

The *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act* ensures that domestic animal businesses throughout Victoria continue to meet community expectations. The Act does this by establishing a registration scheme for domestic animal businesses such as pet shops and adopting enforceable Codes of Practice for their business operations.

A 'pet shop' is a shop situated in a permanent location and open at least 5 days a week (excluding public holidays) where a pet animal, namely a dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, mouse, reptile or caged bird is offered for sale, sold or bought and sold. Pet animals may also be offered for sale from a private residence (which is not required to comply with Code of Practice standards). However, it is illegal to sell pet animals from market stalls, Trash and Treasure or similar establishments operating on a part-time basis.

The purpose of the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops* is to define the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are appropriate to the welfare, physical and behavioural needs of pet animals held for sale in registered pet shops. People who operate or work in pet shops are required by the Act to comply with the minimum standards established by the Code, and are encouraged to establish higher standards. Only businesses that meet the minimum requirements are permitted to operate, so you can be confident that your new pet is healthy and remedial action or advice is available if you do experience problems.

Before you purchase an animal from a pet shop, you should be aware of some important provisions contained in the Code of Practice.

## PET SHOP REGISTRATION

A person must not operate a pet shop on a premises which is not registered with the Council. Before you buy an animal from a pet shop, check that the shop is registered with the Council of the municipal district in which the business is conducted.

## SALE ANIMALS

All animals offered for sale must be weaned and fully self sufficient. Minimum age of animals for sale must be:

- 8 weeks for dogs and cats
- 5 weeks for rabbits
- 4 weeks for Guinea Pigs
- 3 weeks for mice

Juvenile birds must be self sufficient and should be fully feathered (moult permitting). Unweaned animals must not be on the shop premises.



## IDENTIFICATION

Dogs and cats must be microchipped prior to the animal being sold or given away. Upon sale or being given away, the proprietor must provide the new owner's details to the council where the animal is to be kept.

## VACCINATIONS

Dogs and cats must be vaccinated at least fourteen days prior to sale to cover such diseases as canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis and canine parvovirus for dogs and infectious feline enteritis and feline respiratory disease (cat flu) in cats.



## VACCINATION CERTIFICATE

All dogs and cats sold must have a vaccination certificate signed by a veterinarian stating that the animal has been vaccinated in accordance with the label instructions of the manufacturer of the vaccine.

This certificate must indicate the next date for further vaccination and any obvious defects. No animal with a potentially life threatening defect apparent at the time of sale should be sold.

## LITERATURE

Purchasers of pet animals must be given literature about feeding, desexing, parasite control, health – including procedures for emergency treatment during the guarantee period, housing, responsible pet ownership and current legislation covering the registration of pet animals.

## GUARANTEE & REFUND

If your animal is not acceptable because of health or other reasons that are supported by a statement from a veterinarian, excluding accidents, within seven days of purchase, pet shop proprietors must take the animal back and refund all monies or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

If the animal is returned within three days for any other reason, the pet shop must refund 75% of the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

If the animal dies or is euthanased as a result of a disease that is traceable to the point of sale, the pet shop proprietor must refund the purchase price or offer a replacement animal with the same guarantee.

Pet shops are required to display the guarantee outlined above in a prominent position on a wall of the shop. Can you see it in the pet shop you go to?

*The Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act* is State legislation which is implemented by Municipal Councils.

A complete copy of the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops* is available for purchase from the DPI Information Centre, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne. Phone 03 9658 4440.

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THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE

# BUYING AN ANIMAL FROM A PET SHOP

