

## ***Dogs in Society Position Paper***

### **Pit Bull Identification Template**

Queensland state legislation encompasses laws relating to the keeping of restricted dog breeds and specifies that permits are required to keep Pit Bull Terriers and their crosses and types. The legislation sets a minimum standard of enforcement for Pit Bulls, although more stringent council by-laws over-ride the state-based legislation. Some councils have chosen in favour of introducing highly restrictive by-laws, such as total prohibition of Pit Bulls,

The Restricted Dog Legislation allows for authorised officers to identify restricted breeds. This has made it necessary for Rangers to gain skills in identifying restricted breeds and in particular Pit Bulls. The South-East Queensland Region of Councils (SEQROC) developed the Pit Bull Identification Template to assist Local government rangers in the identification of Pit Bull Terriers.

The template comprises a number of criteria that build up a primarily visual assessment of each dog. Two rangers score each dog and a photo match is also required. The points for each criteria are added to give a total score. The higher the score the more compliant with a Pit Bull type the dog is considered to be. Scores above a threshold level are considered to be definitive proof of breed.

ACAC is concerned that the Pit Bull Identification Template remains a very subjective means of determining a dog's breed. Breeds that closely resemble Pit Bull Terriers, such as the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, and a range of cross breeds, are difficult to distinguish using this protocol. It is also difficult to apply the template to dogs under 9-12 months of age.

ACAC does not support bans or restrictions on dogs, based solely on the basis of their breed or appearance, on the grounds that such regulation is ineffective, difficult to enforce and discriminatory.