



Endangered Dog Breeds Association of Australia

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MEDIA RELEASE

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DOG ATTACK SHOWS THAT BREED BANS ARE INEFFECTIVE

According to The Endangered Dog Breeds Association (EDBA) the recent dog attack on Sydney toddler Jacob Kent by a Japanese Akita, provides further evidence that breed bans are ineffective as a means of reducing dog attacks.

The government's own figures show that focusing on a narrow group of owners of virtually one breed or type will not provide any immunity from dog bites in the community. Identifying dangerous dogs by breed and applying penalties in a blanket breed based approach not only misses the central issues of dog problems but punishes responsible owners along with irresponsible owners.

Breed bans do not address the recurrent patterns of irresponsible or uneducated dog ownership associated with dog attacks. Measures taken need to address human ownership practices, as dogs of many breeds and crosses appear in dog attack statistics, yet no single, or even group of breeds, have been shown to account for the majority of dog attacks in Australia.

Minister Kerry Hickey's sensationalistic statements last year with regard to the American Pit Bull Terrier, the only restricted breed known to be in Australia in any significant number, were both misleading and unfounded. Of dog-related Australian fatalities, only one could possibly be attributed to a pit bull type dog. This was in Toowoomba, Queensland in 1996. Whilst widely reported as a pit bull, this dog was in fact registered with Toowoomba council as a Labrador cross and was a crossbred of unknown parentage.

While Opposition spokesman John Turner calls for a review of the list of restricted breeds in NSW with the view to expand it, the EDBA continues to urge the government to conduct an inquiry into the efficacy of such breed specific laws to significantly reduce dog attacks. Similar legislation targeting specific breeds have failed to reduce the incidence of dog attacks throughout Europe, the United States, and even other Australian states. The EDBA suggests that the problem would be better addressed if the non-breed specific existing laws pertaining to dog containment and control were more rigorously enforced, and harsher penalties were applied to owners who know their dogs are vicious or whose dogs are repeat offenders.

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