



Queensland Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Breeding Dogs and their Progeny



Queensland
Government

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PREFACE

The *Queensland animal welfare standards and guidelines for breeding dogs and their progeny* were developed as an initiative of the Queensland Government in consultation with RSPCA Queensland, the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission and Dogs Queensland. The standards provide minimum requirements for persons responsible for the breeding of dogs.

By adhering to these standards, persons involved in the breeding of dogs demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of the dogs in their care.

The standards will be revised from time to time to take into account new knowledge of dog physiology and behaviour, technological advances, developments in standards of dog welfare and changing community attitudes and expectations about the humane treatment of breeding dogs.



Part A

INTRODUCTION



Purpose

This document describes standards and guidelines for the care and management of breeding dogs and their progeny that:

- allow dog breeders to meet their duty of care
- promote positive animal welfare management practices for breeding dogs and their progeny.

These standards and guidelines recognise that breeding dogs and their progeny have specific needs and require specialised care and management.

Scope

The document includes standards for the treatment, management and handling of dogs kept for breeding and their progeny.

The standards and guidelines apply to everyone involved with breeding dogs and raising puppies.

This document is not intended to apply to organisations such as Council pounds, shelters or temporary emergency accommodation where bitches and their progeny may be temporarily housed. However, all dogs in these circumstances must be managed in accordance with the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* (ACPA).

Interpretation

Each numbered section of the document covers a particular topic (water and feed, etc.) and contains the following information:

Animal welfare objective — the intended outcome(s) for the section of the standards and guidelines.

Standards — the animal welfare requirements designated in this document (i.e. the requirements that must be met under law for dog welfare purposes). The standards are intended to be clear, essential and verifiable statements. However, not all issues are able to be quantified or well defined by scientific research. Science cannot always provide an objective or precise assessment of an animal's welfare and, consequently, where appropriate science is not available, the standards reflect a value judgement that has to be made in some circumstances. Standards use the word 'must'. They are presented in a box and are numbered with the prefix 'S'.

The standards are intended to be adopted as compulsory codes of practice under the ACPA.

Guidelines — the recommended practices to achieve desirable animal welfare outcomes. Guidelines use the word 'should' and complement the standards. Noncompliance with one or more guidelines will not necessarily constitute an offence under law.

Note: further detail on breeding dog management practices can be found in other industry and government publications.

DEFINITIONS

Bitch: - the female animal of the species *Canis lupus familiaris*

Breeding - the mating of dogs and the production of puppies.

Desexing/spaying - the surgical removal of the gonads for the purpose of making an animal incapable of reproducing.

Enrichment – the provision of an environment that ensures a dog’s physical, psychological and behavioural needs are being met.

Facility - the location used for the accommodation or shelter of breeding dogs, or used to house puppies following breeding.

Housing - the area where the breeding dog lives when in a confined area. This can include a specially built facility or an area at a residence of the person in charge.

Humane killing - the activity that results in rapid loss of consciousness and then death of the dog whilst still unconscious.

Person in charge - defined by Section 12 of the ACPA means:

1. A person is a person in charge of an animal if the person—
 - a. owns or has a lease, licence or other proprietary interest in the animal; or
 - b. has the custody of the animal; or
 - c. is employing or has engaged someone else who has the custody of the animal and the custody is within the scope of the employment or engagement.
2. Despite subsection (1)(a), a person who holds a mortgage or other security interest in an animal only becomes a person in charge of the animal if the person takes a step to enforce the mortgage or other security.

Rehome - the process of providing a dog with a new owner and/or a new place to live.

Significant infectious or transmissible disease - a disease that is likely to cause illness or death in susceptible dogs that become infected. Common examples include kennel cough, canine parvovirus, canine infectious hepatitis, heartworm and canine distemper.

Skeletal maturity - the age at which the skeleton has reached adult size (assessed by closure of the growth plates of the major long bones).

Staff - includes any person who works at the facility whether or not for fee or reward.

Stereotypic behaviour - any (abnormal) pattern of action and attitude assumed by a dog, such as a movement or sequence of movements repeated with little or no variation and which has no obvious purpose. These behaviours may include, but are not limited to:

- circling
- pacing
- air biting
- whirling
- jumping
- wall bouncing
- repetitive grooming or self-biting
- excessive drinking or urinating
- increased food consumption
- coprophagia (faeces eating)
- compulsive staring
- increased aggression
- destructive behaviour
- persistent whining and barking.

Whelping - the act of giving birth to puppies.

LEGISLATION AND RELATED CODES OF PRACTICE AND GUIDELINES

The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* places a duty of care on the person in charge of a dog to properly care for the dog and provide for its needs.

Compliance with these Standards does not remove the need to comply with the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, local laws, or the *Animal Management (Cat and Dog) Act 2008* or subordinate legislation.



Part B

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

RESPONSIBILITIES

Animal Welfare Objective

The person in charge of an animal is aware and accepts their responsibilities and has the skills and ability to care for breeding dogs and their progeny.

Standard

S.1 A person must exercise a duty of care¹ when breeding dogs.

Guidelines

G.1 The person in charge should have knowledge and skills in dog care and management, or be under the supervision of a person who has the knowledge and skills in dog care and management.

G.2 The person in charge should understand:

- canine behaviour and social needs
- the special nutritional requirements for pregnant and lactating bitches
- the special requirements for whelping a bitch and identifying when help is needed, including the need for prompt veterinary care
- the normal behaviour of pups including milestones (e.g. when eyes open, when ears open etc.)
- the safe management of new introductions
- the requirements for appropriate housing for a dog, including re-homing a dog
- dog husbandry and management, including handling, controlling, moving, transporting, and training a dog
- signs of health and ill health in a dog, including identifying signs of stress and when prompt veterinary care is required
- the correct procedures for the care of a sick and/or injured dog
- the special requirements of a young dog including diet, exercise and socialising
- disease and parasite control and prevention
- all relevant record keeping requirements.

¹ Duty of care is defined in the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

RECORD KEEPING

Animal Welfare Objective

Record keeping assists to demonstrate that welfare standards are achieved and with the provision of accurate historical data on individual dogs.

Standard

S.2 A facility that houses a total of five or more entire bitches that are of breeding age and maturity must keep records on each dog housed. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years, or the life of the dog, and must include records that demonstrate welfare outcomes have been achieved, for example:

- microchip number unless exempt under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*
- vaccination history
- worming and parasite control history
- health issues and treatments received
- veterinarian/s consulted for any health issues
- date of birth, if known
- the identity of parents, if known
- results of health testing carried out (e.g. DNA testing, X-rays, CT scans etc.)
- dates of mating and whelping
- number of puppies born, including any still births and deaths of pups before eight weeks of age (and reason for death, if known)
- date of death and reason, if known.

Guidelines

- G.3** Records should be kept for all breeding dogs and their progeny.
- G.4** Records should include the age of the dam and sire at mating.
- G.5** A full copy of a dog's record should be provided with transfer of ownership.

BREEDING AND REARING

Animal Welfare Objective

The breeding, birthing and rearing processes are managed to ensure good dog welfare outcomes, to maintain genetic diversity, reduce heritable diseases through using available testing methods (e.g. DNA) and minimise the production of surplus dogs.

Standards

- S.3** A bitch must not, without reasonable excuse, be mated unless the dog is—
- physically mature; and
 - fit and healthy; or
 - the person has written approval by a veterinary surgeon that the dog has been examined by the veterinary surgeon, and the veterinary surgeon reasonably considers the dog is ready for breeding.

A person in charge of an undesexed dog must ensure the dog is not used for breeding with—

- the dog's progeny; or
 - a parent or sibling of the dog.
- S.4** When whelping, a bitch must:
- be able to withdraw from other animals
 - be monitored to ensure that any adverse consequences are detected early and corrective action provided.
- S.5** A dog with an exhibited deleterious heritable condition that has the potential to adversely impact on the welfare of the progeny must not be used for breeding, unless with the written approval of a veterinarian or geneticist.

S.6 A puppy must be accustomed to food other than its mother's milk before being rehomed.

S.7 The extra nutritional requirements of pregnant and lactating bitches must be met.

S.8 Veterinary treatment must be sought for:

- a bitch that has an abnormal vulval discharge
- bitches with swollen, red and hot, painful, or ulcerated mammary glands, or glands that have abnormal discharge from the nipples
- whelping bitches where the whelping does not appear to be proceeding as it should
- lactating bitches that are exhibiting excessive or rapid weight loss or showing any other abnormal behaviour
- pups that are not gaining weight or otherwise appear unwell
- pups that have gross or structural abnormalities e.g. cleft palate.

Guidelines

Breeding

- G.6** Breeding with close relatives (grandparent, cousin etc.) should only be undertaken with the full understanding of the health or welfare consequences that might occur.
- G.7** A bitch that has previously produced a litter by caesarean section should not be mated unless veterinary advice has been sought which indicates that she is fit for future breeding.
- G.8** A puppy less than six weeks of age should not be permanently separated from its mother unless approved by a veterinarian.
- G.9** A bitch in season that is not intended for breeding should be kept separate from entire male dogs.
- G.10** A dog that is aggressive to humans or other dogs, or excessively nervous, should not be used for breeding and should be desexed.
- G.11** Bitches over eight years of age should be assessed by a veterinarian as suitable for breeding before mating.
- G.12** Bitches should only be mated on consecutive oestrus cycles with the approval of a veterinarian. A bitch should not be allowed to have more than two litters in an 18 month period.
- G.13** During mating, the breeding pair should be monitored and isolated from other dogs.
- G.14** A pregnant bitch should be provided with a suitable separate whelping area, large enough for the potential number of pups and to enable the bitch to lie flat, which is clean, dry and contains suitable bedding.
- G.15** A bitch should only be allowed to breed when there is a reasonable expectation of finding suitable homes for each puppy.

- G.16** A dog that is not intended for breeding, has reached the end of its useful breeding life, or is assessed as unsuitable for breeding, should be:
 - desexed (or otherwise prevented from breeding)
 - kept as a pet; or
 - rehomed to a suitable owner — where the health and temperament of the dog have been assessed as suitable for rehoming; or
 - humanely killed if not suitable for rehoming.

Rearing and weaning

- G.17** A lactating bitch should be provided with the ability to rest and withdraw from her puppies.
- G.18** A puppy that does not achieve regular weight gain should receive veterinary assessment.
- G.19** Pups with structural deformities, abnormal behaviour, or significant injuries should be inspected by a veterinarian for assessment and provided with appropriate treatment. Appropriate treatment may include humane killing.
- G.20** Veterinary advice should be sought if a puppy's eyes have not opened naturally between seven and 14 days of age and its ears begun to unfold naturally between 18 and 20 days of age.
- G.21** By eight weeks of age, a breeder should be offering a puppy at least three meals per day. Breeders should supply instructions to new owners regarding feeding programs and supply food to ensure changes in the diet occur gradually.
- G.22** A puppy should not be rehomed before eight weeks of age. It should have received its first vaccination before going to its new home.

ENRICHMENT and SOCIALISATION

Animal Welfare Objective

A dog is provided with stimulation that encourages physical, cognitive and psychological well-being, promotes fitness and prevents the development of inappropriate behaviours.

Standards

- S.9** A dog must be given social interaction with humans at least once per day.
- S.10** A dog must receive a variety of enrichment to ensure its physical, cognitive and psychological well-being.

Guidelines

- G.23** A dog should be provided social contact with other dogs through:
 - group housing with socially compatible dogs where possible; and
 - allowing a dog controlled/supervised contact with other dogs during exercise periods.
- G.24** A dog should receive human social contact from an early age through a range of activities including daily grooming, playing, stroking, training and being talked to.
- G.25** A puppy should be gradually habituated to a range of experiences and handled from three weeks of age.
- G.26** A dog that is kept separate from other dogs should be provided with additional enrichment such as socialisation with humans.
- G.27** A dog should be monitored regularly for signs of abnormal behaviour (e.g. stereotypic behaviour) which may indicate frustration, a lack of fitness or poor mental or physical health and a veterinary, enrichment and socialisation program developed and implemented to address the cause.
- G.28** A dog with persistent abnormal behaviours should be assessed and treated by a veterinarian or other person with experience in behavioural problems in dogs.
- G.29** Enrichment programs should provide complexity, choice and change, and may include providing:
 - physical enrichment - space, substrate and furniture to encourage appropriate canine behaviours
 - occupational enrichment - objects for a dog to manipulate (e.g. toys)
 - feeding enrichment - feed activities, novel food items and feeding devices to increase foraging times (e.g. hiding food to increase activity). Care should be taken to ensure these feeds are part of the normal diet, rather than in addition, in order to decrease the likelihood of obesity
 - sensory enrichment - novel smells or noises
 - physiological enrichment - temperatures, humidity and photoperiods to stimulate natural behaviour patterns
 - social enrichment - opportunities to interact with other dogs, humans or other compatible animals
 - behavioural enrichment - positive reinforcement training appropriate to the age and breed of the dog should be used to facilitate physical exercise, mental stimulation and learning of cooperative behaviours
 - exercise – providing appropriate and regular opportunity to exercise.

DOG HEALTH, VETERINARY CARE and MANAGEMENT

Animal Welfare Objective

A dog's health is monitored, appropriate veterinary care is provided for disease, illness, injury and distress and appropriate preventative health regimes are in place.

A dog is managed in a manner that provides for its safety and wellbeing.

Standards

- S.11** A dog must be monitored daily for signs of disease, injury or distress and receive appropriate treatment.
- S.12** A dog that appears to be sick with a condition that may be transmissible must be isolated unless advised otherwise by a veterinarian.
- S.13** A dog must be groomed regularly and not have a dirty, matted or tangled coat that affects its health, mobility or general wellbeing.

Guidelines

- G.30** A dog used, or intended to be used, for breeding should receive an annual health check by a veterinarian.
- G.31** A dog suffering from a severe injury should be treated according to veterinary advice.
- G.32** A dog's physical body condition score should be maintained at a score level appropriate to its breed, age, reproduction status and other considerations. Appendix 1 provides guidance on body condition score.
- G.33** A dog should be inspected for signs of good health including:
 - eating and drinking normally (suckling in puppies)
 - defaecating and urinating normally
 - behaving normally and not showing any obvious signs of illness or distress
 - moving freely.
- G.34** A dog should be inspected for signs of illness, injury or distress including:
 - eye or ear discharge or inflammation
 - mastitis (swollen, red, painful mammary tissue)
 - repeated sneezing, coughing or vomiting
 - severe diarrhoea (especially if bloodstained) or difficulty in defaecating
 - difficulty in urinating, or passing red or brown coloured urine
 - lameness, difficulty or inability to stand or walk and/or reluctance to move
 - bleeding or swelling of body parts (other than the vulva of a female in heat)
 - loss of appetite and weight loss, particularly if severe or sudden
 - drinking excessive amounts of water
 - apparent pain
 - fits, staggering or convulsions
 - patchy hair loss
 - bloating of the abdomen
 - depression
 - fever
 - presence of external parasites
 - teeth, gum and mouth problems;
 - excessive itching, scratching and/or self-chewing
 - any other serious physical or behavioural abnormality.

- G.35** A bitch in the last week of pregnancy should be checked at least every eight hours for any signs of distress or abnormal behaviour, and for the last 48 hours before whelping a bitch should be checked every two hours.
- G.36** A dog should have an appropriate preventative program for the control of infectious diseases and parasites.
- G.37** Unexplained deaths should be investigated by a veterinarian.
- G.38** The contact details for a veterinarian should be readily available.
- G.39** The person in charge should establish a relationship with a veterinarian who will be responsible for the care of sick dogs and for preventative care.
- G.40** A pregnant bitch should receive a minimum of one health check during the pregnancy by a veterinarian.
- G.41** A puppy should be vaccinated against preventable diseases and wormed in accordance with veterinary advice.
- G.42** A puppy should be socialised appropriately to develop cooperative behaviours, for example allowing mouth checks and foot and nail care.
- G.43** A dog breeder should attempt to ensure that when selling a dog it goes to a responsible owner who has the means to provide for the needs of the dog in an appropriate way.



FOOD AND WATER

Animal Welfare Objective

Dogs are provided with appropriate food and water to meet their physiological needs and promote good animal welfare.

Standards

- S.14** Dogs must have constant access to clean drinking water of a quality and quantity that meets their physiological needs.
- S.15** Dogs must be provided with a complete diet sufficient to maintain good health, growth, and appropriate to the stage of physiological development and reproductive status.
- S.16** Adult dogs must receive food at least once in any 24 hour period.

Guidelines

- G.44** Food and water containers must be free of contaminants. Examples of contamination include: urine, faeces, vomitus or other substance that may be harmful to dogs.
- G.45** Food and water containers should be readily accessible to dogs and be positioned to avoid spillage or contamination by urine or faeces.
- G.46** Food and water containers should be stable, non-toxic and easily cleaned/disinfected.
- G.47** One feeding bowl should be provided for each dog.
- G.48** Bitches in the latter stages of pregnancy and during lactation should be provided with additional access to food and water, provided at frequent intervals.
- G.49** Food should be prepared hygienically and served in clean, non-spillable containers that prevent access by vermin.
- G.50** Food should be stored in a manner that prevents deterioration or contamination.
- G.51** Dogs between three weeks and four months of age should be provided with access to food a minimum of three times per day.
- G.52** Dogs housed in groups should be monitored during feeding to ensure that all receive an adequate diet and to prevent bullying.
- G.53** Dogs that are unable to feed themselves should only be kept where facilities and expertise is available for artificial rearing or feeding.
- G.54** The transition of puppies to solid food should be well-managed:
 - solid food should be offered to puppies from three weeks of age
 - puppies should be monitored when first offered solid food to ensure that the food is acceptable and palatable.
- G.55** Uneaten spoiled or stale food should be removed and disposed of daily.
- G.56** The period between providing food to dogs less than four months of age should not exceed 12 hours.
- G.57** Dogs four to six months of age should be fed a minimum of twice daily.
- G.58** Veterinary advice should be sought regarding an adequate intake of calcium during pregnancy, lactation, and in the feeding of puppies.
- G.59** By eight weeks of age, puppies should be weaned and eating at least three meals per day of an age specific diet e.g. specially formulated puppy food.
- G.60** Breeders should supply instructions to new owners regarding feeding regimes and supply food to ensure changes in the diet occur gradually.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

Animal Welfare Objective

Housed dogs are provided with a clean and secure environment that provides for wellbeing, good health, safety, disease prevention and protection from the weather.

Standards

S.17 Housing and exercise areas must be maintained in a clean state and appropriate for the health and welfare of a dog.

Guidelines

Housing

- G.61** Dogs housed for breeding should not be confined in housing less than the minimum space requirements shown in Appendix 2, unless alternative housing is provided under the direction of a veterinarian.
- G.62** A dog should be provided with a clean and dry dedicated sleeping area. Sleeping areas should have sufficient clean, hygienic, dry and soft bedding to insulate a dog from the floor.
- G.63** Housing should provide sufficient space to allow a dog to defecate and urinate away from eating and sleeping areas.
- G.64** A dog should not be in extended contact with wet floors.
- G.65** Housing should provide protection from rain and wind, direct sunlight, extreme temperatures or other adverse conditions.
- G.66** Housing should provide sufficient ventilation to maintain the health of the dog and minimise undue draughts, odours and moisture condensation.

- G.67** All potential poisons and harmful substances, whether in storage or in use, should be kept out of reach of a dog.
- G.68** Housing and perimeter barriers should be secure to prevent a dog from escaping.
- G.69** Exercise areas should contain a grassed area and not be bare earth or entirely concrete.
- G.70** The area where a puppy is being reared should be cleaned at least twice a day, and kept dry and free of faeces, urine and uneaten food.
- G.71** A bitch with dependent young or about to give birth should be housed singly in a quiet, warm and dry area isolated from other animals.

Environment

- G.72** Temperature should be controlled to minimise distress to a dog. This includes ensuring warmth or the ability to keep cool, particularly for puppies and pregnant and lactating bitches.
- G.73** Breeding dogs prone to heat stress should be monitored carefully to minimise distress.
- G.74** Housing should be located away from sources of excessive noise or pollution that could stress or injure dogs.
- G.75** Appropriate measures should be in place to protect a dog from loud or sudden noise such as fireworks or explosions.
- G.76** Artificial lighting should mimic the prevailing natural light cycles in duration and intensity and allow effective inspection and observation of dogs.

Security

- G.77** Housing should be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by a dog and prevents access by unauthorised persons.
- G.78** The facility should have a documented emergency evacuation procedure. The procedure should be reviewed every two years.
- G.79** Functioning firefighting equipment should be readily available.

Hygiene and cleaning

- G.80** The following measures will assist in keeping housing and exercise areas in a reasonably clean state:
 - collection drains should be cleaned daily
 - waste products such as faeces, urine and food waste should be disposed of promptly and hygienically
 - bedding that is contaminated by faeces, urine, food scraps or dirt should be replaced
 - bedding should be kept clean and laundered
 - the birthing area should be cleaned appropriately.
- G.81** Food preparation and storage areas should be clean and free from insects and vermin. This is especially important when preparing raw foods.
- G.82** The person in charge should have a program in place to control insects, ecto-parasites and vertebrate pests.
- G.83** Housing should be cleaned with a kennel safe disinfectant before a new dog is introduced and before whelping.



HUMANE KILLING ²

Animal Welfare Objective

When a dog is required to be killed, it is done humanely.

Standards

S.18 When the decision is made to kill a dog it must be done humanely.

Guidelines

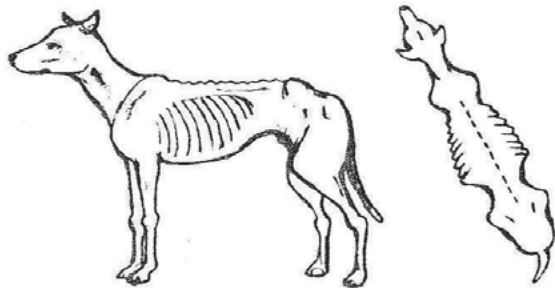
- G.84 Humane killing should be carried out by a veterinarian.
- G.85 Dogs that are suffering and are unable or impractical to be treated should be humanely killed.
- G.86 Humane killing should not be used as a routine means of managing unwanted breeding dogs and progeny.
- G.87 Dogs should not be killed in view (or within hearing) of other dogs.

² Under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* a person is taken to be cruel to an animal if the person:

- kills an animal in a way that is inhumane; or
- causes it not to die quickly; or
- causes it to die in unreasonable pain.

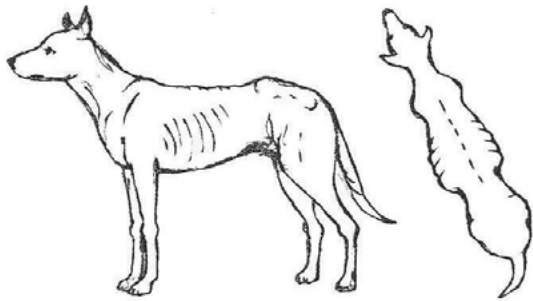
APPENDIX 1

Body Condition Score



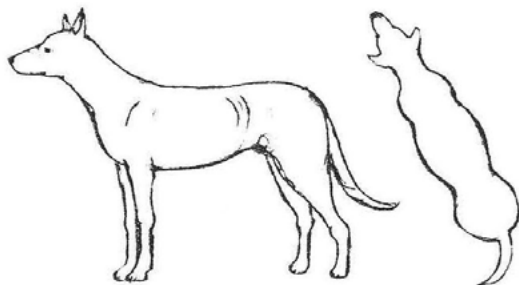
Condition score 1

- Ribs, spine and pelvis prominent
- Hollow rump
- Prominent waist when viewed from above
- Severely tucked up abdomen
- Neck thin and bony
- Sunken eyes



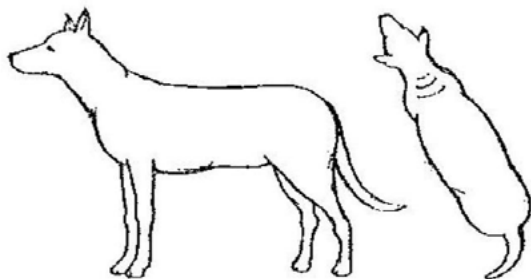
Condition score 2

- Ribs, spine and pelvis visible
- Abdomen tucked up
- Obvious waist when viewed from above
- Neck thin



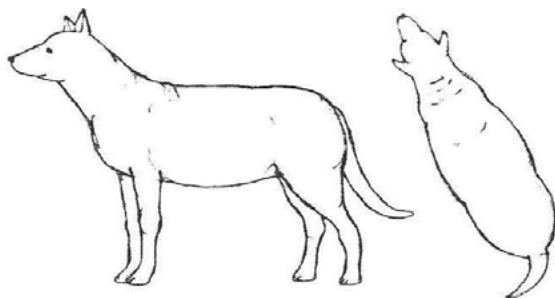
Condition score 3

- Ribs and spine can be felt
- Rounded rump
- Dog should have a waist when viewed from above
- Good muscle mass



Condition score 4

- Ribs and spine not visible but can be felt
- Fat deposit on tail
- Little or no waist when viewed from above
- Abdomen appears slightly rounded



Condition score 5

- Ribs and spine not visible and difficult to feel
- Tail has obvious fat deposit
- No waist and back broadened
- Abdomen rounded and possibly distended
- Obvious fat deposits

APPENDIX 2

Minimum space requirements for housing a dog

The spatial requirements apply to the keeping of a dog older than 16 weeks of age or a breeding bitch accompanied by her progeny.

Height of dog measured at shoulder (cm)	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Minimum width (m)	Minimum height (m)	Increased floor area for each dog 8–16 weeks of age (m ²)
> 70	15	2.40	1.80	1.5
41 to 70	10	1.80	1.80	1.0
Up to 40	6	1.40	1.80	0.5

Reference: Gold Coast City Council, *Code of practice for the keeping and breeding of entire cats and dogs*. Available from www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/attachment/factsheets/breeder-code-practice.pdf