

Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

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Submission

**Proposed Bill to amend the
Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008**



Dogs Queensland

The Canine Control Council (Queensland) Ltd, trading as Dogs Queensland (DQ), is a member of the internationally recognised Australian National Kennel Council Ltd (trading as Dogs Australia) and is the leading body of expertise on dogs in Queensland. Dogs Australia is an Associate Member of the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI).

Dogs Queensland manages/maintains the Register/registration of pure-bred dogs in Queensland. Dogs Queensland also maintains an Associate Register for non-pedigree dogs who participate in sporting competitions and other events.

Dogs Queensland is the premier dog organization in Queensland with currently over/approx. 6500 members. DQ members generally fall into the following categories.

1. Members who show dogs at conformation shows;
2. Members who compete in dog sport competitions;
3. Members who breed pedigree registered dogs;
4. A combination of any or all of the above;
5. "Community" members (pet owners).

Dogs Queensland manages the running of conformation dog shows, dog sports trials, obedience, training and other events (run by affiliates under the auspices of Dogs Queensland), judges training and certification in Queensland, as well as a range of other activities. DQ is the governing body for over 150 affiliated canine clubs throughout Queensland. These clubs conduct approximately 850 events throughout the State each year. These clubs actively promote responsible dog ownership through a variety of activities including, but not limited to, dog shows, dog sports trials, dog training, and their involvement in educating the general public.

Dogs Queensland provides education to its members on breeding, health and welfare issues. It also provides education to the public on responsible dog ownership.

Dogs Queensland members agree to abide by our Rules, Code of Ethics and ANKC regulations. Those rules closely mirror the requirements of the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, and our members are required to comply with this Act. (See Appendix 1: Dogs Queensland Code of Ethics)

Pursuant to Dogs Queensland Rules, dogs are required to be microchipped and members are required to record any transfer of dogs within 30 days.

This submission is made on behalf of Dogs Queensland, being a significant stakeholder, both with respect to its membership and influence in the broader community with respect to responsible ownership.

Proposed Bill to Amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 in Queensland

Dogs Queensland welcomes this review and the opportunity to make a submission concerning the proposed Bill. We also refer to our previous detailed submissions on the proposed reforms.

This submission is made on behalf of Dogs Queensland, being a significant stakeholder, both with respect to its membership and influence in the broader community with respect to responsible ownership.

This submission centres around opportunities to maximise the protection of the community and members of the public from injury, harm and death from dogs demonstrating dangerous behaviour.

Proposed Breed Ban

Dogs Queensland is opposed to Breed Specific Legislation (BSL) because this is not effective in preventing or reducing dog bites, dog attacks or in protecting the public from dangerous dogs.

The proposed BSL legislation fails to prevent dog attacks for the following reasons:

- Aggression is not breed specific - all breeds can display aggressive behaviour that may lead to injury or death as a result of a dog attack.
- Aggressive dog incidents occur as result of interactions between humans and dogs. They are multi-factorial and are usually the result of a number of contributing factors leading up to the dog's behaviour and response. BSL completely fails to address the human behaviour – lack of responsibility and supervision of dogs and children - which leads to these incidents. As a large number of incidents, particularly those involving children, occur at the owner's residence or that of family or a friend, BSL does nothing to address any of these incidents.
- Breed identification is problematic and uncertain. Identification of the breed is based on a sight assessment, may not be contemporaneous, not validated, repeatable and accurate. This encompasses many variables including training and experience of the person identifying the dog, owners completing microchipping and council registration paperwork, the proliferation of cross-breeds, and unregulated breeding of dogs by the general public (many of which will be unregistered). In most cases, the breed cannot be accurately verified by DNA evidence.

We note the current review, while welcome and necessary, does not address these gaps.

It is noted that there are also certain exceptions in the proposed Bill with respect to restricted breeds which seem incongruous with public expectation. For example, providing an exception for an assistance dog. If a dog is considered so dangerous that it is a restricted/banned breed, how is this breed appropriate to be an assistance dog and therefore out in the community. It is difficult to reconcile this with the importance of satisfying considerations of public safety.

BSL does not provide a solution orientated approach to the issue of dangerous dogs. There needs to be a quantifiable measure on individual dogs to achieve consistency in identifying those dogs that display dangerous behaviour within the community and the interactions that lead to aggressive dog attacks and fatalities.

If we take a look at recent dog attacks and fatalities in Queensland:

- Would BSL have saved the life of [REDACTED] who was trying to read an electrical meter at a property? (December 2022)
- Would BSL have saved the life of 5yo [REDACTED] that sustained life threatening injuries when he was attacked by a dog and later died? (December 2021)

- Would BSL have prevented a 3yo girl from being mauled and sustaining serious injuries? (April 2023)
- Would BSL have prevented 6yo [REDACTED] being attacked by the neighbour's dog? (April 2023)
- Would BSL prevent any of the numerous attacks that happen to delivery drivers and meter readers while trying to do their job?

The answer is NO!

Why? – Because the attacks are not breed dependent. What is significant is that these dogs were not of a specific breed listed in BSL. BSL does not cover cross-breeds of these breeds. If you ban one breed, those people who have a need for these breeds will just find another similar equally dangerous breed.¹

All of the dogs were individuals and, in each case, the attack will be the result of a combination of factors leading up to or contributing to the incident.

Further, breed identification is based on opinion which is not verified. Breed identification is not determined by expert evidence.

The most important information to look at in each of these cases is:

- What were the actual events leading up to the attack?
- Were they housed in a suitable enclosure?
- Were these dogs microchipped and registered?
- What was the capacity of the owner to manage the dogs?
- Were there previous reports of the dog's behaviour?
- Were there other contributing factors eg. provocation?
- Had those involved been educated in safety around dogs?

BSL is an overly simplistic solution to a complex multi-factorial problem. Accordingly, this does not work and is ineffective.

BSL has been attempted in numerous jurisdictions and there have been many reviews conducted on this issue.^{2 3}

All of this evidence indicates that BSL is ineffective or at best inconclusive and that there is no demonstrable reduction in dog bites and dog attacks over time.

In particular, the Victorian Government undertook a review of it BSL - the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Relating to Restricted Breed Dogs.⁴ This Inquiry recommended revocation of the decision to ban the restricted breeds (which included pure or cross bred American Pit Bull Terrier, Perro de Presa Canarios, Dogo Argentinos, Japanes Tosas, or Fila Brasileiros) and enabling the registration of restricted breed dogs. This resulted in the Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Act 2017. The reasons and explanations for this are set out in the fact sheet, a copy of which is attached to this submission.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/aug/16/the-alarming-rise-of-american-bully-xl-dogs-if-one-gets-hold-of-you-youre-in-trouble>.

² Dangerous Dogs – A Sensible Solution (Australian Veterinary Association 2012)

³ Nilson, F., Damsager, J., Lauritsen, J., & Bonander, C. (2018). The effect of breed-specific dog legislation on hospital treated dog bites in Odense, Denmark—A time series intervention study. *PLoS One*, 13(12), e0208393.

⁴ <https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-the-legislative-and-regulatory-framework-relating-to-restricted-breed-dogs/>

Accordingly, while Breed Specific Legislation tabled may seem appealing (at first instance) on the basis that something needs to be done to satisfy public concerns, there is no point in proceeding with legislative changes which are costly and completely ineffective. While this may seem to provide a "quick fix" solution, ultimately it is worse if the costly measures implemented are completely ineffective as then the government will have done nothing.

Effective Dangerous Dog Laws should be:

1. Behaviour based (BASED ON THE ACTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL DOG)
2. Quantifiable
3. Consistent
4. Clear requirements and clear penalties
5. Hold Humans responsible for Human Actions

Dogs Queensland recommends the following strategies for dog attack prevention:

1. Develop a central database (Eg. NSW Pet Registry) managed by the office of Local Government that contains microchip and registration information, behaviour orders and impoundment history of all cats and dogs that live in QLD.
2. Implement the use of quantifiable measures such as a Canine Threat Assessment Guide (C-TAG) and the Dunbar Bite Scale for Queensland Councils to utilise when responding to a dog attack incident to assess the risk and severity of that individual dogs behaviour regardless of breed.
3. Review menacing dog orders to provide greater flexibility to council Animal Management officers around orders. In particular, this should include an option to scale the response for matters that are minor to facilitate an enforced education of the owner rather than the dog being placed in a cage with minimal ramification for the owner eg. Muzzled in public, under effective control by a person over 18yo, must not attend leash free areas etc.
4. Provide mandatory training to Animal Management Officers in dog attack investigations and provide extra resources for Councils to implement dog attack prevention strategies.
5. Development of a targeted education program in the key areas that may cause a dog to display aggressive behaviour and ways to prevent this - i.e. responsible pet ownership, effective supervision of children around dogs, appropriate containment, and effective control of dogs in public places.

Restriction on avenues of appeal

Dogs Queensland has significant concerns with the proposal to restrict the right of appeal with respect to decisions, being purportedly on the basis that this is more humane and that this will also save cost.

This is a very simplistic approach to a complex issue. It is a problem that dogs may impounded for long periods while awaiting the outcome of legal proceedings which is arguably not fair on the dog and also incurs significant costs for councils. However, the real problem that needs to be addressed in this case is the timeframe for impounding the dog and resolving these matters. Instead of removing avenues of appeal, perhaps we should be looking at ways to expedite the process. Councils could look at appointing a panel of qualified independent assessors with expertise in animal behaviour. This might significantly reduce the number of appeals and avoid the need for court proceedings in most cases. For those cases, where the owner wishes to appeal the decision to QCAT or which are the subject of further appeal, perhaps these cases could be on a separate fast-track list. These cases are expedited through the system to significantly reduce the timeframe in which the dog is impounded (in a similar manner to the expedited handling of bail applications in which humans are incarcerated). There may also be other options to impounding

the dog long term. There may be cases where "bail" is considered an appropriate alternative albeit subject to strict conditions for the keeping of the dog. These are all options which could potentially be explored.

The current Bill proposes to restrict further appeal to matters of law. Arguably, this does not include breed identification as this is a question of fact. And yet, as indicated above, the issue of breed identification is a very complex issue, particularly as the breed identification DNA tests are not intended for this purpose and are not sufficiently reliable in this context.

Decisions to destroy or declare a dog menacing or dangerous have very grave consequences for the dog and also significant consequences for the owner. Councils have a duty of care not to act prematurely and rights of appeal should be preserved. Dog owners should be entitled to natural justice and procedural fairness. Accordingly, a right of appeal to these decisions should be maintained.

This is not to say that there should not be a balance between rights and restrictions. Some people, particularly repeat offenders, are perhaps not fit to continue to keep dogs and these persons should be subject to appropriate orders banning or restricting dog ownership.

Conclusion

What is clear is that BSL is not effective. Attacks are not breed dependent.

Dock attacks are a multi-factorial problem. In each case, the attack will be the result of a combination of factors leading up to or contributing to the incident (including the human element).

A large number of dog attacks are as a result of irresponsible dog ownership. So, by and large, the cause of the problem lies really with the dog owners and their management/supervision of the dog.

- Accurate breed identification and registration of all dogs
- Education programs for potential dog owners to assist in understanding the nature, characteristics and temperaments of specific dog breeds and their needs to assist potential dog owners in making appropriate choices for their pets and to minimise the risks involved.
- Education programs for all dog owners, parents and children.
- Additional education requirements for owners of regulated dogs.

Clearly, education and training is key. However, without properly understanding the nature of the dogs which are involved in these incidents and the human behaviour which is the underlying cause of the problem, it is likely that such education and training will be poorly targeted and therefore lead to little difference in the overall outcome.

Dogs Queensland is prepared to work with the State Government and local councils in delivering the message about responsible dog ownership and appropriate training for dog owners and new puppy buyers and most importantly in better understanding **this very complex** problem in order to ultimately find a solution.

Appendix 1

CODE OF ETHICS OF RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP, INCLUDING KEEPING, WELFARE, BREEDING, SELLING AND DISPOSING OF DOGS BY MEMBERS OF THE CANINE CONTROL COUNCIL (QUEENSLAND) LTD.

1 – COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF ETHICS

1.1 Each member, upon signing an Application for Membership of the CCCQ Ltd and being duly accepted to membership of the CCCQ Ltd shall, in addition to agreeing to be bound by the Constitution and Rules of the CCCQ Ltd be also bound by the CCCQ Ltd's Code of Ethics relating to responsible dog ownership, including the keeping, welfare, breeding, selling and disposing of dogs by members to the effect of the terms and conditions set under Section 2 hereof and complemented by the Code of Practice for Financial Members and the Code of Practice for Breeders (copies available at <http://www.dogsqueensland.org.au> or hardcopy on request).

2 – CODE OF ETHICS AND UNDERTAKING

2.1 In consideration of the CCCQ Ltd accepting me to membership, I undertake to abide by this Code of Ethics that:

- (1) I shall ensure that at all times, all dogs under my control are properly contained within a fenced area or suitable enclosure, properly housed, fed, watered, exercised and receive proper veterinary attention if and where required;
- (2) I shall permit any person authorised in writing by the CCCQ Ltd Secretary pursuant to a resolution of the Board of Directors to enter and inspect any premises owned or occupied by me for the purposes of investigating compliance with Section 2.1 of this Code;
- (3) I shall not allow any dogs under my care to roam at large or to cause a nuisance or be aggressive to neighbours, other dogs, members of the public or persons carrying out official duties. I will ensure that my dogs wear properly tagged collars (unless an appropriate exemption from a Local or State authority has been granted) and when in public or open areas be leashed or otherwise under effective control. If I live in a koala habitat area, I shall keep any dogs under my care enclosed in a building or pen at night to reduce the likelihood of attacks on koalas;
- (4) Should I be required to leave a dog in the care of another person for any period of time, I will ensure that the other person is aware of the requirement that the dog is to be kept leashed or under effective control at all times;
- (5) I agree not to breed from a bitch or a dog in a way that is detrimental to the dog or the bitch or to the breed. I further acknowledge that I shall breed only with the intent of maintaining and/or improving the standard of the breed and welfare, health and soundness of my dogs and I shall strive to eliminate hereditary diseases within my dogs and from within the breeds;

Further:

- (i) I shall not mate any bitch kept or owned by me before it has reached the age of twelve (12) months at the time of mating. This is not intended to reduce minimum age requirements for breeding set out in the Rules of National Breed Councils and/or Breed Clubs;
- (ii) I shall not breed from any bitch kept or owned by me causing it to whelp more than twice in eighteen (18) months;

(iii) I shall not breed any bitch kept or owned by me causing it to whelp more than four (4) times unless I have a current Veterinary Certificate stating that the bitch is in good health at the time of breeding. This Certificate must be presented at the time of registration of the litter resulting for each mating after the fourth (4th). A current Veterinary Certificate is defined as being within three (3) months prior to the mating;

(iv) I shall not breed any bitch kept or owned by me aged seven (7) years or over at the time of a mating unless I have a current Veterinary Certificate stating that the bitch is in good health at the time of breeding. This Certificate must be presented at the time of registration of the litter resulting from this mating. A current Veterinary Certificate is defined as being within three (3) months prior to the mating;

(v) I shall not breed from any male dog under nine (9) months of age; and

(vi) (a) I shall not mate my bitch or dog to a close relative, i.e. mother/son, father/daughter or brother/sister. Notwithstanding the above, progeny as a result of these matings will not be registered without first gaining pre-approval from the CCCQ Ltd for the mating for scientifically proven welfare or veterinary reasons;

(b) any breach of this clause will constitute an offence by the member/s who are the owners of either the sire or dam of the litter. The progeny resulting from such a breach will be registered on the Limited Register and endorsed "never to be upgraded" and any further penalties may be determined by the CCCQ Ltd.

(6) I agree that when selling any dog that my primary obligation must be for the welfare of the dog specifically and for the breed generally and I further undertake that if I dispose of any dog either by sale, commission or on consignment to any reseller of dogs in Australia or Overseas that transaction must comply with Rule 26 and such registration must comply with Rule 28.4 and be identified by Microchip before disposal;

(7) I shall not directly or indirectly give a dog as a prize or donation in any contest or raffle of any kind;

(8) I agree with the principle that any veterinary surgeon performing an operation on a dog that changes the natural conformation of the dog may report such operation to the CCCQ Ltd;

(9) I shall adhere to all the current ANKC Ltd Regulations (Parts 6.2 4-8, 6.8 2-11, 6.9.1 and 6.9.19) and any subsequent amendments (see Appendix 1 hereto) if specified for my particular breed. I shall record such information/scores for my breeds as required by any ANKC Ltd Regulations;

(10) I shall breed only for the purpose of improving the standard of the breed;

(11) I shall be bound by the CCCQ Ltd Rules applying to the Limited Register. I further agree to be bound by any decision of the CCCQ Ltd in respect to registrations on the Limited Register, with such decision/s of the CCCQ Ltd being binding and final without right of appeal;

(12) I shall not permit any of my purebred dogs to be mated:

(i) to a dog of a different breed;

(ii) to a crossbred dog;

(iii) to an unregistered dog of the same breed;

(iv) to a purebred registered dog of the same breed that is not the property of a current financial member of the CCCQ Ltd or other State/Territory Controlling Body and in the case of a bitch, where that aforementioned member does not hold a valid Breeder's Prefix; or

(v) to a dog not on the Main Register.

(13) I agree to only sell a dog where there is a reasonable expectation of a happy and healthy life and I will assist in the rehoming of a dog if the initial circumstances change;

(14) I shall not:

- (i) sell or otherwise transfer from my care any puppy under eight (8) weeks of age. I will liaise with my veterinary surgeon to determine a vaccination regime appropriate for my dogs and shall provide a current Vaccination Certificate, signed by a veterinary surgeon registered under the Law of Queensland or another State/Territory, with any dog leaving my care; and
- (ii) export any puppy under (11) weeks of age. When exporting, I accept that it is my responsibility to have the dog Microchipped and obtain an Export Certificate before the dog leaves Australia and comply with all current requirements of the relevant Government body or its successor;

(15) I shall ensure that all persons acquiring dogs from me are given clear written information as to their responsibility for the care and welfare of the dog, as detailed in item 2.1 of the Code of Ethics;

(16) I shall provide to all purchasers of dogs sold or placed by me, written details of all dietary and immunisation requirements and details relating to responsible dog ownership as well as the responsibility to abide by Local Laws;

(17) I shall display my CCCQ Ltd membership number on any advertisement for sale of dogs, whatever the media and I will include the following wording in the advertisement:
"Please contact Dogs Queensland to verify my membership".

(18) I shall ensure that all dogs sold or disposed of by me are in the best possible state of health. Where I dispose of a dog with a health issue or disability, I shall obtain from the recipient written and signed acknowledgement of the condition of the dog.

(19) I shall be honest regarding the characteristics of the breed and shall not falsely advertise a dog or mislead any person regarding the performance or quality of any dog on offer;

(20) I shall comply with all provisions of the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001 (Qld) and with the Laws relating to the keeping of dogs promulgated by my local authority. I accept that it is my responsibility to keep abreast of any changes to the local Laws;

(21) I accept that, should I become aware that any of my dogs have any contagious disease, I will notify the office of the CCCQ Ltd within seven (7) days of becoming so aware. I acknowledge that I will be unable to exhibit or dispose of any dogs that are within my kennel for a period of three (3) months of such notification unless cleared to do so by a registered veterinary surgeon. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the CCCQ Ltd may, at the expiration of the said three (3) month period, require me to provide a veterinary clearance in respect of the dogs contained within my kennel;

(22) I accept the following:

- (i) the objective of the CCCQ Ltd is to promote in every way the standing and improvement of purebred dogs in the wider Queensland community;
- (ii) as a consequence, membership of the CCCQ Ltd extends certain responsibilities;
- (iii) as a member, it is incumbent on me to also abide by the following requirements:
 - (a) conduct myself politely and with integrity at CCCQ Ltd approved events;
 - (b) conduct myself in a sportsmanlike manner at such events and in any related activities or communications;
 - (c) respect the reputations of other members, including Judges at CCCQ Ltd approved events and comply with the Dogs Queensland Social Media Policy and Guidelines (see Appendix 18); and
 - (iv) in reference to the matters outlined below, I acknowledge that my involvement in any of the matters listed will affect my standing as a member and could result in disciplinary action and suspension of membership:
 - (a) committed an offence involving cruelty to animals;
 - (b) committed an indictable offence or summary offence;

- (c) being found liable for defamation or libel in civil court proceedings instituted as a result of conduct in the dog world context;
- (d) threatening or abusive behaviour, whether verbal or physical;
- (e) harsh treatment of dogs; or
- (f) use of the name of the CCCQ Ltd in an unauthorised manner.

Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Act 2017

What is the *Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breed Dogs) Act 2017*?

This Amendment Act amends the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to:

- allow the registration of restricted breed dogs in Victoria with councils
- clarify the dangerous dog status of guard dogs when retired to a residential premises
- increase the payments for registered dogs and cats made by Councils to the Treasurer under section 69(1)(a) and (aa) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act).

What are restricted breed dogs?

Restricted breed dogs are defined as dogs fitting the Approved Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria. These include pure or cross bred American Pit Bull Terriers (or Pit Bull Terriers), Perro de Presa Canarios (or Presa Canario), Dogo Argentinos, Japanese Tosas, or Fila Brasileiros.

Prior to 30 September 2017, the only restricted breed dogs that could be kept (i.e. registered) were those that were in Victoria before 1 September 2010 and were registered (as any breed) with the local council before 30 September 2011.

From 30 September 2017, restricted breed dogs may be registered with councils in Victoria.

Why allow registration of restricted breed dogs?

The Parliamentary Inquiry into the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Relating to Restricted Breed Dogs recommended enabling the registration of restricted breed dogs. For full details of Inquiry findings and recommendations, visit parliament.vic.gov.au.

Allowing the registration of restricted breed dogs will improve community safety and benefit councils.

Community safety is enhanced as owners won't be tempted to hide restricted breed dogs as there is a pathway for registration. The change allows restricted breed dogs to be identified and managed. Registering, identifying and appropriately housing these dogs will enhance community safety. For example, mandatory desexing will decrease the number of restricted breed dogs overtime.

Councils will have a better idea of the location of these dogs, and can ensure compliance with strict housing and ownership requirements. This will improve community safety through the identification of dogs and secure housing of dogs.

The change will save councils money by avoiding costs associated with seizing, holding and euthanasing dogs declared as restricted breeds.

Will this increase the number of restricted breed dogs in Victoria?

No. Allowing registration of restricted breed dogs will not increase the number of these dogs in the community, as bans on breeding, adopting or transferring ownership remain in place.

Any increase in the number of registered restricted breed dogs will simply reflect the fact that existing (previously unregistered) dogs have now been registered. Identifying these dogs improves community safety as requirements for secure housing, mandatory desexing, muzzles and identification collars are applicable.

It remains a criminal offence (with a maximum 6 months jail or 60 penalty units) for any person, whether or not they are the owner, to breed a restricted breed dog. The offence is committed if the person deliberately or recklessly allows the breeding. It applies whether or not both dogs are restricted breeds, and when the breeding results in progeny (whether or not any progeny is a restricted breed dog) born alive or stillborn.

Ultimately, the ban on breeding, along with the ban on importing, selling and changing ownership of restricted breed dogs, aims to phase out these breeds in Victoria.



How will community safety be maintained?

Allowing the registration of restricted breed dogs does not change any of the strict controls applying to restricted breed dogs currently in place.

Restricted breed dogs are still required to be:

- de-sexed
- microchipped
- kept on a leash and muzzled at all times when in public
- housed in such a way that they cannot escape, and are prevented from injuring visitors to the premises
- housed with warning signs at all entrances to the premises
- identified by wearing a red and yellow striped collar at all times.

The registration and identification of dogs with prescribed collars enables community members to know these dogs are of a restricted breed. In turn, identifying these dogs also alerts community members to instances where they are not properly confined, and this can be reported to the local council.

How can community members report suspected unregistered restricted breed dogs?

Call your local council. Alternatively you can call the Dangerous Dogs Hotline on 136 186. This number will connect you to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport and Resource (DEDJTR) Customer Service Centre. When prompted, select option 1 – to report an animal offence including a dangerous or restricted breed dog.

What are details of the other key changes introduced through the Amendment Act?

The Amendment Act clarifies that retired guard dogs are still subject to the same housing and identification requirements as working guard dogs.

The Amendment Act introduces a new requirement that dangerous dog owners who sell, give away or transfer the ownership of that dog to another person, to notify that person in writing that the dog is deemed dangerous.

The Amendment Act also increases the payments for registered dogs and cats made by councils to the Treasurer under section 69(1) (a) and (aa) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. This is known as the "pet registration payment".

Payments are currently \$2.00 for every cat and \$3.50 for every dog. These payments have not increased since 2010, nor have they been indexed.

The Amendment Act increases the payment to \$4.00 per dog and \$4.00 per cat, and indexes payments annually. Payments will increase from the 2018-19 financial year.

What is the pet registration payment used for, and why does it need to be increased?

The pet registration payment funds the Domestic Animals Unit, within DEDJTR. The payment is utilised for promoting responsible dog and cat ownership and animal welfare, research into domestic animal management and supporting administration of the Act.

The payment increase will ensure DEDJTR has sufficient funds to maintain and develop programs that educate expectant parents, preschool and school aged children on dog safety and responsible dog ownership.

The funds are also used to implement the government's priorities, for example around restricted breed dogs, greyhounds and puppy farms.

Where can I get more information?

Call 136 186, visit www.vic.gov.au/pets or email pet.welfare@ecodev.vic.gov.au

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