their determined breed.

The puppy farm issue has generated and brought to the surface contested notions about breed. This specifically relates to the shifting idealness of non-breeds of dog, namely designer dogs, and mixed breed rescue dogs. But before we can analyse how normative breed discourses have been adopted, disrupted, challenged, and moulded in the context of this debate, we must first trace the socio-cultural formations of breed discourse. Foucault was concerned with the socio-cultural structuring of experiences of madness, sexuality, and the disciplinary technologies of the prison or clinic to understand how the contingencies of these processes shape the present – a process that he called genealogy (Foucault 1973). Similarly, I am interested in the socio-cultural structuring of breed: how institutions and knowledges have shaped breed; the struggles between competing knowledges; the historical conditions through which our present-day practices have emerged and depend.

With that in mind, below I conduct a genealogy of breed. Drawing upon the research of human-animal historians, I trace how dog types came to be classified as breeds and the ways in which themes of scientific expertise, race, class relations, and economic capitalisation, which gained authority in the late 18th and 19th centuries, came to shape this category. These discourses, I argue, have ongoing relevance for the ways in which dogs' bodies and behaviour are regulated materially and discursively in contemporary Victoria and beyond.

Classifying dog 'types'

Humans and dogs are estimated to share a domestic history of roughly 23,000 years (Perri et al. 2021).[3] Yet despite thousands of years of correlated history, the process of categorising, referring to and conceptualising dogs through the framework of breed is a relatively recent development. This is not to say that dogs have never been routinely classified by humans into distinct categories. Rather than being labelled as 'breeds' though, categories of dog were instead referred to by a range of terms including varieties, types, tribes, strains, sorts, kinds and races (Worboys, Strange & Pemberton 2018, p. 23) These categorisations, however, commonly focused on the dog's utilitarian function as opposed to their physical morphology and behavioural temperament, characteristics that largely underpin breeds today.

There are several examples of dog 'type' classifications in the 15th and 16th centuries. For example, Dame Juliana Berners developed a list of the thirteen canine types common to the 15th century. She lists dog types whose names bare similarities with present day breeds such as the "Grehoun", "Mastiff" and the "Spanyel", but also dog types whose name categorisation aligns with specific human vocations, for example the "Butchers Houndes" (Shaw 1881, p.2). Berners also mentions "a Mengrell" (Shaw 1881, p.2) a name which resembles the present day term 'mongrel', however she offers no commentary about the significance of the 'mengrell' in this period.

A better-known example of dog type classification is John Caius' *Of Englishe Dogges: The Diveristies, the Names, the Natures and the Properties*, first published in 1576. Caius' volume, which premises distinction of types based on function and use would become a useful tool for the formation of breed narratives that largely came to be in the 19th century (Wallen 2017, p. 49). Caius' work distinguished three primary categories of dog, the "gentle kind", the "homley kind" and the "currishe kind" (1576). The category of "gentle kind", which primarily referred to hunting dogs, also included the lap dogs kept by aristocratic women (Wallen 2017, p. 49). Julian Berners' text similarly referred to the lap dogs kept by upper class women, calling them the "smalle laydes poppees" (Shaw 1881, p.2).

For the most part, however, Caius' classification system focused on dogs in hunting roles, distinguishing them based on the proclivity for scent, sight, speed or hunting ability, whereas spaniel types were distinguished based on the type of game that they hunted. Like Berners', Caius makes

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[3] This is the most recent estimation based on a review of the genetic populations of humans and dogs from Siberia, Beringia, and North America (Perrie et al. 2021). These timelines are often subject to revision based on emerging archaeological and DNA evidence.

reference to a "mungrell" type in his text, which included turnspit dogs, dancing dogs and dogs who were putatively bred from foxes, wolves or bears (Wallen 2017, p.49). Unlike contemporary breeds, within his text, Caius spent little time describing the physical features of the dogs he discusses and rather discusses the dogs hunting capacity and performance in the sporting field. These categories of dog as described by Berner and Caius, provide insight into the varying functions and tasks that dogs performed during these periods. They also demonstrate how a dog's value was based less on physical appearance or companionship, but rather on their utilitarian benefit.

By the 18th century, dogs, particularly those owned by the poor, were still being largely classified by function. Blaisdell's (1999) research on the London's 18th century dog tax demonstrates that while the conceptualisation of dogs through breed-based language was gaining traction, the majority of dogs were not being identified under these labels. For example, the records of Westminster Parish record two terriers, four spaniels, one pointer and one lap dog, however, ninety-two dogs living in this parish are not identified or categorised as a type (Blaisdell 1999). Similarly, the records from St. James Parish show two pointers and two terriers, whereas thirty-nine dogs are referred to as "house dogs" and two referred to as "yard dogs" (Blaisdell 1999, p. 80). The categorisations of these dogs interestingly reflect the space that the dog occupies *within* the home (both the house and yard) as opposed to the function that they performed *for* the home, for example the 'guard dog'.

These forms of classification act as a precursor to the classification of breeds that are understood today. Categorisations of dogs, as well as other nonhuman animals, whether through breed or function, reflect human practices of classifying both the human and nonhuman world, which largely takes shape with the onset of European colonialism. Thomas (1983) argues that "all observations of the natural world involved the use of mental categories with which we observers, classify and order the otherwise incomprehensible mass phenomena around us..." (p. 52). Ultimately the classificatory work of naturalists in the early-modern period tended to base the categorisations of both plants and animals less on the qualities of the plant or animal, but rather on their relationship to humans (Thomas 1983, p.53). Organising dogs into types based on their benefit to human labour and recreation is emblematic of the ways in which exchanges between humans and dogs are always grounded in anthropocentric ways of knowing.

This trend of distinguishing distinct types was not restricted to domestic animals, with natural historians mapping the taxonomies of wild animals, plants and humans in what Wallen (2011) has called the "necessity of mastering themselves and nature" (p.128). Further, as Ritvo (1986) points out, despite

the great variety that existed among domestic and nondomestic animals in England, this was often ignored to represent them as "consistent and intentionally produced distinctions" (p.230). In other words, to make sense out of, regulate and lockdown the natural world around them, it became a necessity for humans in this period to develop distinct, traceable and perhaps most notably for dogs, reproducible, categories.

Institutionalising the dog breed

In large part, the idea of breed when attached to dogs, as well as other domestic species such as horses, cattle and sheep, was largely limited to the animals bred by the gentry. However, this began to shift with the onset of the British Agricultural Revolution. The idea of breed became popularised through the work and writings of British Agriculturalist Robert Bakewell (1725-1795). During Bakewell's career, which traversed the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the continual 'improvement' of both plants and animals became essential to meet the demands of the burgeoning industrial population (Derry 2003). Indeed, the very notion of 'improvement' via human intervention became a key governing principle of the British Agricultural Revolution (Wallen 2011) and Bakewell became one of the first agricultural breeders of the period to promote the mating of closely related animals, a method he labelled as "inbreeding" (Derry 2003, p.3). Bakewell also developed a "weaker version of inbreeding" known as line breeding, whereby animals were bred with closely related animals, but where the breeding of unrelated animals (out breeding) was still avoided (Derry 2003, p.3). Bakewell convinced his contemporaries that this method would not only create distinct breeds amongst livestock animals, but that inbreeding would also 'strengthen' many working animals such as horses and generate greater yields of meat from animals such a cows and sheep (Derry 2003, p.4). These interventions developed by Bakewell represent the direct intervention upon nonhuman life. Drawing upon the concept of biopower, such interventions are representative of attempts at 'optimising' animal life and integrating its management into the economies of the industrial agricultural systems emerging in this period.

Bakewell's breeding methods quickly spread throughout agricultural circles, primarily through the journals and the writings of economist and fellow agriculturalist Arthur Young (Derry 2000, p. 4). Bakewell's methods grew steadily in popularity, particularly among aristocratic landowners who, guided by the inbreeding approach, began establishing their own breeds. Alongside this, they began closely recording and documenting the lineages of their animals, a practice which aided in the regulation of breeding and the evolving notion of 'purity'. The importance of 'blood purity' within livestock and horses

became an essential aspect of breeding these animals and also crucial to the buying process, with so-called "toxic" animals regularly being removed from breeding pools to retain the vitality of breeds (Ritvo 1986, p. 233).

The breeding methods developed by Bakewell became readily applied to the breeding of dogs following the growth of middle-class dog breeding and showing, which became known as Victorian dog fancy. On June 28th and 29th, 1859, the first formally recognised dog show was held at the local town hall in Newcastle (Pearce 1874). The show included sixty participants, with the top price awarded to Dora, a live and white pointer owned by Lord Derby. In their book, *The Invention of the Modern Dog*, Worboys, Strange and Pemberton (2018) dispute this date, suggesting that dog fancy and dog shows had been taking place since the 1830s (p. 54). However, it is from around the 1860s where dog shows grew in scale and popularity, with the activity facilitating Victorian dog fanciers desire to establish their chosen breed of dog as unique and distinguishable. Dog breeding began to follow a similar trend to that of livestock breeding, whereby breeders became concerned with breed lineage and blood purity. Thus pedigree breeding, or pure breeding as it is also known, became attached to the notion of a consistent and reproducible dog. A dog was deemed to be 'pure' if it could pass its distinct type onto its progeny (Guest & Mattfield 2017). As Ritvo (1986) describes, "the very notion of breed as it was understood by Victorian dog fanciers and such as we understand it today is a subspecies or race with definable physical characteristics that will reliably reproduce the offspring of interbred matings…" (p. 235). Victorians believed, that through their increasing intervention upon dogs' morphologies through breeding, they could be physically adapted to suit various looks and colours and ultimately create reproducible physical types.

It is at this point during the mid-19th century where a shift occurs. A dog's type, or breed becomes differentiated based on an adherence to a set of physical characteristics as opposed to just utilitarian function. This is something that was largely tied to the dog showing system, wherein the basic dynamics of pure breeding came to be formed. Specific dog breeds were only allowed to breed with carefully selected mates to ensure that the physical characteristics of their breed remained distinct. This saw certain physical qualities such as long pointed noses, exaggerated head sizes and certain eye and coat colours become popular looks for dogs (Ritvo 1986 & 1987b, p. 163). As photographic evidence has demonstrated, the malleability of dog's bodies has led to intense and rapid physical adaptations by breeders. Furthermore, breeders of dogs, as well as livestock, readily began drawing upon the authority of emerging zoological language and knowledge (including terms like genus, species, and variety) in

order to assert distinction amongst their breeds and proclaim the physical excellence and legitimacy of an animal (Ritvo 1997, pp.75-76).

This period also witnessed the emergence of the breed standard. John Henry Walsh, editor of *The Field,* an agriculture and sporting magazine, first proposed the use of conformational standards for pedigree dogs (Worboys, Strange & Pemberton 2018, p. 83). Using a recently awarded pointer, Major, as the 'model dog, he divided the dogs body in sixteen parts, describing everything from the ideal frame of the dog, the preferred appearance of its lips, ears and eyes and the acceptable colours of its coat (Worboys, Strange & Pemberton 2018, p. 83). Following this, several breed standards for Gordon setters, deerhounds, fox terriers and others were written and published by leading dog authorities of the period. Thus, this process saw breed become defined by conforming to a morphological standard.

The growing interest in dog breeding and showing, which at this period was relatively unregulated, led some fanciers to call for a governing body to oversee the breeding, buying, selling and showing of pedigree breeds. On April 4, 1873, the British Kennel Club (BKC) was established by S.E Shirley and twelve other gentlemen. Their intent was to develop a consistent set of rules and regulations to oversee dog breeding and showing. Thus, through the development of the BKC as well as subsequent breed-specific kennel clubs, dog breeding became governed by an institution who claimed authority, knowledge and expertise about dogs and their breeding. Following the formation of the BKC, the very first stud book was published in 1874, compiling a list of all dog show results from the first show held in Newcastle in 1859. Stud books, other ancestral record keeping practices, manuals, pamphlets, dog show records and the formal rules and guidelines of kennel clubs sees pedigree breeds and breeding practices become firmly grounded and legitimised through the circulation of these texts (Ritvo 1987a). The stud book for instance not only features lists of show results and prize money awarded to competitors but was an essential text for solidifying the practices and goals of the BKC as the true and correct way of breeding dogs (Huff 2002). These discourses and the institutions that produced them here began to proclaim authority not only to conceptualise what a breed of dog was physically and behaviourally, but also assert authority to direct and regulate dogs' lives and bodies. As Margaret Derry (2004) explains throughout her book *Bred for Perfection,* the innovations of record keeping that emerged within this time not only furthered international trades in pedigree dogs, but also livestock such as sheep and cattle as well as show breeds of chickens. These practices and the authority granted to the BKC and equivalent kennel clubs, for example the National Kennel Council in Australia, have seen these institutions become the preeminent voices of expertise in relation to proper dog breeding practices and have laid the

conditions though which we conceptualise, manage, and understand breed origins.

Dog breeding rationalities: race, nation & eugenics

The emergence of breed as a way to differentiate dogs and other nonhuman domestic animals was not a phenomenon that materialised purely through the growth in Victorian dog fancy. Rather, the strict implementation of breed classifications was reflective of broader social anxieties about human race and racial purity. Wallen (2011) suggests that "it is by no means surprising that the notion of breed appeared at the same time the discourse of race appeared as a means of categorising and regulating human variability" (p.127). He argues further that the variability that existed amongst dogs was understood as a narrative for human variability, with both discourses (that of race and breed) acting as a way to institute and enforce socially constructed organised difference (Wallen 2017, pp. 19-21). Analogies of breed and race were often featured alongside one another in texts that discussed dog breeding and in addition, the newly 'discovered' scientific principles that captivated the public of the day used dog breeding as a metaphor to emphasise the importance of human racial purity.

Settler-colonial ideas around race and racial 'purity' have always informed, and continue to inform, the logics of dog breeding. As Patrick Wolfe (2001) describes in his discussion around Aboriginal-Australians, an individual's blood quantum, or in other words the amount of Aboriginal blood they were deemed to possess, formed the basis of their membership or identity to a certain group (p.866). Moreover, in the American settler-colonial context, the 'one-drop rule' dictated that any indication of African 'blood' or ancestry automatically classified an individual as black (Wolfe 2001, p.882; Wolfe 2006, p. 987). Similar logics are evident in historical texts around dog breeding, which were also fixated on ideas around blood mixing or 'tainted' blood in dog breeds. Moreover, as Kim (2015) argues, race and species, or in this instance breed, are "synergistically related…taxonomies of power" wherein different types of bodies are interconnected in profound and enduring ways (p.18). Race and species are discourses that have sustained one another, wherein animalisation has become central to the racialisation of the 'other' (p. 18).

Historical texts highlight this connection between race and breed. For example, first published in 1881, the *Illustrated Book of the Dog* was an encyclopaedia of sorts, offering its readers information on the history of dogs, advice on how to kennel, manage, buy and sell dogs, as well as including information about the sixty-three recognised dog breeds of the time. Discussion points in the seventieth (LXX)

chapter of this large volume, titled 'Breeding, Puppying, Rearing', reflect ways in which prevailing social ideas about human race became complementary to discourses on breed. The chapter opens with a quote from Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1872) that reads "It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneracy of the domestic race" (Shaw 1881, p.520). Author of the *Illustrated Book of the Dog,* Vero Shaw, proclaimed of Darwin's argument that "…no practical breeder of any sort of stock can be found to disagree with [Darwin]" and goes onto inform readers that no level or care from a dog's owner, or his servants "can turn a badly-bred, ill-informed animal into a good one" (p.520). Shaw then asserts that "by rigidly adhering to an ideal type and resisting all temptations to go from it, a breeder is certain in time to find himself in possession of the sort of dog her has…determined on possessing" (p. 520). Such commentary was common about dogs in this period and reflects how discussion about the 'race of man' and dog breeds became tied to one another. In addition, the use of Charles Darwin's theories in this context illustrates the way in which the growing interest and acceptance of new scientific thought was being applied and adapted by Victorians, not only in their understanding of human subjects but also nonhuman ones.

Evidently, the language used to discuss dog breeding, both in the past and presently, carries with it discernible racial tones. Terms often used to describe dogs such as pure, mutt and mongrel are sometimes used to describe human races. For example, some lay claim to being "purely white", while racial mixing has been labelled "mongrelisation" by others (Brandow 2015, p. 85). When asked what breed of dog the first family would have at the White House dog, former United States President Barack Obama joked that he would adopt a shelter dog because "a lot of shelter dogs are mutts…like me" (Wallen 2017, p.1). While a brief quip at a White House press conference, what Wallen highlights here is the way the former US President draws comparisons between the 'muttness' of shelter dogs and his own mixed-race status. Turning to such comparisons demonstrates the ongoing linguistic associations between human racial categorisations and dog breed categorisations.

To ensure consistent purity amongst dog breeds, the BKC developed rules which forbid the breeding of dogs outside of their breed category, a rule that is still observed by pedigree breeding bodies in Australia today (Australian National Kennel Council 2020). These types of policies were first developed in the 19th century and symbolised broader fears and anxieties about racial mixing that were prevalent at the time. For example, in the Australian context, pedigree dog breeding was another cultural export from 'Mother England' and largely grew in popularity in a period where concerns about 'racial intermixing' were high on the political agenda. This was evident in the eugenics-based policies

adopted by the individual colonies and later the federal government, which sought to 'breed out' the Aboriginality of Australia's indigenous people. Mixing of dog breeds became parallel to the mixing of races, a notion that was seen to taint society and place into question the legitimacy of Australia's newly developing pedigree breeds (Greenway 2003, p. 224).

The influence of underlying racial ideologies has endured in pedigree dog breeding discourse and practice. Michael Brandow (2015) has suggested that "dog breeding as a whole is a favourite hiding place for values and beliefs we're no longer supposed to have" (p.17). He goes onto argue that the 'breedism' that exists in many dog breeding circles, informed by claims about pure breed superiority and beauty, when stripped back is no more than a metaphor for "pure racism" (Brandow 2015, p.83).

This parallel between breed mixing and racial mixing is demonstrative of the ways in which humans worked on their dogs as an extension of working on themselves. As prevailing ideas around racial mixing led to the intervention and management of human life via legislative interventions as well as everyday self-management, humans began to apply the same interventions and management mechanisms to dogs. These interventions could be applied in much more drastic ways than with humans and resulted in less scrutiny. Breed societies enhanced and legitimised these modes of thought and practices through the dispensation of their regimented rules and regulations, ultimately governing breeders, their practices and the way they conceptualised and acted upon dogs' bodies. This is similar to Holloway and Morris' (2016) observations in their research on beef cattle and sheep breeding. They explore how breeding organisations and other bodies discipline livestock breeders into "thinking about, and acting on, livestock animals in ways that are identifiably part of the co-constitution of the identities and bodies of humans and livestock" (Holloway & Morris 2016, p. 275). This mode of biopower is also evident in the formation of pedigree dog breeding practices, wherein dog breeders and the dogs they breed are equally entangled by these socio-cultural racialised norms. In order to be recognised as a proper breeder, and by extension their dog as a true and correct breed, a breeder must engage with these knowledge practices and intervene on their dogs in these ways.

Many of these ideas largely developed in the United Kingdom and other parts of western Europe. However, they also emerged in North America. Harrington (2009) explores the ways in which the popularity of pedigree dogs, and a repulsion towards mongrels represented and privileged white Americans' fears and anxieties about immigration. She charts how the surge in pedigree dog popularity in the 1840s and 1850s corresponded with the revival of nativism and calls for an "America for Americans" (Harrington 2009, p. 221). The American equivalent on the BKC, the American Kennel Club

(AKC), founded in 1884, established rules that required all AKC dogs to be born in America to be considered an American pedigree breed, a rule that still governs the AKC today. American breeders also developed their own dog breeds, such as the Boston Terrier, whose origin and bloodline were baptised as the 'pure breed' of the "American gentlemen" (Brandow 2015, p. 131).

The significance of a geographical origin was also essential for defining dog breeds. In the United Kingdom breeds such as West Highland Terriers, English Cocker Spaniels and Norfolk Terriers, among others, became named for the landscapes on which they were first bred. No breed perhaps better exemplifies British national identify and landscape better than that of the English Bulldog, with various breed manuals from the 1880s onwards proclaiming this former pit fighting dog as the national dog of England (Ritvo 1986). The English Bulldog was believed to represent the English character and sensibility and English Bulldog fanciers promoted the 'ancient' and 'mystical' ties that the breed supposedly had to the English nation to defend its 'purity' from sceptics (Ritvo 1986). Geographical and national origin became immersed within dog breed histories to legitimise pedigree breeds as natural and organic members of the landscape in opposition to mongrels and curs (Wallen 2017 pp. 51-53). This gave pedigree breeds a recognisable narrative and a clear origin – something that continues to legitimise them today. Wallen (2017) labels this a dog's technological character, whereby they are knowable in advance to humans and reproducible bodies whose very nature and character resides in the human produced origin stories of their breeding (p.3). As I demonstrate in Chapter's 3 and 4, the reproducibility and predictability of pedigree dogs is a dominant feature of modern breed discourses and leads to their desirability as companions for some dog carers, as well as uncertainty and criticism of dogs that do not embody this replicability.

'Good' or 'ideal' dog breeds and breeding were further reflected in the period through notions of national civility. By the mid-19th century, a belief arose in the United Kingdom that the 'civility' of the nation was reflected in the treatment of its animals. As breed fancy and breed societies emerged, so too did the formal animal protection movement, for example in 1824 the Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals[4], founded to advocate for animal issues. This was followed by the *Cruelty to Animals Act 1876*, one of the first pieces of legislation to regulate animal vivisection (Ritvo 1987b). In addition, formal activist movements against dog fighting and cock fighting also emerged. However, as Ritvo (1987b) points out, the advocacy against these practices was less inspired by a genuine abhorrence to

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[4] In 1840 the Society was renamed the *Royal* Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals after being granted royal patronage by Queen Victoria.

animal abuse, but rather a disdain of the regular visibility of such abuses (p. 159). Despite this, when it came to the treatment of their dogs, Britons believed that there was "no civilized land where canine race is more companion of man than Great Britain…" (Thomas 1983, p. 108). Moreover, Scottish doctor and author Gordon Stables suggested "that the more highly civilized a nation is, the greater its care and culture of the canine race" (Brandow 2015, p. 78). These statements further reflect how the treatment and selective breeding of dogs became a way for white, privileged Briton's to further assert their superior racial and national difference from 'the other', who by their accounts did not establish comparable standards of breeding and care, for dogs and other nonhuman animals.

As breed discourse became codified in this period through prevailing knowledge around race, nationhood and national origin, the pseudo-science of eugenics also played a large role in the regulation of dog bodies, as well as human ones. BKC founder S.E. Shirley strongly believed in scientific method being cemented as an integral part of pedigree dog breeding and once commented "…that the science must be associated with the breeding of dogs in as great degree as it has been in the connection with racehorses and shorthorns" (Derry 2003, p. 57). Francis Galton, known as the 'pioneer of the eugenics movement', took a special interest in the practices of dog breeding to promote and enhance his own eugenics agenda. Galton disagreed with Darwin's argument that continual variation was essential for evolution, instead maintaining that evolution would make leaps and jerks (Huff 2002). Like Bakewell's inbreeding methods, Galton argued for the controlled breeding of humans to quickly improve the human race, believing greater social control of human procreation could 'improve' undesirable qualities (Huff 2002). Galton became interested in the work of dog breeders using the breeding records of 100 Basset Hounds to inform his own ideas about selective breeding (Huff 2002). In his 1908 autobiography, *Memories of my Life*, Galton wrote, "So far as I am aware no animals have ever been bred for general intelligence, special aptitudes are too thoroughly controlled by the breeder…it would be a most interesting subject for attempt" (p. 312). Galton believed then that the breeding of dogs for intelligence could be an experimental precursor to breeding humans for intelligence.

Galton's theories, as well as other scientific theories and new technologies of the period were regularly presented to middle and upper class Victorians at exhibitions to educate, disseminate and persuade the public to put eugenics into practice (Huff 2002). It is here that the agricultural methods devised by Bakewell and the 'scientific' principles formulated by Galton amalgamated resulting in a 'rational', 'scientific' approach to 'improving' canine breeds. While the guise of 'breed improvement' through strict linebreeding has continued, more recent inquiries into the eugenics-based breeding

methods have revealed the problematic consequences of these practices (see Chapter 3). The intersection of eugenics principles and dog breeding methods is a good example of how biopower is constituted via human-animal relations. The prevailing 'scientific' principles and flows of knowledge informing the breeding of dogs and livestock animals were historically used to inform the management of human reproduction and life.

Pedigree pets, status, and class

In additions to pedigree dogs acting as an analogy for race and nation, having a dog of a distinguished pedigree in the United Kingdom also represented an individual's class and social status. Prior to the 19th century the type of dog that a person owned became an indicator of their social rank. For example, squires were known to have hounds and aristocratic sportsmen greyhounds and setters, whereas 'tinkers' were identified with mongrels and 'alley scoundrels' with curs (Thomas 1983, p. 106). Before the institutionalisation of dog breeding, dogs of a distinctly recognisable type were only kept by members of the aristocracy. Moreover, members of the aristocracy not only kept dogs for practical, utilitarian purposes, but as pets. Pets were a common feature of court life during both Tudor and Stuart rule (Ritvo 1986) and throughout the 17th century pet keeping was readily practiced by those with privilege, wealth and social rank (Ritvo 1987b).

Pet-keeping by those without social rank is rarely documented, or where it is documented is represented as an unnecessary luxury. For example, John Caius' 1575 text *Of Englishe Doggees* was a book for 'English Gentlemen', therefore only offering insights into the relations between dogs and upper-class men. Thus, it is an account of human-dog relations that only included a specific privileged group. When dogs belonging to the poor, also known as the 'mongrel type', were written about in this period they were described as "lecherous," "incestuous" and "dirty" (Thomas 1983, p.106). These labels had less to do with the dogs themselves, but reflected class distinctions and notions of purity, whereby these dogs represented the status of, and assumptions about, the people who owned them (Thomas 1983, p. 106). Overall, dogs owned by members of lower classes, which were overwhelmingly mongrel types, were largely considered useless and inconvenient even if they were used for working roles (Wallen 2017, p.36).

The 1796 London Dog Tax provides further insights about these attitudes. The tax was legislated to "eliminate numerous dogs from the poor" whose dogs were often blamed for outbreaks such as rabies (Blaisdell 1999 p. 78). The tax further targeted the dogs who "led the blind about the streets"

(Blaisdell 1999, p.77). Proponents of the Dog Tax felt that the lower classes did not actually need to keep dogs as pets, but just kept them as a "pernicious luxury" (Wallen 2017, p. 36). By the 19th century pets owned by the poor were considered an "inappropriate luxury," whose owners had little means to afford or control them (Ritvo 1987b p. 162). In this sense, the keeping of pets was a right only for the privileged, with the lower classes being constructed as incapable of their care and unworthy of their keeping, a belief that still persists to an extent today as people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are often constructed as being 'irresponsible' pet owners who have 'bad' dog breeds (see Chapter 4).

By the 19th century and the rise of 'dog fancy', keeping a dog as a pet was no longer a practice for aristocrats, but was becoming a favourite activity for the burgeoning middle class, a factor that led to a rise in London's canine population between 1865 and 1887 (Ritvo 1986). Harriet Ritvo's historical work illustrates that distinguishing the well-bred dogs from those that were not became a metaphor for the need for distinctions between the social classes (Ritvo 1986). While members of the sporting gentry had bred sporting dogs such as Foxhounds and setters for years, those belonging to urban business and professional classes delighted in the institution of dog fancy (Ritvo 1987a, p.87). Dog showing and breeding was open to anyone of moderate means, and this was a community where individual merit as opposed to inherited position was celebrated (Ritvo 1987a, p.87). Thus, even though the British Kennel Club (BKC) was founded by Lords, Sirs, Colonels, and Captains, it was middle class members of the British public that used the practice of pedigree dog breeding to characterise and solidify their position in society (Ritvo 1986).

Even though many of the dog breeds that we know today were developed in this period by Victorian fanciers, their efforts towards establishing their breeds endured criticisms. The aristocrats who had asserted their social ownership over dog breeding began to dispute the growing number of middle-class fanciers breeding and showing 'their' dogs. Ritvo (1986) argues that "from the beginning dog fancy was characterised by tension between the divergent goals of the aristocratic (usually rural) and middle class (usually urban) owners and breeders" (p. 240). Aristocratic breeders who previously had the monopoly over dogs and their breeding were now having their beliefs and practices challenged by a new wave of breeders. Gentry sporting dog owners in particular were begrudged by the loss of social authority over their sporting setters and terriers, becoming horrified by the middle classes turning them into house lapdogs (Ritvo 1986). As dog fancy grew as a practice, members of elite classes attempted to make distinctions between their well-bred sporting animals, and the pets that they saw as being designed for human amusement (Ritvo 1987a, pp. 87-88). Fox hound breeders came to despise dog

shows (Ritvo 1987a p. 88) and collie enthusiasts lamented the fact that their hard-working, intelligent and loyal sheep-dogs were being bred by middle-class fanciers for "modifications" and "improvements" (Ritvo 1987b, p.163). One reviewer of the *Kennel Gazette*, a publication founded by the BKC, protested that judges were awarding prizes to greyhounds whose faces "bore an inane and expressionless look", while others complained that sporting dogs could no longer display their intelligent characters as there was "no room in their head for brains" (Ritvo 1987b, p. 163).

By the turn of the century, pedigree dog breeding had become firmly institutionalised and regulated by the BKC, however this did not halt criticisms from aristocrats who still believed their dogs had been adulterated by the modern fancier. For example, in 1911, Judith Lytton, 16th Baroness of Wentworth penned the dog breeding book *Toy Dogs and their Ancestors*. Lytton herself was a casual breeder of dogs, favouring Toy Spaniels such as the King Charles Cavalier Spaniel. Her text detailed the history and development of this breed from the reign of its namesake, King Charles II, to the present day. Lytton was unnerved by the variety of fanciers now taking part in the practice of pedigree breeding, and as a British aristocrat, believed only experienced and knowledgeable fanciers such as herself, who strove to maintain the traditional values of the practice, had cause to take part.

Dog breeding became a symbol of class tensions within a society that was rigidly class-based. The dominance and control that the ruling classes had formerly had over dog breeding was now being challenged by middle class breeders, leading to a loss of status and authority by aristocratic breeders over what a dog should be. As Chapter's 3 and 4 will explore, this narrative is once again playing out in a similar form as contemporary pedigree breeders and their breed standards are being challenged by the growing popularity of designer dogs and mixed breed rescue dogs.

Despite the class tensions that existed in relation to pedigree breeding, the pedigree dog nonetheless became a representative of their owner's status in society, representing prestige, importance and wealth. Similarly, in the supposedly classless society of the United States, owning a pedigree dog represented that a person was from a family of good breeding (Harrington 2009). In the U.K owning a dog that was not a pedigree was seen as potentially threatening to a person's social status, with one breeder commenting "nobody who is anybody can afford to be followed about by a mongrel dog" (Ritvo 1986, p.227). These themes of pedigree dog ownership were also apparent in the Australian context in the 19th and early 20th century, with pedigree dogs representing superior social standing, while 'bad people' were believed to own mongrel dogs (Greenway 2003, p.210). Overall, distinctions of dog breeds that emerged in this period became not only a symbol of who people were or what they had,

but perhaps more conspicuously, who they wanted to be seen as. Pedigree and non-pedigree dogs became symbolic extensions of their human owner's selves, and the relationship that specific types of dogs have to human self has become an enduring aspect of the modern human-dog relationship. Ownership of pedigree dogs is not as rigidly class-based today. However, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, specific dog types continue to have associations with people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, while others continue to be bought and owned by more affluent members of society. Moreover, status with respect to dog type remains prevalent, although this status is now also tied to notions of ethical dog breeding and acquisition as opposed to only breed prestige.

Marketing breed & commodifying the pet dog

The emergence of the 'breed' of dog also represents a point in time where dogs become increasingly conceptualised as commodities. This occurs for both 'pet dogs' - specifically those with 'pure' credentials - but also working dogs, which become central to the history of capitalism via their fixation within developing agribusinesses (Haraway 2007, p. 52).

Aside from developing methods for breeding, there was another principle that guided the aforementioned British Agriculturalist Robert Bakewell's work. By creating a formal method for breeding, and thus a select prestigious group of animals to breed from, Bakewell also knew that his method would attach exclusivity to his animals and thus, economic value to breeds. Commentators of the period assessed that Bakewell intentionally created a demand for his unique animals and then limited the supply to drive up their prices (Derry 2003, p.4). One scholar argued that the "new idea of breed" was merely "an ingenious marketing and publicity mechanism" designed to create hype and demand for a select group of animals (Derry 2003 p.4). This criticism can be applied to pedigree dog breeding, as a dog breed's importance became measured by not just its physical appearance and lineage, but also its economic value. It is during this period that dogs kept for non-utilitarian purposes, principally pet dogs, become an important and valuable commodity. This trend in dog breeding is emblematic of the ways in which biopower is necessarily linked to capitalism, which as Foucault suggests "would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (1990, p.141). As further parts of this thesis will explore, pedigree dog breeding rests on the assumption that the

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economic value of these dogs is intrinsically linked to performativity, reproducibility and predictability of their bodies and behaviour.

In the 16th century, animals that were kept as pets had no status under law and therefore no economic value (Fudge 2002). In this period there was no recognition of the emotional connection between humans and companion animals. Thus, if people kept animals "for pleasure only" the animal was considered "not of any value" and therefore to steal it was not considered to be a crime (Petrie 2009, p. 61). By, contrast, a household Mastiff, whose role it was to protect private property was deemed to be of both social, functional and economic importance (Thomas 1983, p.101). By the 19th century however, the growth of pedigree dog breeding, and the demand for pedigree dogs as pets saw economic value become attached to companion dogs. The price of a pedigree dog became an indicator of the differing status amongst dogs (Ritvo 1987a, p. 87) with buyers of certified pedigrees paying high prices for the expectation of both blood purity and excellence in the show ring (Ritvo 1986).

Moreover, while the British Kennel Club (BKC) was principally established to govern the practice of dog breeding and showing as described above, it was also set up to regulate the buying and selling of dogs. Prior to its 1873 establishment, the high prices of both stud dogs and pedigree puppies were relatively unregulated, with fraudulent behaviour at dog shows and in the pet market, leading to 'inferior' animals being sold for exorbitant prices (Ritvo 1986). To stamp out such behaviour and ensure that buyers were getting the dogs they paid for, the BKC's *Stud Book* acted as a way to not only record lineage, but to ensure prices paid for stud dogs and puppies reflected the prestige of those lineages (Ritvo 1986). At one point, distinguished dogs or champions of the show ring cost upwards of £250, with one champion St. Bernard selling for £1,000 (Ritvo 1987a, p. 87). These prices were in stark contrast to the prices of dogs considered to be of suitable "pet quality" but who were by comparison seen to be "undistinguished specimens" costing around 3 guineas (Ritvo 1987a p.87). In addition, dogs shows, which by the 1870's had become and entertainment sub-culture, were awarding prizes of £22,000 sterling yearly, indicating that prestigious pedigree was not just a symbol of status, but also an opportunity to profit from the exclusivity and status of your pet (Huff 2002).

While ownership of a notable pedigree symbolised a dog owners' class-status in society, the amount spent on a pet was a further expression of status and wealth. For example, in the United States, the pedigree dog acted as an accessory, a trophy and display of wealth for upper class women (Harrington 2009). In the United Kingdom, the 19th century marks a point where the 'the Victorian cult of pets' (Ritvo 1987a, p.86) became firmly entrenched, and within this cult of pets, greater emotional

attachment between human and dogs began to emerge, or rather was more regularly displayed. Showing 'love' for one's dog was measured in expenditure by purchasing any number of new pet products on the market. Dog collars first became popular and fashionable in this period, with vendors in London specialising in brass collars that were purchased by the most 'respectable' dog owners (Ritvo 1987a). Products that featured dogs also became a popular means of pet consumerism. For example, books that reflected both the practical aspects of dog ownership, breeding and care grew in popularity. To cater to growing emotional value attached to pets, books were also published that featured heart-warming stories about hero dogs and their owners (Ritvo 1987a, p.87).

The 'cult of pets', however, was not without its critics. *Punch*, a weekly British newspaper known for its humorous cartoons, regularly satirised "the foolishness" of dog owners who treated their pets as more human than dog by allowing them to eat from the table or dressing them in outfits (Ritvo 1987a p.86). One of their notable cartoons titled 'dog fashions for 1889' featured a middle-class woman walking several dogs in the park, all of which have their breed standards extravagantly depicted by the cartoonist. This illustration not only highlights the way in which the 'fashion' of pedigree pets became a point of satire, but also how a dogs 'fashionability', and thus their marketability, became innately tied to extreme physical characteristics. One of the more scathing critiques of fashionable, high-priced pets came from American sociologist Thorstein Veblen who argued that:

> The commercial values of canine monstrosities such as the prevailing styles of pet dogs for men's and women's use rests of their high cost of production and their values to their owners lies chiefly in the utility as items of conspicuous consumption (Harrington 2009, p.221).

Veblen's criticism points to the exorbitant prices of pedigree dogs, locating their purchase in the attempt for men and women to enhance and solidify their prestige through fashionable consumption, while also highlighting how 'canine monstrosities' were being deliberately and regularly physically adapted for commercial and competitive gain.

Conclusion

Dogs have been domesticated for thousands of years, yet the idea of breed is relatively new. Throughout this chapter, I have traced some of the socio-cultural formations of knowledge which have largely shaped and informed our contemporary notions of breed. While breed or categorising dogs based on type has occurred since the 16th century, it is in the 19th century where the pure, or pedigree

dog breed, and the methods that inform their breeding, become institutionalised, justified through claims to authority, scientific expertise and highly commodified. Moreover, these 'truths' about dog breed are historically embedded with assumptions about race, and prejudices related to the perceived class of their owner

As the following chapters will demonstrate, the pervasiveness of these socio-historical discourses about 'ideal' breeds and breeding practices are evident in our modern conceptualisation and management of companion dogs in the puppy farm debate and beyond.

Chapter 3 - A mongrel in breed's clothing: designer dogs

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████████████████████████ However, the growing popularity of designer dogs has attracted controversy for two reasons. Firstly, because of the associations between designer dog breeding and puppy farming and secondly because of the continued framing of designer dogs through the language and technologies of breed, the latter of which this chapter primarily focuses on.

Designer dog types are not recognised as breeds in the same ways that pedigree breeds are – they are not recognised by a breed club, nor is there a standard attached to their breeding. Yet, designer dog breeders and their carers draw upon the language and technologies of breed to represent and speak about their dogs, something that has aggravated some pedigree breeding bodies. Moreover, while they do not belong to a recognised breed, designer dogs have become subject to similar networks of categorisation and standardisation not too dissimilar from pure breed dogs.

In this chapter, I outline some of the contestation that surrounds designer dogs and their breeding with reference to their association with puppy farms and their 'non breed' status. I then explore the ways in which discourses that have shaped how we understand modern breeds are drawn upon by various groups to both legitimise and delegitimise designer dog breeding. Finally, by exploring the continued professionalisation of designer dog breeding in Victoria, I consider the ways in which designer dogs have been reproduced into replicable canine subjects, whose bodies and behaviour have been adapted – or at least marketed as such – to meet changing human subjectivities and markets.

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[5] The 'cavoodle' is also sometimes referred to as the 'cavapoo'.
[6] The 2016 Animal Medicines Australia survey of *Pet Ownership in Australia* found that 8% of dog carers identified their dog as a designer dog.

Releasing the 'Frankenstein': breeding the first designer dog

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While this story offers insights into the emerging trend in designer dogs, it also signifies how dog types become knowable and traceable through their naming and origin. The Labrador cross poodle *becomes* a Labradoodle only when it is named as such, and through this naming it endows the dog with a tangible realness, wherein its acceptance and function as a guide dog and later a companion dog is
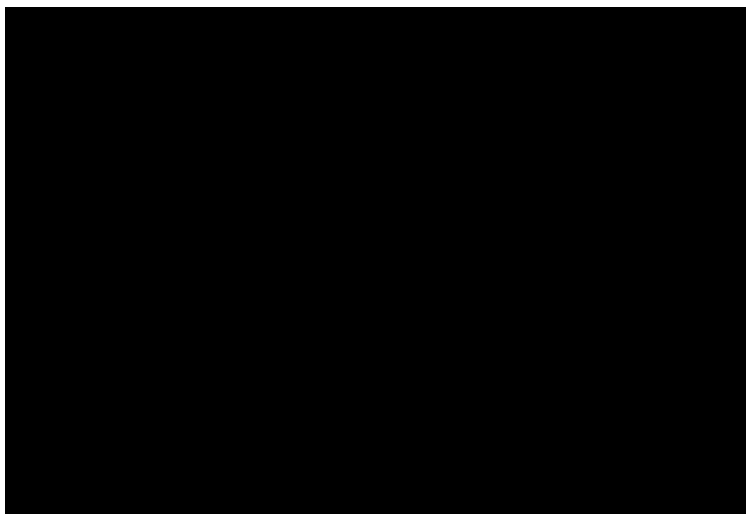
Figure 3.1: Wally Conron featured on the Guide Dogs Association of Australian 1992 calendar, pictured with 3 Labradoodle puppies and their parents, 'Brandy' a Labrador and 'Harley' a Standard Poodle.

grounded in the discursive framework of its name. Moreover, while the Labradoodle does not have a lengthy, prestigious history compared to many pedigree breeds, the origin narrative that is presented in this story does to a degree envelope them with a technological character, which as described by Wallen, is omnipresent in breed narratives (2017, p. 3). The Labradoodle's breeding is attached to a time period from when it was first created (1980s), a geographical location where it originated (Melbourne, Australia) and a utilitarian function that it has originally been bred for (a seeing eye dog). These three features – time, place, and function – have been recited time and time again in various news articles transforming this into the popular origin story of the Labradoodle and designer dogs more broadly. This story is even used by the Australian Labradoodle Association (ALA), an organisation set up to "protect the Australian Labradoodle" as the official history of "the breed" (Australian Labradoodle Association 2021). Even though the ALA is established as the governing body of the Labradoodle, the history that they advertise and by extension the Labradoodle itself, is not documented, recognised and authenticated through Australia's highest dog breed authority – the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC), a point that becomes contentious as we shall see.

This is a good example of the way discourses that inform how we understand breeds – in this instance origin – can be used to legitimise and delegitimise designer dogs. The █████████████

Labradoodles are currently the only designer dog with such a well-known, extensive history. However, designer dog breeders in Australia are beginning to attach origins to other types of designer dogs. For example, the Groodle (a Golden Retriever crossed with a poodle) is suggested to have originated in North America in the 1990s as an alternative to the Labradoodle (Chevromist Kennels A). The history of the Spoodle (an English Cocker Spaniel crossed with a poodle), the same breeder claims, is even older than that of the Labradoodle, with Spoodles being bred since the 1950s (Chevromist Kennels B).

Dogs that are not recognised as breeds have been bred, whether purposefully or accidentally, long before the first Labrador and poodle were mated by the RGDAA. Yet popular discourses enthusiasm for retelling this story in turn fixates this event as the point where cross breeding as a recurrent and intentional practice becomes widespread and, for some, problematic. It is no longer just cross breeding but becomes a specific practice – designer dog breeding – a process that disrupts conventional ideas about ideal dog breeds and good breeding practices.

The trend in designer dogs

Fashion-trends associated with having a particular type of dog have witnessed many incarnations.

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The growing cost of designer dog puppies in Victoria further contributes to perceptions of these dogs as up-market trends for the wealthy. As of 2020 – after which dog prices where even further inflated due to increased demand for dogs brought about by the COVID-19 induced lockdown in Victoria - a cavoodle was being sold for $7,000 AUD by one Victorian dog breeder (Banksia Park Puppies A). Whereas a beaglier (a Beagle crossed with a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel) was being sold for $5,995 AUD by another Victorian breeder (Chevromist Kennels C). Evidently, while designer dog carers did not indicate that their dogs were purchased for fashionable or aspirational reasons, demographic data suggests that designer dogs are acquired by people from a higher socio-economic status (see Chapter 1). A third had a total household income exceeding $150,000 per annum (33% n=28) and a large majority owned their own home (77% n=65). This suggests that designer dogs in Victoria have come to symbolize a specific socio-economic status of owner.

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       When considering this contention over price, it appears that the proliferation of designer dog breeding poses a disruption to the financial prestige and exclusivity that was previously only attached to a pure breed. Interestingly, as Chapter 2 examined, pure breeding and the categorising as some dogs as 'pure' in the 1800s was criticised as a marketing ploy to attach value and exclusivity to a specific type of dog (Derry 2003, p.4). This is representative of the ways in which authority over dog breeding – in this instance over the authority to charge a specific price – are subject to similar critiques across different periods. When new dog breeds gain popularity through market driven factors, this sits uncomfortably with society's paradoxical desire for more authentic reasons behind dog breeding and ownership and raises concerns about the conditions of and motivations for this type of breeding.

"They're not a real breed" – breed-based criticisms of designer dogs

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███ This statement not only functions to reposition this 'so-called' groodle to the category of a mongrel – which has derogatory connotations - but once again raises concern about the prices being attached to designer dogs. The pedigree breed discourses established in the 19th century, which solidified what a 'true', 'correct' and 'pure' dog is, today operates to exert an authority about dogs and denounce other ways of knowing or classifying them. These discourses again relate logics of 'blood purity' and human racilisation, whereby cross breeding a dog taints the purity of a breed and casts it as inauthentic and illegitimate.

Designer dog carers are acutely aware of the criticisms about their dogs from some pedigree breeding enthusiasts. In survey responses, when asked if they have had negative experiences because of their choice of dog, several participants recounted unpleasant interactions with owners or breeders of pedigree dogs. For example, one response suggested that "people are very snobby with those 'pure bred' dogs", whereas another labelled the pure-bred dog carers they encountered as "elitists", with another calling them "dog snobs". This is language that suggests that the historical class-based status that came with pedigree dog ownership may still be exerted today or is at least perceived by designer dog carers, when interacting with pedigree dog proponents. Another response suggested that "...people have strong opinions on [designer dogs]" with another commenting that these opinions and the negativity which surrounds designer dogs is "...stigma created by breeders of pure dogs".

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This deconstruction of pure breed history is not limited to carers of designer dogs but is also a narrative presented by those who breed and sell them. For example, an excerpt from the website of a Victorian breeder and pet store states[7]:

> We were amazed to see that the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel began as a pugalier when King Charles' spaniel was crossed with a pug to create this soft sweet natured dog in the 17th century…If a pure breeder comments on your choice of puppy, ask them the origins of their preferred breed. Unless they own a wolf or a dingo, I can assure you their dog began as a cross breed (ACA Breeders Kennels).

They present no evidence to support their claim about the pugalier. However, this excerpt acts as both a clever marketing tool and also provides prospective designer dog carers with preparedness for the scrutiny they are likely to face about their dog selection and its legitimacy. Ultimately, this statement, as well as the survey responses from designer dog carers reflects the ways in which pedigree breed history

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[7] This business has shut down in the period this thesis was written.

is sometimes utilised to frame their dogs as legitimate. These comments have attempted to turn the pure breed narrative on itself by emphasising the fact that all dog types experience some form of human interference, and by means of this shared intervention and malleability, are no different from one other.

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Health, hybrid vigour and breed 'improvement'

The association between scientific rationalisation, dog health and breed 'improvement' are perpetual features of dog breed discourse, largely codified in the 19th century (see Chapter 2). Today, these features operate across a spectrum, where they are adjusted and moulded by each group to proclaim their dogs as superior and their breeding practice as the more scientifically informed. In Australia, National Breed Councils function to, among other things 'improve' and 'develop' a specific breed of dog (Australian National Kennel Council). This 'improvement' takes place through scientific research and genetic testing and ironically is a response to the so-called 'improvements' of dogs in the past, which have produced several extreme morphologies and other health conditions (Bateson 2010). Within designer dog breeding, an example of this is the notion of hybrid vigour: that is, the idea that cross breeding two pedigree dogs will lead to an overall healthier and more vigorous dog, free of many of the

genetic conditions or problems caused by the extreme morphologies that effect pedigree breeds. This concept has become increasingly associated with designer dog breeding.

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Concern over pedigree dog breeding has also grown in Australia. *Pedigree Dogs Exposed* was aired by the *ABC* and led to concerns from Australian dog owners. In anticipation of the documentary airing, the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) began liaising with veterinary and animal welfare stakeholders about health issues facing pedigree dogs. The ANKC committed to opening their stud books

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[8] Brachycephalic breeds include the pug, French Bulldog, English bulldog, Pekingese and Boxer among others.

(i.e. allowing outcrossing), collecting data on disease prevalence, investing in research programs to respond to health problems and reviewing breed standards. From a broader legislative perspective, the Victorian Government established the *Code of Practice for the Breeding of Animals with Hereditable Defects that Cause Disease* also making it offence under section 15C of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1986)* to intentionally or recklessly breed an animal with a hereditable defect that causes disease. These mechanisms introduced by the ANKC as well as the Victorian Government (which apply to any dog breeder) attempted to give assurance to pet carers and prospective pet carers, as well as to promote greater consideration of the health problems experienced by some pedigree dog breeds. Despite this, growing uncertainty around pedigree dogs as reliable or healthier dog had already taken root.

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[9] While Cottage Canines is located in New South Wales, they breed and ship dogs to Victorian dog carers.
[10] Do Little Designer Dogs similarly breeds and ships dogs to Victorian dog carers.
[11] The first draft of the Bill intended to cap all dog breeders in Victoria to 10 fertile females. Following the conclusion of this inquiry this number was revised to 50 fertile females with Ministerial approval.

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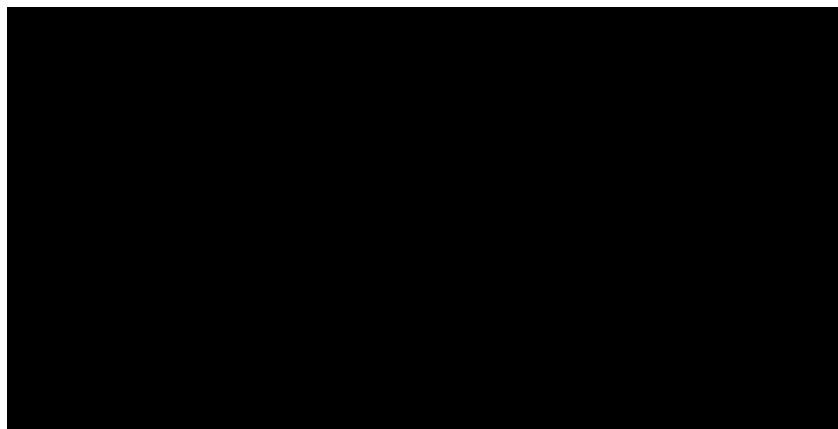
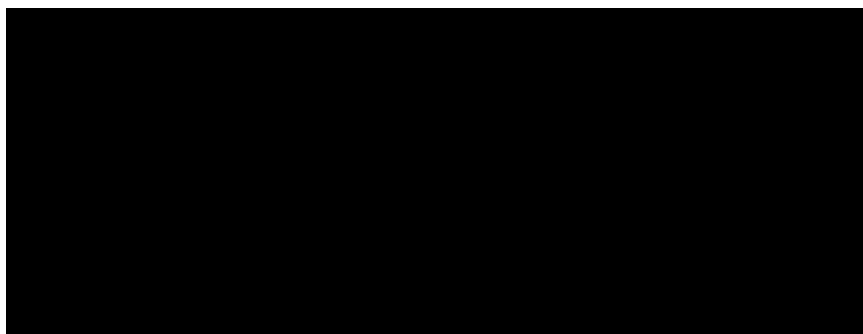**Figure 3.2:** Example of DNA testing certifications for beagaliers from a Victorian designer dog breeder's website.

Figure 3.3: Example of DNA testing certifications for cavoodles from a Victorian designer dog breeder's website.

Designer dog health and perceptions of ethics

The perception of 'better health' among some designer dogs when compared with some pedigree breeds further highlights how that which is understood to be 'ethical' has shifted within this debate. The 'ethical rules' established by animal welfare groups about dog acquisition (see Introduction; Chapter 5), repeatedly refer to the health and welfare of puppies, with a focus on dog carers ensuring that the puppy is "bred to be a healthy pet" (RSPCA A). This is featured alongside information that reminds dog carers that puppy farms do not breed for good welfare or healthy dogs (RSPCA A; Oscar's Law B). Thus, in this context, the breeders that are represented as breeding for high welfare and with health in mind are often pedigree breeders.

Yet, these same organisations equally problematise pedigree breeding due to the health issues outlined above. For example, Oscar's Law warn "being a 'registered [Australian National Kennel Council Breeder]' doesn't always mean the breeder is ethical or humane" (Oscar's Law B). Whereas the RSPCA outlines a number of the issues with pedigree dog breeding, including breed standards which lead to exaggerated physical features and inherited diseases (RSPCA 2020). Neither group suggests that pedigree dogs should be avoided, but nonetheless this information along with the myriad of other texts that have problematised pedigree breeding fuel an uncertainty about what is 'ethical' in this instance.

Evidently, in my participant group, those who wanted a pug rationalised their choice of acquiring a cross breed pug as being better for the individual health and wellbeing of their dog. However, the ongoing ties that designer dog breeding has with the puppy farm and pet store trade demonstrates how ethics have become hazy and contested within this debate. The questions of what type of dog to acquire and from where are subject to different rationalisations of what is 'good', 'right' and 'ethical', which in this example centre around the health of a dog. Moreover, it is not merely the healthiness of the *specific* dog in question but rather the predictability of its health status by virtue of the breed or lineage it belongs to.

Breeding the 'modern' 'family-friendly' dog

Dog breeding has always functioned as a mode of adaptation, which involves detecting the perceived ideal qualities of a dog, and then breeding to continually replicate this idealness. Designer dog breeding continues this tradition of adaptation where these dogs have been imagined and interpolated into the 'perfect family pet', adaptation that emulates prevailing human subjectivities and consumer patterns.

During the aforementioned debate over the Victorian Government's *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill*, commercial breeders and those in support of the industry strategically avoided the term 'designer dogs', instead replacing it with 'family-friendly cross breeds' (Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2016, p. 39; Victoria, Legislative Assembly, p. 4140). This decision by breeders to 'rebrand' designer dogs to 'family-friend cross breeds' may have been due to the negative associations attached to the phrase designer dog. In my own survey I found that a majority of participants (n=63; 76%) agreed to some extent that there are negative connotations attached to the term designer dog. Moreover, a third of participants (n=29; 35%) noted that they preferred the term 'cross breed' over 'designer dog', which suggests that designer dog carers as well as breeders have identified the stigma around the term designer dog. Thus, within the debate the newly branded "family-friendly cross breeds" were constructed as the dogs "preferred by most buyers" and the closure of these breeders would deny Victorian families the opportunity to have a suitable dog for their children (Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2016, p. 39).

Donna Haraway (2007) has commented that "Like a 1950s TV show, companion animal worlds are all about family" (p.47). This is especially true for designer dog worlds. ██████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ███ ██ ███ ███ ██ ██
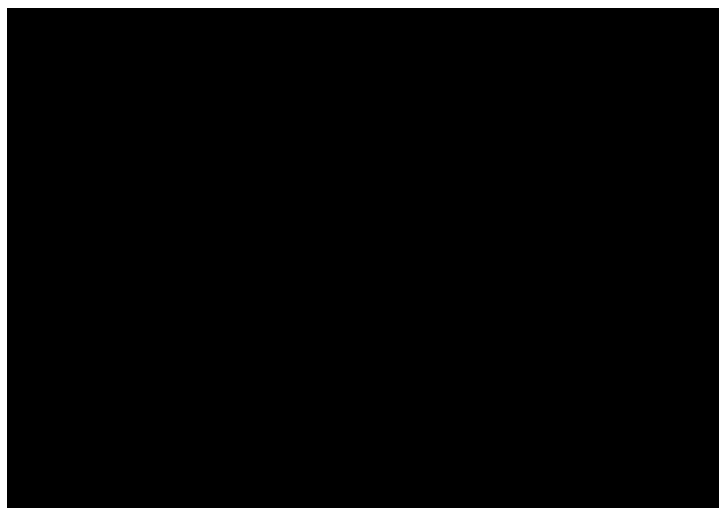
Figures 3.4 & 3.5: Examples of the 'family-friendly' imagery used on designer dog breeder's websites.

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      Further, Australian dogs are more frequently being allowed to roam both outdoors and indoors. This is especially the case for designer dogs who are more likely than other dog types to be allowed to come inside the home (Animal Medicines Australia 2019). Thus, the non-shedding convenience of some designer dog types appears to drive both their popularity and a willingness from dog carers to have them in the home. ██

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become increasingly detailed including information about exact weights of dogs and positioning of ears. For example, Chevromist Kennels suggests that the cavoodle's "…ears are usually set well above the eyes and hang low past its chin. The neck is elongated and transitions to its straight back. Its tail is long and usually hangs freely past the hocks" (Chevromist Kennels E). Similarly, the information about temperaments of designer dogs is also becoming more detailed. Do Little Designer Dogs suggest that the Labradoodle "…should be outgoing but not pushy, self-confident but not aggressive and smart but not overly independent" (2017). These descriptions are of course not official standards, and there are no prerogatives for designer dog breeders to adhere to these ideals. However, as designer dogs like cavoodles, spoodles and groodles become more popular, there appears to be growing conformity to colours, sizes and temperaments. Like other examples noted throughout this chapter, this growing preoccupation with categorising designer dogs, whether by virtue of their family friendliness, or through specific qualities such as coat colour, is another way in which the norms of breed discourses have been applied to and utilised by designer dog breeders. This is emblematic of our broader preoccupation with ordering dogs into neatly definable categories and highlights the ways in which humans revert to traditional breed discourses to think and speak about dogs. In this regard, despite being a deviation from traditional breed paradigms, designer dogs have still been transformed into performative canine subjects, highlighting the ongoing relevance of breed discourses and technologies in shaping, and constraining human perceptions and treatment of certain types of dogs.

Conclusion

The emergence and popularity of designer dogs has been a site of controversy for a variety of reasons. One of these is the continued framing of designer dogs through normative breed discourses. In many ways, designer dogs disrupt the market and status of pedigree breeding. On the one hand, designer dog breeders and owners utilise and adapt traditional breed knowledge and technologies to legitimise their dog. On the other, they recognise and deconstruct known ideas about pedigree dog breeds and breeding practices to lend further legitimacy to their selection of a companion dog.

Overall, the growth in popularity of designer dogs suggests that human ideas and expectations about dog breed and what makes an ideal companion dog is never stagnant nor fixed, but constantly shifting according to prevailing social, cultural and politico-economic norms. Designer dogs are an example of this fluidity, wherein they have been shaped and constrained to fit changing forms of human subjectivity. Ultimately, however, designer dog breeding still reduces dogs to consumable products and

aligns their worth with notions of ideal appearance and behaviour. In this way, despite the discursive divisions that are constructed around designer and pedigree dogs respectively, they are still subject to the same networks of subjugation; ordered into knowable pliable canine subjects. And yet, the ongoing ties between designer dog breeding and large-scale commercial breeding in Australia and other parts of the world means that – despite the rhetoric of the designer dogs as the 'ideal family friendly' dog, or a 'healthier' dog that pedigrees dog carers intention toward the 'ideal family friendly' dog, or a 'healthier' dog than pedigrees – it remains important to continually monitory the extent to which designer dog popularity may also come at the cost of a dog's welfare.

Chapter 4 - Reordering the unknowable: mixed breed rescue dogs

Over the course of the puppy farm debate, Victorian dog carers were increasingly encouraged to adopt rescue dogs rather than purchasing puppies from breeders. In addition, the first instruction featured in dog buying guides developed during the debate was to check your local pounds and shelters before purchasing a puppy. Despite the push towards dog adoption, my survey findings reveal that uncertainty still exist for many current and prospective dog carers when considering adopting a dog from a pound, shelter or community rescue group (CRG). Overwhelmingly, rescue dogs are classified as 'mixed breeds' a classification that, along with their being relinquished, casts them as unknowable subjects, whose bodies and behaviours do not align with the regimented constructions of breed.

In terms of biopower, pedigree dogs and to an extent designer dogs, have been bred through processes of normalisation wherein specific truths about their behaviours and bodies are exercised via breeding practices that determine which dogs are bred, by whom and how frequently. However, mixed breed rescue dogs are often constructed as a product of irresponsible pet ownership and irresponsible breeding. In this respect, the 'true nature' and technological character (Wallen 2017, p.3) of a mixed breed rescue dog cannot be locked down in the same way as pedigree and designer dogs can. They become category deviants (Haraway 2003, p.5) and cease to embody the canine performativity that is expected of an ideal companion dog. Relations of biopower still envelope the lives of rescue dogs, however. In the absence of breeding practices, technologies such as temperament testing, documentation of rescue dog's behaviour and breed identification testing have emerged to reorder mixed breed rescue dogs into knowable canine subjects.

Categorising the 'rescue dog'

Any type of dog can be found in pounds, shelters or CRGs in Australia. However, research has suggested that there is a specific profile of dog that is more commonly found in Australian shelters. Marston et al. (2005) found that rescue dogs are most often more than two years of age, sexually intact (I.e. not sterilised), male, mixed breed and large sized. When conducting semi structured interviews with animal shelter and rescue group workers, each participant was asked about the type of dogs they commonly encounter in their work. Their responses mirrored the findings from the aforementioned study, which suggests there is a distinct category of dog found in shelters and CRGs in Victoria. Dog rescue workers described how:

...you get a lot of your...Bull Mastiffs, a lot of your Staffies[12].

Dogs that fill up pounds are Staffie mixes...it's working dog mixes, or Staffies, or Bull Arabs, it's not little white fluffies.

A further search through Pet Rescue, an Australian online companion animal adoption database, reveals a similar finding. Dogs primarily available for adoption in Victoria are identified as large mixed breeds, often of Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Bull Arab, German Shepherd, Kelpie or Blue Heeler mix. However, some are simply referred to as 'mixed breed'.[13] Various smaller breeds of dog, such as Jack Russell Terrier, Maltese and Chihuahuas are also available for adoption. However, the larger breeds of dog vastly outnumber the smaller dogs that are available.

Several of the dog types listed above are popular with Victorian dog carers. For example, Staffordshire Terriers have been found to account for 9% of greater Melbourne's owned dogs (Worrall & Heagney 2018). Moreover, as Chapter 5 will explore, discourses around 'saving a life' have prompted some dog carers to adopt these types of dogs. However, equally, these dog types have been subject to public scrutiny when they have engaged in behaviours determined to be in defiance of good dog conduct. In particular, the above dog types have garnered reputations for being badly behaved, vicious, aggressive, and capable of causing serious injury and death (Markovits & Crosby 2014, p. 280). Breeds such a German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Dobermans, Blue Heelers and Bull Mastiffs are often named in news reports as the dog breeds responsible for attacks against people (Dow 1997; Cookes 1997). Staffies are also regularly referred to in media reports about dog attacks and dangerous breeds. Representations of these dogs position them as "unpredictable" animals who can turn at any minute (Sunday Age 1993) as well as "canine kill[ers]" (*The Age* 1995) who after they bite someone once "...get the taste for blood" (Pristel 1997). Moreover, terms such as "vicious", "savage" and "hunter" are repeatedly used to describe Staffies (*The Age* 1995, Pristel 1997, Butcher 1997, O'Brien 2014, *The Age* 2016). They are represented as more akin to "wild" dogs rather than domestic pets, and as pack animals (Cookes 1997, Pristel 1997, Butcher 1997). Additionally, the victims of attacks by these breeds are often young children, whether it be the family pet who has "turned" on the child, or a random attack in a park or on the street (Dow 1997, Cookes 1997, Pristel 1997, Cuneo 2008, Firkin 2011, *The Age* 2016).

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[12] 'Staffie' or 'staffy' is an Australian colloquial term that refers to both Staffordshire Bull Terriers and American Stafordshire Terriers.
[13] Based on search of dogs available for adoption in Victoria on Petrescue.com.au (02/02/2020)

Media reports about these incidents do not make explicit connections with these sorts of dogs and adopting a dog. However, constant media portrayals of these dog types as aggressive, unpredictable and potentially life-threating, coupled with discussions around 'breed bans' fuel negative perceptions about these dogs, who are generally the ones in shelters and requiring rehoming. In mid-2017, the death of Sue Lopicich an animal rescuer in Perth, Western Australia, did see rescue dogs become a focal point of media scrutiny. After she was mauled to death by her rescue Bull Mastiff mix, some news articles detailing the incident included warnings to the public, with one animal behaviourist suggesting, "There's a really high risk of taking on a rescue dog…" (MSN News 2017). Following this incident, I conducted an interview with an adoption coordinator at a Melbourne-open admission shelter who commented that many people coming to view Mastiff-type dogs were now quite wary of them, with some potential adopters explicitly mentioning their concern about this incident with adoptions staff.

'Problems' with rescue dogs

The above rhetoric does contribute to perceptions about rescue dogs and impacts people's willingness to adopt them. As Chapter 3 demonstrated, the desire for a family-friendly dog has contributed to the popularity of designer dogs in Victoria. Moreover, the expectation that a dog is safe with children is something that many dog carers have (King et al. 2009). Perceptions that rescue dogs will be not good with children and may even be unsafe or a risk to them, influences people's decision to not adopt. This was highlighted in some survey responses. When participants were asked whether they would adopt an adult dog from a pound, shelter or CRG, and why, concerns about the dog's behaviour around children arose as a factor:

> …we have young children and did not want to risk behaviour we were not aware of.

> We looked at dogs in our local shelters, but as we have seven grandchildren in all, we never felt comfortable bringing an adult dog into the home.

In addition, survey participants highlighted other problems they believed rescue dogs would have. Several respondents indicated that rescue dogs would likely have problems with their health and behaviour. For example, one commented that "I believe most rescue dogs come with problems", whereas another suggested that rescue dogs have "too many health issues". Others raised concerns about adult rescue dogs fitting into their household. For example, one person explained that "I have heard too many

stories where the dog had problems adjusting and the owners have been sorry they have the dog". While another suggested that "…some rescue dogs can be really difficult to assimilate into the family".

Previous research has also suggested that the perception rescue dogs 'have problems' is one of the main limitations to successful adoptions (Mornement et al. 2012). Behavioural problems, which is often one of the factors that influences dog relinquishment, is also a factor that influences reluctance to adopt. In Mornement et al's. (2012) study into perceptions of shelter practices and shelter dogs they found that a majority of their respondents indicated they were highly likely, or likely to adopt from a shelter or rescue organisation. Similarly, my own survey found that 72% (n=133) of respondents indicated that they would consider adopting an adult dog over a buying a puppy from a breeder in the future. However, one-third of Mornement et al's. (2012) respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Adult dogs from shelters often have behaviour problems" (p. 465). Thus, while many people express the intention to adopt a rescue dog, when faced with the decision, a puppy is often considered a more favourable choice due to an assumption that their behaviour is more pliable and will thus be more predictable and less problematic.

Rescue dogs, socio economic status & irresponsible pet ownership

Uncertainty about rescue dogs is not only based in practical considerations about perceived problem health or behaviour. It is also influenced by underlying socio-cultural attitudes. Other than being potentially aggressive, unpredictable and unhealthy, rescue dogs are often situated as products of 'irresponsible pet ownership' and irresponsible or 'bad' breeding (McHugh 2002, p. 188). By virtue of being perceived as irresponsibly owned and bred, rescue dogs have become associated with class-based narratives, which problematises their owners and the dogs themselves, and in some instances casts these dogs as 'less valuable' than others.

An interesting example of this is from 1989, in which an *Inquiry into the Role and Welfare of Companion Animals in Society* was commissioned by the Victorian Government. A submission from the Victorian Kennel Council (today Dog's Victoria), a pedigree breeding organisation, suggested that there should be mandatory sterilisation of any "cross-bred animal", going on to argue that cross breed dogs are "more likely to be irresponsibly owned" (p.88). They then go on to assert that a dog registered with their organisation and therefore a pure breed is a "valuable animal" (p.88). This position presents several problems, the first of which is that its policy of mandatory sterilisation of any and all non-

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purebred animal is derivative of eugenicist-like policies, although perhaps this is not surprising considering perceptions of 'good breeding' and ideal dogs emerged from these ideas. Moreover, by adopting this position, this statement reinforces the assumption that not only are non-purebred animals a social inconvenience, but that they are not an animal to be valued in the same way as a pure breed. Finally, this statement reinforces the assumption that any non-purebred animal is likely to be irresponsibly owned, adding not only to stigmas about carers of these but also to the dogs themselves.

'Responsible pet ownership' is a term which broadly encompasses several key tenants that indicate if a companion animal carer is looking after their animal in such a way that is deemed to be competent and socially acceptable. According to the RSPCA, a responsible pet owner will be able to care for a pet for its whole life, afford a pet, be able to care for the pet appropriately (i.e. provide their pet with sufficient food, water, shelter), have time to care for the pet, have suitable accommodation for the pet and have a suitable lifestyle for the pet (RSPCA B). In addition to this, responsible pet owners will ensure that their pets are desexed, vaccinated and microchipped (RSPCA B). Moreover, as Borthwick (2009) points out, pet ownership is increasingly judge through broader moral behaviouralism, in which dog carers are expected to be compliant citizens who must ensure the cleanliness of their dog in public spaces, while also ensuring their dog enacts acceptable behaviours. Pet ownership activities which are in contravention of these key tenants are usually labelled as irresponsible pet ownership. Often carers of mixed breed dogs that enter pounds, shelters or CRGs enact – or are perceived to enact – behaviours which are counter to the responsible behaviours listed about.

Extensive research has explored why companion animals are relinquished to shelters. Salman et al. (1998) identified ten common reasons for companion animal relinquishment in their study looking at American animal shelters and found the reasons behind the majority of surrenders: moving; landlord not allowing pet; too many animals in household; cost of pet; maintenance; owner having personal problems; inadequate facilities; and no homes available for litter mates. These findings are consistent with other research that has focused on this issue both in an Australian and international context (Miller et al. 1996, Patronek et al. 1996, DiGiacomo et al. 1998, New et al. 1999, Scarlett et al. 1999, Shore et al. 2003, Dolan et al. 2015). However, as Dolan et al. (2015) points out in their work "reasons for relinquishment vary from community to community, and there is still much to be learned regarding relinquishment (p.1313).

In my interviews with companion animal shelter and rescue group workers, interviewees discussed several reasons why dogs were surrendered into their care. When mentioning a dog that was relinquished due to the owner having "no time for the dog" dog rescuers would roll their eyes and demonstrate visible frustration. However, the majority of interviewees accepted that there are always going to be instances where an animal would need to be surrendered. For example, most dog rescue workers understood circumstances such as a carer coming into poor health, entering aged care or experiencing domestic violence as justifiable reasons for giving up a dog. However, one rescue group worker did feel differently. When I asked them if there was ever a good reason for giving up a dog, their response was blunt; "No! I'd just say the owner's a fuck-wit and should've never gotten the dog in the first place". Thus, while there is some understanding in the dog-rescue world that relinquishment is sometimes unavoidable, this CGR worker draws a moral line in which dog carers should never acquire dogs that they cannot properly care for.

Narratives of abandonment and sometimes even cases of cruelty elicit empathy for rescue dogs (see Chapter 5). However, they can also contribute to the conceptualisation of the rescue dog as traumatised and unpredictable. Much of this stems from not only how they have been 'owned' (i.e. irresponsibly), but how they were bred. Irresponsible dog owners are the ones most often criticised for irresponsibly breeding their dogs as a result of "…ignorance or neglect" (RSPCA B) by not desexing their pets and allowing them to have sometimes multiple litters. This irresponsible breeding is sometimes labelled as 'backyard breeding' and is suggested to contribute to "the unwanted companion animal population in the community", or in other words the dogs (and cats) that make up the pound, shelter and CRG population (RSPCA B). Pedigree dogs are constructed as the embodiment of a predictable dog, being bred to reproduce specific qualities so that you "…you know what to expect" (Dogs ACT, Dogs NSW, Dogs Queensland, Dogs Victoria, Dogs West). While designer dogs are 'cross breeds', the continued professionalisation of the designer dog breeding industry has seen similar aims and systems of regulation become utilised by designer dog breeders. Mixed breeds, however, have few if any of these predictable qualities and this is always framed as a result of irresponsible breeding, whether it be accidental or profit driven (RSPCA B).

Pet caring behaviours that are deemed to be 'irresponsible' or even problematic have been linked to low socioeconomic status across various research. For example, in the case of desexing pets, the cost of the procedure has been identified as a barrier for dog carers in several papers (Downes et al. 2015; Ong et al. 2017; Gates et al. 2019). Desexing your pet has become a responsible aspect of

companion animal ownership, not only because it reduces the likelihood of several health conditions and the risk of aggression and fighting amongst dogs, but also because desexing prevents the continued reproduction of "unwanted" (RSPCA B) animals, by limiting unregulated breeding.

Socioeconomic status has also been found to influence the relinquishment of animals to shelters and pounds. For example, one study that looked at socio-economic factors that led to pet relinquishment on the Sunshine Coast, Australia (Carter & Taylor 2018) found that homelessness was a reason that led to pets being surrendered. Moreover, they found that of the animals surrendered in their research only 40% were desexed and only 35% microchipped; both considered key responsible pet ownership requirements. Many of the companion animals surrendered in this study were also born with the carer that relinquished them, something that the researchers suggest reflects the high number of litters being bred by carers who will eventually relinquish animals when they can no longer look after them (p. 542). These results suggest that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds have less capacity to enact socially sanctioned pet ownership behaviours (i.e. desexing and microchipping) and therefore engage in pet ownership behaviours deemed to be irresponsible, such as unregulated breeding and relinquishment of their animals due to an inability to care for them.

As well as being 'irresponsible' dog carers, people from lower socioeconomic groups are often associated with cases of animal neglect and cruelty. One study (Shih et al. 2019) found that reports to RSPCA Queensland regarding concerns for dog welfare were more likely to reported in areas with "inhabitants of low socioeconomic status" (p. 1). Moreover, they found that complaints related to committing intentional acts of cruelty were more often associated with lower socioeconomic areas and so too were complaints related to neglect, such as not providing the dog with veterinary care or food and water. Interestingly, the research also found that cases of cruelty or neglect that involved dogs of an 'unrecognised breed' or as I am calling them here, mixed breed, were potentially related to owners being socially disadvantaged compared with cases involving 'recognised breeds' of dog. Cruelty and neglect are also factors that influence dogs' entry into rescue situations. In the Victorian context, so-called 'cruelty hotspots' are often areas that are identified as having higher rates of crime, social disadvantage and 'unemployment' (Evans 2017, Slater 2018).

Research in the social sciences has also drawn links between socioeconomic status and dog ownership, in some instances linking it with susceptibility for 'deviance'. Milot (2018), explored unregulated backyard breeding and its contribution to the shelter dog population in the United States linking this type of breeding as being a precursor to criminal activity, for example, breeding and using

dogs to guard criminal enterprises such as drug, weapon or human trafficking (p.712). Moreover, questions about animal cruelty and abuse being a precursor for human interpersonal violence has been explored in various research. These questions are not the subject of inquiry here. However, what is apparent from this research, as well as other discourses is the way lower socioeconomic status is repeatedly aligned with irresponsible pet ownership behaviours such as irresponsible breeding and the inability to care for an animal often resulting in relinquishment, neglect and even cruelty.

The assumption that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds cannot properly care for their animals has historical roots. As Chapter 2 discussed, dogs that were known to be mutts and mongrels typically belonged to the poor who were perceived as ill-equipped to care for their animals, and were deemed to be keeping them as an "inappropriate luxury" (Ritvo 1987b p. 162). Other historical examples reflect the negative attitudes about mixed breed dogs and the people that care for them. Harrington (2009) points out how in New York City in the 1870s dogs assumed to be homeless mutts were rounded up, killed and thrown into New York City's East River. Whereas Wallen (2017) explores the way legislation in eighteenth century England, such as the Dog Tax, sought to eliminate ownership of "the ugly, immoral dogs" owned by the poor, in other words mixed breeds and curs (p.15). These logics remain prevalent in contemporary discourses and some people's perceptions of rescue dogs.

These notions are also extended to different racial groups. For example, Bénédicte Boisseron (2015) traces how the perceived 'agressiveness' of pit bulls, dogs often found in shelters in America, have been tied to their associations with black men (p.18) He points out how white middle-class female subjects often 'rehabilitate' pit bulls both in the literal sense but also figuratively from their associations with black men (p.18). This points to the ways that class, but also race can formulate perceptions about rescue dogs not only as something likely to be problematic, but also as beings that need to be 'saved' from 'irresponsible', ill-equipped and potentially even 'cruel' human carers.

Even in academic circles, assumptions have been made about the capacity of some groups to properly care for their dogs. In the opening chapter of her book *My Dog Always Eats First: Homeless People and Their Pets* (2013), Leslie Irvine recounts her interaction with a homeless man and his dog in Colorado. She details how she and a friend attempted to convince this man to sell them his dog so they could find it what she calls "a good home" (p. 2). This 'good life' she explains "would have meant four walls, a roof, and even a yard" (p. 3). Yet despite their attempts, the man refused to give up his dog. However, the implied link between socio-economic disadvantage and irresponsible pet ownership is problematic here. Irvine details two other stories of her time volunteering in an animal shelter, one that

involved a pedigree Shiba Inu that had escaped its home during a storm. The higher socio-economic owner of the dog initially took four days to collect it from the shelter after being notified by shelter staff. The Shiba Inu Irvine describes "reappeared at the shelter" a few weeks later and following several follow up calls from staff the dog remained unclaimed (p. 4). The man eventually relinquished his dog, citing its escapes as an inconvenience (p. 4).

The second story involved a man with no fixed address and no phone, whose dog has escaped during the same storm as the Shiba Inu. The man, who also did not have a car and could not afford public transport walked to the shelter every day to see if his dog had been found. Irvine explains how staff at the shelter purchased the man a new pair of shoes as he had worn out his old ones walking around looking for his dog and putting up posters. These two counter narratives challenge Irvine's assumptions about who can provide better care for a dog. More broadly, these stories illuminate deeply entrenched attitudes, which expect that people experiencing homelessness and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds cannot responsibly care for their animals in the way more privileged groups can.

The 'known-unknowns' of rescue dogs

Assumptions about rescue dogs being bad with children and having lower socioeconomic backgrounds are not the only factors that drive uncertainty about rescue dogs. As many rescue dogs are mixed breed, their behaviour cannot be predicted in the same ways as dogs that have been purchased from breeders. As Chapter 2 explored, the taxonomic heritage developed by 18th and 19th century natural historians and scientists have informed the current ways that humans conceptualise the human and nonhuman world around them. The only way we can speak about humans, nonhuman animals, plants and nature is through neatly defined discursive structures such as race, gender, breed, species and genus (Thomas 1983, p. 52). A dog cannot exist in any form of fluidity whereby its breed is not defined in some way. Because of this classificatory pressure, shelters and CRGs must therefore engage with these dominant discourses to communicate that the dogs they have available for adoption are – as much as possible – "performed canine products" (Wallen 2017, p. 16).

Much in the same way that designer dogs exist both outside of and within normative breed frameworks, rescue dogs must also be defined, shaped and understood via these categories. Recent genetic research about dog breeds has indicated that categorising a dog's 'breed' purely based on analysis of their morphology can be extremely unreliable (Bradley 2011, p.5). But despite this, the

identification of specific morphological traits has become the primary way of establishing what type of breed a dog is, and subsequently affects the way humans engage with and respond to dogs. As Wallen (2017) argues:

> A modern breed dog carries his technological character bodily in his confirmation to a breed standard, and discursively in the breed history through which we anticipate his character. A good dog affirms our expectations by not suggesting any other possibility, while a bad dog disrupts our expectations by raising unanticipated possibilities for engagement (p.3).

While mixed breed rescue dogs are by no means 'breedless', their categorisation as mixed breed (or cross breed) signifies that they are unable to conform either bodily or discursively to a predetermined standard and are rather a messy combination of potential possibilities and behaviours. Further to this, the fact that they have possibly been surrendered to a rescue organisation, irresponsibly owned, and bred or found as a stray, fuel the uncertainty around who they will be and how they will behave. Thus, they are rendered 'other' by this process.

The 'unknowns' associated with mixed breed rescue dogs was a factor that arose numerous times in survey data. When participants were asked if they would consider adopting an adult rescue dog, and why/why not, why a common theme arose. For example:

> Unknown issues health/mental/emotional, history unknown.

> I don't know how it's been raised or how it's going to react in certain situations. If I raise it from a pup I know its mannerisms and how it's been trained.

Responses like these suggest that there is a belief among some dog carers that a mixed breed rescue dog cannot be 'known' in the same way that a puppy from a breeder can be known. Interestingly, the majority of participants who made this type of commentary also identified that they owned a pedigree dog. However, while these responses classify mixed breed dogs as 'unknowable', they also indicate that mixed breed dogs are also 'knowable in advance' as problematic. The discourses that surround mixed breeds, specifically those from shelters, continuously objectify them into the categories of 'unpredictable', 'aggressive' or 'badly behaved'. The above responses conform to this way of conceptualising these dogs, assuming a mixed breed dog is 'unknowable' concerning its temperament, health, history, and behaviour. But that a mixed breed dog is also 'knowable' based upon the common assumption that it will almost certainly possess these unpredictable traits. In this respect, by continuously approaching and engaging with dogs by virtue of their breed (or in this case mixed breed)

categorisation we reaffirm and reproduce the specific knowledges and power relations attached to breed frameworks and ideal breeding practices, thereby presupposing the individual dog's character and delimiting the possibility of a human and dog relationship.

Pedigree bred dogs purchased from registered breeders – and to an extent designer dogs – face little if any of the same scrutiny about their bodily or behavioural confirmation. The taxonomic qualities bound up in individual breed standards, and in breed discourses, allow humans to understand and locate the qualities of their chosen breed in advance. Wallen (2017) explains how the "intervention that is perpetuated through breed discourse colludes with the aesthetic of the privileged subject [the human] by producing a canine face in such a way that it can be recogni[s]ed and responded to within conventional limits that…serve human needs or desires" (p.19). In this regard, the physical predictability and behavioural uniformity of the pure breed in opposition to the mixed breed provides humans with a dog that reflects human centred notions of dog idealness, and a dog that lives within the boundaries of continuous physical and behavioural regulation.

The determinism that envelopes breed discourse was explicitly highlighted as an advantage of a pure breed puppy when compared to a mixed breed rescue dog in several survey responses. For example:

I have [adopted a dog] in the past but my passion is now with pedigree dogs whom I know their lineage and background".

I love the predictability of my purebred dogs…

In addition to these responses, another response suggested that their pure breed dogs would offer "no surprises". This reflects the way in which the dominance of breed taxonomies has influenced the assumption that a breed will only act within a range of pre-calculated possibilities (Wallen 2017, p. 47). This same respondent went onto suggest that "I know that I can't live with some breed types", further indicating how the intersubjective exchange between human and dog must be grounded in modes of knowledge reliant on adequate classification of a dog type for a meaningful relationship to take place. Moreover, the desire to have a specific 'kind' or 'breed' of dog is still a priority for many people, with some survey respondents indicating they would not adopt a dog because:

I want a dog with select traits and characteristics.

We looked at shelters first but wanted a specific breed and they do not really get them often.

Thus, while the sentiment around dog adoption does continue to grow (see Chapter 5), for some dog carers there is still a preference in having a dog that is reproducible, reliable and predictable. This highlights the ongoing relevance of breed discourses in grounding and informing human-dog relations.

In the absence of breed: making rescue dogs knowable

Despite being predominantly mixed breeds, in dog rescue, dogs are nonetheless continually framed through the lens of breed. Adoption groups refer to their dogs as breeds, whether that be by categorising them as a 'kelpie cross', a 'kelpie cross Labrador' or a 'kelpie mix' for example. A shelter in Costa Rica even took to creating new breed names for their mixed breed dogs to make them more marketable (Kavin 2016, p.180) a response remnant of the meshed names of designer dogs. However, in the absence of a clearly distinguishable breed or comprehensive history of a dog, other mechanisms are drawn upon within dog rescue to reorder the dogs into knowable subjects and, most importantly, adoptable subjects. This takes places through regulatory tools that seek to detect, record and lockdown the breed, behaviour, and personality of a rescue dogs.

In Victoria, registered pounds and shelters have a responsibility under the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Shelters and Pounds* (the Code) to ensure that the dogs they rehome are not a risk or danger to other animals or the community. To ensure they are meeting this requirement, shelters and pounds will often utilise dog temperament tests to determine the dog's behaviour and any risks they may present. Temperament tests are understood as the most accurate and scientifically validated way to determine and predict a dog's current or potential behaviours. However, one recent paper pointed out that canine behaviour testing in shelters, which predominantly function to calculate risk by provoking dogs to determine how they will respond to adverse or stressful situations and environments, are "no better than flipping a coin" in that they rely upon assumptions about dog behaviour (Patronek & Bradley 2016).

Shelter dog temperament tests operate under the assumption that a dog's present and future risky behaviours can be reliably and scientifically predicted in an environment that resembles little if any of the world the dog is being assessed for. Shelter temperament tests are also distinctly biopolitical. The utilisation of such testing reflects how dogs are managed differently based on their belonging to a biosocial collectivity – pedigree or designer dogs are not scrutinised in this way. In addition, these tests at

once attempt to maximise the positive aspects of a dog's behaviour and they also attempt to minimise aspects that are risky or inconvenient, knowing that these risky or inconvenient attributes may never be fully supressed. These tests are deemed necessary because, unlike pure breeds who have narratives of reliability and predictability built into their being, mixed breeds in a rescue context, must have a collection of knowledge built around them to ensure that they can be adequately known in advance before they are rehomed and considered of value.

This knowledge production further takes place through observation of dogs, both within the shelter and if the dog is placed into foster care. Observation of and record keeping about individual animals is a requirement under the Code, and one of the primary ways that knowledge about a dog's individual self is formulated and uncovered. These observations and information about an individual dog are especially important, as these details are often drawn upon in the adoption profiles of dogs. These profiles, which can be featured on a variety of platforms such as Pet Rescue or Facebook function to construct the rescue dog as a unique and distinguishable self in such a way that they can be 'known' by their carer in the same way that other dog types can be known.

I have been a foster carer of several dogs and cats for a shelter and three different CRGs. My brief as a foster carer, apart from giving essential care to the animal is to also learn about them, to document their behaviour, any health concerns, if they eat, drink, how regularly they urinate and defecate and so on. Through interactions with an animal in a home, an environment more reflective of where the dog will be adopted to, the role of the foster carer is to reliably conceptualise *who* the animal is.

In the context of dogs, this 'uncovering' of who the dog is, can sometimes be informed by perceptions about their breed. For example, in 2018 I fostered a dog named Bertie through the shelter I volunteered for. This had been his second time being surrendered to a shelter after living in two different homes. Bertie was a suspected beagle crossed with a pug and perhaps crossed with something else. My relations and recording of Bertie's qualities and behaviours were often driven by my assumptions about who he was based on his breed(s). On his 'observation sheet', a document I was required to email to the shelter weekly, I documented that Bertie was "not very beagle-like" in that he was not interested in smelling and exploring with his nose – a quality I had understood beagles to have. Moreover, I noted how he was "much more like a pug" as he preferred lounging on the couch, had a desire for affection and a distinct obsession with food. My knowledge of and relations with Bertie were essentially being framed through the "regulated intersubjective recognition" of breed discourse (Wallen

2017, p.47), whereby I could only reliably know this dog through locking down and rationalising his behaviour as per my perceptions of his breed norms.

The documentation and recording of dog behaviour and health in the shelter and foster setting contributes to how the dog is represented at the point of adoption. Adoption profiles, which are common mediums on advertisements of dogs available for adoption function for the individual rescue dog in much the same way as breed history. They provide the essential information about who the dog is, how it will behave and what it requires for care. In the absence of breed, the aforementioned technologies such as temperament testing are collated in adoption profiles to reflect the 'true nature' of the individual dog in such a way that they can be known in advance to a potential carer.

Moreover, the 'true nature' of a dog is often projected onto it via a human-centric lens. In his work around relations between humans and dogs, Sanders (1993) argues that people project human-like attributes onto their animals and produce a variety of identities for their dogs (pp.206-209). Sanders' explored the way in which humanness can be assigned to dogs by their carers through: attributing thinking; individualising; understanding dogs as reciprocating; and incorporating dogs into a social place. Sanders found that "caretakers commonly give voice to what they understand to be the thoughts and feelings of their companion animals" (2003, p. 407). As I illustrate below, this process of 'giving voice' or 'speaking for' dogs is apparent in online profiles, whereby shelter and rescue groups aim to present dogs in their care as individual selves.

Pet profiles often engage with anthropomorphic tactics, namely through the use of the first-person style of writing and 'speaking for' the dog. For example:

> Hi I'm Rose. I absolutely love cuddles and if you let me I will fall asleep in your arms, and who wouldn't let me? (Pet Rescue B).

Representations of nonhuman animals as individual, rational and autonomous selves can lead to criticism of dog carers and animal studies academics. As Irvine (2004) discusses, "along with culture, rationality and language, 'the self' is one of the entities for which animals purportedly lack the tools" (p. 3). However, Alger and Alger (1999) argue that criticisms of anthropomorphising are used as a way to distance human from animal and are employed to complicate the possibility of human and nonhuman intersubjectivity, discredit any claims about an animals capacity for emotions and to construct non-human animals as beings who are not deserving of human moral consideration (p. 203).

In this context, these profiles have been constructed based upon the interactions between dogs and their current carers, whether that be a collection of staff at a shelter, or a foster carer. The information provided within these profiles is based upon meaningful interactions between human and dog, and can thus be considered a genuine, albeit subjective, representation of the dog's self (Sanders 1990, p. 663).

Some research has suggested that marketing strategies that seek to make rescue dogs appear sad or vulnerable do not achieve better adoption outcomes for dogs (Kavin 2016, pp.142-147). In Victoria, however, emotive driven rescue dog profiles and sad backstories are a common mechanism that are used in pet adoption profiles. For example, Touza a male Bulldog cross Boxer's profile reads:

> Hey there! I'm Touza. So... if you're going to take me home either for a while or permanently it is best I tell you a little about myself. And I want to be honest up front. I came to [Vic Dog Rescue] when I was only five months old and everyone told me I was such a great dog and a real wuss. But then things went bad for me, people I loved didn't do the right thing by me, and I've learnt not to trust humans (until I know them) or other dogs (Pet Rescue C).

Touza's profile begins by inviting the reader to feel empathy for the dog whose entry into rescue has purportedly been the fault of other people rather than the dog itself. The inclusion of the dog's sad backstory is often presented in these profiles as a means of explaining why and how the dog has come into rescue. Given that most people believe dogs go into rescue because they are 'badly behaved' (Mornement et al. 2012), these profiles use dogs' backgrounds as a way of both explaining and defending their current position. As Chapter Fiver will explore, for some adopters of rescue dogs, a sad or traumatic backstory can be highly valued and sought after when adopting a dog.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a common drawback to the adoption of a rescue dog is the assumption that they are misbehaved and have inherent behavioural problems. As such, a major aspect of the dog profile has become the listing of the dogs 'manners'. All profiles analysed made some reference to the dog's training and the consequent manners they have developed. The listing of the dog's manners act as point of appeal whereby the profile demonstrates the dog's ability to exert self-control, comprehend and live within the rules and limitations of any given household (Sanders 1993, p. 217, Irvine 2008, p. 129).

A dog's likes and dislikes featured within their profiles also demonstrate their capacity for agency and therefore their individuality (Irvine 2008). The listing of their likes and dislikes serves a

practical purpose too. Often their dislikes are listed as a way to phase out potentially unsuitable adopters. For example, Qubo is "selective with other dogs and dislikes cats" (Pet Rescue D), while similarly Saxon wants to live in a "cat free and rabbit free zone" (Pet Rescue E). Moreover, their likes are listed in such a way to distinguish the features or lifestyle a potential adopter must have. Such as Joey, a large Bull Arab whose new caretaker should "enjoy going for a run" (Pet Rescue F), and Nigel who needs a caretaker who will participate in dog sports with him (Pet Rescue G). Overall, their likes and dislikes are utilised here to show their uniqueness, subjectivity and sense of selfhood. Individuality is also manifested through the detailing of things the dog enjoys doing. Each profile features details which outline the dog's favourite activities, whether that be playing in a paddling pool, going to the beach, or simply sleeping on the couch. Oftentimes, dogs that may be traditionally conceived as more active, 'boisterous' or even 'aggressive, such as the staffies discussed in previous sections, are presented as 'over-grown lapdogs' whose days are spent seeking affection and 'cuddles and kisses' – terms that soften the potentially negative connotations of any inconvenient levels of energy.

The dog's self is also further transmitted through their capacity to display and act on emotions. These representations of emotions make the individual dogs more available to us as humans, as their capacity for emotion can reinforce our own human subjective experiences (Irvine 2004 p. 16). A dog's capacity for emotions is transmitted in two ways within their profiles. Firstly, through categorical effects, which are distinct emotions such as a dog being 'happy' when playing fetch, but 'sad' when left alone for too long. Secondly, through applying vitality effects, which can be understood as particular ways of feeling, as opposed to distinct emotions. In other words, vitality effects are distinct characteristics of an individual dog such as Coco who is described as "bouncy and playful" (Pet rescue H) and Sooky who is "sweet and gentle" (Pet Rescue I). This capacity for individual personality and emotions gives the human and dog relationship much of its substance and expresses to potential adopters elements of the dog's core self, as well as what attributes it will contribute to the carer and the carer's lifestyle.

Online profiles of rescue dogs not only provide potential caretakers with basic information about the dog, but also shape the dog as an individual with a sense of self and identity. Such a process, while fashioned by elements of anthropomorphism, can reside in the genuine interactions between these dogs and their current carers and act to distance rescue dogs from presumptions that they are badly behaved and unpredictable. These profiles position rescue dogs as individuals who through no fault of their own, are in need of new homes. In the absence of a clearly defined breed type, or extensive behavioural history, the knowledge production that occurs in shelters and foster care, which is

then presented in dog adoption profiles, functions to frame rescue dogs as knowable and thus socially acceptable.

Reordering the unknowable: breed identification tests

If mixed breed rescue dogs are successfully adopted, there are other technologies that are used to reorder and properly know these dogs. I learnt this on a particularly boring Sunday afternoon in the middle of a Melbourne winter when I found myself watching *Pooches at Play*, a dog lifestyle program that airs on Network 10 in Australia. The show featured several relevant and informative segments for dog lovers, including how to introduce your dog to your new baby and pet friendly travel destinations. However, it was the final segment of the program that caught my attention as it focused on promoting the benefits and necessity of mixed breed identification testing.

In the segment, one of the program's hosts, along with a representative from Orivet Genetic Pet Care – the company who produces the test – explains to the audience that "Dogs inherit their physical and personality traits from their breed and genetics...so knowing their DNA can be really important" (Pooches at Play 2018). As the segment continues, the attention turns to Darcy, the dog belonging to the host, who has had his cheeks swabbed and is about to have his true breed revealed to the audience. Darcy's breed(s) are then revealed to the viewer, complete with a pie graph breaking down the exact percentages of breeds that make up Darcy. The Orivet Pet Care representative explains that Darcy is a "grandparent level Maltese" and a "grandparent level Toy Poodle" and also has ancestry including Whippet, Chihuahua and a category labelled as 'Terrier breed' (see Figure 4.1). Darcy's breed belonging is mapped out numerically, where the percentage of his breed type is represented in a format reminiscent of 19th century United States race policy, in which blood quantum logics informed notions of African descent (Wolfe 2001, p. 882). This all concludes with Darcy's owner, rejoicing that many of Darcy's behaviours and attributes are now understandable following the genetic confirmation of his belonging to several different breed categories.

Mixed breed identification testing, such as the DNA testing used on Darcy, have become a increasingly promoted pet services product, with a variety of companies and vet clinics offering this service. Data on the frequency of use of these tests in Australia, however, is not currently available. Reports from the United States, however, have predicted that the canine genetics market will grow by 7.2% until 2027 (Global Market Insights 2021). While these tests function to determine the breed or

breeds of a dog, they are not routinely used in Australian shelters to identify the exact breeds of rescue dogs. Some studies from the United States have utilised these tests to survey and identify the shelter dog population (Voith et al. 2009, Gunter at al. 2018). However, due to price and practicality of use, determining breed based on visual appearance is still the most commonly utilised method of identification in shelters. Therefore, this section will principally analyse mixed breed identification testing in a post-adoption context, wherein these tests are marketed as a mechanism that dog carers can utilise to reorder their dogs into a knowable canine subject and to enhance human and dog relationships.

The geneticisation of dog breeding practices, both prior to breeding and after adoption is something that has grown in scale and is reflective of broader social processes of the geneticisation of humans such as those that Nikolas Rose (2001) has described. Pedigree breeders have long utilised these genetic technologies of regulation, and as Chapter 3 explored, designer dog breeders have also begun to use these tests to further legitimise their breeding practices. Bound up within the geneticisation of dog breeding are the remnants of the eugenics-based thought that has informed pedigree breeding, namely the notion that specific qualities of an animal can be located and locked down through genetic interventions, while any undesirable qualities can be avoided and 'bred out' through those same methods. This is demonstrated in the Missyplicity Project, a four-million- dollar project in the united states, which sought to create clones of the 'perfect' pet dog. Interestingly, the donor for this project was mixed-breed dog 'Missy'. However, as McHugh (2002) describes, the cloning of 'Missy' still focused on harnessing and replicating her 'specialness' (p. 182) and 'genetic gifts' to transplant them into the duplicate clones (p.190). Moreover, Probyn-Rapsey's (2015) work on the hybridisation of the dingo in Australia similarly describes genetic DNA testing developed to establish the 'purity' of dingoes (p.66). Thus, whether developed to identify health risks, breed identity, create the 'perfect pet' or determine 'purity', scientific, genetic and race-based taxonomies of power consistently envelope and inform the breeding of canines, their legitimacy and their idealness as companions.

Animal Network, a company that offers genetic testing for breeders promises to use "cutting edge DNA technology to deliver genetic tests, which are designed to assist you in the management of your animals" (2016). While many of the tests promise to identify specific conditions to help breeders eliminate these animals from their breeding pools, the language of 'management', 'improvement' and 'lineage' are still consistent terms used to discuss 'correct' dog breeding here (Animal Network 2016). In addition, they promise the tests can confirm "that pedigrees are correct and guarantees puppy buyers

that pedigrees are accurate" (Animal Network 2016). In this context, the careful tracing of a specific dog's lineage is represented to avoid breeding dogs who may have hereditable negative conditions. However, the promise and overall aim to adapt dog's bodies for 'breed improvement' and ensuring they are 'correct', echo the discourses developed in the 18th and 19th centuries. This is reflective of how ideas about race, nation and the intersection of dog breeding and science have given great power and legitimacy to our current knowledge about dog breeds, continuing to act as a basis by which we understand, define, and regulate dogs today. In addition, the unrelenting goal of 'improving' dogs for human ▊▊▊▊▊▊ the ongoing significance of human 'mastery' over 'nature' (Wallen 2011).
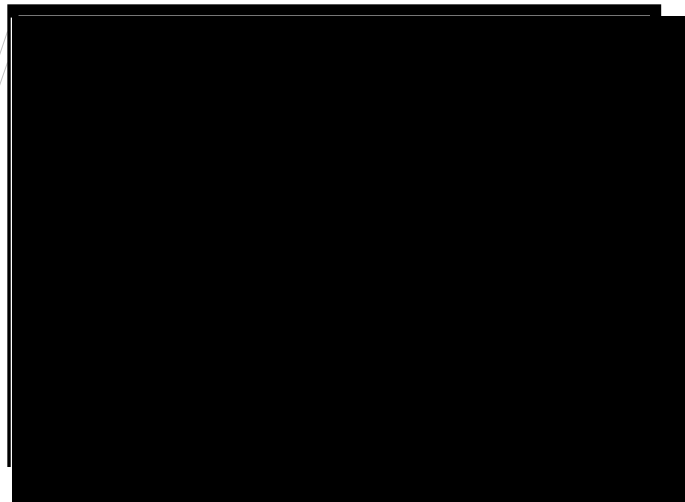
Figure 4.1: *Pooches at Play* reveals Darcy's breed(s), with percentage breakdowns, to the viewer.

Because of their origins (i.e. they are the result of irresponsible pet ownership and/or backyard breeding) mixed breed dogs do not undergo the same rigorous systems and practices of breeding management as other dogs. There are no standards disciplining their bodies and optimising them to look and act in certain ways ensuring their efficiency as companions. Instead, the genetic tests offered to identify a dog's breed or breeds serve a different purpose. They function to locate and situate a dog's breed, and with this knowledge provide dog carers with information about how best to manage and optimise their dog based on its genetic breed makeup. Therefore, even if a person opts to 'take a gamble' on an unknowable mixed breed rescue dog, they now have at their disposal breed identification tests, which are available in most veterinary practices in Australia, as well as online. These tests promise to "clear up the confusion" and "remove the guesswork" (Advance 2017) about a dog, giving owners the opportunity to better understand their dog, or as one test claims to give "you the assurance of knowing who your dog really is" (Adelaide Vet 2020).

The emergence of these tests are an example of the ways that biopower functions through both our management of dogs within human-dog relations. These discourses are apparent in the marketing around these tests as they establish that by "...understanding the temperament and characteristics behind the temperament will assist you in how you manage that animal" and moreover "...we can manage it if it's a couch potato, whether it likes to howl and sleep a lot...these are all important things in how you look after your particular animal" (Pooches at Play 2018). With the above statements in mind, the implication is that a dog can no longer be managed just through interaction – by developing an understanding of their wants, needs likes or dislikes – rather it needs to be better regulated through the anatamaplotics of genetic technology, which can reliably predict a dogs behaviours and provide pet owners with precise knowledge to undertake the most efficient management of their dog.

Modes of subjectification, which see humans regulate their bodies and themselves in relation to truth discourses are evident in the marketing of these products, which focus on the bond and co-constitutive relations between humans and dogs. The Orivet Genetic Pet Care website claims that knowing your dog's genetics will "…help owners develop a genuine, deeper and lasting bond with their pet" (2019). Whereas the website for VetGen Veterinary Genetic services states that "over 25 million mixed-breed dogs owners know their dog…. but not as well as they could" (2020). This framing creates an aspect of uncertainty about one's dog and suggests that said uncertainty can only be resolved by knowing them genetically. According to these tests, a mixed breed dog can now be 'known', understood, and managed by their owners in more definitive ways than ever before. Moreover, these

genetic discourses not only promise that they will allow mixed breed dog owners to know their dog, but also claim they can contribute to an improved and more genuine relationship between human and dog. This narrative is not too dissimilar from the narratives that drive marketing of human ancestry DNA testing, which allows users to better know and understand themselves and their families through knowing the makeup of their genetics and the origins of their relatives.

The more genuine and improved bond between dog carer and dog that this marketing suggests, is purportedly generated by giving dog carers information about the possible diseases or health problems their dogs may experience. In addition, some of these companies, for example Orivet Genetic Pet Care, provide owners with a personalised 'pet life plan', which details specific key dates in a dog's life, such as when they will require flea treatment, intestinal worm treatment, vaccinations, and veterinary check-ups. The 'pet life plan' also details specific risk periods in a dog's life, such as when they may be affected by the health problems and diseases that are prevalent in their breed(s). These potential risky health conditions and disease are determined in the results of the DNA testing (see Figure 4.3). Pet owners are implored to draw upon this genetic knowledge to adapt their relations with their dog and modify their own behaviours to prepare for and act upon the relevant knowledge-practices which have been highlighted as per the genetic tests results. These processes are similar to what Holloway & Morris (2012) describe takes place in livestock breeding, where genetic knowledge-practices inform the decisions that sheep and cattle farmers make about breeding their animals. Thus, pet owners come to regulate not only their dogs in response to these technologies of biopower, but also themselves, as well as their relational exchange with their dogs, adapting their specific pet ownership behaviours based on the knowledges produced by mixed breed identification testing.

These tests function as an amalgamation of several types of knowledge about dogs (breed, health, behaviour, genetics), that when amalgamated produce truth telling claims about not only individual dogs, but also about mixed breed dogs as a population who must be continually ordered into a recognisable and knowable framework of breed. Through these tests a mixed breed can cease to be just a mixed breed but can be ordered into a perceptible dog that is, for example, 25% Bernese Mountain dog, 25% American Staffordshire Terrier, 12.5% American Eskimo dog and so on (see Figure 4.2). Other testing companies reorder mixed breeds in a way to represent direct lineage, in a format not too dissimilar from the way pedigree lineages are recorded and reported (see Figure 4.4). Such forms of knowledge production are a function of biopower, wherein processes of normalisation are crucial modes of intervention both upon individuals and populations (Holloway & Morris 2016, p.253). The

'norm' in this context is of course breed. These tests are bound up in both anatamapolictics and biopolotics, which have informed broader breed discourses and seek to produce systems that measure dogs and attempt to understand and regulate deviations from certain biological processes. From a Foucauldian perspective, the task of an identification test is to "take charge of life", wherein it enacts "continuous regulatory and corrective mechanism…such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise and hierarchise…" which affect "….distributions around the norm" (Foucault 2003, p.144). Thus, the importance of the normalisation and regularisation of dogs through the discourse of breed produces and is produced by techniques of breed identification testing. These genetic intervention techniques respond to variation in such a way that risk and probabilities can be calculated, and allow specific truths about mixed breed rescue dogs to be articulated and then enacted upon by their owners, whether that be a focus on determined health risks or future planning around how to manage the dog for the entirety of its life.

Thus, the process of 'knowing' one's dog's breed not only occurs bodily and discursively as Wallen (2017) has suggested. People can now anticipate their dogs' character and know them better than ever through an essentialist framework that further fixates our relations with dogs on their breed membership. This delimits the possibility of engaging with and relating to a dog outside of these breed specific pre-calculated possibilities. Through relations of biopower, and the truth telling discourses of genetic breed identification testing, people can begin to govern their dog's behaviour and health via their newfound belonging to a breed category or categories. Not only does this give mixed breed dog owners the capacity to 'know', but also the capacity to minimise "what is risky and inconvenient" (Holloway & Morris 2012, p.68) about their dog, such as the myriad of behavioural and health problems they may be susceptible to. Therefore, while mixed breed dogs adopted from shelters or CRGs cannot be intervened upon at the point of their breeding, other technologies of optimisation and management have emerged to ensure that mixed breeds are equally encapsulated under the discursive framework of breed.
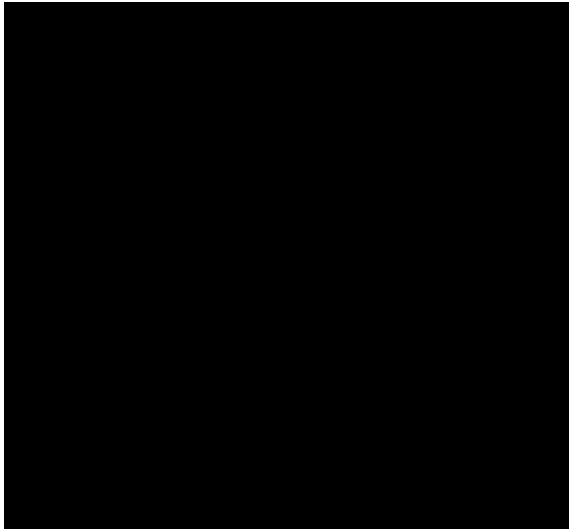
Figure 4.2: Example of Orivet Pet Care's 'life plan'. This dog has been found to be susceptible to thyroid conditions and this alert reminds their owner to screen for and manage this condition from 2 years old onwards.
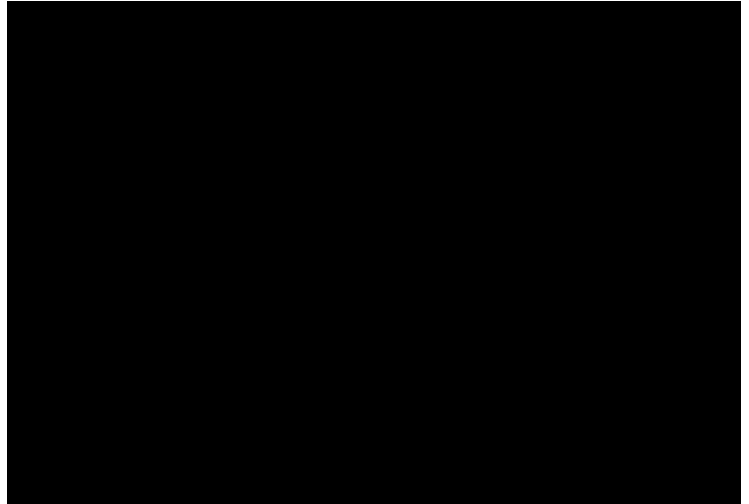

Figure 4.3: Example of Orivet Pet Care's breed identification results featuring a percentage break down of 'Sammy's' breed(s).
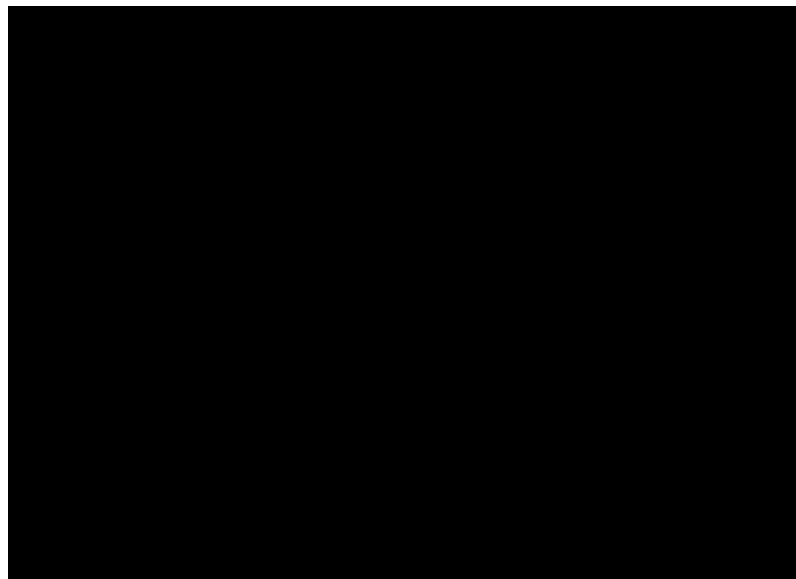

Figure 4.4: An example of Advance's breed identification results, which is reported as a direct lineage akin to a family tree. This representation is similar to the recording of pedigree lineages.

Conclusion

Rescue dogs, many of which are mixed breed, are thought of by some dog carers as unpredictable, problematic and unknowable companions. Some dog carers, particularly those that have pedigree dogs, understand mixed breeds from pounds, shelters, and CRGs as potentially risky around children and not as predictable and reliable as pedigree breeds. This understanding has been formed through socio-historic constructions of breed, as well as through ongoing associations between rescue dogs, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and, irresponsible breeding and pet ownership. In the absence of a clearly discernible breed category or origin, mixed breed rescue dogs are ordered and conceptualised through specific relations of biopower that seek to lock down their bodies and behaviour. This takes place through genetic breed identification testing, which can provide carers of these dogs with precise knowledge about how to properly regulate the health and behaviour of their dogs. This case study shows that despite the growing promotion of dog adoption, there is still hesitancy from some dog carers about mixed breed rescue dogs. Moreover, the promotion of genetic breed identification testing highlights the ongoing social resonance breed and scientific technologies in guiding human-dog relations and how dogs are regulated at the site of their bodies.

Chapter 5 - Companion dog acquisition in practice: status, stigma & complexity

Awareness about the problem of puppy farming, pet stores and the numbers of dogs in shelters forced the Victorian community to revaluate previously routine methods of dog acquisition. So far, this thesis has highlighted the ways in which discourses about breed and good breeding shape understandings of different categories of dogs as ideal and non-ideal companions and whether or not they have been bred in responsible and ethical ways. Yet, dog buying guides and other discursive instruments developed by animal welfare groups have also sought to govern dog carers conduct toward further ethical and responsible ends, which in this context is either adopting a dog or purchasing one from an ethical breeder.

In this chapter I analyse the discursive governmentalities that have shaped ideas around ethical and responsible dog acquisition practices. Following Stenson (2005 & 2008) and Mckee (2009), who have called for a 'realist' governmentality perspective, this chapter will fuse discursive analysis with ethnographic data in order to not only examine the logics of ethical dog acquisition, but also the ways in which they are constituted and enacted in practice by Victorian dog carers. This approach renders visible the complexity, contestation and unintended consequences immersed within the governmentalities of dog acquisition.

I find that the discourses of compassion (Markovist & Crosby 2014) that frame dog adoption as 'lifesaving' and the 'right thing to do' are being increasingly acted upon by dog carers. This positions dog carers that adopt their dogs endowed with an ethical status. However, while many dog carers are attempting to adopt, some report that they face difficulties in doing so. Moreover, many dog carers that adopt actively engage in the denunciation of both dog breeding and dog carers who do not choose to adopt their dog. As such, dog carers that do not adopt their dog – in this context mostly designer dog carers who have either acquired their dog from a breeder or pet store – face scrutiny for their decision and are routinely stigmatised as a result of the variety of discourses that have rendered designer dog breeding as problematic. Overall, in considering dog acquisition in practice in Victoria, I highlight the ongoing contested nature of this issue and the myriad of justifications that are drawn upon by dog carers to assert their avenue of dog acquisition as ethical.

Technologies of 'ethical' dog acquisition

The choice about where to acquire a dog and how to acquire one ethically has been largely framed as one of individual responsibility. In the early days of the puppy farm debate, if people purchased dogs from a problematic place such as a pet store, this was framed as lack of community awareness. However, as the debate progressed and the issue became more prominent, this framing shifted to an insistence that the community must be aware, educate themselves and take responsibility for where they are acquiring their dogs.

As specific rationalities about individual choice and responsibility surrounding dog acquistion began to circulate in news media and social media, so too did technologies of governance, which came to operationalise and deploy these rationalities in calculable and instructive ways. This namely took place through the development of guides and information pages for acquiring dogs, featuring step-by-step processes designed to both assist the community to make an informed decision, but also to govern choices about where to get a dog. Framed to 'help' dog owners and empower them to make informed decisions, dog buyers' guides operate as a set of rules, responsibilising dog owners to follow previously prescribed ideas about correct avenues to purchase dogs. The most well-known of these guides in the Australian context is *The Smart Puppy and Dog Buyer's Guide* developed by the RSPCA. This guide features several components about responsible pet ownership. However, the section 'where to get your dog' will be the focus here as it establishes the 'rules' that dog carers must follow to ensure we are acquiring dogs ethically and responsibly. The RSPCA is not the only organisation who has developed such a guide: Oscar's Law have developed an *Ethical Dog Buyers Guide* and Animals Australia, Pet Rescue and other animal welfare organisations feature information about this process on their websites. While the amount of information varies from resource to resource, each include the same prescribed set of steps for finding a dog responsibly and ethically.

In each of these guides, the first step to be followed is to acquire a dog through an adoption avenue, whether that be through a local pound, shelter, or community rescue group. Each guide notes animal adoption may not be right for all people, but despite this, a great deal of information is dedicated to promoting the benefits of adoption and the diversity of dogs available via adoption networks. While the RSPCA guide promotes adoption specifically from RSPCA shelters, other guides, such as Oscar's Law's, endorse any reputable animal rescue agency. The information in these guides about adoption functions not only as a first step to follow in the process, but also to promote the 'ethical' benefits of

animal adoption compared to buying a puppy. For example, discussions about adoption in guides from Oscar's Law and Animals Australia focus heavily on adoption as a choice that will 'save a life'. Such discourses about animal adoption being akin to saving a life, while not so much present in the RSPCA's dog buyers guide, are prevalent in other information resources they have available for the public about acquiring a dog. For example, RSPCA Victoria's '11 reasons to adopt' information makes explicit connections between animal adoption being a more ethical decision than buying a puppy. This is constructed at the site of the individual dog owner, framing the action of adoption as something that means *you* are giving a dog a "second chance" and by extension this action makes you a "superhero" of sorts (RSPCA Victoria). In addition, it positions the animal adopter as generous and compassionate and someone who is "setting a good example" (RSPCA Victoria). Similarly, Pet Rescue, an online animal adoption database, aligns animal adoption with "setting a good example for your kids" as adoption teaches them the "values of compassion and caring" by engaging in a "selfless act" (Pet Rescue 2018). Moreover, some animal advocacy groups directly draw upon the language of ethics to describe animal adoption. For example, Oscar's Law state, "if you want to get a dog or puppy ethically, adoption is always the best option" (Oscar's Law B). Interestingly, the RSPCA Victoria adoption resource also makes the connection between puppy farming and the experiences of dogs in shelters, declaring that adoption protects "...the world form evil" as "by adopting a dog, you are reducing the demand for puppy factories where dogs and puppies live in appalling conditions" (RSPCA Victoria).

These discursive technologies are aligned with questions of morality and ethical conduct and thus seek to govern their observers to prescribed ethical ends. Foucault's work related to ethics focused on how individuals govern themselves "as moral subjects of [their] own actions" (Foucault 1984, p. 352), further suggesting that our ethical lives are socially constituted and formed by our relations with institutions. Moreover, as Dean (2013) notes in his discussion around governmentality, morality can be understood as an attempt to make oneself accountable for one's own actions, wherein human conduct must be subject to self-regulation (p. 19). In this regard, governing behaviour and conduct around dog acquisition is an intensely moral activity, and, as is demonstrated with dog adoption, this moral work is grounded in transforming individuals' perceptions of dog adoption as an action that is both good for the individual dog being adopted, and for dogs in general because it boycotts problematic breeding trades associated with animal cruelty. Yet, dog adoption is equally framed as being good for oneself, with such techniques framed as an opportunity to act upon moral choices to endeavour towards self-improvement (Rose, O'Malley, Valverde 2006, p. 90).

While guiding dog owners towards adoption is the primary goal of these resources they also outline the procedure for buying a puppy from a reputable breeder as a second best option. Oscar's Law term this as finding an 'ethical' breeder in their guide, whereas the RSPCA term this a 'good' breeder. Regardless of the descriptive language used to describe the breeder, the procedure for locating, and ensuring the practices of a breeder meet prevailing standards of 'ethical breeding' are consistent across all resources. In this context, a good breeder is defined as one who: will allow the buyer to see where the puppy was born and meet the puppies' parents; provide a high standard of care for their dogs; allow the buyer to meet and play with the puppy before they buy it; be there to support the buyer through information sharing and advice after they have taken the puppy home and so on. In the RSPCA guide, these steps are presented as a check list, wherein people are asked to address each step before committing to purchasing their new puppy (see Figure 5.1).

Oscar's Law present their information similarly detailing steps of what to do (see Figure 5.2), but also providing information on locations where a puppy should not be purchased, in other words ways of acquiring a dog that are not consistent with responsible dog acquisition (see Figure 5.3). These steps function to privilege and routinise a systemic way of thinking and conduct when trying to find a new dog. However, in the tradition of liberal governmentalities, they also balance this instruction with the notion of 'choice', wherein dog owners do have the freedom and autonomy to still choose where they get a dog, yet this freedom is imbedded within discourses of self-responsibility and self-regulation steering decision making towards 'ethical' and 'responsible' ends. Operating to ensure dog owners acquire dogs in ethical and responsible ways, the steps in these guides relating to finding a breeder also function to limit the risk of purchasing an unhealthy animal or an animal with genetic disorders. The RSPCA guide specifically focuses on this and prompts dog owners to consider "is your puppy bred to be a healthy pet, with suitable temperament and free from known inherited disorders?" (RSPCA A). Moreover, their information on finding a good dog or cat breeder similarly determines that healthy animals come from breeders who "breed to produce happy, healthy pets, free from known genetic disorders" (RSPCA C). The focus on health, and specifically determining health via genetics, became a central focus of the dog acquisition process following the problematisation of puppy farms. Further, as explored in Chapter Three, the language of genetics has been utilised by some large-scale breeders to legitimise their breeding practices. However, incorporating a standard for determining a dog's genetic health and future potential for illness into the process, operates to ostensibly safe-guard dog owners from the risk of purchasing an animal that is genetically precarious.
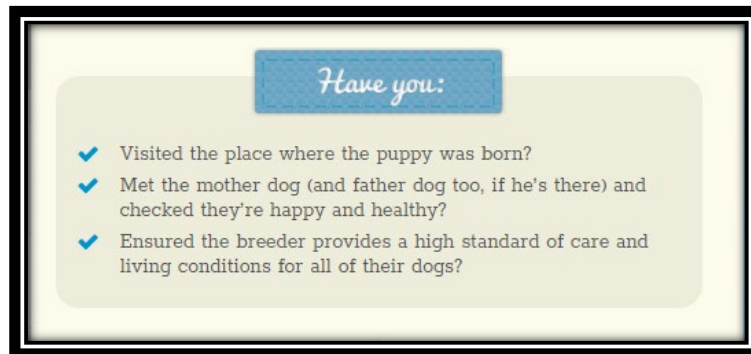
Figure 5.1: The steps for finding a good breeder from the RSPCA *Smart Puppy and Dog Buyer's Guide.* These steps function as a procedure that people should follow when trying to acquire a dog.
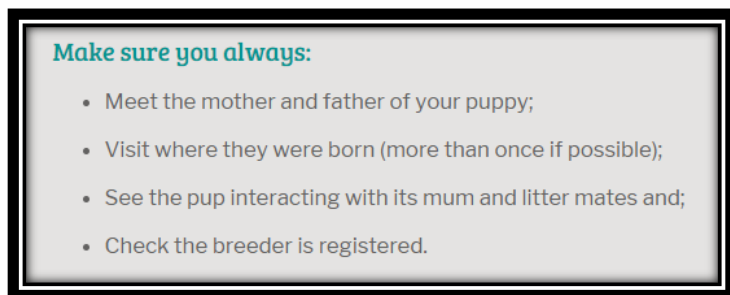

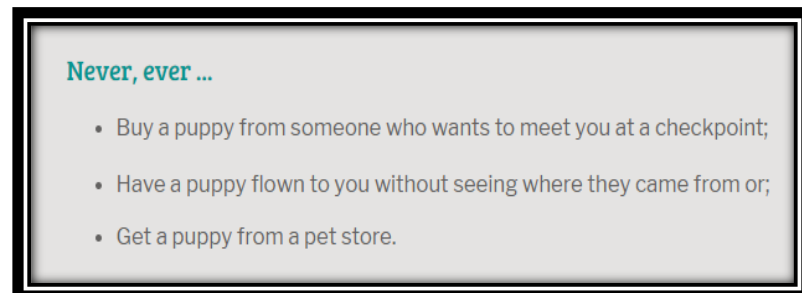Figure 5.2: Oscar's Law's *Ethical Dog Buyers Guide* includes similar steps for finding a new dog.

Figure 5.3: The Oscar's Law guide also includes information about where to never buy a puppy.

As previous chapters have explored, risk management around dog health becomes a powerful tool for determining 'good' and 'bad' breeders, and moreover 'ideal' and 'non-ideal dogs', wherein genetic knowledge is utilised to govern dogs at the site of their bodies in both a pre and post-breeding context.

Dog adoption: shifting attitudes

Some dog carers are unwilling to adopt rescue dogs due to an assumption that they will be unknowable and unpredictable, as illustrated in Chapter 4. However, the puppy farm issue and the related focus and promotion of dog adoption that emerged during the puppy farm debate has seen shifting attitudes around dog adoption among some dog carers. The RSPCA's annual statistics have shown a steady increase in adoption rates of both dogs and cats since 1999 (Cansdale 2019). Furthermore, data from my survey found that 30% (n=93) of dogs were adopted, with 12% (n= 37) of respondents having adopted their dog from a pound or shelter, whereas 18% (n= 56) adopted their dog from a rescue group. This was compared with 32% (n=102) that acquired their dog from a breeder. Thus, while acquiring a dog as a puppy from a breeder was still the most common source of acquisition, adoption from either a pound, shelter or CRG was also very common.

For dog carers that chose to adopt their dog, narratives of 'saving lives' and 'giving dogs a second chance' were common ideas that drove their decision. When asked why they chose to adopt a dog, several responses noted that they wanted to "save [the dogs] life" or give the dog "a second chance at life". Furthermore, some respondents were concerned that if they did not adopt the dog it would be euthanased in the shelter or pound. For example, some responses explained how the concern over euthanasia promoted them to adopt their dog(s):

Both dogs needed a home, and they were waiting to be euthan[as]ed.

They were going to put him down.

Survey responses as well as interviews with dog rescue workers indicated how dog carers are attempting to better inform themselves about where they acquire dogs. Promoting educational tools to allow carers to make better individual choices is a primary function of dog buying guides and other discourses. In this example, the instructive and guiding work of these discursive technologies appears to be functioning as anticipated. For example, one participant explained that they had first considered buying a puppy, but then "…did a lot of research before getting a dog. When we realised how many

rescue dogs needed new homes, the choice became easy". Similarly, a shelter worker commented that "…we do have people that will come in and say we've bought dogs from breeders all our life but now we're rescuing dogs, so people are definitely changing…". These types of acts of adjustment, such as doing research and changing one's behaviour can be understood as self-reforming activities, whereby individuals engage in efforts to transform themselves into ethical subjects. As Foucault (1997) points out, ethical actions are often orientated towards what we aspire to be. Thus, behaving in a perceived moral way – in this instance reassessing previous action and choosing to adopt dogs – becomes an ethical transformation of the self (p.233).

Groups such as the RSPCA and Oscar's Law do not oppose dog breeding or acquiring dogs as puppies, but rather attempt to distinguish the 'good' breeders from the 'bad' breeders. However, some responses from dog adopters suggested that dog breeding and purchasing a puppy remained inherently problematic. For example, when asked if they would ever consider acquiring a dog from a breeder, some respondents asserted that dog breeding was "unethical" and moreover, that they believed dog breeding was "wrong and cruel". Some respondents went into more detail about their position on this issue, explaining that they felt purchasing a puppy from a breeder was questionable in the face of the number of dogs in shelters that need new homes. For example:

> [I] would never consider buying a dog from a breeder while there are brilliant animals being put down…

> Buying from and supporting breeders when there are already countless dogs being put down and mistreated is madness…

> [I] prefer to adopt a dog and give that dog a second chance at a good life, rather than buy a dog from a breeder/pet shop. I believe you can get a fantastic dog from the pound/shelter/rescue, and so why would you choose anything else?! They are in dire need of a home and may be killed if no home is available.

These responses also highlight the emerging division between groups that choose to adopt dogs and groups that choose to acquire their dogs from breeders, something that will be explored in more detail below. Thus, while not necessarily the intention of advocacy groups that have been promoting 'adopt, don't shop' logics, the promotion and subsequent moralisation of dog adoption has transformed dog

acquisition into a political exercise. Acquiring a dog is no longer *just* about getting the right dog for one's lifestyle and needs, but is a process that is embedded in broader questions and considerations about ethical responsibility towards both the dog being adopted and the broader issues of puppy farming and other contentious breeding practices.

Dog adoption & ethical status

As dog adoption has become increasingly aligned with acting in an ethical way, the decision to adopt a dog has affected the status of these dog carers. Research has described how our possessions regularly act as a symbol of who we are, or rather how we would like to be seen (Belk 1988). The clothes we wear, the things we buy and even the food we eat give meaning to the creation of our concept of self and broader social identity (Belk 1988). While for many people they are much more than mere 'possessions', companion dogs too act as extensions of ourselves, functioning as representations of who we are and who we want to be seen as, especially in relation to our status and class (Sanders 2003). Throughout this thesis, the relationship between the ownership of a specific type of dog and human status has been well documented. Pedigree breeds initially represented the upper-class status of their carers as well as sometimes racial purity and notions of nationhood (see Chapter 2). Whereas designer dogs have become framed as a modern 'aspirational acquisition' and a symbol of the modern family (see Chapter 3). Despite mixed breed dogs historical and contemporary associations with lower socio-economic groups (see Chapter's 2 & 4), adopting a dog has now come to represent an ethical act.

Several survey respondents who adopted their dog utilised the language of ethics to explain their decision to adopt. For example, some explained that adopting a dog was consistent with their "ethical perspectives" or their broader "ethical lifestyle". Thus, for some dog carers, adopting a dog is not a single ethical action, but is embedded in a broader ethical ideology. The dog adopters included in this research do not only seek to adopt dogs to improve the life of an individual animals, but also to further promote the value and importance of animal adoption.

Yet since adoption has become a symbol of an ethical lifestyle, it now represents a new form of social status. This shift bares similarities to other forms of 'ethical consumerism'. Consumption of certain ethical products such as fair-trade goods or eco-clothing can attach individuals to a certain lifestyle or set of personal and social values (Niinimaki 2010). These 'ethical consumer choices' are often

motivated by an individual's sense of ethical obligation or even sense of solidarity with a particular issue or social problem (Shaw & Shiu 2002).

Dog rescue workers also made observations about this. For example, one shelter worker commented that there is "definitely a good stigma attached to 'I rescued this animal'", going onto suggest that "there is a real feeling of joy that comes with that too". Two dog rescue workers suggested that dog adoption was in fact the latest canine "trend", albeit one that is seeing positive outcomes for many dogs. For example, one rescue group worker noted that "I think it is [fashionable to rescue], there is definitely a trend at the moment". Another rescue group worker reflected on their experiences meeting people who have adopted dogs:

> I think it is really cool now to have a rescue dog and you meet people on the street and they
> go oh this blah, blah and he's a rescue, and I go oh okay, well go you!.

Adopting a dog has also been promoted as giving dog carers a "bit of a badge of honour" by RSPCA Victoria (Cansdale 2019).

The badge of honour that comes with adopting a dog is further enhanced if the dog has special needs or an unfortunate backstory. Dogs in pounds, shelters and rescue groups are surrendered for a variety of reasons, and sometimes enter care with serious health problems or a traumatic past. In interviews with dog rescue group workers, they described how sometimes dogs with 'problems' and 'special needs' become highly sought after by prospective adopters. For example, one rescue group worker explained that if a dog is "…missing an eye or a leg [people are] fighting over it". Another rescue group worker noted something similar, suggesting "If they're deaf, or they're blind, missing an eye, missing a leg they're in and out…" going on to emphasise that adopters "…love it. And they hope that something has happened to the dog that they can talk about". A dog shelter worker made a similar observation, explaining how people that adopted 'special needs' dogs "love to shout it from the roof tops". Further, a rescue group worked described incidences where adopters assumed that their dog would have a traumatic past:

> …even when people fill out the adoption form, or I take them to meet a dog…they go 'oh it
> must have been from a puppy farm', and you go, 'no it's just been sitting in someone's
> backyard'. I mean if you want to have that story because it makes you feel good that's fine,
> but it's just a neglected dog…

A dog rescue worker from a shelter also described a story where an adopter expected their new dog to have a sad backstory:

> People are morbidly disappointed when the dogs don't have a bad back story. On Saturday for example, we had a beautiful Kelpie girl who was here, she was up for adoption because she was surrendered by the owners because the family's house had completely flooded. They were going to be living in a hotel and so we offered to keep the dog here for the time being, but it was an indefinite amount of time so they felt it was better for her to just find a new home... we had gotten an amazing history from these people, so I explained all of this to her new adopter. And he actually said, 'oh we'll have to make up a better story than that... It's not sad enough; I thought she'd have a cool story'.

Contrary to the scepticism over rescue dogs with 'problems' described in Chapter 4, these accounts from dog rescue workers suggest an alternative angle. In this context, a dog's health problems, or the prospect that it has come into rescue following trauma or abuse, is sought after by adopters because of the 'good feeling' it may give them and because this may further contribute to the adopter's construction of being ethical.

And yet, despite having similar themes to ethical consumerism, dog adoption is routinely positioned as an *anti*-consumerist action. The slogan 'adopt, don't shop' has become a popular catch phrase used in the animal adoption movement and is used to varying degrees to promote animal adoption over purchasing a puppy from a breeder. When asked why they adopted a dog, many survey respondents simply replied using this slogan verbatim, symbolising its prominence as a call to action. In this context 'shopping' for a dog is the antithesis of adopting, suggesting that purchasing a dog from a breeder, pet store or anywhere else innately reduces the dog to a consumable product. This is not to discount the fact that adopting a dog still involves a monetary transaction. However, this is framed as an 'adoption fee' and as largely contributing towards the relevant shelter or rescue group's continued work rehoming homeless animals. Formal documents, for example, the Victorian *Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelter and Pounds* still refers to the 'sale' of an animal, however this language of 'purchase', 'buying' and 'sale' has been abandoned in favour of 'adopt' and 'rescue'. The term 'adoption' has so much power in terms of its associations with benevolent and ethical action that several large-scale commercial breeders in Victoria have begun to use this language. For example, Victorian dog breeder Danglo Breeders has rebranded to "Danglo Puppy Adoptions", Chevromist Kennels has developed a "puppy adoption procedure" and Urban Puppies talk about their

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puppies that are available "for adoption" (see Figures 5.4, 5.5, 5.6). Despite this, by adopting and not

'shopping' for a dog, dog adopters position themselves as not engaging in the

consumerist, materialistic influences that have led to many of the issues associated with dog

breeding described in this thesis. This apparent rejection of rendering dogs as commodities to be

'shopped' for further contributes to adopter's ethical status.

Figure 5.4: Example of one large-scale commercial Victorian dog breeder who has started utilising the language of 'adoption' on their website.

Figure 5.5: Danglo puppy breeders has now rebranded to 'Danglo Puppy Adoptions'

Figure 5.6: Another commercial breeder in Victoria advertising cavoodle puppies 'for adoption'.

Uncertainty & tensions in the rescue world

Although dog adoption is often upheld as the most ethical option some uncertainties remain amongst dog carers in Victoria about the ethical standing of some dog adoption avenues, notably CGRs. For example, one person noted that they found it "hard to tell rescue groups apart and know which are actually ethical". They added further that they were "suspicious about some groups posing as rescue groups". Another respondent suggested that it is not just breeders who mislead the public about their dogs, but also rescue groups. They said: "Breeders and rescues are both unclear and likely to lie about their dogs. [It's] hard to find honest people who list both the pros and cons of a breed or individual dog". Thus, even when dog carers are confronted with acquiring a dog through a supposedly 'more ethical' avenue they still express uncertainty.

In Victoria, CRGs are not recognised as domestic animal businesses in the same way that pounds and shelters are, and therefore do not have to register with local councils. This also means that unlike pounds and shelters, they are also not required to comply with the *Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds,* which sets minimum standards of staffing, animal handling, housing and record keeping. Many rescue groups in Victoria operate with high standards of care and dedicate considerable efforts to rehome as many animals as they can. This is sometimes done so at their own expense: as one rescue group worker pointed out in an interview, with "$22,000 of my own money". However, there have been examples where rescue groups have been found to provide inadequate care for animals, such as the well-documented case of Story Brook farm in Queensland. RSPCA Queensland seized 37 animals on the farm that was marketed as a rescue farm for animals including dogs, horses and other livestock animals (Wondracz & Withers 2019). Following this incident, RSPCA Queensland were accused of besmirching the work of rescue groups, representing them as a gateway to potential hoarding behaviour (Saving Pets 2019).

Tensions have arisen between larger-scale shelters such as the RSPCA and Lost Dog's Home on the one hand, and CRGs in my interviews. One shelter operator expressed that their organisation "work[s] with as many [rescue groups] as they can…", but went onto suggest that"…some are out there for their own agenda". Another shelter worker commended the growth of rescue groups in Victoria, but noted that this sometimes sees larger shelters putting in less effort:

> I mean in my personal view it's good [that there are more rescue groups], but I think it also has meant that bigger pounds have been able to drop the ball a little bit…

Rescue group workers were less complimentary of the work of large-scale shelters, however. One rescue group worker argued that "pounds are failing in Victoria" and noted the amount of money individuals operating rescue groups are having to put into the care of animals. They explained:

> Like I shouldn't be [putting in my own money], we shouldn't be doing that, our systems are failing. …you've got situations at the moment where I see emails from the Lost Dogs Home failing in their adoption program and putting them out to rescue. Like they're getting paid to do that.

Speaking about larger scale shelters, another rescue group worker made a similar criticism about the financial differences between shelters and CRGs:

> You've got an organisation that's been in operation for years, they've got a lot of money behind them if you analyse them financially…you sit back and go, shit, you've got heaps more money than us and our twenty grand in the bank.

A shelter operator who has worked in companion animal rescue for over thirty years, had a different perception about some rescue groups, labelling some as "arrogant" and some of the volunteers as "nutters". They especially raised concerns about some CRG's tendency to hold onto dogs that should be rehomed:

> They are totally dictatorial…they think that their own ideas are the only ones and nobody can look after these dogs...they [will] hang onto them and hang onto them in what really be[comes] quite cruel situations because it became quite cramped and everything, because they have this thing in their minds that nobody else will look after the dog as well as they would. And at the end of the day you have to let your children go when they grow up and you have to let the dogs go. You do everything you can to make sure they're safe and well cared for, and you have a contingency plan if they come back without judgement. But I think it's appalling what I've heard, and I've heard a lot of it. And it's just, it's just horrible

These tensions between larger shelters and CRGs – and different philosophies around animal rescue – are by no means new or unique to Victoria. For example, Arluke (2003 & 2006) documented the strain between open-admission, often high euthanasia shelters and smaller 'no-kill' shelters in the United States. Yet these tensions have recently flared up in the Victorian

context. Following the euthanasia of a greyhound named Dash by RSPCA Victoria[14], the Animal Justice Party (AJP) put forward a motion to the Victorian Parliament calling for greater transparency in Victorian pounds and shelters including mandatory reporting of euthanasia and requirements for pounds and shelters to work with rescue groups (Victoria, Legislative Council 2020, p. 3474). The motion, which successfully passed in October 2020, is yet to have its objectives put into action. However, this study has illustrated that this political debate will no doubt continue to foster tensions in the companion animal rescue world. Moreover, it will likely continue to generate confusion about the ethics of breeders, and also the reputability and legitimacy of specific avenues for rescuing dogs.

Difficult experiences with dog adoption

As dog adoption becomes increasingly promoted, many dog carers are attempting to acquire their dogs through pounds, shelters or CRGs. Some dog carers however, found this to be a difficult task. While concerns that rescue dogs would be unhealthy or poorly behaved kept people from adopting, so too did the process of adoption and the experience people had with shelters and CRGs.

Some people highlighted that they tried to adopt but were unsuccessful even at the RSPCA. One person noted that "RSPCA were difficult to deal with which was unfortunate". Another person expressed that some shelters "make it difficult to adopt [dogs]". Others expressed frustration with the adoption process, specifically the process set out by CRGs. One person noted that "adopting is a long process". Another explained how going through a rescue group was "too hard" so they eventually went to a shelter: "Going through a shelter was easier than a rescue group. The rescue group made us fill out a 11 page application…".

Communication from rescue groups, or rather a lack of communication was also highlighted as a difficulty with adoption from these avenues. For example, on respondent complained that "we never heard back from any rescue groups about our applications…". Similarly, another explained "[I] asked after some rescue dogs and didn't get a response from [the rescue group]". Another person recounted similar experiences but conceded this was likely due to the volunteer nature of CRGs: "Rescues are often

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[14] Dash was in foster care for six weeks before being returned to RSPCA Victoria. His foster carer was told he would be assessed for adoption and when she inquired about his status was told Dash was doing well in the shelter. His foster carer later found out the RSPCA Victoria had misled her, and Dash had in fact been euthanased because of anxiety issues (Clayton 2020).

understaffed and overworked and take a long time to respond to messages or disorganised". Because they were unable to access a dog through a rescue group, all of these respondents indicated that they eventually acquired a puppy from a breeder. These experiences are consistent with the findings made by the *Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farm and Pet Shop) Bill*.

The Committee overseeing the Inquiry heard that around 50 to 64 per cent of Victorians had considered or attempted to acquire a dog from a pound, shelter or CRG but eventually purchased a puppy from a breeder (p.48). Therefore, while many people do attempt to acquire dogs through prescribed more ethical avenues, a variety of factors can limit their success and instead see them acquire puppies from breeders.

Some dog carers who attempted to adopt a rescue dog expressed that they felt discriminated against when trying to acquire a dog. For example, one person explained that:

> As a then single female I was often dismissed and treated rudely by shelter volunteers. I am a shift worker and felt unfairly or harshly judged about my ability to provide a good home for a dog.

Another person explained how they attempted to adopt a rescue dog but found that "rescues…don't want to adopt dogs to families with kids", presumably for reasons of risk. Others simply felt that following months of approaching various rescue groups and visiting shelters, they were still unable to find a dog that was suitable for them. This sentiment was echoed by a shelter worker who explained that while people are increasingly willing to adopt rescue dogs, that this is not always the best thing:

> We have people coming to us all the time with the right motivation, very nice people, and very good adequate homes looking for the right dog, they're not looking for an inappropriate dog. They've been told don't go to a pet shop, go to a shelter which is terrific. We have to turn them away because we only have a certain number of those dogs that they're looking for.

Similarly, a rescue group worker explained how people's expectations about the dogs in rescue may be unrealistic:

> Look, you know people don't know how to find a dog now, they know not to buy from a pet shop store. So what do I do? I'll go to a rescue, well I want an eight week old

French Bulldog and I want to pay $400 for it and that's not the reality. And that's where the

confusion is...

Therefore, while prospective dog carers are evidently aware of the messages around dog

adoption, there are several factors that can limit adoption.

Pet stores: impulse & love at first sight

As puppy farms became highly problematised, so too did pet stores as an avenue for selling puppy farm-

bred dogs. Within the debate, designer dogs were specifically highlighted as the dog most likely to be

bred by puppy farms and sold through pet stores (see Introduction). Survey results indicate that 13% (n=

13) of designer dog carers purchased their dog from a pet store. This was the third most common

location for acquiring a designer dog behind small-scale registered breeders and large-scale commercial

breeders. When asked why they opted to acquire their dog from a pet store contrary to advice from

animal welfare groups, respondents gave a variety of answers:

We worked in a shopping centre and saw him and fell in love. Having said that, I would never

go to a pet store to buy a dog again.

Didn't realise the harms pet shops do to animals. Walked past and fell in love with the dog.

These responses indicate how awareness about pet store as problematic avenues for acquiring dogs has

become more widespread in recent years. Some participants explicitly referenced the ways in which pet

shops were once considered the normal and routine place to purchase pets, but how this has since

shifted:

Parents bought her 15 years ago and weren't familiar with any other places at the time.

Didn't know any better, thought that was the only place you got your dogs from (many years

ago).

Equally, however, a significant number of responses engaged in little to no reflection on the issues

associated with pet stores, instead justifying their decision was based on emotions or convenience. For

example, one person explained that getting their dog was a matter of "walk[ing] past and f[alling] in

love, no thought had to take him home". Because of the immediacy of finding dogs in pet stores,

another factor that influenced people's decision making was convenience. Other responses suggested that purchasing their dog from a pet store was "convenient" and "…easy to access" in contrast to people's experiences of adoption avenues above. Some people explained that the pet store had the dog that they wanted, and this was the main factor for their decision:

> I passed by and noticed the pup. As I has been searching for a pug I decided she was perfect even though a pug [cross] (3/4 pug).

> They had the dog we wanted at the time.

Many of these responses suggest that the drive to get the dog they wanted in a convenient and timely fashion outweighed any consideration of the problems associated with pet stores.

Further, while some people consciously sought a dog from a pet store, for others, the decision to buy a dog only occurred to them when passing by the store. One respondent expressed that they "just saw the dogs and liked them", whereas another admitted that their purchase from a pet shop was an "impulse purchase". Responses such as these reflect and give weight to the arguments made by some activists during the puppy farm debate, who argued that pet stores encourage the impulsive purchasing of animals with little thought given to where the dog may have come from, the conditions in which it was bred as well as the requirements for its ongoing care.

Interestingly, some dog carers that purchased their dog from a pet store implied they knew about the dubious nature of pet stores and yet justified their decision by framing it as a kind and benevolent act; one of rescue. One response for example conceded that they were aware that their dog most likely came from a puppy farm before it was sold in a pet store, but argued that:

> …I knew she would find a loving home with us and I didn't want her to be in a pet shop.

Similarly, one person expressed that their decision to acquire their dog from a pet store was because "…he was all alone in the shop. Looked really sad". Another designer dog carer gave a more decisive response, arguing that their decision to purchase their dog from a pet store was to "remove the dog from the harsh conditions of a glass box". Such rationalisation may be attempts to alleviate guilt or provide a somewhat-agreeable justification (Romo et al. 2019). These logics have been widely criticised

by animal advocacy groups who have pointed out that while people might believe they are 'liberating' dogs from pet stores, these decisions only perpetuate puppy farm and pet store trades. Such responses also highlight the contested nature of 'ethical dog acquisition' in practice, wherein these people have made their decision based on a concern about the welfare of an individual animal in a pet shop, as opposed to considering the broader systemic welfare and animal cruelty issues embedded in the puppy farm and pet store trade.

Stigma: designer dogs & 'bad breeding'

The breeding and acquisition of designer dogs is also a site of concern and uncertainty. We have already seen in previous chapters the ways in which designer dogs have been problematised as the latest superficial fashion trend of the dog world and continually associated with profiteering breeders and the puppy farm trade. In my survey findings, only 2% (n=2) of respondents reported having purchased their dog from puppy farms. However, a further 15% (n=15) of designer dog carers indicated that they acquired their dog from a large-scale breeder. As described in the introduction of this thesis, the definition of a puppy farm is subject to contestation. To make matters more complicated, many breeders that have formally been labelled as puppy farms began referring to themselves as commercial dog breeders and adopting more professional practices in the midst of the puppy farm debate (see Chapter 3). In addition, because of the negativity around puppy farms, as will be detailed below, people may not be willing to disclose that their dog has come from a puppy farm facility.

A significant proportion of designer dog carers, (32%; n=31) indicated that their designer dog was acquired from a small-scale registered breeder. Of these, many are Labradoodles (15%; n=14), one of the few designer dogs with their own breeding governance body – the Australian Labradoodle Association Inc- which has an accreditation system for their breeders, a code of ethics and promotes a breed standard for the Labradoodle. Even so, the perceived association between designer dogs and the puppy farming trade remains salient. These perceived associations lead to stigma surrounding the ownership of designer dogs.

According to Goffman (1963), people can experience stigma if they have specific traits, either physical or mental, that can result in negative consequences. These consequences can include social exclusion or alienation, anxiety, discrimination or disenfranchisement. Dogs are identity markers for humans and therefore people and their dogs are often linked together and viewed as a collective

(Robins, Sanders & Cahill 1991), or as Irvine (2004) suggests, dog-human relationships help people create and confirm themselves. Thus, dogs as extensions of ourselves can not only produce a good status for humans – such as the badge of honour granted to dog adopted – but also stigma for having a particular type of dog or having acquired it in a particular way. The stigma associated with certain types of dogs has been explored in other studies. Notably, Twining, Arluke and Patronek (2000) investigated the negative stigma surrounding pit bulls, a breed that has become associated with vicious attacks and are seen as a threat to the safety of the community, which in turn has seen owners of these so-called 'outlaw' dogs becoming frowned upon. More recently, Romo, Lloyd and Grimaila (2019) explored the stigma of having a non-rescue dog in the face of growing calls to adopt animals - something that will be explored in the following section. Thus, nowadays it is not only the breed of dog that can cause stigma, but also the avenue of acquiring the companion dog that can lead to judgement and criticism.

In qualitative responses, many designer dog carers relayed the negative experiences that they had, had with other people because of their dogs. Many of these negative experiences related to accusations that they had purchased their dog from a puppy farm or a backyard breeder, which was a valid assumption to some extent. While only a small number of respondents indicated their dog came from a puppy farm, a higher number of designer dog carers (12%; n=12) indicated that their dog was purchased from a backyard breeder. The types of stigma described by dog carers was predominately enacted stigma, such as negative comments and questions about their decision (Twinning et al. 2000). For example, one respondent recounted being "abused for supporting backyard breeders" while they were at a dog park walking their dog. Another designer dog carer spoke of a stranger highlighting their "concerns about puppy farms" and similarly another respondent reflected on an incident where someone "...asked where we got [the dog] from and if they came from a puppy farm".

Designer dog carers not only described having received abuse and condemnation from other dog carers in face to face settings, but also in online settings such as on social media. One person, who had acquired their dog from a large-scale commercial breeder, described an incident on an online dog breeding forum where other users commented that "...the place our [dog] came from was not ethical enough". This respondent was quite defensive about their decision, however, going on to comment that "supply and demand, isn't it? Not everyone can wait months/years for a puppy from an exclusive small, once a year breeder". This response is an example of corrective facework (Cupach & Metts 1994, p.8), wherein this designer dog carer has attempted to manage criticism about their decision by

providing an excuse and justification for their choice of dog – in this case purchasing from 'reputable' breeders can be too expensive, implied in the comment about exclusivity, and can also take too long.

Another designer dog carer who acquired their dog from a large-scale commercial breeder shared their negative experience of joining a Facebook group dedicated to the cavador (a Cavalier crossed with a Labrador):

> We joined a cavador [Facebook] page but received negative comments about buying our puppy from a large breeder (puppy farm). We felt very hurt by this. We thought we had really done our research and that the breeder exceeded our expectations of care for the breeding dogs. We left the [Facebook] page feeling very sad and angry. We realised that our decision to get a 'designer dog' is not supported by some people in the community...

This story from the cavador carer not only highlights the shame that designer dog carers can be made to feel about their choice of dog. But also, this story again reveals the contestation that exists around 'ethical' dog acquisition, demonstrating how despite attempting to follow the rules outlined within dog buying guides – in this instance doing extensive research about a breeder – this dog carer has still been actively criticised for their decision.

Confusion around determining what is and is not an 'ethical' breeder was a theme that arose time and time in qualitative survey responses. While a vast majority of survey 1 respondents (86%; n=165) indicated that they knew that you should not purchase a dog from a puppy farm or pet store and that they used information such as dog buying guides to acquire their dog, some people still suggested information was difficult to access or unclear. For example, when asked about accessing information on ethical dog acquisition one person stated that the information is "…not readily available, nor common knowledge". Whereas another suggest that they could not find information, noting that "no information came up in my multitude of searches". By contrast another respondent highlighted how there was a lot of information, but that none of this information was helpful to them: "[I] didn't know where to look as there was too many websites that didn't give me very good information that was relevant to my situation".

In addition, several responses highlighted that the information that is available does not provide clear enough distinctions between ethical and unethical breeders. For example, one person explained their experience:

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People that I thought were ethical breeders turned out to be puppy farmers or backyard breeders. It was such a shock to find out that they were deceiving me. I soon discovered anyone who wanted to meet me in a shopping centre or petrol station car park was dodgy.

This experience was reflected in several other responses. For example, one person suggested that "the information is [too] general and does no[t] identify easily the ethical breeders and the one[s] who are in it for the wrong reasons". Further to this, another person expressed that they had trouble figuring out which breeders were puppy farms and which breeders were not, noting that it's difficult "...to tell the difference between breeders and puppy farms. Some breeders seem to breed a lot of different breeds and I'm not sure why they aren't classed as puppy farms".

This confusion is further complicated by the fact that several large-scale commercial breeders in Victoria have begun to incorporate the language of ethics and ethical processes outlined by animal welfare groups into their operations. For example, on their website Banksia Park Puppies a breeder located in East Gippsland, Victoria, has an information page dedicated to choosing an ethically bred puppy. The information they provide is very similar to the dog buying guides developed by animal welfare groups and they also offer site tours and meet and greets with the puppy and its parents, thus meeting the requirements laid out in dog buying guides.

This theme arose further in qualitative responses, with many designer dog carers acquiring dogs from so-called problematic avenues yet indicating that they had also engaged with ethical guidelines outlined earlier in this chapter. For example, several people who had acquired their dog from a backyard breeder described how, despite their dog coming from a location that is now framed as 'irresponsible breeding', they had followed ethical rules laid out in dog buying guides, namely meeting the puppy's parents, and seeing where the puppy was raised:

...I could meet the parents of the dog and where they lived to ensure they were well cared for pets.

Was a lovely breeder that looked after her dogs well.

Another respondent expressed something similar, saying their decision to acquire a dog from a backyard breeder was because:

The parents were both well looked after, healthy and c[a]me from a friendly household. I

would not buy from a large-scale breeding as I don't know the conditions the breeding dog

are being kept in.

This response is interesting, as despite coming from a problematised avenue – a backyard breeder – this dog carer has assessed the breeder of their dog to be appropriate and responsible based on their transparency. They also frame large-scale breeders as innately different, drawing upon the uncertainty around large-scale commercial breeders' conditions and practices to assert acquiring a dog from a backyard breeder as justifiable by comparison.

People who had purchased from large-scale commercial breeders described similar incidences of following the ethical guidelines, again visiting the location where their puppy was bred and meeting the puppy's parents. For example:

They were breeders in Victoria, and we wanted to visit the breeders and select our dog and

ensure this was an ethical business. It was not too difficult for us to travel there. We visited

the breeders, we were very impressed with their business and we purchased our puppy.

Originally wanting a groodle and not many places seem to breed these. We were sceptical as

we were afraid of puppy farms and they are a larger scale breeder. We did visit and the place

was clean, and the dogs looked healthy and well looked after and therefore went with this

breeder.

Similarly, another commented that their dog came from "what seemed to be an ethically run establishment and parents and puppies were well cared for". These examples of people purchasing from backyard or large-scale commercial breeders reveals the unforeseen and unintended consequences of discourses of ethical dog breeding and acquisition in practice. While advocacy organisation's materials, including dog buying guides have warned against backyard breeding and large-scale breeders (sometimes understood as puppy farms), these breeders have actively adopted elements from dog buying guides that signal to the community that they are 'ethical'. This demonstrates the messiness and complexity around discerning avenues of dog breeding and acquisition as ethical or otherwise, as in a practical context they can become easily confused and adapted by individuals to suit their wants and desire for a specific type of dog. Moreover, dog breeders have also been able to draw upon these ethical

indicators to appeal to the growing awareness and concern about responsible dog breeding practices. In saying that, this also reveals that irrespective of the dog being acquired, dog carers are attempting to make informed and ethical decisions regarding where they acquire their dog.

For their part, designer dog carers appeared to be conscious of the complexity of ethical dog breeding. One designer dog carer who acquired their dog from a large-scale commercial breeder discussed the contestation around puppy farms in their response, suggesting that there are:

> different views as to what constitutes a 'puppy farm', in my opinion, it's a continuum, not a black and white, yes or no situation.

This represents the way in which an agreeable definition of puppy farm is not only elusive in animal advocacy circles, but also within the general dog caring community. However, this response can also be interpreted as facework, wherein criticism about purchasing a dog from a puppy farm is managed through deferring to complexity.

Some designer dog carers placed blame on animal advocacy groups and the media for generating negative sentiment about their dog. For example, one designer dog carer who indicated that their dog had been acquired from a puppy farm said that "Media, social media & groups like Oscars Law give the impression that all fluffy designer dogs come from puppy farms & that there are no ethical breeders". Whereas another designer dog carer noted that the negativity was because "...the media now portray..." breeders of designer dogs "...as bad". Like the above comments, these responses attempt to manage criticism about where their dog was acquired by shifting blame to animal advocacy groups and the media for representing designer dogs and the places that breed them as problematic.

Stigma: designer dogs & 'adopt, don't shop'

While criticisms about puppy farms are common toward designer dog carers, so too are criticisms that they did not adopt a dog from a pound, shelter or rescue group. As noted above, proponents of dog adoption often express a general dissatisfaction for all forms of commercial dog breeding. However, designer dog carers appeared to be the target of the most criticism: people who had acquired pedigree puppies from breeders reported no incidents of criticism for not adopting their dog. This could be due to designer dog's association with puppy farming because, by comparison, pedigree dog breeding has been widely labelled as 'reputable' in Victoria. In saying that, in their research around non-

rescue dog stigma, Romo et al. (2019) did find that people who had acquired pedigree puppies from breeders also experienced criticism.

Various respondents indicated that the negativity about their dog was due to the growing sentiment towards animal adoption. For example, people suggested negative attitudes stemmed from "awareness of adopt don't shop" and the knowledge that "a lot of dogs can be adopted from the RSPCA". Moreover, one person explained that the "overwhelming public opinion is to rescue animals and getting a design[er] dog is seen as the opposite". As with criticism of puppy farms and backyard breeding, many designer dog owners were defensive about judgements made about them not rescuing. In addition, they actively participated in blame-shifting to justify their decision and manage this criticism.

Several designer dog carers, for example, recounted that the decision to acquire a designer dog and not rescue was not their choice. For example, one person described how they "...would have been happy to rescue but my partner did not want a dog that sheds". Whereas others described how they had tried to get a rescue dog but could never find the dog they wanted via animal adoption networks:

A lot of people expect everyone to get rescue dogs. We waited for 3 years looking for a rescue dog that was a puppy pug or cav[alier] but nothing c[a]me up and I wouldn't get an older dog not knowing it's history when I have 2 young kids under 4 years old.

This response points to the continued uncertainty the exists around rescue dogs and their unpredictability, particularly with small children. But also, this response indicates how 'breed' and a desire to have a dog look and act in specific ways distinguishable through a breed lens – in this instance not shed and be 'family friendly' - is still important. Similar to this, another respondent suggested that they would have adopted "If a non-shedding dog was available for adoption". Romo et al. (2019) described similar justifications around dog carers needing non-shedding dogs in their research, finding that several of their participants noted that their allergies limited them from adopting a dog (p.14).

One respondent was adamant about their decision to acquire a designer dog over adopting. They explained that "a lot of people were telling me to get a rescue dog. We had done that in the past..." but that "...this will prob[ably] be my last dog so [I] went for what [I] wanted". Such a response is reflective of arguments that took place during the debate around Victoria's *Puppy Farm and Pet Shop Bill*, wherein breeders and politicians against the Bill argued that Victorian pet owners should have the right to own the dog they want and "not be limited by choice" (Victoria, Legislative Council, 2017

p.6919). This response then is somewhat indicative of broader assumptions that humans are entitled to own dogs, and moreover the dog they want irrespective of the broader issues embedded in dog breeding. Nevertheless, by disclosing that they have rescued a dog in the past, this respondent demonstrates their overall ethical behaviour, something that operates to justify their present decision to acquire their dog from a breeder.

Chapter 3 explored how designer dog carers were criticised for purchasing their dog for supposedly fashionable and trendy reasons. This theme also arose in discussions about them not rescuing a dog. For example, one respondent explained how they were criticised for "not rescuing" as people assumed that "we wanted a fancy dog. [This was] not the case". Whereas another explained that that negativity around designer dogs was because "we pa[id] big dollars for a dog to be a cross breed when you could get a dog from a shelter". Similarly, another designer dog carer relayed that:

...We realised that our decision to get a 'designer dog' is not supported by some people in the community, we have seen newspaper articles and lots of people have suggested to us that it would be have been more ethical if we had bought a rescue dog. Making a home for a dog with us was a big decision that we thought about very carefully. It is hurtful to us when people suggest we made this important decision for selfish reasons.

Not only do these responses highlight the ongoing association with designer dogs and the supposed superficiality of their carers, but it also centralises the shame that some dog carers are made to feel about their decision. As this person describes, the criticism they received, coupled with the negativity in the media as being 'hurtful'. Another respondent described something similar, explaining that "people make you feel bad if you don't get a rescue". Whereas another speculated that purchasing a puppy over adopting a dog "...may seem that we don't care".

Unlike the associations often drawn between designer dogs and puppy farms, some designer dog carers indicated that their dog had been acquired from a pound (2%; n=2), shelter (2%; n=2) or rescue group (6%; n=6). Interestingly, this group of designer dog carers were also the least likely to report negative experiences with other dog carers because of their choice of dog. However, one designer dog carer whose designer dog had come from a rescue group did describe one incident where they received "criticism of pug-related problems and that person's opinions". They go onto note that the person who criticised them was "shut down when told [the dog] was a rescue". This example further

highlights the status that comes with having a rescue dog, which means that, the carer is able to dispute and ultimately 'shut down' any criticism about their choice of dog.

Conclusion

The work conducted by animal advocacy groups has seen companion dog adoption become increasingly normalised and acted upon by dog carers. Because of this, dog adoption and its associated positive discourses have endowed dog adopters with an ethical status. While dog adoption has grown in prominence, some dog carers find adopting a dog difficult and still choose to acquire puppies from breeders or pet stores. Designer dog carers in particular are stigmatised for this decision and are seen as acting on impulse and for superficial reasons. Designer dog carers have shared stories of being actively criticised for their choice of dog, not only for their puppy farm, pet store and backyard breeding associations, but also because they have not rescued a dog from a pound, shelter or rescue group. However, they engage in a range of corrective frameworks to manage and justify their decisions. Moreover, despite the discursive work from advocacy organisations, ethical dog acquisition in practice is messy and complex, with breeding avenues that have been deemed problematic (backyard breeding and large-scale commercial breeding) gaining favour among some dog carers due to breeder's perceived demonstration of certain ethical practices. Ultimately, this chapter highlights how in practice 'ethical' and 'responsible' dog acquisition – and by extension breeding – remains a contested and complex space in Victoria. Governmentalities that normalise adoption, while gaining momentum, have not been fully routinized in practice, with the desire to have a specific type of dog, the convenience and hazy definitions of ethical breeding, still driving dog carers to acquire dogs from previously problematised avenues.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

In December 2017, news outlets across Australia celebrated that puppy farming had been banned in Victoria. The *Puppy farm and Pet Shop Bill 2017*, an amendment to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* featured several key mechanisms to address the problem of puppy farming and its associated issues such as pet stores and numbers of animals in shelters and pounds. First, the Bill prohibited the sale of puppies and kittens in pet stores in Victoria. Pet stores are now only able to source and sell animals from pounds, shelters or rescue groups. Thus, pet stores as an avenue for selling puppy farm bred dogs are, for all intents and purposes prohibited, while animal adoption has been made visible by giving rescue animals the opportunity to be promoted through pet stores.

Second, the Bill introduced the Pet Exchange Register, which requires all puppies and kittens advertised for sale in Victoria to have a source number that is aligned to the breeder, pound, shelter, or foster carer that owns the animal. The Pet Exchange Register was established to monitor and trace breeders and where animals are coming from. Now, along with microchip details, all dogs and cats sold in the state must be advertised with a source number from the Pet Exchange Register.

Third, and perhaps mostly notably, the Bill is said to have banned puppy farms in Victoria. However, this so-called ban was rather a cap on commercial breeding facilities in Victoria, allowing them to only have up to 50 fertile females following approval from the office of the Minister for Agriculture. Groups such as Oscar's Law disagreed that this was in fact a ban on puppy farms and have continued to call for the breeding cap to be lowered to 10 fertile females as was the intention in the original draft of the Bill. Nevertheless, despite the ongoing contestation over definitions of puppy farms, 'unethical' breeders and breeding caps, Victoria was celebrated for its world-first stamp-out of the puppy farming trade, a trade that continues to plague other states in Australia that continue to consider solutions as well as in other parts of the world.

Using the case study of debates over puppy farming in Victoria, this thesis asked, how discourses, both historical and contemporary, about breed and dog breeding produce knowledges about specific categories of dogs, and to what extent do these discourses influence current and prospective dog carers' understandings of 'ethical' companion dog breeding and acquisition. Often competing discourses about breeds and breeding practices produce different perceptions of specific categories of dog, which in turn effects the ways in which these dogs are reproduced, commodified and represented. Moreover, I have argued that these discourses also generate competing understandings about 'ethical'

dog breeding and acquisition, which has seen some avenues for acquiring dogs regarded as more morally superior than others. While at face value, the puppy farm problem has been largely represented as an issue of animal cruelty and poor dog welfare, the issue generated broader questions about the types of dogs the Victorian community is acquiring and why. Specifically, the growing popularity of designer dogs and the shift towards the adoption of rescue dogs that are often mixed breed surfaced over the course of the puppy farm debate. Yet these contemporary ways of thinking about, relating to and regulating companion dogs arise out of historically entrenched conditions. Here, I summarise the key themes presented throughout this thesis, highlighting the ways in which discourses about breed; health and genetic certainty; class and status; commodification of dogs; and the ethics of breeding and acquisition function within our modern relations with, and management of, companion dogs in Victoria and beyond.

Breed & breeding

When I first began this project, I often found myself asking the question, does a dog's breed still matter? Is the so-called prestige of pedigree breeds still important to dog carers and if so, why? The short answer is yes, and no. As this research has demonstrated, the socio-historic imagining of the 'pure' dog breed took shape in the late 18th and 19th centuries, bolstered by prevailing notions about race, class, nationhood and the recreational activity that become known as dog fancy. The ambition towards pure breeds of dog – that is, dogs that were readily identifiable, traceable, and replicable – has set the conditions for our modern attitudes towards both breeds of dog and those considered non-breeds.

While pedigree breeds of dog remain the most popular type of dog in Australia, as reported in this and other research (see King et al. 2009; Animal Medicines Australia 2016 & 2019), other dog types are steadily gaining favour among dog carers. The growth in popularity of designer dogs is an example of this shift. Criticised for their links to the puppy farm trade, profiteering breeders and superficial fashion trends, designer dogs are also denounced because of their non-breed status. Many pedigree breeders and governing bodies refute the notion that designer dogs are 'real' breeds as they are not granted this status by the authorities and institutions that grant such legitimacy. Nonetheless, designer dog types such as cavoodles, labraoodles, groodles and puggles are being increasingly shaped as breeds through various discursive mechanisms such as naming (i.e. being described under a collective type name) and being ascribed histories and standards (i.e. coat colour, behavioural expectations). Moreover, they are often described as being bred under the guise of 'improvement', and also to have a replicable

appearances and temperaments, both values and ideals that govern pedigree dog breeding. In spite of all this, many pedigree breeders and governing bodies continue to express frustrations around the growing popularity and prices of dogs they consider to be mutts.

Mixed breed rescue dogs are another dog type that have grown in popularity as more dog carers become willing to adopt from pounds, shelters and rescue groups. Mixed breeds, or mutts and mongrels as they are sometimes referred to, are still to some degree seen as problematic, especially by dog carers who value the predictability and replicability of pure breed dogs. This thesis uncovered that much of this uncertainty is linked to perceptions that such dogs are not bred under any strict regimes but are instead framed as a result of irresponsible breeding and pet ownership. While designer dog breeding is criticised for a number of reasons, designer dog breeders in Victoria have attempted to increasingly professionalise their breeding models and follow relevant codes of practice and other requirements, which has led to a degree of legitimacy being accorded to their breeding practice. By contrast, mixed breed dogs that are in shelters are viewed by some as a product of irresponsible, unregulated and often unplanned breeding – otherwise referred to as backyard breeding – which reinforces existing concerns about the dogs being unknowable companions. Concerns about mixed breed dogs being unknowable are directly linked to the authority of breed discourses, as these discourses tell us that dog types must always be knowable in advance and exist within a realm of pre-calculated possibilities (Wallen 2017). However, in the absence of a definable breed, mixed breed rescue dogs are still managed through technologies that seek to observe, record and lockdown their bodies and behaviour.

Breed discourses are inherently characterised by features of biopower; they focus on disciplining, optimising, and managing dog life to ensure they are 'good subjects' or rather, 'good companions'. These relations of biopower are adjusted and applied to dogs in varying ways depending on their belonging to a specific biosocial collectivity (I.e. pedigree breed, designer dog or mixed breed) Yet, at once, these relations of biopower still govern dog life to the same end – that of being an efficient, and ideal companion. This 'idealness' is often clearly linked to prevailing market trends, but also relevant human subjectivities, as well as the goal of minimising risk and inconvenience in terms of a dog's health and/or behavioural qualities.

Thus, to return to my original question about whether breed still matters; dog carers in Victoria are moving away from traditionally popular pure breeds towards designer dogs and mixed breed rescue dogs. However, breed does still matter to some degree. Even when a dog is not considered a 'breed' in the traditional sense – not being recognised by the Australian National Kennel Council – they are still

represented, understood, marketed, and governed through the socio-historic and biopolitical breed discourses described throughout this research. Moreover, the growing popularity and acceptance of designer dogs as ideal family pets suggests that governmentalities surrounding breed and dog idealness are not stagnant nor fixed, but rather shift and adapt according to prevailing socio-cultural trends. The rise in designer dog breeding and its implications for dog welfare in Australia and other parts of the world in particular, is a critical site for further monitoring and analysis.

Health & genetic certainty

The relationship between scientific knowledge and dog breeding has existed since the 19th century as illustrated in the genealogy of breeding discourse in Chapter 2. While the eugenics movement and its associated methods for 'improved' breeding are closely connected to dog breeding practices historically – and to an extent remain a contemporary fixture of pedigree breeding today – choices around dog breeding, and sometimes which dog to acquire, are largely governed by genetic DNA testing, perceptions of health and avoiding risk.

The health of dogs and puppies has become a primary concern for many dog carers, particularly following, on the one hand, the problematisation of genetic and morphological conditions in pure breeds following generations of 'inbreeding', and on the other, the proliferation of the puppy farm trade where dogs were often sold with severe and life-threatening health issues. In the pedigree breeding community, it has become standard practice to conduct genetic DNA testing before breeding pairs are mated. More recently, designer dog breeders have begun to adopt genetic DNA testing practices to both avert any risks about their dogs and legitimise their breeding practices. This follows increasing claims by designer dog breeders that their dogs are (cross) bred for 'improvement' and to eliminate many of the health and morphological issues associated with pedigree breeds. Evidently, my research shows that the perceived elimination of health problems, specifically among pug cross designer dogs, is a driving factor that influences dog carers choice to acquire them and perceptions that their choice is ultimately more ethical.

In the context of mixed breed rescue dogs, potential poor health was often a concern for those prospective dog carers who participated in this study. However, the emergence of breed identification tests for mixed breed dogs' functions twofold. Firstly, in the absence of a clearly definable breed, they promise to give dog carers an exact make up of their dog's various breeds to a high degree of certainty. With this knowledge, also comes detailed life-plans, which purport to predict any possible future health

problems a dog may have. Secondly, through finding out this information, dog carers are deemed to be more able to not only have a more meaningful relationship with their dog, but also precisely manage any potential health problems with their dog, thus minimising risk and potential inconvenience.

The scientific interventions and knowledge that originally shaped notions about optimum breeds and breeding practices remain salient in our modern relations with and management of dogs. For those dogs that are not pure breeds and are thus less predictable, modern genetic testing has become a commonly utilised tool, both at the point of breeding and beyond, to measure and understand a dog's possible health risks. The human desire to 'pre calculate' the possibilities of breed is continually reified through the development, refinement, and increased use of DNA testing. The prevalence of geneticisation in dog breeding is emblematic of genetic interventions implemented to manage other species of non-human animal breeding, for example livestock (see Holloway & Morris 2012a, 2012b, 2015 &2017), but also governs dogs to the same ends and goals as humans, goals that seek to promote health among dogs and avoid any measurable risks. The market growth in DNA testing for mixed breed dogs is specifically something that warrants further consideration.

While it was beyond the scope of this research, understanding what prompts dog carers to pursue this testing, and how the results of such testing informs and adapts their relationship with and care of their dogs requires further investigation and theorisation within the context of biopolitical relations between humans and dogs.

Class, status & stigma

Dogs have always acted as markers for human class and social status. Historically, this has seen pedigree dogs become symbols of wealth and prestige and mutts or mongrels become associated with the poor. The relationship between socio-economic status and the types of dogs humans acquire remains prevalent today. However, the status that is accorded to dog carers for having a specific type of dog is not solely isolated to expensive pedigrees with long lineages, but also dogs that are acquired for benevolent reasons. Moreover, this research has demonstrated how within different periods, certain types of dogs fall in and out of trend with human carers, often casting those that acquire them as being driven by superficial and fashionable factors.

Designer dogs have become the latest dog fashion trend, associated with increasingly high prices and (upper)middle-class family values. My research has shown that designer dog carers in Victoria are typically have a higher-income, university educated, homeowners, suggesting that designer dog

carers do belong to people from a specific socio-economic background. This, coupled with the growing prices of designer dogs in Victoria – some ranging from $6,000 –suggests that these dogs are only available to dog carers with the means to afford them. Despite this, designer dog carers reject the notion that their dogs were acquired for fashionable or aspirational reasons and instead point to other factors such as the health, family friendliness and low or non-shedding qualities of designer dogs as motivating their decision.

While designer dogs are associated with wealthy owners and fashion trends, this has not necessarily produced a favourable status for their carers. Designer dogs ongoing associations with puppy farms and pet stores, often sees their carers denounced and criticised for their decision to acquire a designer dog. This is further conflated by growing sentiment toward dog adoption.

Mixed breed dogs have historically been associated with the poor, and today continue to be associated with dog carers from lower socio-economic backgrounds both in popular discourse and academic research. Dog carers that own mixed breed dogs are often positioned as being irresponsible dog owners. This is because they are less likely to enact the requirements expected of a 'responsible' dog owner such as not desexing or microchipping their dog, allowing unwanted breeding (RSPCA B) and often being the dog carers most likely to relinquish their dog to a shelter, pound, or rescue group. However, this research has identified that the status of mixed breed dogs and the people that adopt them following their relinquishment has experienced a shift. Through the dissemination of discourses that have promoted dog adoption and renounced problematic trades in dogs, mixed breed rescue dogs have been increasingly positioned as dogs in need of saving and second chances. This has not only made these dogs more favourable as companions, but also meant that carers who adopt them are accorded a higher ethical status because, by rescuing a dog, they have demonstrably engaged in virtuous behaviour. Shelter and rescue group workers in this research described the moral value and 'good feelings' that are associated with rescuing dogs. Thus, the status that is accorded to dog carers for having a specific type of dog is no longer restricted to a dog that is expensive or a recognised breed, but also includes dogs that were benevolently rescued.

Commodification of dogs

Since the emergence of modern pet keeping practices, breed and the formalised breeding of companion dogs, dogs have been commodified. The commodification of dogs can be taken to extreme and cruel ends as revealed by puppy farming practices that focused on large-scale and intensive dog breeding for

maximum profits. However, whether a hobby breeder, an accidental litter or a commercial operation, all dog breeding situates dogs as both producers and products and, with the exception of dogs being given away for free, involves financial exchange and profit. Thus, while it may sit uncomfortably with the popular social construction of dogs as 'family members' and 'fur babies', dogs are also continually positioned as commodities.

Essential to rendering dog breeding as a viable business is ensuring that the dogs for sale are free of any health problems. As noted above, one of the key issues that emerged from the puppy farming debate was the number of puppies being bred with health issues. While this was a welfare concern, it also became an issue of cost for dog carers. Thus, genetic DNA testing not only functions to give legitimacy to designer dog breeding, but also to protect from hazards to make them a more viable product within a competitive market. Dog's bodies, as a product and means of production must be adjusted to suit different economic processes, wherein a genetically inferior product is not viable for business.

Moreover, there are tensions that surround the commodification of dogs – primarily how much so-called non-breeds can be sold for. Some pedigree breeders, breeding organisations and vets have expressed dismay about the high prices of designer dogs; dogs they consider to inferior non-breeds or mixed breed. These criticisms of inflated commoditisation of dogs are by no means new, having occurred historically when pure breeds were first marketed and gained popularity. What this highlights is that the concerns about designer dog prices from pedigree breeding groups is a longstanding tension about who has the authority to capitalise on dogs' bodies and to what ends.

Dog adoption, while still a business that involves monetary exchange, has positioned itself as the antithesis to dog breeding and its capitalisation of dogs. The phrase 'adopt don't shop' further implies this division, that dog adoption is separate from breeding in its predominate goals is a compassionate one of saving lives and rehoming unwanted animals, rather than one of profit. This supposed distance from the commodification of dogs via breeding further adds to the perceived moral high ground of dog adopters.

Ethics & complexity

Considerations about ethical dog breeding and acquisition grew in prominence during the puppy farm debate in Victoria. Animal advocacy groups, such as Oscar's Law and the RSPCA prompted Victorian dog carers to seek out dogs from pounds or shelters and gave advice about how to determine ethical

breeders from unethical breeders. The intention of this research has never been to determine which breeders or method of dog acquisition is the most ethical, but rather to analyse how these discourses of ethics have been shaped, internalised and acted upon by dog carers. My research findings have revealed the complex and contested nature of dog acquisition in practice in Victoria.

For the most part, dog carers that were featured within this research detailed to some degree their attempts at acting ethically and following the guidance set out by advocacy groups when making a choice about the type of dog they were acquiring and from where. However, many carers, namely designer dog carers, reported that despite their attempts to acquire their dog in a way they believed was more ethical or responsible, they were still subject to criticisms about their actions. Designer dog carers that met their puppies' parents or saw where their puppy was bred were still accused of purchasing their dog from a puppy farm. This highlights both the ongoing association between designer dogs and puppy farms, and the continued contestation among dog carers about how to define and identify a puppy farm – contestation that also remains in animal advocacy circles. Moreover, designer dog carers also reported stigma about not adopting a dog from a pound, shelter, or community rescue group.

The tensions between dog adopters and people who acquire puppies from breeders were particularly salient in this study. Some dog adopters are not only passionate about rescue for ethical and lifestyle reasons, but also actively denounce dog breeding and people who do not adopt dogs. The sentiment that every dog carer should be attempting to adopt is evident within animal advocacy group resources and amongst dog adopters. However, my research also identifies that there are structural barriers to dog adoption for some dog carers, whether that be through being refused a dog by a rescue agency or not finding an appropriate dog for their perceived needs. Ultimately, while education materials produced by groups such as the RSPCA and Oscar's Law do appear to have resonated with dog carers in Victoria, in practice dog acquisition is a contested and complex space with competing values and understandings.

Consistent with Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse, the debates I outline above are not simply ideas that circulate in conversation. Rather they are logics that shape how humans think about and behave towards dogs. Moreover, this can have significant implications for dog welfare. There are a myriad of ways in which these breed discourses continue to control aspects of dogs' lives and bodies in ways that are both positive and negative. The increased popularity of designer dogs encourages large scale commercial breeding and inflated prices, which in turn can shape which humans select them as

companions and which lifestyles they are expected to conform to. The fate of mixed breed dogs who have been relinquished can on the one hand be impacted by ongoing stigma surrounding their unpredictability, and, on the other, a shifting discourse in which the ethics of adoption make them a favourable purchase.

Governmentalities in this period have attempted to shift dog breeding and acquisition practices to those that are deemed 'good', and 'ethical'. To an extent, they do this by promoting avenues that are more tightly regulated and which seemingly prioritise animal welfare. However, equally, these governmentalities prioritise mechanisms of breeding and acquisition that seek to manage the biological life of dogs in distinct and calculated ways. Whether an institutionally recognised breed or not, ideal companion dogs must embody specific qualities – those that are often human-centric and seek to erase and supress inconvenient bodily and behavioural functions. Companion dogs in Victoria, and other parts of the world do certainly hold the privileged position of 'family member' and 'fur baby'. But, this status is only granted through their bodily and behavioural confirmation to specific standards of idealness, standards that are often situated within breed discourse.

After the legislation: adoption booms & pandemic puppies

While my study focused on the period between 1993-2017 when the puppy farm debate was most heated, it is illuminating to briefly examine what has happened in the years following the legislation passing into law. Despite Victoria's landmark legislation, stories have continued to emerge about covert and illegal puppy farm operations in regional areas across Victoria. For example, there was a case in which 39 cavoodles were found kept in greyhound trailers in East-Gippsland, the year after the Bill was passed (Lazzaro). There is moreover, the ongoing problem of online trading websites such as Gumtree selling dogs and puppies. With pet stores no longer a mechanism for selling puppy farm bred dogs in Victoria, more than ever breeders have begun marketing their dogs online as an alternative (Molloy 2018).

The issues described throughout this thesis have become particularly prevalent once again with the onset of governmental restrictions on movement and community lock downs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of this thesis was written during Victoria's lock down, which at the time was considered one of the longest and strictest in the world (Mannix 2020). Throughout the lock down period stories abound about the importance of companion animals for comfort, company and emotional support, during what was an isolating time for many people living in Victoria and Australia wide

(Coresetti 2020; Obordo 2020). However, while stories emerged about the support that companion dogs provided for people, this period also saw problems around dog breeding and acquisition in the news once again.

By mid-2020, dog breeders as well as animal shelters reported a significant increase in demand for dogs and puppies. For example, RSPCA Victoria reported that they had received over 20,000 online applications to adopt animals in their shelters and saw the length of stay for shelter animals drop to four days, which was half of the usual length of stay period (Boseley & Wahlquist 2020). However, as life returns to a (relative) state of normalcy in Victoria, including a return to typical office-based working, it remains to be seen how this will impact the thousands of animals that were adopted during lock down, many of which have become used to constant company from their carers. Moreover, the continued economic instability caused by the pandemic, and the known relationship between animal relinquishment and cost of caring for an animal has led many in the rescue industry to fear that there will be an influx of dogs, as well as other animals returning to shelters (Shine 2020).

The lock down saw an increasing demand for shelter animals, but also puppies. The high-demand for puppies in Victoria in particular led to a surge in puppy-scams online. By May 2020 the Australian Consumer Commission (ACCC) estimated that Australians had lost around $300,000 to online puppy scams, with Victorians the most likely to fall for these scams losing an estimated $115,000 (ABC 2020). By November 2020, the ACCC revised this number to $1.6million in losses due to puppy scams (Seselja 2020). RSPCA Victoria also reported in August of 2020 that they were investigating thirty incidences of illegal puppy sales (Turbet 2020). Stories emerged about breeders requesting transfer of funds into bank accounts and then not providing puppies to individuals who had paid for them. Moreover, some breeders were found handing over puppies in MacDonalds car parks, a strategy that avoided breaking lock down restrictions such as not visiting other people's homes and maintaining social distancing. These scenes were starkly reminiscent of a supposedly bygone era of suspect breeders selling their puppies (and sometimes kittens) from the boots of cars. The lock down also prevented dog carers from investigating the conditions where their puppy had been bred – a purportedly key requirement of ethical dog acquisition.

While the demand for puppies grew during the lock down, so too did their prices, with one report suggesting that the cheapest puppies available in Victoria were selling for $5,000 (Kinsella 2020). Other reports found that puppies in Victoria and across Australia were ranging anywhere from $3,000 to $10,000 (Seselja 2020). For those lucky enough to acquire a puppy in this period, paying upwards of

$10,000 was commonplace, particularly for highly sought-after designer dog puppies. Some prospective buyers of designer dog puppies took to online review pages on breeder's websites to complain about the exorbitant prices being charged for cavoodles, groodles and other popular 'oodle' types, accusing breeders of taking advantage of people during the pandemic. Interestingly, breeders responded by suggesting that the high prices of their puppies were influenced by another factor: Victoria's puppy farm legislation. For example, responding to a two star google review, in which a visitor complained of 'price-gouging', one breeder replied by saying:

> Hi, due to government legislation introduced this year we are bound by many laws that
> require a very high level of care and documentation which set the prices.

A review of another Victorian based breeder also complained of the rise in prices for puppies, accusing the breeder of being a puppy farm. This breeder similarly pointed to Victoria's legislation as the reason for their price changes:

> I understand your concern in regards the significant price increase of our puppies. New
> Victorian Legislation regarding dog breeding came into effect on April 10th of this year. This
> has led to a significant increase in our overall costs and a reduction in the number of dogs
> and puppies we breed. Other breeders will likely be affected by this legislation as well.

These responses to concerned customers reflect some of the predictions that were made about Victoria's puppy farm legislation during the puppy farm debate. For example, one MP warned that Victorians would not be able to "…access an affordable family pet cheaply" (Legislative Assembly 2017, p. 4108). Whereas other opponents of the Bill warned of people being denied "…the right to own a pet" (Economy and Infrastructure Committee 2016 p. 39) and cautioned that the "communities' access to puppies…" (Victoria, Legislative Council 2017, p. 6920) would be restricted by the legislation. Whether the increase in puppy prices is as a result of Victoria's legislation, pandemic-driven demand, profiteering breeders or something else entirely is unclear. Nonetheless, some dog breeders are relying on legislation as a justification for increasing prices of their dogs, rhetoric that was evidently introduced while the debate over the legislation took place.

The price of puppies, whether the result of the pandemic, the legislation, or a combination of the two has seen many dog carers unable to access dogs. This has been especially true for people from low socio-economic backgrounds, who have felt "priced out" of the puppy market creating a sense of

"puppy privilege" (Marsellos 2021) wherein well-bred dogs are only available to those that can afford them.

Overall, Victoria's lock down – and those all over the world – have revealed the value and importance of dogs for company and emotional support in a time that has been challenging for so many. However, the pandemic and the associated restrictions on movement have only heightened the contestation that surrounds dog breeding and, specifically acquisition. It has also revealed new problems and areas of concern with many in the dog rescue world anxious about the post-pandemic fate of hundreds of animals adopted in this period. On the one hand, higher dog prices may require prospective dog carers to more carefully consider their capacity to care for a dog. On the other, this does indeed privilege a specific type of dog carer. Moreover, the increase in demand could possibly encourage further backyard breeding or illegal breeding to provide cheaper alternatives as a lucrative business.

this project set out to explore if and how ideas about breed, breeding practices and dog acquisition have shifted following the problematisation of puppy farming in Victoria. Ultimately, this study has highlighted that the puppy farm debate both reflects and reinforces a shift in understandings about the breeding of companion dogs. This has seen some dog types grow in popularity and become more readily accepted as ideal companions. It has also led to greater consciousness amongst the dog caring community, many of whom are more aware of the welfare issues associated with dog breeding and are attempting to make the 'right' choices when acquiring their dogs.

This study has presented a local example of what is persistent problem in other parts of the world. My findings have global relevance for other jurisdictions trying to address the issues of problematic breeding and surges in shelter animal populations. Public educational resources, such as those produced by animal advocacy groups, work to some extent to shift community attitudes about dog breeding, ethics, and acquisition. And yet this study has emphasised that there are also structural, emotional, socio-cultural and market factors that sway decision-making about the acquirement of a dog (as well as the justification of the decision afterwards). This serves to obfuscate the debate over ethics and makes dog acquisition in practice a contested and complex space. Educational approaches to this issue – whether through the work of animal advocacy groups or government – can only do so much to address the problems inherent in dog breeding, which are at their core often governed by human subjectivities that in turn produce arbitrary standards of 'idealness' against which companion dogs are measured.

Regulations, rationalities and ethics around dog breeding, breeds and dog idealness interact with and co-shape human populations. This study has been quite narrow in its focus, primarily looking at dogs kept for companionship in Victoria, Australia. However, the questions and considerations proposed in this work have relevance for other modes of human-dog co-relation (i.e. working, sporting dogs) and for international contexts. In many respects, interactions between human and dog populations are fixated within economic relations. Breeding dogs in particular are forced to perform the labour of reproduction sometimes in horrific conditions to meet market supply. Furthermore, there is something to be said about the labour of *companionship* itself, wherein dogs are always working to meet the expectations of their breed or the expectations of what they have been purchased for (i.e. to be good with children).

How dogs are known, ordered, bred from, considered to be worthy for companionship or consigned to euthanasia is starkly dependent on discursive mechanisms, which have shaped and been shaped by biopolitical logics of power. Positive representations of human-dog relations often ignore the issues of intensive breeding, oversupply and wastage that are perpetual features of the dog breeding industry and human-dog relations. As identified in this work, human perceptions about these issues have begun to shift. However, despite this shift, the mistreatment of dogs in our relations with them endures to some degree. Some critical animal studies work has advocated that dog breeding and by extension pet keeping in all its forms should end. If anything, this thesis has highlighted that this is an unlikely endeavour, as regardless of the means of acquisition humans still want and crave the companionship of dogs. What this thesis can offer, particularly for prospective dog carers is a set of critical questions to ask themselves when acquiring a dog. *Why do I want this type of dog? What discourses, assumptions, and understandings have informed my perception of some types of dogs over others?* The dog acquisition process is often too heavily shrouded in perfunctory determinations about appearance, status, individual validation wants and desire. Our relations with dogs, as with all non-human animals are undoubtedly political ones, shaped through socio-cultural discourses and dynamics of power. But by critically examining these logics of power in our daily and routinised interactions with dogs, and with other dog carers, we can begin to destabilise the normative assumptions we have about dog breeds, breeding and acquisition that so often lead to the mistreatment of companion dogs.

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1. Gender
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Not specified
2. Age
   a. 18 to 24
   b. 25 to 29
   c. 30 to 34
   d. 35 to 39
   e. 40 to 44
   f. 45 to 49
   g. 50 to 54
   h. 55 to 59
   i. 60 to 64
   j. 65 to 69
   k. 70 to 74
   l. 75 to 79
   m. 80 plus
   n.
3. How many dogs do you currently have? (option for multiple drop down boxes from here on so participants can fill out information about each dog they have).
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
   d. 4 or more
   e.
4. What breed is your dog? (option for participants to write in their dog's specific breed)

5. Which one of the following would you describe your dog as?
   a. Pedigree Breed
   b. Designer Breed
   c. Cross Breed
   d. Mixed Breed
   e. Other

6. Why did you select this particular breed of dog? (Participants will be allowed to select multiple options).
   a. Trainability (dog would be easy to train)
   b. Health (breed of dog was known to be healthy and have long life expectancy)
   c. Grooming (breed known to require minimal grooming)
   d. Physical attributes (the appearance of the dog appealed to me)
   e. Exercise (dog required minimal exercise)
   f. Exercise (wanted dog to become a running/exercise companion)
   g. Good with children
   h. Size (wanted a small dog)

      i.   Size (wanted a medium-large dog)
      j.   Intelligence
      k.   Familiarity with the breed (have owned the breed before and found them to be a good companion)
      l.   Allergies (required a hypo-allergenic dog)
      m. Understood pedigree breeds to be better quality dogs
      n.   Understood cross/mixed/designer breeds to be better quality dogs
      o.   Other (option for participant to add additional comments)

7. Did you acquire your dog as a puppy or an adult?
      a.   Puppy
      b.   Adult

8. Where did you acquire your dog?
      a.   Professional Breeder
      b.   Animal Shelter
      c.   Animal Rescue Organisation
      d.   Puppy farm
      e.   Pet Shop
      f.   Gift
      g.   Friends or family
      h.   Backyard breeder
      i.   Other (option for participant to add additional comments)

9. Why did you choose to acquire your dog from this place? (short answer question)

10. If you acquired your dog from a puppy farm, pet shop or backyard breeder, were you aware at the time that this sort of purchase of a puppy is not recommended?
      a.   Yes
      b.   No
      c.   Other (option for participants to add additional comments)

11. If you acquired your dog as a puppy, would you ever consider acquiring an adult dog from a shelter or rescue group?
      a.   Yes
      b.   No
      c.   Why (option for participants to add additional comments).

12. If you acquired your dog from a recuse group or shelter would you ever consider acquiring your dog as puppy from a breeder?
      a.   Yes
      b.   No
      c.   Why (option for participants to add additional comments).

13. How would you rate your overall experience when searching for the right dog for you?
      a.   Extremely good experience
      b.   Good experience
      c.   A somewhat good experience

d. At times a difficult experience
    e. Difficult experience
    f. A very difficult experience

14. What resources did you use when searching for your dog? (participants can select multiple options).
    a. RSPCA Smart dog buyers guide
    b. Information from other animal welfare groups (ie. Oscar's Law, The animal Welfare league)
    c. Advice from a veterinarian
    d. Advice from family and friends
    e. Dogs Online (Pedigree dog breeding website)
    f. Pet Rescue.com or other rescue website ie. Lost Dogs Home
    g. The Trading Post or Gum Tree
    h. Other internet websites
    i. Other (option for participants to add additional comments).

15. Were you at all confused by the advice about ethical dog purchasing?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Additional comments

16. If yes, what in particular have you found to be confusing or difficult? (Short answer question).

17. What attributes are essential to your ideal companion dog?
    a. Dog is easy to train
    b. Dog is a healthy breed that does not require many vet visits
    c. Dog requires minimal time/effort/money on grooming.
    d. Dog requires lots of grooming
    e. Dog needs to be aesthetically pleasing to me (ie. Dog's physical attributes are considered appealing)
    f. Dog requires minimal exercise
    g. Dog wants to go running/ exercise with me
    h. Dog is active and playful
    i. Do is not overly excitable
    j. Dog is good with children
    k. Dog is a small size
    l. Dog is a medium or large size
    m. Dog is intelligent
    n. Dog is hypo-allergenic
    o. Dog is Affectionate
    p. Dog is Independent
    q. Dog behaves well around other dogs
    r. Dog behaves well around strangers
    s. Dog does not jump on people
    t. Dog does not eat its own or other animals faeces
    u. Dog is not aggressive
    v. The dog is purchased as a puppy

w. The dog is rescued from a shelter
x. Dog is not destructive
y. Dog does not excessively bark or howl
z. Dog does not shed excessively
aa. Dog is of pedigree origin
bb. Dog is of cross/mixed/designer origins
cc. Dog can be easily left alone
dd. Dog gets along with other household animals (ie. Other dogs or cats)

18. Overall, how does your dog fit in with your lifestyle? (short answer question)

19. What aspects of your dog's behaviour and personality fit in well with your lifestyle? (short answer question)

20. What aspects of your dog's behaviour and personality conflict with your lifestyle? (short answer question)

21. Are there any behaviours specific to your breed of dog that you find challenging?
        a. Yes
        b. No

22. If yes, what are they? (short answer question)

23. Are there any behaviours specific to your breed that you find rewarding?
        a. Yes
        b. No

24. If yes, what are they? (short answer question)

25. On an average day (a working day such as Monday to Friday), how much time would you estimate you spend with your dog?
        a. 3 hours or less
        b. 6 hours or less
        c. 9 hours or less
        d. 10 or more hours

26. Do you walk your dog every day?
        a. Yes
        b. No
        c. If no, why? (option for additional comments)

27. Do you find your dog's behaviour to be more difficult when they have not had sufficient exercise?
        a. Yes
        b. No
        c. Additional comments

28. When you are not home for long periods, where does your dog spend their time?

     a. Confined to the backyard
     b. Confined to the house
     c. Able to venture inside and outside
     d. With friend or family
     e. Doggy day care
     f. Other (option for additional comments)

29. Where does your dog spend majority of its time when you are home?
     a. Confined to the backyard
     b. Confined to the house
     c. Able to venture inside and outside
     d. Other

30. What are your current living arrangements?
     a. I own my own home
     b. I rent and live alone
     c. I rent and live with a friend/partner/relative
     d. I rent and live in a share home with multiple occupants
     e. Other (comments section)

31. What sort of residence do you reside in?
     a. House (2 or more bedrooms)
     b. Unit
     c. Apartment
     d. Townhouse
     e. Home with acreage
     f. Other (comments section)

32. Has this affected your choice of dog breed?
     a. Yes
     b. No
     c. Other (comments section)

33. If yes, how has this affected your choice of breed? (short answer question)

34. Do you have a backyard?
     a. Yes
     b. No
     c. Other (comments)

35. If no, how would you describe your outdoor space?
     a. Court yard
     b. Shared outdoor apartment/unit area
     c. No outdoor space
     d. Other (comments)

36. Would you describe your outdoor space as adequate for your dog?
     a. Yes

b. No
c. Why? (comments section)

37. How would you rate the level of dog friendly spaces in your community? ie. Off-lead parks/ walking tracks, dog friendly cafes.
    a. Very good
    b. Good
    c. Satisfactory
    d. Unsatisfactory
    e. Highly unsatisfactory

38. Have you ever experience problems with your neighbours or local council because of your dog?
    a. Yes
    b. No

39. If yes, what was the issue? (short answer question)

1. Gender
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Not specified

2. Age
    a. 18 to 24
    b. 25 to 29
    c. 30 to 34
    d. 35 to 39
    e. 40 to 44
    f. 45 to 49
    g. 50 to 54
    h. 55 to 59
    i. 60 to 64
    j. 65 to 69
    k. 70 to 74
    l. 75 to 79
    m. 80 plus

3. What is the highest level of education you have achieved
    a. Less than year 12 or equivalent
    b. Year 12 or equivalent
    c. Vocational Qualification
    d. Associate Diploma
    e. Undergraduate Diploma
    f. Bachelor Degree (including honours)
    g. Master's Degree
    h. Doctorate

4. What is your current employment status?
    a. I have full-time employment
    b. I have part-time employment
    c. I am casually employed
    d. I am self employed
    e. I am employed on a contractual basis
    f. I am currently unemployed and actively seeking work
    g. I am current unemployed and not actively seeking work
    h. I am a student

5. What is your total household income?
    a. Less than $10,000
    b. $10,000 to $19,999

c. $20,000 to $29,999
d. $30,000 to $39,999
e. $40,000 to $49,999
f. $50,000 to $59,999
g. $60,000 to $69,999
h. $70,000 to $79,999
i. $80,000 to $89,999
j. $90,000 to $99,999
k. $100,000 to $149,999
l. $150,000 or more

Lifestyle Questions:

1. What are your current living arrangements?
   a. I own a home
   b. I rent
   c. Other

2. What type of residence do you live in?
   a. House on a small property
   b. House on a large property
   c. Unit
   d. Apartment
   e. Townhouse
   f. Other

3. Who do you currently live with?
   a. I live alone
   b. I live with family (including children, partner)
   c. I live with a partner
   d. I live with my parents or other relatives
   e. I live with housemates/friends
   f. Other

4. Do you have a backyard?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Other

5. If no or other, how would you describe your outdoor space?
   a. Court yard
   b. Shared outdoor apartment/unit area
   c. No outdoor space
   d. Other

Designer Dog specific Questions:

1. What types of designer dog(s) do you have? (multiple answers can be selected if participant has multiple dogs)
   a. Puggle
   b. Pugalier
   c. Jug
   d. Cavoodle
   e. Schnoodle
   f. Groodle
   g. Labradoodle
   h. Schmoodle
   i. Moodle
   j. Cockapoo
   k. Cavador
   l. Beaglier
   m. Spoodle
   n. Huskador
   o. Poochon
   p. Goldalor
   q. Spanalier
   r. Other (qualitative response)

2. Where did you get your dog(s)? (Multiple answer selection in case participant has multiple dogs from different locations).
   a. Small-scale registered breeder
   b. Large-scale registered breeder
   c. Backyard Breeder (non-registered breeder)
   d. Pet Shop
   e. Puppy Farm
   f. Friends or Family
   g. Gift
   h. Pound, Shelter or Rescue Group
   i. Online
   j. Other (qualitative option available)

3. Why did you chose to acquire your dog from this place? (qualitative response)

4. Was your dog(s) acquired as a puppy?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Other (qualitative option available)

5. (If yes to above question) Were you able to meet your puppy's parents (mother and/or father) before you brought them home?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Other (qualitative option available)

6. What appealed to you about getting a designer dog(s)? (qualitative response)

7. What resources did you use when researching and choosing your dog(s)? (multiple options can be selected)
    a. RSPCA Smart Dog Buyers Guide
    b. Information from other animal welfare groups
    c. Advice from a veterinarian
    d. Advice from family and friends
    e. Information from other internet websites
    f. No research conducted
    g. Other (qualitative option available)

8. Where did you first see your dog(s) advertised? (Multiple options can be selected)
    a. Specific breeders website
    b. The Trading Post or Gum Tree
    c. Local newspaper
    d. Pet Rescue or other animal rescue website
    e. Other internet websites
    f. In a pet shop
    g. Other (qualitative option available)

9. Have you ever had any negative experiences with others because of your decision to get a designer dog(s)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes

10. (If yes or sometimes is selected for the above question)What was the negative experience? (qualitative response)

11. Have you ever had any positive experiences with others because of your decision to get a designer dog(s)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes

12. (If yes or sometimes is selected for the above question) What was the positive experience? (qualitative response)

13. Have you ever experienced any exceptional issue with your dog (ie. Health, behavioural)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes

14. (If yes or sometimes is selected for above question) What was the issue? (qualitative response)

15. Would you agree that there are negative connotations attached to the term 'designer dog'?
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree

c. Neither agree or disagree
d. Disagree
e. Strongly disagree

16. (In reference to above question) Why is this your belief about the connotations attached to <u>the term</u> 'designer dog'? (qualitative response)

17. What is the preferable term you would like to see attached to designer dogs?
    a. Designer dog is fine
    b. Cross breed
    c. Mixed breed
    d. I am Impartial
    e. Other (qualitative response available)

18. (in reference to above question) Why is this the term you would like to see attached to designer dogs? (qualitative response)

19. Would you agree that there are any negative connotations attached to designer dogs themselves?
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree or Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly disagree

20. (in reference to above question) Why do you think this might be the case? (qualitative response)

21. On an average day (a working day such as Monday to Friday), how much time would you estimate you spend with your dog?
    a. 1 hour or less
    b. 3 hours or less
    c. 6 hours or less
    d. 9 hours or less
    e. 10 or more hours

22. Do you walk or exercise (through playing, training etc.) your dog every day?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes

23. How likely is it that you would continue to select a designer dog(s) in the future to be your companion dog?
    a. Highly likely
    b. Likely
    c. Neither likely or unlikely
    d. Unlikely
    e. Highly unlikely

24. (in reference to above question) Why is this the case? (qualitative response)

1. Tell me a little about the history and background of this shelter, as well as your general operations

2. What sort of companion dogs does your shelter/rescue organisation primarily take in (ie. do you regularly receive certain types of breed)?

3. Are you generally pleased about the level of smaller scale and breed specific rescue groups that have begun operating in recent years? Why, Why not?

4. To the best of your knowledge how do these dogs come into shelter and rescue (ie. are they surrendered, abandoned etc.)?

5. In your experience, what are some of the main factors that lead people to surrender their dogs to shelters and rescue groups?

6. Would you agree or disagree that majority of the dogs in shelters and rescue within the state come from puppy farms? Why, why not?

7. Do the majority of dogs that come into shelter/rescue exhibit behavioural problems?

8. What sort of behavioural problems do they have?

9. What are the main challenges you face with adopting out some of your dogs?

10. Do you think most of the dogs that come into your shelter/rescue group are compatible with majority of prospective adoptees lifestyles?

11. From some of the data I have already collected from dog owners, some have indicated that while they have purchased a puppy they initially tried to adopt but found the process extremely bureaucratic and difficult. Is this something you find adoptees struggle with here, and do you think there are issues in the rescue industries processes?

12. In your experience, do you find people generally prefer to acquire a dog from puppyhood? Why, why not?

13. In your experience, do you think the mentality surrounding shelter animals is beginning to change? Would you agree that it is becoming 'fashionable' or my 'ethical' to rescue a dog? Why, why not?

14.   Do you recognise why some people may still prefer to purchase a puppy? Or do you think all people should consider adoption first?

15.   What do you understand ethical breeding to be? Should we continue to breed dogs for sale when we have homeless dogs in shelters?