

INTEGRITY TESTED BREEDERS REGISTRY ITBR

CODE OF ETHICS

Ethical Standards of Breeding Practice

Applies to all ITBR members | Dogs, Cats, and All Registered Species
Version 1.0 — 2026

Applies to all ITBR members across all Australian states and territories.

Integrity Tested Breeders Registry (ITBR)
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PREAMBLE

The ITBR Code of Ethics defines the ethical standards that all ITBR members are required to uphold in their breeding programs. Ethics in breeding goes beyond legal compliance, it reflects a commitment to the long-term health of breeds, the welfare of individual animals, and the integrity of the breeding community. An ethical ITBR member holds themselves to a higher standard than what is merely legally required, because they understand that the decisions they make today affect the health of the breed for generations to come.

ITBR's primary mission is to create a legitimate pedigree and health record system for all animals produced in Australia, with health as the number one priority. This is why ITBR's registry framework is broader than traditional registries, it includes the Heritage Certificate and the Developing Breed Program precisely because these pathways ensure that parent animals are subject to the same rigorous DNA health screening as pedigree animals, regardless of whether they are purebred or crossbred. ITBR believes that every animal deserves to be born of health-tested parents, and that every buyer deserves transparency about the health of their animal's lineage.

SECTION 1 — BREEDING GOALS AND INTENTIONS

1.1 Purpose of Breeding

- Members shall breed only with the genuine intention of improving the health, temperament, and function of the breed or, in the case of Developing Breed programs, of producing a new breed with documented purpose, health, and benefit.
- Members shall not breed solely for commercial gain, colour, or novelty at the expense of health, temperament, or structural soundness.
- Members shall have clear goals for each breeding pairing that prioritise health, temperament, and breed betterment.
- Members shall continuously strive to expand their knowledge of their chosen breed or breeds, including genetics, health, temperament, and breed standards.
- Members shall breed only animals that are structurally, genetically, and temperamentally sound, regardless of registry type.

1.2 Selection of Breeding Animals

- Members shall only breed from animals that meet the ITBR minimum health testing requirements for their breed and registry type.
- Members shall not breed from animals known to have serious hereditary conditions in a manner likely to produce affected offspring.
- Members shall consider the coefficient of inbreeding (COI) of any proposed mating and shall strive to maintain genetic diversity within their breeding program.
- Members shall not breed animals that have been determined genetically incompatible under ITBR genetic compatibility guidelines without exception.
- Members shall consider temperament as a primary selection criterion — animals with serious temperament problems shall not be bred from.
- Members shall not breed animals with exaggerated physical features that compromise health, function, or quality of life.

1.3 The Four Registry Types — Ethical Obligations

The ethical obligations in this Code apply to all four ITBR registry types:

Registry Type	Register	Animal type	Key entry requirement
Full Registry	Main or Limited	Verified purebred	Full pedigree from recognised body or bred from 2 ITBR full registered parents
Extension Registry	Main or Limited	Purebred — building heritage	DNA heritage verification, structure assessment by veterinarian; 5 generations of breeding to progress to Full Registry
Heritage Health Certificate (HHC)	Limited ONLY	Crossbred (two pedigree breeds)	Both parents on Full or Extension Registry, Only supported for 1 st generation crosses, both parents are tested for breed specific diseases
Developing Breed	Main (approved breeders) / Limited (everyone else)	New breed development	Approved breeding plan and annual progression report and full DNA testing for diseases stated in their breeding proposal

- Full Registry members bear the highest responsibility for breed stewardship. Their animals represent the standard by which the breed is judged, and their decisions have lasting impact on breed health.
- Extension Registry members are in the process of building verifiable heritage. They carry the same health testing obligations as Full Registry members and must work progressively toward Full Registry status for their breeding lines.
- Heritage Certificate participants acknowledge that health comes first regardless of breed composition. The HC exists because ITBR recognises that responsible crossbred breeding, where both parents are DNA tested and health verified, is preferable to unregulated, untested breeding. The HC is not an endorsement of crossbreeding as a general practice but an acknowledgement that if crossbred animals are to be produced in Australia, they should be produced by health-tested parents with traceable heritage.
- Developing Breed Program participants carry a special responsibility to the future of their proposed breed. They must document their intentions transparently, maintain all health testing records across generations, and submit annual progression reports demonstrating that the program is producing animals that consistently meet the developing breed standard.

SECTION 2 — HEALTH TESTING REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Compulsory Health Testing — All Registry Types

All animals on all ITBR registries must have completed all applicable compulsory DNA health tests before being used for breeding. This requirement applies without exception to:

- Full Registry animals — both parents must be tested before any mating
- Extension Registry animals — both parents must be tested before any mating
- Heritage Health Certificate parent animals — both parents must be tested for all conditions relevant to both base breeds

- Developing Breed Program animals — all animals must be tested specific to their approved developing breed program

This universal health testing requirement is the core purpose of ITBR. The Heritage Certificate and Developing Breed Program exist specifically to bring health testing discipline to areas of Australian breeding that currently operate without any such framework.

2.2 Accepted Testing Providers

- Orivet Genetic Pet Care (primary recommended provider for Australian breeders)
- Animal Genetics Australia
- UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory
- PawPrint Genetics
- Genomia
- Embark Veterinary (DNA panel testing)
- Any other provider approved by ITBR and listed on the ITBR website

2.3 Genetic Incompatibility

- Members shall not knowingly breed genetically incompatible combinations (carrier × carrier, affected × carrier, or affected × affected).
- For Heritage Certificate breeding's, genetic compatibility must be assessed against the conditions relevant to BOTH parent breeds. An HC breeding will only be approved where the compatibility screening for both base breeds is satisfied.
- For Developing Breed Program breeding's, genetic compatibility requirements are set out in the approved breeding plan and must be maintained at each generation.

2.4 Minimum and Maximum Age for Breeding

Dogs: minimum 15 months (bitch) and 12 months (dog) at time of mating. Maximum litters: 5 per bitch lifetime. No more than 2 litters in any 18 month period. No whelping after 8 years without current veterinary certificate.

Cats: minimum 12 months (queen and stud) at time of mating. Maximum litters: 8 per queen lifetime. No more than 3 litters in any 2 year period. No breeding after 7 years without current veterinary certificate.

These limits apply to all registry types including Heritage Certificate and Developing Breed animals.

SECTION 3 — GENETIC TESTING AND HEREDITARY DISEASE

3.1 Hereditary Disease Obligations

- Members shall actively work to reduce the incidence of hereditary diseases in their breed.
- Members shall be honest with other breeders and ITBR about any hereditary conditions known to exist in their breeding lines.
- Members shall disclose to buyers all known and potential hereditary risks relevant to any animal being sold, regardless of registry type.

SECTION 4 — REGISTRATION ETHICS

4.1 Pedigree Integrity

- Members shall only register animals with accurate parentage information on all registry types.
- Members shall not register animals with falsified, estimated, or unverified parentage.
- Members shall register all live offspring from any litter — selective registration to conceal litter size is prohibited for all registry types including Heritage Certificate and Developing Breed litters.
- Members shall ensure microchip numbers submitted to ITBR are accurate and match the animal being registered.

4.2 Registry Type Integrity

- Members shall not represent a Heritage Certificate as a pedigree under any circumstances. The HC is a document of health-verified heritage, not a pedigree, and must be described as such in all communications.
- Members shall not breed from a Heritage Certificate animal. HC animals are sold on limited registration — breeding from them is a breach of this Code.
- Members shall not breed from a Developing Breed limited registration animal outside the approved program.
- Members shall not represent a Developing Breed Certificate as a Full Registry pedigree until the developing breed has been formally accepted as a recognised breed by ITBR.

SECTION 5 — SALE AND TRANSFER OF ANIMALS

5.1 Minimum Age of Sale

- No puppy may be sold, transferred, or leave the breeder's care before 8 weeks of age.
- No kitten may be sold, transferred, or leave the breeder's care before 12 weeks of age
- All kittens must be sold desexed if not being used for breeding purposes

5.2 Documentation Required at Time of Sale — All Registry Types

All members must provide the following to buyers at or within a reasonable time of sale:

- ITBR certificate appropriate to the registry type (Full Registry pedigree, Extension Registry pedigree, Heritage Certificate, or Developing Breed Certificate)
- Current vaccination certificate signed by a registered veterinarian (physical or digital)
- Microchip documentation
- Written confirmation of registry type and any associated breeding restrictions
- For Heritage Certificate animals: explicit written statement that the animal is sold on limited registration and cannot be bred from (seen in sample contracts to provide to buyers on ITBR website)

- For Developing Breed limited registration animals: explicit written statement of the limited registration status and breeding restrictions (seen in sample contracts to provide to buyers on ITBR website)

5.3 Prohibited Sales

- Members shall not sell animals to commercial pet shops, pet wholesalers, or retail outlets.
- Members shall not sell animals to research facilities where unnecessary suffering may occur.
- Members shall not sell Heritage Certificate animals for breeding purposes.
- Members shall not sell Developing Breed limited registration animals for breeding outside the approved program.

5.4 Rehoming and Returns

- Members shall accept the return of any animal they have bred at any point in its life.
- Members shall desex any retired breeding animal before rehoming to a non-breeding home.

SECTION 6 — HERITAGE HEALTH CERTIFICATE ETHICS

The Heritage Certificate (HC) represents ITBR's commitment to extending health testing discipline to crossbred animals. ITBR acknowledges that crossbred dogs are produced in significant numbers in Australia and that buyers of these animals deserve the same health transparency as buyers of pedigree animals. The HC does not endorse crossbreeding as equivalent to purebred breeding. Rather, it creates a framework within which, if crossbred animals are to be produced, they must be produced responsibly.

- HC parent animals must be registered on the ITBR Full Registry or Extension Registry.
- Both parents must have completed all applicable compulsory DNA health tests for their respective breeds.
- Genetic compatibility must be assessed against conditions relevant to both base breeds.
- HC offspring are sold on limited registration only — they may not be used for breeding under any circumstances.
- The HC document must clearly state the registry types of both parents and their individual health test results.
- Members must not breed further from HC offspring — this is a prohibited action that will result in disciplinary action and possible fines

SECTION 7 — DEVELOPING BREED PROGRAM ETHICS

The Developing Breed Program represents the highest level of structural commitment within the ITBR registry. Members participating in a Developing Breed Program accept a special ethical obligation to the future of the breed they are developing.

- All Developing Breed applications must be submitted to and approved by ITBR before any intentional cross is commenced.

- The breeding program must document the purpose, intended function, gene pool preservation strategy, structural standards, colour standards, and participant list.
- All animals in the program must be DNA tested at each generation.
- Annual progression reports must be submitted to ITBR demonstrating that the program is producing animals consistently meeting the developing breed standard.
- All offspring are sold on limited registration until the breed has been formally accepted as a recognised breed by ITBR.
- Offspring may be sold on main registration only to approved program participants who have submitted and had approved an Application to Join Developing Breed Program.

SECTION 8 — CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

- Members shall commit to ongoing education in breeding practices, genetics, animal health, and welfare.
- Members shall participate in ITBR education programs, newsletters, and information updates.
- Members shall respond constructively to feedback from buyers, veterinarians, and ITBR.
- Members shall report new developments in breed health testing or welfare to ITBR to assist in keeping the health testing framework current.

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Breeding with Integrity. Testing with Purpose.

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