



***Making the most of the human-canine relationship.***

## Assistance dogs in NSW

Relevant legislation: **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

Information in the purple text boxes comes from the *Office of Local Government* website:

An assistance animal in NSW is a dog or other animal that is either:

- accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of that disability; OR
- accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the Commonwealth; OR
- **trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of that disability, and, to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place.**

This is based on how assistance animals are defined in Commonwealth law (Disability Discrimination Act 1992). Currently neither the Commonwealth nor NSW laws provide for the accreditation of assistance animals.

Assistance animals need to be micro-chipped and lifetime registered on the Companion Animals Register via the local council.

Councils are entitled to request reasonable proof that your animal is a genuine assistance animal. This means proof:

- that you have a disability;
- that your animal has been trained to alleviate the effect of the disability; and
- that your animal is trained to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Importantly, a person with a disability has the right to train their own assistance animal so long as he or she can provide proof that that training means the animal meets the definition of an assistance animal.



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## Public Places

A person with a disability is entitled to be accompanied by an assistance animal in public places and on public transport while he or she is genuinely using the animal for assistance. Entry cannot be refused without reasonable cause.

Staff in charge of access to public places and transport are **entitled to request reasonable proof** that your animal is a genuine assistance animal. They may be guided by their organisation's own policy to help them to determine this. Their policies may be publicly available.

## Public Transport

A dog that is owner-trained will need to have an *Assistance Animal Permit* from Transport for NSW to ride on public transport.

From the Transport for NSW website:

To obtain an Assistance Animal Permit from Transport for NSW you will need:

- A medical certificate confirming that you have a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth);
- Documentation showing that the assistance animal (where relevant) has been registered with the handler's local Council;
- An assessment letter or report dated within the last six months from an **organisation registered with TfNSW\*** identifying:
  - The skills and actions that the assistance animal exhibits to alleviate the effects of the handler's disability;
  - The assistance animal meeting the appropriate behaviour and hygiene standards for a public place; and
  - The handler having control of the assistance animal; and
- A colour photograph of the assistance animal

\* There is a list of registered organisations on the Transport for NSW website, however this may not be up-to-date. I'm currently investigating options for who can provide this documentation.