

Health & Welfare Subcommittee Report

Dogs ACT continues to explore options for increasing the availability and uptake of health screening for dogs in Canberra. Ophthalmologist Dr Jeff Smith will be attending Dogs ACT in the first week of September for an Australian Canine Eye Scheme (ACES) clinic which has generated moderate interest so far. Unfortunately, Dr Geoff Nicholson was unable to attend Dogs ACT this year for an echocardiography and auscultation clinic, however Dr Inaki Prado Checa, a veterinary cardiologist from Veterinary Specialists Of Sydney (VSOS), has kindly offered to assist us. We are planning to hopefully host Inaki in October. Our offering of a brachycephalic Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Scheme testing day unfortunately received an underwhelming response, perhaps due to the date coinciding with championship shows in Harden. We would like to try again for another RFG Scheme testing day in 2026. A canine first aid course likely to be presented by myself is also currently being considered.

Recently, the ACT Government invited feedback on the draft Code Of Practice For The Welfare Of Dogs In The ACT. Dogs ACT encouraged our members to respond and we also submitted a formal response ourselves which can be perused on the Dogs ACT website. Dogs ACT and its members are important stakeholders in this and it behoves us to proactively engage with developments in the ACT legislation, regulations, and codes of practice that affect us. Collectively we must advocate to ensure that a balance is achieved in upholding high standards of dog welfare without inappropriately restricting or interfering in sporting and recreational use of dogs or the ethical breeding of purebred dogs. Animal rights extremists remain loud in their activism and lobbying so we mustn't be complacent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind our members that the broader community, including the veterinary profession, is very much paying attention to us and our dogs. They are expecting us to be setting a good example and be positive role models for dog health and welfare in the community. Please remember this when considering your approach to the husbandry, healthcare and breeding of your dogs, and the way you conduct yourself at shows and trials.

Regards

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Dogs ACT Health & Welfare Subcommittee Convenor

Dogs ACT representative to the Dogs Australia Canine Health & Wellbeing Committee

Dogs ACT representative to the ACT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC)