

Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries
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Wednesday, 23 September, 2009

Negligent dog and cat breeders face Strict Penalties under New Code

A raft of changes designed to improve animal welfare in NSW will come into effect this week, Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, announced today.

“These important changes are about bringing the industry into line with society’s expectations on animal welfare – there is no room for negligence,” Minister Macdonald said.

“All people breeding cats and dogs for sale must meet minimum animal husbandry standards set out in the *Animal Welfare Code of Practice - Breeding Dogs and Cats*.

“About 53 per cent of Australian households are home to a cat or dog and many of these are bred in commercial situations that fall under this code.

“From Friday commercial dog and cat breeders must meet strengthened animal welfare standards - including fines of up to \$2,750 - that will be enforced by the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League.”

The new standards include:

- Written information must be provided to each purchaser to ensure that they are aware of pet ownership responsibilities, eg food, care and shelter requirements;
- Three day refund (50%) offered in writing at the time of purchase;
- Animals must not be intentionally mated during the wrong parts of their cycles.
- A dog or cat must be physically and mentally fit, healthy and free of disease at the time of being mated;
- Female dogs must not have more than two litters in any two year period, unless with the written approval of a vet; and
- Female cats must not have more than three litters in any two year period, unless with the written approval of a vet.

“The *Animal Welfare Code of Practice - Breeding Dogs and Cats* is the culmination of more than 12 months consultation with industry and enforcement agencies,” Minister Macdonald said.

“It clearly outlines minimum standards that must be met by commercial breeders planning to sell a litter, and industry best practice requirements that breeders should aspire to meet.

“Most breeders already meet the high standards set out in the code, but those not meeting the new standards must now lift their game.”

The *Animal Welfare Code of Practice - Breeding Dogs and Cats* is supported by Dogs NSW, Waratah Cat Alliance, Australian Veterinary Association NSW, the Pet Industry Association and enforcement agencies.

The code can be found at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/codes/general/breeding-dogs-and-cats>

Pet Statistics:

- In Australia in 2007 \$2.75 billion (58.2%) was spent on dogs and \$1.31 (27.6%) on cats
 - An estimated 13.4 million pets in NSW/ACT in 2007, 37 million in Australia
 - 3.7 million dogs in Australia, 2.2 million cats, 7.8 million birds, 20.5 million fish and 2.9 million other pets such as pleasure horses, rabbits and guinea pigs
 - Total pet ownership in Australia is one of the highest in the world, with 63% of 7.5 million households owning at least one pet, USA is 62%
 - In 2007 \$4.74 billion was spent by Australians on pet care products and services, up from \$3.326 billion in 1998
 - About 44,000 people are employed in the Australian pet industry, both directly and indirectly
 - 30% of pet industry employment is in veterinary services, 26% in service provision, 19% in retailing of pet products and 15% in the manufacture of pet food
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