



Media release

The Hon Peter Walsh MP

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security
Minister for Water

Tuesday, 17 December 2013

Victoria sets new animal welfare benchmark

- **Victoria's new breeding and rearing code sets new global benchmark**
- **New prescriptive requirements for breeding limits, health plans and housing**
- **Victorian Coalition delivers promised crack down on illegal and rogue breeders**

The Victorian Coalition Government has set a new global benchmark for animal welfare in breeding and rearing establishments with a new mandatory code that prescribes how cats, dogs and their young must be cared for.

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh said revision of the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses* was now complete after extensive work and public consultation.

"Following significant revision and enhancement, Victoria's new mandatory breeding code for cats and dogs is the most comprehensive in Australia and the strongest in the world," Mr Walsh said.

"The previous code was outdated and out of line with community expectations. It had not been updated since being developed in 1996.

"The revised code is far more detailed and prescriptive, with several new sections to ensure businesses meet all needs of the animals in their care, as well as the community's expectations."

Additions in the new code include:

- breeding limits
- staff to animal ratios
- health management plans
- exercise and socialisation requirements
- annual health checks
- new nutritional requirements
- extra record keeping
- a clear ban on wire cage floors

"There are also very clear guidelines on euthanasia, including an explicit ban on blunt force trauma," Mr Walsh said.

"The needs of working dogs are also recognised with a specific set of housing and exercise requirements applicable to working dog breeding establishments."

Mr Walsh said non-compliant businesses face stiff penalties, including fines for up to \$35,512, bans on owning animals for up to 10 years, and confiscation of animals and property.

"The Victorian Coalition continues to deliver on our commitment to tighten laws and crack down on illegal and rogue puppy farms," Mr Walsh said.

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“As well as the significantly improved Code, since 2011 the Coalition has delivered tougher penalties and more substantial fines, and granted the RSPCA extra powers to help investigate and shut down non-compliant breeding operations.

“The Coalition Government has also set up the \$1.6 million Animal Welfare Fund which is helping non-government, not-for-profit animal care and rescue groups with activities like responsible pet ownership education, pet foster care, relief and emergency services, and subsidised de-sexing programs.”

Businesses have until April 11, 2014 to ensure they are compliant with the new code, which is available at www.depi.vic.gov.au/breedingcode

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