

Cat Act 2011 – A new world for Cat Owners

In early September 2011, the West Australian Government introduced a bill into Parliament dealing with the control and responsible ownership of cats. After much debate in both the lower and upper houses of Parliament, the Cat Act 2011 was assented to on 9 November 2011 and the Act will come into effect on 1 November 2012 and 1 November 2013.

The Act was introduced by the Minister for Local Government and you can read more about the Act here: [WA Dept of Local Government Cat Ownership](#)

The Feline Control Council of Western Australia (Inc) supports the responsible ownership of cats and has long been operating with the welfare of cats underpinning everything we do. FCCWA supports the desexing of non-breeding cats. Microchipping has been an accepted practice for many years amongst FCCWA breeders, but in January 2012 this was formalised with microchip details being added to the registration of all kittens. FCCWA goes further than the legislation in that clause 3.1(g) of the Code of Conduct says that cats owned by FCCWA members are not allowed to roam freely. Many of our breeders will only sell their kittens to homes where the kittens are confined to the owner's property. In addition we have rules and guidelines in place to ensure that breeders are making choices about their breeding programs that give the best possible outcomes for their cats and kittens.

Some of the key features of the Cat Act 2011 are:

- All cats over the age of 6 months must be registered with the Local Government in the area that they live.
- All cats must wear registration tags in a public place unless they belong to a class of cats who are exempt. (Cats attending Shows or Exhibitions are exempt)
- All cats over the age of 6 months old must be microchipped
- All cats over the age of 6 months old must be sterilised unless they are exempt. A cat that is kept for the purposes of breeding is exempt
- A person is not permitted to transfer ownership of a cat that is not sterilised unless the purchaser is an approved breeder. The cat must also be microchipped. If the cat is less than 6 months old, it may be transferred unsterilised provided that a voucher for sterilisation is part of the transfer.
- Within 7 days after the transfer of a cat, the seller must notify the local government and microchip data base of the change
- Only approved breeders may breed cats.
- A breeder may apply to their Local Government for approval to breed cats.
- Cats can not be offered as prizes.

The Act is largely silent about breeders and show enthusiasts, with the only specific protection in place being clause 37 (5) which states that a local government may not refuse to grant or renew an approval to breed cats if the applicant belongs to a class of persons prescribed.

FCCWA Governing Council endorsed a sub committee to look at the impact of these laws on FCCWA members. The subcommittee has consulted widely with representatives from COAWA and ANCATS. FCCWA has lobbied long and hard for recognition of breeders and show enthusiasts and took the lead in advocating on behalf of all three of the organisations based here in Western Australia.

In December 2012 the Minister's Office released a set of regulations in support of the Cat Act 2011. Excluded from the regulations are a fee structure and the issue of the

number of cats that Councils will allow members of registering organisations to keep. However, all three organisations (FCCWA, COAWA and ANCATS) have been recognised as prescribed organisations for the purposes of clause 37 (5). The Minister's Office has recognised that members of registering organisations are governed by a set of rules and ethical guidelines. However, with this approval comes a responsibility to all breeders to continue to do the right thing and to demonstrate that registered breeders are a special class and deserve to be recognised as having more controls and better breeding programs than people who are breeding on an uncontrolled and ad-hoc basis.

You can view the regulations here: [Cat Regulations](#)

The issue of fees and the numbers of cats allowable to members of FCCWA is still being considered by the Minister for Local Government's Office and additional regulations are being drawn up. However, with the impending election, the WA State Parliament is now in caretaker mode and no new regulations can be gazetted during this period. We have been assured that the Minister's Office will continue to work on the regulations with an expectation that they will be progressed after the election.

Further updates will be provided as they become available. In the meantime, if you have any concerns or are aware of any issues that relate to the administration of the Cat Act 2011, please do not hesitate to contact members of your Governing Council.

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