

Australian Capital Territory

Animal Welfare (Welfare of Cats in the ACT) Code of Practice 2007

Disallowable instrument DI2007–67

made under the

Animal Welfare Act 1992, s 22 (Codes of practice)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 22 of the *Animal Welfare Act 1992* provides that the Minister may approve a code of practice relating to animal welfare.

The *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats in the ACT* has been prepared by the ACT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

The provisions of the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Cats in the ACT are detailed below under the title of the appropriate section:

Introduction—the purpose of this Code of Practice is to provide general guidelines on the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care that are appropriate to the cat.

Responsible Ownership:

Urban Cats—identifies that a person in charge of a cat has duties and responsibilities towards that cat to ensure that the emotional and physical needs of the cat are taken into account.

Desexing—refers to the legislative requirements in regard to desexing a cat as required by the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*.

Owner Absences—outlines actions an owner should consider prior to being absent from caring for their cat for a period of time.

Identification—establishes the minimum identification requirements required by the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*.

Cats Kept for Pest Control—identifies that some cats are kept for the specific purpose of pest control on a property. This provision identifies that these cats still need basic nutritional and health care requirements and should not be left to fend for themselves. All cats kept for the purpose of pest control are to be desexed and identified.

Cats Kept for Breeding—identifies that the owner of any cat that is not desexed is required to apply for, and be granted, a permit to keep their cat sexually entire. This is in line with provisions within the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*.

Nutrition:

Nutrition—identifies that cats need a nutritionally complete and varied diet.

Environment and Housing:

General—provides basic information regarding the keeping of a cat.

Cats in Cat Curfew Zone—outlines that within a declared cat curfew area, cats are required to be confined to their keeper's or carer's premises for the entire duration of the declared curfew period.

Cats Housed in Enclosures (including breeding cats)—outlines the minimum space allowance required to house a cat in an enclosure.

Environmental Enrichment for Cats:

Environmental Enrichment for Cats—notes that confinement, especially without human company for many hours, can result in boredom, loneliness and anxiety in cats.

The Living Environment—provides suggestions to cat owners regarding making a cat's living environment more interesting.

Feeding Enrichment—suggests inspiring cats to search for their food by dividing their meals into portions and hiding it in different locations other than their regular feeding station.

Tactile Stimulation—recommends providing different types of surfaces for a cat in order for it to clean and sharpen claws as well as to mark territory.

Mental Stimulation—suggests that the provision of a variety of toys for a cat to play with. Toys should stimulate a cat's mind and all the cat's senses as well.

Hygiene:

Hygiene—recommends the minimum standards of hygiene that needs to be maintained.

Health Care:

Prevention of Disease—outlines the appropriate vaccinations required to ensure that a cat does not contract any contagious diseases such as Feline Enteritis, Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus.

Health Monitoring—outlines simple signs that owners can observe on a daily basis to monitor the health of a cat.

Signs of Disease or Injury—outlines signs of feline ill health that an owner of a cat should seek further veterinary advice over.

Transport:

Modes of transport—outlines appropriate methods of transportation for cats. Guidelines are given for suitable containers. Ventilation requirements are based on the *International Air Transport Associations Live Animals Regulations*.

Food and Water during Transport—outlines the minimum requirements in relation to food and water for cats when they are subjected to transportation.

Labelling of Container—states that, except when the cat is travelling with its owner in a private motor vehicle, any transport container that holds a cat should be appropriately labelled.

Use of Tranquillisers during Transport—states that tranquillising cats for transportation is not recommended due to the possibility of the cat suffering from severe side effects.

Breeding:

Breeding—outlines that the requirements under the code in relation to breeding from cats.

Placement of Kittens—requires that owners are responsible for finding suitable homes for all kittens produced by their cats whether they had intended to breed from their cat or not.

Disposal of Unwanted Kittens/Cats—acknowledges that there are times when a person will no longer be able to keep or care for their cat(s).