

# Under pressure – campaigning for change

## TEACHERS' NOTES

### Learning objective:

- To think about an issue of public concern – overpopulation of dogs and cats – and how pressure groups work to publicise it.

### Outcomes:

- To offer reasons why an issue such as overpopulation is of public concern
- To understand what voluntary organisations and pressure groups are and how they operate
- To research overpopulation and solutions using literature from pressure groups
- To create an effective publication centred upon the overpopulation issue.

### Resources:

- Overpopulation handout from **page 4 of the Animal Action Week main booklet**.
- Information on spaying and neutering from various pressure groups (charities, non-governmental organisations) that you have collected – at least one example per table group. You can find useful web sites by searching using the words 'spay and neuter'.

### Activity

- Ask the class what they can remember about the overpopulation problem as described in the *Caring for our 'Best Friends'* film.
- Invite them to think of reasons why some people might not get their dogs and cats spayed or neutered. Reasons may include: it's unnatural; it might hurt them; it's expensive; it's against someone's religion.
- Ask them to think of the consequences of not spaying or neutering dogs and cats.

Consequences may include: not enough people willing to give the animals homes; not enough food and shelter for the animals; the charities which try to care for them running out of money; the spread of disease; packs of dogs behaving aggressively; people disliking the situation so much that they try to hurt or even kill the animals.

- Invite the class to tell you what their solutions to the problem would be?

Possible solutions could include subsidised spaying and neutering schemes for poorer families; local government-funded spaying and neutering schemes for areas which have problems with packs of stray dogs and colonies of stray cats; public education campaigns organised by government, charities etc about the problem.

### Homework

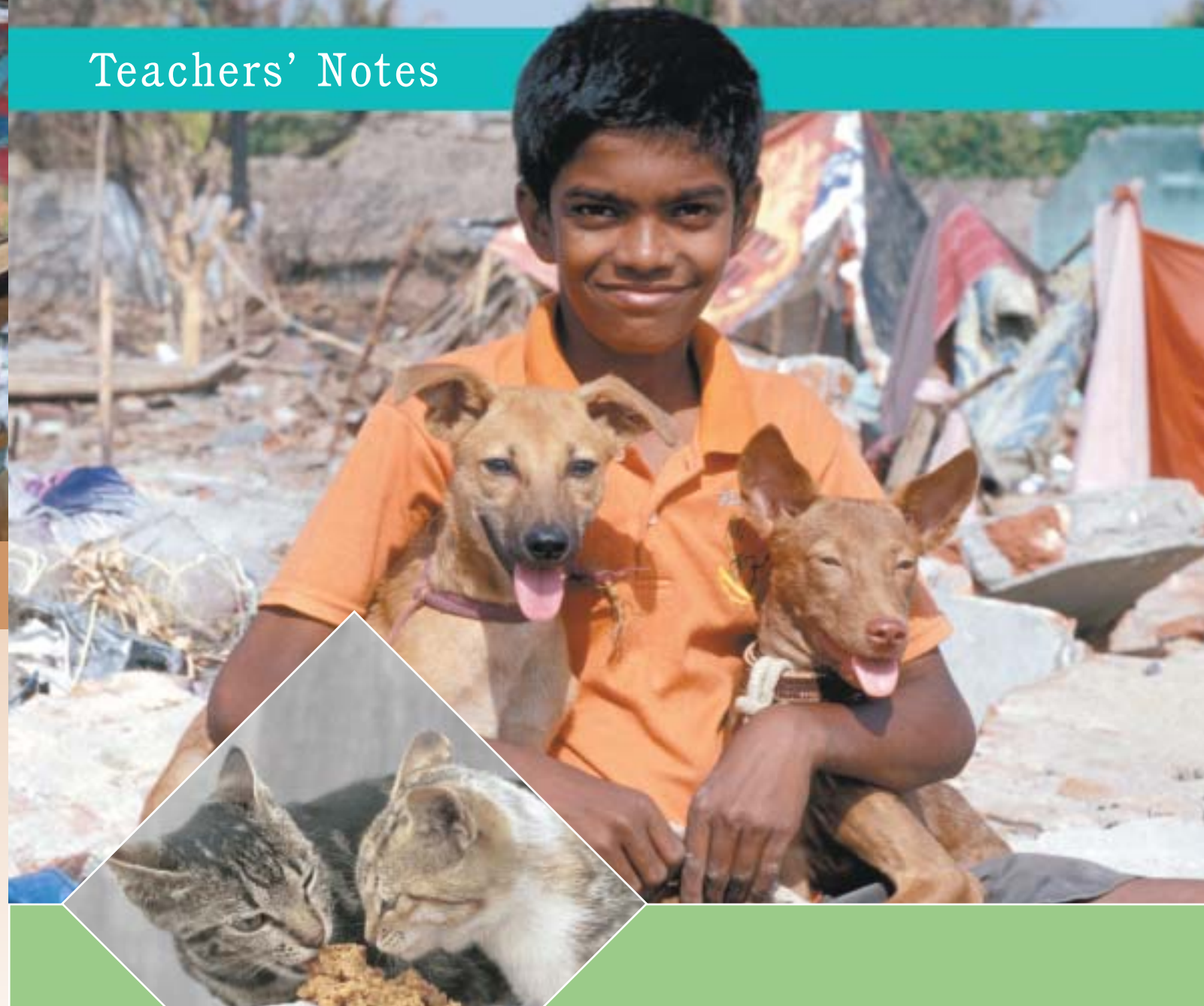
For homework or as an extension activity ask the students to imagine they are in charge of an animal charity in an area with a large stray cat or dog population. Ask them to create an effective poster or leaflet encouraging people to get their cats and dogs spayed and neutered.



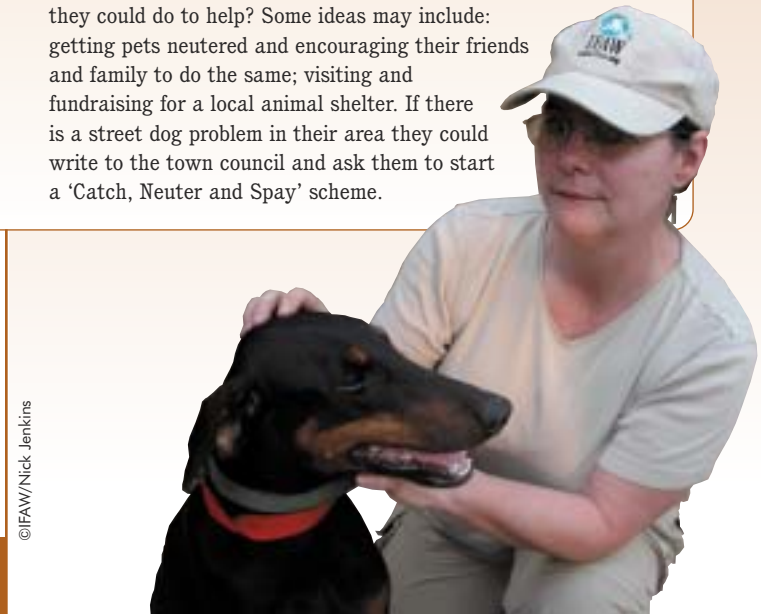
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# Caring for our 'Best Friends'

## Teachers' Notes



- Ask the class if they know of any pressure groups which work to help cats and dogs. Ask them to summarize, if they can, what they think these organisations do. Some useful questions to ask are: Who do the groups put pressure on? How do they do this? What sort of information do pressure groups produce?
- Divide the class into groups. Ask them to choose a spokesperson to feed back the results of the discussion to the class. Give each group one or two pieces of information from the pressure groups. Ask the group to discuss the material. Is it balanced in its messaging or is it biased in a particular way? Is it effective? Would it encourage someone to get their cat or dog neutered? If not, why not? How could the material be improved? Has anything been left out?
- Finally, ask the students what they know about the overpopulation of cats and dogs in their area. Is there anything they could do to help? Some ideas may include: getting pets neutered and encouraging their friends and family to do the same; visiting and fundraising for a local animal shelter. If there is a street dog problem in their area they could write to the town council and ask them to start a 'Catch, Neuter and Spay' scheme.



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### About IFAW

IFAW is an international campaigning organisation founded in Canada more than 35 years ago. Its mission is to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals by reducing their commercial exploitation, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress. Recognising that the fates of people and animals are inextricably linked, IFAW seeks to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people. It has bases in 15 countries and two million supporters worldwide.



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## Introduction

These educational activities centre upon the unique and longstanding relationship that humans have with dogs and cats and our responsibilities towards them.

The activities will encourage young people to have a better understanding of the problems faced by dogs and cats and the need for them to be protected by the law and cared for by their owners.

## Caring for our 'Best Friends'

### TEACHERS' NOTES

#### CD-ROM/Video activity

The film and accompanying student quiz *What's your score?* on page 3 are an introduction to the roles of dogs and cats in our lives and the problems that face them. The notes on pages 4, 5 and 6 of the **Animal Action Week main booklet** also give useful background information.

You may wish to use them in discussion with the students and/or write some points on the board before they start *What's your score?* The answers appear on the quiz, but upside down and at the bottom of the page.

#### More copies

Additional copies of this pack can be ordered from: [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org) or by emailing [animalactionweek@ifaw.org](mailto:animalactionweek@ifaw.org)

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# Townsville News

## Ten-year ban for cruel owners

A couple has been banned from keeping animals for 10 years by Townsville city court for mistreating their pets.

Ann and John Smith, of 12 Jones Street, Townsville were sentenced on Thursday for causing unnecessary suffering to 13 cats and one dog.

Samantha Richards, a veterinary surgeon who visited the Smith household with representatives from the Townsville Police Department, described the animals as living in "unsanitary and unhygienic" conditions.

When the animals were taken from the house in Jones Street, all were heavily flea-infested and had varying degrees of flea allergies and dermatitis.

Ms Richards said the dog – called Rusty – was the most severely affected. It had very little fur and sore, irritated skin.



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"I think a 10-year ban is significant simply because it denies these people the chance to inflict the same kind of suffering on animals in the future," said Daniel Rigby, representing Townsville's animal protection charity.

Rusty was the most severely affected. He had very little fur and sore, irritated skin.

The animals, which have all now recovered, are to be re-homed.

The couple was also given a two-year conditional discharge and Mrs Smith was ordered to pay legal costs.

## Kicked to death

A Townsville teenager who kicked a cat to death has been banned from keeping any animal for five years, given a 100-hour community service order and ordered to pay prosecution costs.

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons, told the court he had been drinking when he kicked the cat, which belonged to a school friend.

The six-year-old cat died of its injuries soon after the incident.



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## Forced to suffer



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A couple who left their dog to suffer with fractured legs for 20 hours before seeking veterinary treatment has been fined and ordered to pay legal costs by Townsville city court. Dorothea and Jonas Williams only agreed that they would take their dog Smoky to a vet after a visit from their local animal protection officer. Smoky was confiscated by the court and handed over to an animal shelter for rehoming.

Note: All stories are real life cases, which have appeared in local and national newspapers. Names and locations have been changed for legal reasons.

# Thinking about cruelty

## TEACHERS' NOTES

### Part two

#### What is cruelty?

- Divide the class into groups. Tell them they will be discussing cruelty to animals. Ask each group to appoint a spokesperson to feed back the results of the group's discussion to the class.
- Ask the students to try to define what cruelty to animals actually means, bearing in mind the basic needs and *Five Freedoms* work they have just completed.
- Encourage them to identify some different types of cruelty:

**Deliberate cruelty** – deliberately hurting (kicking, beating, deliberately starving an animal)

**Cruelty through neglect** – not being bothered to look after an animal properly

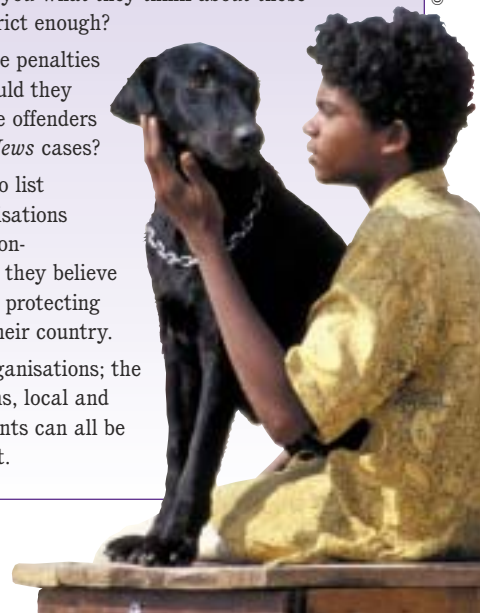
**Cruelty through ignorance** – not being aware of the animal's needs.

**Which, in the group's opinion, is the worst form of cruelty? Why do they think some people might be cruel to animals?**

### Part three

#### Animals and the law

- Hand out *Townsville News*. Explain that although Townsville is an imaginary place created for the purpose of this activity, these are all real life cases gathered from newspaper reports. (Names, and places have been changed.)
- Invite the students to tell you how the cases make them feel. Which in their opinion is the worst case of cruelty?
- Using the *Animals and the law in Townsville – some background* (in the panel on the right), explain how the law in Townsville currently protects animals.
- Invite them to tell you what they think about these laws – are they strict enough?
- Bearing in mind the penalties available, how would they have sentenced the offenders in the *Townsville News* cases?
- Ask the students to list anyone/any organisations governmental or non-governmental that they believe are responsible for protecting dogs and cats in their country. Animal welfare organisations; the police, dog wardens, local and national governments can all be included on the list.



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#### Animals and the law in Townsville – some background

In Townsville for someone to be prosecuted for cruelty to animals it has to be proved that they have caused an animal to suffer unnecessarily.

#### Unnecessary suffering can be:

- Acts of violence against an animal – cruelly beating, kicking, ill-treating, torturing or terrifying it
- Not caring for an animal properly – neglect
- It is also against the law to abandon an animal in a situation where it is likely to suffer unnecessarily.

#### Cruelty convictions

*Adults convicted of cruelty to animals can:*

- Be banned from keeping an animal for a period of time decided by the court
- Have the animal that is the subject of the conviction taken away from them
- Be sent to prison for up to six months
- Be made to pay a fine
- Be made to pay prosecution costs including the costs of bringing the case before the court.

**In Townsville, children aged 10 years and over can be convicted of crimes against animals.**

#### Homework

*For homework or as an extension activity – ask able members of the class to research and consider what could be done to stop young children being cruel to animals.*

## STUDENT NOTES



# What's your score?

✓ Tick the correct answers below

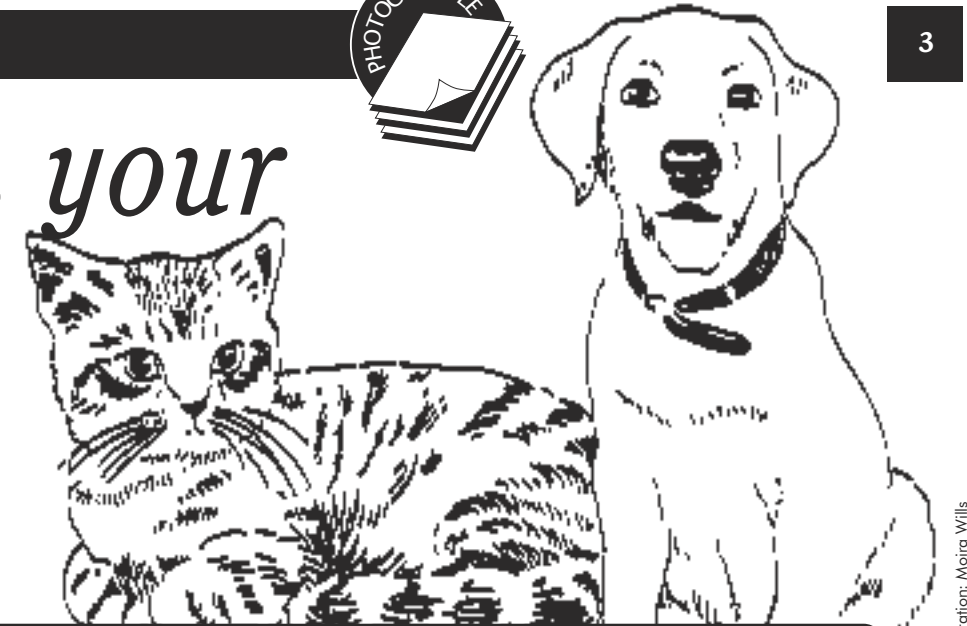


Illustration: Moira Willis

### What do you remember from the film you have just seen?

- Domesticated dogs are descended from wolves  
True  False
- Spaying and neutering are the most effective ways of preventing dogs and cats producing unwanted puppies and kittens  
True  False
- In the United States of America how many unwanted dogs and cats end up in animal shelters each year?  
1 million  16 million   
600,000  6 million
- Dogs and cats can be linked to their owners by a microchip inserted under their skin  
True  False
- Approximately how many lost cats are never reunited with their owners?  
25 percent  50 percent   
68 percent  98 percent
- In the Far East, dogs and cats are eaten for food  
True  False
- In the UK, 20,000 people are convicted for cruelty to dogs and cats every year  
True  False
- Cora Bailey lives in  
South Africa  Zimbabwe   
Kenya  Nigeria
- In 10 years, in South Africa, CLAW has spayed and neutered  
30,000 dogs  13,000 dogs   
100,000 dogs  50,000 dogs
- IFAW does not have an emergency relief team that helps at natural and man-made disasters around the world  
True  False
- After the tsunami, which affected south east Asia in December 2004, rabies was at risk of spreading from dogs and cats to people  
True  False
- The companionship of dogs and cats may make people who are ill and in hospital feel better  
True  False

ANSWERS  
1 True; 2 True; 3 6 million; 4 True; 5 98 per cent; 6 True; 7 False; 8 South Africa; 9 30,000; 10 False; 11 True; 12 True

# Where do you stand?

## TEACHERS' NOTES

### Learning objectives:

- To develop listening skills
- To express views and to establish a basic understanding of issues that may affect the laws relating to companion animals.

### Outcome:

- Students should have achieved the objectives by observing good citizenship practice relating to the creation of a positive listening and sharing environment. This should result in attitudes and values being clarified and even challenged respectfully.

### Resources:

- Two large signs: *Agree, Disagree*

## Activity

- Pin up two signs – *Agree, Disagree* – on opposite walls of the room with a clear space between them.
- Read out the different statements contained in the panel at the foot of this page. After reading each statement ask the students to stand under the appropriate sign.
- After each statement ask people why they chose to stand where they did.

While listening to other people's decisions, some students may change their minds and move to stand under a different sign. Their reasons for doing so should also encourage further discussion and debate.

- Finally, ask the class what conclusions they have reached. Did any of the discussions make them change their minds on various issues? **How would they summarize the usefulness of this exercise?**

## Agree/disagree statements

1. People should be allowed to keep as many pets as they like
2. Pets should be taken away from owners who can't look after them
3. Animals need laws to protect them
4. People should be a certain age before they can own a pet
5. Pets should be allowed to behave naturally
6. There are too many unwanted pets in the world
7. Someone who is cruel to a pet should be sent to jail
8. Deliberate cruelty is worse than neglect
9. Pet owners are completely responsible for their animals' care



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## Possible discussion points relating to agree/disagree statements

- **Should we be allowed to keep as many pets as we like?**

What happens if people do not have the money, space or time to care for all of their animals properly?

- **Should pets be taken away from owners who can't look after them properly?**

What happens if pets stay with owners who can't look after them properly? Effects on the pets? Effects on the owners?

- **What happens if there are no laws protecting animals?**

Some countries have had such laws for more than a century and others have none.

- **What happens if pets are allowed to behave and live completely naturally?**

Overpopulation? Diseases may spread and develop?

- **There are too many unwanted pets in the world – why is this?**

What happens to unwanted pets? **Page 4 in the Animal Action Week main booklet** contains some facts your students may find useful.

- **Should someone who is extremely cruel to an animal be sent to jail?**

This point may be used to introduce the question: 'What is cruelty?' which will be dealt with in a future section. **Page 5 of the Animal Action Week main booklet** contains background information.

- **Are pet owners completely responsible for their animals' care?**

Ask the students to consider the role of: neighbours; friends; families; the police, and charities in protecting companion animals.



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# Thinking about cruelty

## TEACHERS' NOTES

### This activity is in three parts.

### Learning objectives:

- To consider the general need for regulation in respect of private behaviour
- To raise some issues for critical examination
- To consider the different roles of the law and evaluate different approaches to dealing with particular issues
- To learn that certain areas of public life – e.g. animal ownership and treatment – can be regulated by local and national government.

### Outcomes:

Students will:

- Think critically while discussing reasons why laws should regulate aspects of everyday life
- Understand that there are different levels of government
- Critically analyse a range of issues, problems or events from different points of view.

### Resources:

- The *Five Freedoms* from **page 9 of the main booklet** copied on to a flip chart/board but concealed until appropriate point in lesson
- Student factsheet: *Townsville News*
- Put up the wall poster calendar, from the Animal Action Week pack, and hand round the **main booklet**. You could also use other photographs, news stories, website material that you feel appropriate.

## Part one

### Basic needs

- Ask the class as a whole or in groups to discuss the basic needs that **humans** have to be healthy and happy.
- Record the answers on the board and then encourage the students, through discussion, to narrow the needs down. For example – fast cars and expensive clothes may make someone happy, but are they as important to their everyday survival as food and water?

As a guide, a list of the most basic needs should include:

- |           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| • Food    | • Companionship                     |
| • Water   | • Care and attention when ill       |
| • Shelter | • Space to move and exercise freely |

- Ask the class in either groups or as a whole to discuss and list the basic needs of **dogs and cats**.
- Are there any differences between the two lists? Ask them to explain why.
- Unveil the *Five Freedoms* on the flip chart/board. Explain that these freedoms are the minimum standards that IFAW and other animal welfare organizations believe owners should provide for animals.
- Ask the students for any feedback they may like to give on the *Five Freedoms*.