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## ANCATS CODE OF PRACTICE

### Preamble

Victorian Members of ANCATS obtain special privileges under two Acts which apply to the keeping/breeding of cats. These are the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, and Section 59 of Division 4 Part 4 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

The purpose of this code is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management, breeding and care that are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of cats housed in a breeding/business environment.

The code is to be observed by the owner, manager and all staff of a cat breeding/rearing business including all persons involved in the sale of an animal.

ANCATS, along with other Breeding Cat and Dog Bodies is recognised as an Applicable Organisation under these Acts. Being an Applicable Organisation means that we are both expected and required to set and enforce our own standards of care and breeding at a standard to be at least as high as the minimum standards required under these Acts.

In Victoria, these codes are mandatory and apply to all ANCATS members, who hold a Domestic Animal Business (DAB) License, or carries out the breeding of cats to sell.

This Code is based on the premise that our Members are aware of and are conforming to State legislation as enshrined in the Victorian Domestic Animals Act 1994 and are in the process, or have obtained from their Councils the available concessions in terms of numbers of cats kept. It is also assumed that they have investigated their legal responsibilities under Local Laws within their own Municipality, and have acquired all the requisite Planning Permits and Licenses to enable them to pursue their hobby of breeding cats

### Compliance with the Code of Ethics

Each member, upon signing an application for membership or renewal of membership of ANCATS shall, in addition to agreeing to be bound by the constitution, rules and regulations of ANCATS, also be bound by the ANCATS Code of Practice relating to responsible cat ownership, including the keeping, welfare, breeding, selling and disposing of cats by members to the effect of the terms and conditions set out below.

ANCATS in Victoria is required to report on the manner in which they have resolved infringements of this Code by their members.

### Purpose of this Code

This Code of Practice is intended to provide the standards of accommodation, management and care appropriate to the physical and behavioural requirements of cats to be exercised by all ANCATS members.

This Code of Practice reflects the current knowledge and opinion and aims to promote the best practice in cat welfare by providing required standards for cat owners/breeders.

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## Definitions

For the purpose of this code the following definitions apply:

**'Domestic Animal Business (DAB)'** means a cat breeding enterprise that is run for profit in which the enterprise has more than 10 fertile female animals; (as per the Victorian Domestic Animals Act 1994)

**'Owner'** includes any person who keeps or harbours the animal or has the animal in his or her care for the time being whether the animal is at large or in confinement.

**'Queen'** means an entire female cat of breeding age.

**'Stud'** means an entire male cat of breeding age.

**'Veterinarian'** means a registered veterinary practitioner.

**'Sell'** as per the definition of the Victorian Wildlife Act 1975. 'Sell' includes barter or exchange, and also agreeing to sell or offering or exposing for sale, or keeping or having in possession for sale, or sending forwarding delivering or receiving for or on sale, or authorising directing causing suffering permitting or attempting any of such acts or things. Note that this definition is subject to any changes to the Wildlife Act 1975.

According to the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses the definition of 'Sell': as per the Victorian Wildlife Act 1975 s.3(1) includes barter or exchange and also agreeing to sell or offering or exposing for sale or keeping or having in possession for sale or sending forwarding delivering or receiving for or on sale or authorising direction causing or attempting any of such acts or things.

**Minimum Standards** are the same as those in the Victorian CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PRIVATE KEEPING OF CATS (2007) and THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE OPERATION OF BREEDING AND REARING BUSINESSES 2014, and must be maintained by ANCATS members. ANCATS also requires that Best Practice Standards must be adhered to by their members.

## Animal Records

Animal records must be established at birth for each individual kitten born and maintained until the ownership of the kitten changes hands or the kitten is deceased. Copies of records of kittens/cats sold from or retained must be kept for a minimum of 5 years. For each cat under 12 weeks of age the following records must be available:

- Name
  - Microchip number (when implanted)
  - Sex
  - Breed
  - Birth date
  - Location (breeders address)
  - Queen (dam)
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- Stud (sire)
  - Health records including vaccination, internal parasite control
  - Disposal records including date and method of disposal, and the name and address of new owners
  - A copy of vaccination certificate and breeder health declaration for the animal.

This also applies to cats/kittens over 12 weeks of age but must also include - in Victoria - a Council registration certificate.

### **Sale of Cats / Kittens**

All cats and kittens being sold or given away must be implanted with a microchip which is implanted by an authorised implanter and must be accompanied by a signed transfer of ownership form which is provided to the new owner upon collection of the cat/kitten. Purchasers of a desexed cat/kitten must be provided with a copy of the desexing certificate.

A cat or kitten being sold must have current vaccinations and receive a vaccination certificate signed by a veterinarian stating that the animal has been vaccinated in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturers of the vaccine used. Kittens must be vaccinated at least once, with at least one vaccination at least 14 days prior to rehoming. Kittens must be vaccinated against:

- Feline Infectious Enteritis
- Feline Respiratory Disease (Herpes & Calici virus and cat flu)

The vaccination certificate must indicate the next date for further vaccination and any obvious physical defect.

A cat/kitten with a potentially life threatening defect apparent at the time must NOT be sold.

The business/breeder of cats/kittens with prevalence of known heritable defect/s, must inform the buyer of this problem, and advise the buyer of any test results/action taken by the business/breeder to minimize the likelihood of the occurrence of this problem in the cat/kitten.

IT IS AN OFFENCE TO FAIL TO SO ADVISE THE BUYER (VIC: POCTA MANDATORY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE RESPONSIBLE BREEDING OF ANIMALS WITH HERITABLE DISEASE 2008).

Cats/kittens may be sold at any time but must not permanently leave the breeder/business before 10 weeks of age.

No cat/kitten shall be sold or auctioned to commercial wholesalers, retail pet dealers, or directly or indirectly allowed to be given as a prize or donation to a contest of any kind.

No cat/kitten may be rehomed as a gift to a third party, unless that third party has been informed in sufficient time to allow them to consider the responsibilities incumbent upon acceptance and to prepare for the arrival of the cat/kitten.

No cat/kitten suspected of being sick, injured or diseased may be rehomed. Cats/Kittens must be free of external parasites, and must also be treated for internal worms with a suitable antihelminthic according to the manufacturer instructions.

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In addition, cats/kittens sold entire with the intention of being bred from, must be accompanied by an ANCATS Registration/Pedigree Certificate transferred into the name of the new owner.

The business/breeder/owner must not knowingly misrepresent the characteristic of the breed, nor falsely advertise, nor mislead any person regarding the performance of any cat or kitten.

New owners must be provided with literature about:

1. Appropriate feeding and grooming
2. Desexing
3. Parasite control
4. Health including procedures for emergency treatment during the guarantee period.
5. Bedding and housing
6. Responsible pet ownership
7. Vaccination certificate
8. Microchip details and transfer form.
9. In Victoria, local council animal registration, including rules and regulations
10. A Pedigree Certificate and if the cat/kitten has been sold for breeding an ANCATS Registration/Pedigree Certificate transferred into the name of the new owner.

### **Guarantee**

Where a cat/kitten is returned to the business/breeder within 3 days of sale for any reason not supported by a statement from a veterinary practitioner, the business/breeder must take back the animal and refund 75% of the purchase price.

Where the cat/kitten is returned to the business/breeder within 21 days of sale accompanied by a statement from a veterinary practitioner that the cat/kitten is unacceptable for health reasons, the business/breeder must take back the cat/kitten and refund 100% of the purchase price.

If a cat/kitten dies or is euthanised from a disease that is traceable to the point of sale, the business/breeder must refund the purchase price or offer a replacement cat/kitten of the same breed and comparable quality with the same guarantee.

### **Deposits**

The taking of deposits on cats/kittens secures the right of the buyer to purchase a chosen cat/kitten, or to be placed in a queue to select and purchase a kitten, or to be advised of kittens becoming available to purchase. Buyers should be made aware of the business/breeder's policy on deposit refunds at the time of making their booking.

Should the business/breeder for any reason be unable or unwilling to continue with a sale, the deposit must be returned in full if there is no cat/kitten of comparable quality available which would suit the requirements of the buyer.

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Should the buyer wish to withdraw from the arrangement the deposit should be returned in full if the cancellation takes place up to six weeks before the agreed collection date. The portion of the deposit refunded between 6 and 2 weeks prior to the collection date may diminish, and should cancellation take place after the cat/kitten has been desexed for the buyer, or within two weeks prior to the collection date, no refund need be made.

### **Management of Cats - Minimum Standards**

Business/owners must provide their cat with proper and sufficient food. Water, shelter and veterinary treatment.

Cats must be treated humanely.

Owners must ensure that they abide by legislative requirements including:

- Cats must be registered with, and identified as required by the local Council
- Cats must not be allowed to create a nuisance problem.
- Cats must be microchipped as required by legislation
- Cats must be contained as per local Council curfews and by laws.

All cats must be microchipped to ensure they are permanently identified. Owner contact details need to be kept up to date with the microchip registry.

Cats must be kept indoors at night (house, enclosure, shed, garage) and must be confined to the property at all times, for the cat's welfare, and to prevent nuisance problems occurring, and to protect native wildlife.

Owners are responsible for the health and welfare of their cat(s) and must provide both the basic necessities and a good quality of life for their cat(s).

### **Nutrition**

Food must be provided in sufficient quantity and nutritional quality; it must be feline appropriate and scientifically balanced to meet the daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

Minimum quantity and nutritional quality of feed must be detailed within the health management plan developed in conjunction with, and signed off by a veterinary practitioner for each classification of cat in the business.

Cats must be fed at least once a day. However, it is recommended that cats are fed twice daily (to avoid over-feeding, divide the daily feed into two smaller meals) as cat's feeding habits are more for small frequent meals rather than one large meal.

Diets composed entirely of vegetable matter are not nutritionally adequate for cats, even if such diets are sufficiently palatable to be readily eaten. Nor should cats be fed a diet solely of fresh muscle meat (including fish) as the required minerals and other nutrients provided by edible bone and organ meats will not be provided.

A balanced diet is important as cats have specific nutrient requirements and sensitivities; for example, excess feeding of liver will cause Vitamin A toxicity problems. If you are not feeding a commercial cat food to your cat, seek advice from breeders/veterinarian to ensure a properly balanced diet is being provided for your cat.

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Cats have differing nutritional requirements depending on their stage of life, amount of exercise and physiological needs, such as growing kittens, pregnancy, lactation (kittens suckling) old age and cold weather. They may require food of differing nutritional value rather than just a greater or lesser volume. As a guide, the feeding instructions on the can, sachet or pack can be followed.

It is important the body condition of pregnant or lactating queens is maintained within the ideal body weight range to avoid the development of metabolic diseases. Lactating queens usually have increased nutritional requirements to enable them to maintain body weight while feeding their kittens and need to be carefully monitored.

Kittens have special feeding requirements and require more food (per kilogram of body weight) because in addition to requiring energy for maintenance and activity they need extra nutrients for growth. A number of small meals need to be provided daily as their daily requirements of food is greater than their stomach can accept. Ideally-

- Kittens up to 12 weeks of age should be fed 3-4 meals a day.
- Kittens from 12 weeks to 6 months should be fed 2-3 meals a day
- Kittens from 6 months should be fed 1-2 meals a day.

Kittens should be fed on a commercial kitten food or a balanced diet specially formulated and discussed with breeders/veterinarian to ensure all nutrient requirements are being met. Poor nutrition during this growth state can create health and skeletal problems later in life.

Cats, especially kittens can be lactose intolerant so feeding cow's milk is not recommended. If giving milk, it should be lactose free and designed for cats.

Cats should be provided with raw bones regularly for good dental health. For example, raw chicken wings, lamb off cuts.

Cooked bones should not be fed as they are likely to splinter and may lodge in the cat's throat or intestine causing serious health problems. If cats have trouble with bones they may need to be provided with an alternative chewing item in order to maintain good dental health.

If cats are being fed raw offal, it must be part to the business's/ breeder's health management plan and be in conjunction with a complete worming program. Feeding raw offal to cats is not recommended as it is a zoonosis risk to humans.

An adequate number of food bowls need to be provided to enable each cat to eat freely without intimidation. All bowls must be washed after each meal. Receptacles must not cause injury to cats

At any time, the breeder/business must hold a minimum for 5 days' food supply, sufficient to feed all cats at the premises to ensure food is available in case of a small or large scale emergency.

## **Water**

All cats must have access in their housing area, at all times, to a permanent supply of fresh clean water daily. The recommended volume of water required daily is approximately 50 millilitres of water per one kilogram of body weight. This amount may vary depending on a number of factors including health status, environmental temperature, amount of exercise, lactation, and the water content of the diet.

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Water should be provided in a container that is not easily tipped over. The container should be large enough or refilled often enough to provide cats access to water twenty-four hours a day.

Water containers should be of a design that is easily cleaned and does not cause injury to the cat. If kittens are present, the container should not be so large or deep that they can fall in and drown.

### Health Care

A cat's health and welfare must be checked daily. When checking daily for health problems: examine the cat's physical condition, check for signs of ill health and make sure that the cat is eating, drinking, toileting and behaving normally.

Veterinary advice must be promptly sought for cats showing signs of parasites, injury, ill health or distress.

All cats regardless of breeding status must have a complete health check by a veterinary practitioner at least once per year, or more frequently as directed by a veterinary practitioner.

Regular vaccinations for the control of contagious diseases, including –

- Infectious Feline Enteritis
- Feline Respiratory Disease (Feline Calicivirus and Feline Herpes virus).

As well as preventive treatments for internal (i.e. worms) and external parasites (i.e. fleas) must be provided to safeguard the general health of cats. Frequency of treatment depends on the product used and life stage of the cat.

Kittens must be vaccinated (at least one vaccination 14 days prior to rehoming) and wormed before going to a new home. They require a course of vaccinations commencing at 6-8 weeks of age. Kittens also require more worming than adult cats and may start at the time of the first vaccination (6-8 weeks of age) Kittens intended as pets should be desexed. Seek veterinary advice regarding vaccination, worming and desexing.

Cats should receive regular checkups of their teeth for dental problems and be fed raw bones or other appropriate chewing/teeth cleaning substitutes to help prevent dental problems. Talk to a veterinarian for advice on dental health.

Provision must be made within the establishment for the immediate isolation of any cat, kitten or litter which shows signs of a contagious disease (particularly upper respiratory symptoms). This may be a simple collapsible pen which can be erected in an otherwise cat free room, or a dedicated isolation room. Large groups of cats can readily pass along such infections to one another. This is the most effective method of restricting spread, in combination with the exercise of meticulous hygiene when handling the infected animals.

Cats should be groomed regularly particularly if they have a long coat. Severe matting of the coat is not acceptable and requires a veterinarian or experienced groomer to correct this problem. To avoid this matting long haired cats will require regular grooming and may require clipping (this should be done by a veterinarian or experienced person).

Scratching posts should be provided for cats. Clipping of nails (claws) should be done regularly by an experienced person.

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White or light coloured cats, particularly those with white or non-pigmented ears, eyelids and noses, are prone to sunburn and skin cancers. Precautions, such as use of sunscreen, should be taken to protect the vulnerable areas or alternatively white cats should be kept indoors especially during the heat of the day, or provided with seasonal shade as well as sunscreen.

Some animal diseases and parasites are transferable to humans for example zoonoses. It is important that those handling cats practice good personal hygiene, particularly when cleaning out litter trays. Due to the risk of miscarriage or foetal abnormalities through contracting toxoplasmosis, pregnant women should practice extra care around cats and never handle litter trays or faeces without wearing gloves and following strict hygiene guidelines.

Cats can appear quite resilient to pain and may just go quiet or hide as a response to injury or disease. This does not mean that they are not in pain or injured. Abnormal behaviour can indicate underlying health problems and a veterinarian should be consulted.

Human medicines must not be given to cats except on veterinary advice, as they can be harmful.

Keep any poisons used in the house, garden or work place stored away from any areas which your cat may have access to. Any products, including products which are coal tar derived, contain polyphenols, xylenol or pine oil are poisonous to cats. Several popular house plants are also poisonous.

### **Breeding**

Breeding mates must not be closely related to one another. They must not be first degree (for example, father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister,).

Second degree (for example grandfather and granddaughter, grandmother and grandson) pairs are not recommended without appropriate prior expert advice.

A female cat must only be bred with one male cat per breeding cycle.

If it is not intended to use a male or female cat for breeding purposes, then they should be desexed by a veterinarian. Desexing can be done safely from 8 weeks of age and preferably before puberty (approximately 4 months of age)

Both male and female kittens, if not required for breeding purposes, should be desexed prior to rehoming.

Before breeding cats should undergo a thorough health check by a veterinarian. This will include checking for any known breed genetic defects (that will affect the cat or its progeny's quality of life). Inherited defects may detract from the cat's overall health and cause pain or discomfort which cannot be cured and animals with such defects must not be bred from.

In Victoria, IT IS AN OFFENCE (POCTA Mandatory Code of Practice for the Responsible Breeding of Animals with Heritable Disease 2008) TO BREED WITH ANIMALS WITH KNOWN HERITABLE DEFECTS other than under a prescribed breeding program as outlined in this legislation/laid down or supervised by ANCATS.

All new breeding animals must be isolated and confirmed free of Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV), Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV/Feline Aids) in blood tests prior to moving the cats into the main housing facility. Partially tested or positive cats must not share accommodation with cats that have a clear status.

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All animals testing free must be vaccinated against FeLV.

Cats testing positive to Feline AIDS/FIV must be kept separate from all breeding animals and must not be bred with and must also be kept separate from vaccinated cats.

Female cats must be at least 12 months of age prior to their first mating. Female cats that come into oestrus prior to 12 months can be bred with, if:

- There is a risk of pyometra due to repeated calling (3 or more callings); and
- The cat is not in her first oestrus; and
- A veterinary practitioner has provided written approval that the cat is sufficiently mature to be bred with.

If evidence of heritable defects in the offspring produced by the female are identified the cat must not be used for further breeding, except where written approval is given by a veterinarian practitioner.

A female cat must not have more than 2 litters in a 12-month period

A female must have no more than 8 litters in her lifetime, after which she must be retired.

Mating pairs must be physically separated from other animals and veterinary advice sought if there is an injury to either cat, or other concerns arise. Mating pairs must be checked for signs of injury before being returned to their normal housing.

The queen must be provided with a separate sleeping area for resting and privacy during birthing. As soon as the queen displays excessive or consistent contractions with no effect; and/or the queen shows signs of contractions she must be monitored every 30 minutes until birthing is complete.

Veterinary advice must be sought immediately if:

- there are prolonged intervals between the birth of each kitten; and/or
- there is excessive bleeding; and/or
- there are any other abnormalities observed during the birthing process.

Contractions should not become prolonged without the appearance of a kitten.

After birthing is complete the queen must be monitored every 6 hours until contractions have ceased. If contractions do not stop, seek veterinary advice.

The birthing area must be completely cleaned and bedding changed within 24 hours of the completion of birthing. This time frame should be determined on an individual basis allowing for the queen's response to interference.

Queens and kittens must be monitored every 6 hours until lactation and feeding is established. A queen must also be checked twice a day for mastitis.

Monitoring of lactating queens must include visual observation of all kittens feeding and confirmation that the queen is lactating. If weight gain in kittens is not observed during the first 7 days of life or if the queen shows signs of mastitis, veterinary advice must be sought.

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Soiled bedding must be removed and clean bedding provided on a daily basis.

Kittens must not be separated from their mother before 7 weeks of age (except under veterinary advice) and not rehomed before 10 weeks of age, preferably 12 weeks of age.

Cats shall be bred only for the purpose of improving the standard of the breed, not for the pet market or any other commercial purpose.

Unregistered pure bred cats must not be bred by members of ANCATS. Registered pure bred cats must not be mated with unregistered cats of the same breed without specific permission of ANCATS. No pure bred cat may be mated to a cat of a different breed unless within a recognised intermating group as laid down by ANCATS. or unless under an Experimental Breeding Program as approved by ANCATS.

Entire male cats must be physically mature and at least 12 months of age prior to their first mating. Male cats that are fertile and considered physically mature may be bred prior to 12 months of age with veterinary certification stating they are in good health and breeding would not prejudice their health.

Male cats must have annual health checks by a veterinary practitioner. If evidence of heritable defects in the offspring produced by the male are identified, the cat must not be used for further breeding except where written approval is given by a veterinary practitioner.

Male Cats must only mate with one female at any given time and must have at least 2 days rest every 4-7 days.

When cats are mating they must be provided with an area physically separated from other cats.

Enrichment, socialisation and handling are essential elements to ensuring the welfare of cats and kittens in the breeding facility

All Litters born where at least one kitten survives to the age of 10 weeks, must be registered with ANCATS.

### **Housing and Hygiene**

Cats must be confined to the owner's property at all times, for the protection of the cat's welfare, as well as natural wildlife, and also reduce the nuisance factor.

Cats are sedentary animals and can be confined at all times without a risk to their welfare, providing environmental needs are met (including exercises such as play).

Cats must not be tethered at any time.

Cats kept inside or in enclosures on a permanent basis, must be provide with a litter tray placed well away from the cat's eating and sleeping areas.

Litter must be cleaned daily to remove urine and faeces to promote hygiene.

All housing areas for cats must be maintained in a safe clean and hygienic condition at all times.

When confining cats there must be no dangerous items or sharp edges used in the structure or fencing.

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Cats must be provided with access to adequate shelter from the sun, wind, and rain.

If not kept in the house, a cat must be provided with access to a weather-proof sleeping area with clean bedding.

Adequate ventilation must be provided if cats are housed in enclosed areas or buildings to prevent buildup of stale air and odours that can cause respiratory problems for the cats.

Enclosures must be cleaned at least once a day. After removing used litter, dirty bedding and uneaten food and dirty food bowls and water containers, the enclosure may be swept, or vacuumed, followed by mopping, wiping or hosing down daily, and disinfected weekly using a hospital grade disinfectant. All surfaces must be left in a dry condition. Restore clean water bowls, litter trays and clean dry bedding at completion of cleaning. All watering and feeding utensils must be washed in hot soapy water daily to ensure bowls are clean and free of food, mould etc. When utensils are disinfected they must be rinsed to avoid poisoning.

Adequate provision must be made to allow excess water resulting from hosing, to drain away, and soak into the ground or be collected into sewerage system or septic tank so that none of it escapes onto adjoining properties. Dispose of uneaten food and dirty litter hygienically, through domestic/commercial waste disposal services, or through composting. All waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate statutory authority. Wastes must not be incinerated.

Phenol and pine oil derivative cleaning product must not be used.

Pests including fleas, ticks, flies, mosquitoes and rodents must be effectively controlled

Cats require some exposure to sunlight to ensure good health. If they are kept indoors for long periods access to sunlight through a window or fly screen is usually sufficient.

Care should be taken to protect cats from hazards within the household such as electrical appliances, power cords, household poisons, poisonous indoor plants and water sources such as toilets or swimming pools.

Suitable accommodation and carers must be provided for cats when owners go away on holidays, such as a boarding cattery that is registered with the local council or a responsible person is providing the necessary daily care of the cat.

Cats can be contained by keeping them in the house at all times; building or buying cat enclosures. These can be separate or connected to a cat door with the house; enclosing verandas; or cat modules/enclosures can be created either separately or linked to the house and can be a great way to provide an interesting environment while containing cats to the property. Such cat housing needs to be easily cleaned and maintained; with human access point provided for this.

Cat enclosures must be lockable, and locked when there are no people on the property, to prevent access to the cats by other animals and unauthorised persons.

An isolation area must be provided for cats suspected of having an infectious disease.

Each cat must be provided with a minimum area of 2 square metres which has a height of at least 1.8 metres and has two levels.

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Module cage construction/walk-in enclosures must have a minimum floor area of 1.5 square metres, a width of 0.9 metres and a height of 1.8 metres and contain at least 2 levels including draught free sleeping quarters. This size is for one cat only and an additional one square metre floor space is required for a second cat. No more than two cats may be housed together in this type of accommodation.

Cats housed in module cages must have access to an external exercise cage, similar to a colony cage in size and dimension, for at least half of the day. The module cage can be connected to the exercise area via tunnels or doors and the exercise area may serve up to compatible cats at any one time. There must be one exercise cage for every 8 cats, 16 weeks or older housed in this system.

Cats may be multiple housed in colony cages. A colony cage must be a minimum height of 1.8 metres with a minimum width of 2 metres, each cat housed must have a minimum floor area of 2 square metres, with a maximum of 8 cats per each colony cage.

An important aspect of cat enclosures is the complexity of the environment. Cats require regular exercise. Environmental enrichment and exercise needs can be met through the use of platforms at different heights in the vertical space connected by walkways (static or swinging), climbing frames, scratching posts and an interesting visual outlook. Constant confinement without stimulation or exercise and play can lead to a dull apathetic cat or to the development of destructive behaviour. Scratching post need to be provided for confined cats.

In a group enclosure, a number of hiding and escape areas should be provided to create a refuge from other cats and humans. Group/Colony housing pens should have a scratching pole and at least two levels joined by a climbing plank. When cats are group housed they should be socially compatible.

Sleeping areas must be weatherproof, constructed of materials selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxic. Beds, hides, nests must be raised off the ground to prevent draughts. Soft warm bedding must be provided and changed weekly or more often as required. Beds must be cleaned daily.

Where indoor modules or colony cages are constructed, natural daylight during daylight hours must be provided and temperature, humidity and ventilation must be managed.

Ventilation must be adequate to keep indoor animal housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts and must provide access to natural daylight during daylight hours.

A fully enclosed cattery area must have an air change rate of 8-12 changes per hour to prevent buildup of odours, and have ventilation devices that avoid draughts and distribute fresh air evenly to all areas.

It is recommended that desexed cats and/or female cats are group housed, entire male cats generally require individual housing to avoid conflict or else to be housed only with desexed cats, provided they are compatible.

Cats respond to visual stimulation so enclosures for solitary cats, particularly stud males should be situated where the cat can see other activities. This reduces the likelihood of the stud cat becoming noisy, or developing behavioural problems.

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Queens should be provided with a safe, warm individual kittening pen/room at least 2 weeks prior to the expected birth date. This space should provide protection against interference from other animals or people, and be safe spacious enough for kittens up to at least 6 weeks of age. Enclosures used for kittening queens must be thoroughly disinfected prior to the introduction of a pregnant queen. Bedding must be soft, absorbent and easily disposed of or cleaned and disinfected when soiled. There must also be access to natural daylight.

Newborn kittens prefer an ambient temperature of 31 degrees Celsius up until about one week of age. Between one and three weeks of age, the temperature can be gradually reduced to about 27 degrees Celsius. During colder weather it is important to provide a heat source for the kittens to ensure they can maintain their body temperature as their internal temperature regulations system do not begin to work until about 3 weeks of age. Breeders should consider installing lamps over bedding area (25 watt globe is sufficient) or commercial pet heating pad for kittens, however it is important to provide an alternative cooler area for the queen.

Kittens from different litters, even if in apparent good health, should not be combined until at least 10 days after their first vaccination.

### Transport

Cats must be individually confined in a secure, escape-proof, well ventilated container/carry cage when travelling. Each cat should have its own travelling cage, a queen and kittens can share a cage together providing the cage is sufficiently large enough for all cats to lie comfortably.

Travelling containers/cages must enable cats to comfortably stand, turn around, lie down and act normally but not so large that the cat may be hurt by being thrown around the container in case of sudden braking or turbulence.

Adequate ventilation must be provided in the vehicle and travelling container/cage. For containers/cages this means multiple holes on at least three sides of the container/cage.

Cats should be adequately restrained when travelling inside a vehicle for the safety of both the cat and human passengers. Unrestrained cats can cause accidents and should never be allowed in the vicinity of the driver. In case of an accident, an unrestrained cat may become a projectile and can damage itself and/or the occupants of the vehicle.

Travelling containers must not have any projections that may cause injury to the cat and must be secured or restrained in the vehicle.

Cats must not be transported in the boot of the car or in a restricted volume of unventilated space.

Cats must not be left unattended in the car if there is a possibility of heat stress occurring or in situations of extreme cold. If a cat must be left in a parked car, lock all doors, park in a shady area and open windows wide enough to provide ventilation. (The cat should remain in its travelling cage.) Leave water in a container that will not tip over. Be aware that the interior of a car can rapidly become hot enough to cause heat stress and even death in a cat, even on mild days.

Cats travelling containers must be protected from direct sunlight at all times.

Sufficient travelling containers/cages must be available to contain all the cats on a property in case of emergency evacuation.

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If being transported long distances, cats should be given regular opportunities to drink. Temperature and transporting conditions should be taken into account when determining the frequency of provision of water. The best way to provide water is via a container within the cat's travelling cage that can be filled without opening the cage. If the cage has to be opened caution should be taken to ensure the cat does not escape.

When cats are being transported by air, the international air transport association regulations will apply.

Cats should also be fed at least once every 24 hours and have regular access to a litter tray and water if these are not provided in the travelling container.

### **Training and Socialisation**

Training methods used with cats must be humane and not cause pain or distress.

Cats should be trained to fit in with the life of their owners for example trained not to jump on benches/tables.

Cats do not require obedience training but do require familiarisation/training with any new experience for example – being shown, or environment and socialisation with other cats, animals and humans.

It is important that from birth, kittens are regularly handled by a human carer. Cats need plenty of stimulation (both mental and physical), so toys and stimulating environment need to be provided. Teach family, friends and children how to properly interact with cats.

Cats must be toilet trained to use a litter tray.

If a collar is to be worn, it should be elasticised or quick release so the cat will not choke if the collar gets caught. Collars need to be snug fitting to ensure paws or the lower jaw cannot get caught up in them but not so tight that they rub or choke the cat. Collars should be checked daily for any sign of rubbing or injury.

Collars, travel/carry cages and harnesses used for leading should be introduced gradually. Where a cat is trained to a lead, the lead should be attached to a harness and not to a collar.

Care is needed when introducing a new cat into a household with existing cats or dogs. Introduce a new cat slowly and under supervision to ensure any conflict over territory or hierarchy is minimised.

Young children should not be left unsupervised around cats.

### **Our Members, Sales and the Law**

To allow traceability of sellers of pets, it is now an offence in Victoria to advertise the sale of a dog or cat unless the microchip identification number of the animal is included in the advertisement or notice. A registered domestic animal business may use its council business registration number as an alternative. Microchip numbers must also be supplied when members advertise kittens for sale on their own website.

Changes in State law governing the sale of cats and kittens are explained on the Department of Primary Industries website, Not only are individuals required to comply with this law, but so is ANCATS as an Applicable Organisation under the Domestic Animals Act (1994).

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**REMBER THAT REGISTRIES IN VICTORIA MUST CONFORM TO GOVERNMENT LAW, AND THAT BREACHES OF THE LAW ON YOUR PART, OR THAT OF YOUR ORGANISATION COULD RESULT IN VERY HEAVY FINES**

OUR CODE OF PRACTICE REQUIRES THAT ALL LITTERS MUST BE RECORDED WITH ANCATS. MEMBERS ARE REMINDED OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO DO THIS, AS ONLY BY DOING SO ARE THEY TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE EXEMPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

All transfers to and from ANCATS members must be accompanied by the microchip number of the animal transferred, this also includes kitten transfers at the time of litter registration.

All transaction involving transferring registration/pedigree certificate carried out by the Registrar on behalf of ANCATS must include the microchip number of the cat/kitten to be recorded on the certificate.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANCATS MEMBERS ARE ALL REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH MINIMUM STANDARDS, BUT ARE ALWAYS ENCOURAGED TO EXCEED THEM, IN STRIVING TOWARDS BEST PRACTICE.

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