

## Companion Dogs as Pets



The term '**Companion Dog**' is used interchangeably with the term 'pet'. Both terms refer to dogs who provide company to an owner/s as a household family member. Often referred to as *man's best friend* companion dogs as pets have no special training other than for obedience, behavioral or recreational sporting purposes and are not given specific tasks or jobs to do in helping individuals with disability or special needs.

Dogs as pets do however have an important place in the lives of humans. They provide nonjudgmental love, encourage healthy lifestyle choices, improve mental wellbeing, decrease feelings of loneliness, and even help reduce stress.

All companion dogs in NSW (unless exempt) must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age or before they are sold or given away and then registered by 6 months on the NSW Pet Registry. Registration requires a once only payment and covers the lifetime of the animal regardless of changes in ownership. The ownership of companion animals, cats and dogs is regulated under the Companion Animals Act 1998.

Companion dogs as pets have no legal public access rights in NSW such as travelling on public transport and are only allowed into public spaces or private venues at the discretion of the owner. Companion dogs are allowed in outdoor dining areas at the discretion of business owners and under regulations set by NSW Health.

Owning a dog is a considerable responsibility. Before welcoming a dog into your home research what breed and temperament will be right for you and your family. Consider the space you have, your family dynamics, the time needed to exercise a dog and your working hours.

There are various categories of companion dog other than as pets. The Fact Sheet: **What is a Therapy Dog?** looks at the important role of dogs in helping people in the community.

### References

**Companion Animals Act 1998 -**

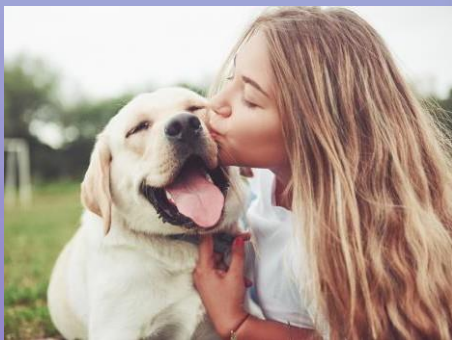
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1998-087>

**NSW Pet Registry –** <https://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au/#/>

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand -**

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/standards/pages/Animals.aspx>

*The details provided in this Fact Sheet are for general informational purposes only. Please consider your personal circumstances and always do your own research to ensure the right outcome for you.*



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