



Office of  
Local Government



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR POUNDS, SHELTERS AND ANIMAL WELFARE BODIES



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## General Questions

### What has changed for pounds and shelters?

Pound and Shelters should still use the existing NSW Companion Animal's Register. Veterinarian and Authorised Identifiers should use the NSW Pet Registry for all new registrations. Pets that are purchased from pounds and shelters will still be able to be registered at half price (50% of the general registration fee). The new Registry will be expanded to include authorised users next year.

### What has changed for animal welfare organisations?

The Government has changed the *Companion Animals Regulation 2008* to authorise the RSPCA and Animal Welfare League NSW to access the Pet Registry for the purposes of exercising their roles under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*. No changes have been made to arrangements that allow animals to be held by the RSPCA, Animal Welfare League and Cat Protection Society of NSW for up to 12 months without registration.

### What has changed for animal rescue groups?

No changes have been made to arrangements that allow animals to be held by animal welfare bodies approved by the Chief Executive, Office of Local Government (under section 16(d) of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*) for up to 12 months without paying for registration. There is still no entitlement to reduce registration fees.

### Why is the Government investing in a new NSW Pet Registry?

The new NSW Pet Registry, including further changes in 2017, will save pet owners, breeders, veterinarians and others, time and money that is better spent keeping our pets and communities safe. It will support the efforts of RSPCA and Animal Welfare League NSW Inspectors who protect animal welfare.

The new NSW Pet Registry will collect information about breeds, breeders, and the number of cats and dogs being bred.

It will also help to identify ways to reduce the number of animals that are euthanised, help to prevent dog attacks and reduce stray, wandering and feral cats in NSW and promote responsible pet ownership.

### Will my logon details change?

No. Councils and other users will be able to use their current logon details in the Pet Registry and the Companion Animals Registry.

## The new NSW Pet Registry

### What does the new 'one step process' mean?

Having your cat or dog microchipped and registered at the same time. When the veterinarian or implanter inserts the microchip, they create the record on the NSW Pet Registry and include its owner's details. Pet owners should insist that all microchip implanters create this record as part of the service they provide. If it's not recorded, your lost or wandering pet may not get home safely.

## **Who can register their pet online?**

Pet owners can register their pet online via computer or mobile device. At this stage online payments can only be made by Visa or MasterCard. Pet owners seeking certain discounted fees or exemptions who will continue to register through their local council include:

- those owners seeking to register assistance animals or working dogs;
- recognised breeders seeking to register animals kept for breeding purposes; and
- owners who do not have the information they need to create a profile online.

Eligible pensioners who are entitled to pay lower registration fees are able to pay online.

## **What else can be done online?**

Pet owners are able to check if their pet is registered, update their contact details, claim existing pets that are already registered, transfer ownership to a new owner if they sell or give away their pet, report their pet missing and inform their local council that their pet is deceased.

## **Who will get a breeder ID number? What about backyard breeders?**

For each person who registers as the first owner of a puppy or kitten (the owner of a female cat or dog that has the litter of kittens or puppies), the NSW Pet Registry will automatically generate a breeder ID number if they do not already have one. This applies whether or not they are a recognised breeder or are in the business of breeding pets for sale.

All other details on the NSW Pet Registry are the same as for all other pet owners. These numbers have been introduced to enable multiple animals to be added easily to the same registered owner.

## **Registering online**

### **Who can enter microchip and other identification information for a pet?**

Only Veterinarians, other Authorised Identifiers and authorised local council staff can create a record for an individual pet. This must happen before the pet's owner can enter registration information or pay registration fees.

### **What name should I use to register?**

Make sure you use your full legal name, as it appears on your Driver's Licence, Medicare Card or Australian Passport. You will need one of these documents to verify your identity.

When you create your owner profile, you only do this once.

### **What address should I use to register?**

You should use your physical address, that is, the address where your pet is kept most of the time. There will also be an opportunity to enter a separate address for postal purposes or a secondary address. When entering the address details, take care to use the official property address as recorded with Land and Property Information NSW.

### **I don't have access to a computer, how can I register?**

If you do not have access to a computer but wish to register online, you may wish to attend your local library or council. However, you do not need to register your pet online – simply attend your local council and submit a completed form over the counter.

### **What if I don't have an email address?**

If you do not have an email address, simply attend your local council and submit a completed form over the counter.

### **Is there a charge for making an online payment?**

Like most online payments, a small charge is levied for online registration. This covers service transaction costs.

### **How can you tell if a pet is registered before you buy it?**

All pets should be registered when you buy them, but the registration fees may not be paid. A prospective buyer will not be able to see registration details online. To find out whether registration fees have been paid, the buyer should ask the seller to show them a registration certificate for the animal. These cannot be obtained until payment has been made.

### **How does identity verification work?**

The identity of the person making the online profile will be validated through a Document Verification Service (DVS). When a person makes a profile their Driver's Licence, Medicare or passport number will be validated against the name and date of birth on their documents. These numbers are not stored in the NSW Pet Registry or on the DVS.

### **How does address verification work?**

Address verification is undertaken by checking the typed address against an Australia Post Address list, which uses the Land and Property Information data on addresses in Australia. Pet owners who cannot verify their address online will need to register using paper forms at their local council.

### **Who can enter microchip and other identification information for a pet?**

Only Veterinarians, other Authorised Identifiers and authorised local council staff can create a record for an individual pet. This must happen before the pet's owner can enter registration information or pay registration fees.

## **Trouble Shooting**

### **I am not able to claim my existing pets online. What should I do?**

Your pet's details must match your own in order to claim them on your online profile. Specifically, you will need to match your name and the contact number you used with those recorded to originally register your pet in the online NSW Pet Registry. You will also need to know your pet's microchip number.

If you do not know this information or your details do not match the name and address on the NSW Pet Registry for your pet, you will need to update the registration by completing an *update details form*, available at <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-and-cats/forms> (or obtained from your local council) and lodge it with your local council.

## **What if I cannot find my pet on the NSW Pet Registry?**

If you are unable to find your pet, it is possible that the wrong microchip number has been used to register your pet. Please contact your local veterinarian – he or she will be able to look up your pet's details on the Registry and, if the microchip number is wrong, give you a *Verification of Existing Microchip Form* to lodge at your local council. This will enable council to correct the information on the NSW Pet Registry, allowing you to claim your pet.

## **My address is not available for validation on the NSW Pet Registry, what should I do?**

If you are entering a physical address please make sure it is the property address as recorded on the NSW Land and Property Information Register.

For rural properties, this may mean your official Rural Property Address rather than a property name or other name. This is not the same as your lot number. It will include a Rural Road Number, a Road Name and a Locality. If you do not know your Rural Property Address, please contact your local council.

If you are not able to enter a valid address on the online NSW Pet Registry you will need to complete a paper form and lodge it with your local council. Forms are available from your council or can be accessed at <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-and-cats/forms>

## **Why won't the NSW Pet Registry work on my computer?**

The NSW Pet Registry has been developed to work on the internet browsers Chrome, Firefox and Internet Explorer. However, the Companion Animals Register (which is used by councils and some Authorised Identifiers) website will not work on Internet Explorer 11 or more recent versions – you may need to switch to a compatible browser for the purposes of using the Companion Animals Register.

## **Moving to NSW**

### **Can people moving to NSW claim their pets online?**

No. The NSW Pet Registry is not directly linked to registries in other States and Territories or commercial registries. If a pet owner moves to NSW he or she should inform their former local council or registry and then register their pet with the NSW Pet Registry.

### **What should council do if a person moves to NSW without identification information?**

Pets must be microchipped before being registered in NSW. Councils can scan the animal for its existing microchip and identification information entered on the NSW Pet Registry.

## **Paper forms**

### **Should we accept existing paper forms?**

Yes. The Office of Local Government will continue to accept existing forms and asks that you continue to accept existing forms.

### **Where can I get new forms?**

New PDF forms that mirror the online NSW Pet Registry will be available to download from the Office of Local Government website at [www.olg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au) or from the Registry website at [www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au](http://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au). Councils should be aware that these forms have changed in NSW Pet Registry Frequently Asked Questions for Pound, Shelters and Animal Welfare Bodies July 2016 8  
*subject to change*

content and format to reflect changes in information required for identification and registration purposes.

The Office of Local Government will no longer supply paper forms once current stocks run out. The new forms can be downloaded and printed for owners to submit to their local council.

### **When will paper forms be phased out?**

Authorised Identifiers and Veterinarians are strongly encouraged to use the new online system. This minimises costs for councils and ratepayers and reduces data entry mistakes.

The Office of Local Government will continue to support the use of paper forms by members of the public who do not have access to a computer or the internet, as well as those who require special assistance, indefinitely.

## **Registration fees**

### **What are the registration fees for pets?**

Registration fees are valid for the lifetime of each pet and do not need to be renewed each year. A list of current registration fees is available on the OLG website at <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/content/registration-fees>

A general registration fee applies to all pets, and discounts apply for eligible pensioners, working dogs, assistance animals and those purchased from a shelter or pound. An additional fee applies for animals that are not desexed – cats must be desexed by 4 months and dogs by 6 months to ensure this fee does not apply.

All registration fees must be paid by the time a pet is 6 months of age (unless the Registry shows advice from a veterinarian that further time is required to desex the pet for medical reasons.)

### **When are registration fees due?**

Registration fees for pets may be paid when registration information is entered (before the animal is 12 weeks of age or before it is sold or given to a new owner, whichever is earlier).

A registration certificate will not be generated online, or provided by a local council, until registration fees have been paid. If the pet's owner has created an online profile and claimed the pet (so it is registered in their name), the date when registration fees are due appears on the owner's home page, along with a link to where fees can be paid online.

### **Does having a breeder ID entitle a person to cheaper registration?**

Only those breeders that are members of Recognised Breeder Associations are entitled to pay lower fees to register animals that are not desexed. This type of registration must be completed using paper forms submitted to a local council.

### **How will discounted registration for animals from pounds and shelters work?**

Pet owners will still be entitled to half price registration if they buy a pet from a pound or shelter (50% of the general registration fee) and will be able to register online. The record of these animals will be marked on the NSW Pet Registry with an 'eligible pound/shelter' flag.

## Desexing pets

### **When does my dog need to be desexed?**

You should consult your local veterinarian about when and how to desex your pet. The Government encourages pet owners to desex their pets to ensure they remain healthy, contribute to better behaviour and prevent unwanted litters.

To encourage early desexing, the Government provides for a lower registration fee for dogs that are desexed by 6 months of age. This is the age that is generally recommended.

### **When does my cat need to be desexed?**

You should consult your local veterinarian about when and how to desex your cat. The Government encourages pet owners to desex their cats to ensure they remain healthy, contribute to better behaviour and prevent unwanted litters.

To encourage early desexing, the Government provides for a lower registration fee for cats that are desexed by 4 months of age. This is the age that is generally recommended. As this age was lowered from 6 months to 4 months on 4 July 2016, those kittens born before that date can be desexed up until 6 months of age and still be registered at the lower price.

### **What if the veterinarian says my dog or cat cannot be desexed yet?**

You should consult your local Veterinarian about when and how to desex your pet. Your veterinarian may recommend that your dog or cat should not be desexed yet for medical reasons.

Where that is the case, he or she will either notify the NSW Pet Registry directly or provide you with a written document to give to your local council before your pet reaches the age at which it should have been desexed. This will entitle you to extra time to desex your pet without paying higher registration fees.

### **How do you prove that your pet has been desexed online?**

Your pet should be desexed by a Veterinarian. If this occurs in NSW the veterinarian will either notify the NSW Pet Registry directly or provide you with a written document to give to your local council. If your pet was desexed in another State or Territory you may present written advice from that veterinarian, or another veterinarian, confirming that your pet has been desexed.

### **What if an owner pays the lower registration fee but does not desex their pet?**

If a person pays a general registration fee before desexing their pet, they will still need to pay a further registration fee of \$142 before the animal is six months old unless they have desexed their pet. Cats born after 4 July 2016 must be desexed by 4 months of age, and cats born before that date and all dogs must be desexed by 6 months of age. This can only be temporarily extended with written advice from a Veterinarian provided before the animal reaches that age.

## Transferring pets and updating details

### What is the best way to officially transfer the ownership of a pet?

The current owner of the pet should log into the NSW Pet Registry website and follow the instructions titled **Transferring your pet to a new owner** from the NSW Pet Registry Public User Guide and FAQs.

The buyer needs to log into the NSW Pet Registry website to create a user profile. Then they need to link their profile to the pet by following the instructions titled **Claim your pet** from the NSW Pet Registry Public User Guide and FAQs.

### What happens if a new owner does not 'accept' the pet?

The pet will remain on the old owner's profile until it is claimed, with a pet status marked 'home – transfer'. Local councils can remove pet details if required.

### Can people whose pets are subject to declarations and orders transfer animals online?

The owners of pets that are the subject of a menacing or dangerous dog declaration or nuisance order are not able to transfer these animals to a new owner online. Instead, they will need to complete a paper form and lodge it with their local council. Forms are available from your council or can be accessed at <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-and-cats/forms>

### Can people whose pet are subject to declarations and orders change their address online?

The owners of pets that are the subject of a menacing or dangerous dog declaration or nuisance order will be able to change their address online. However, it is important, that these owners still inform their local council that they have changed address.

### Who is responsible for a pet between release and acceptance?

The person responsible for a pet at all times is the person who legally owns it. If a person has accepted possession of a pet, they should take care to take responsibility for its welfare and behaviour, regardless of whether they are yet to register it in their name.

## Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers

### What is changing for Veterinarians?

Veterinarians can access the Companion Animals Register online through a new portal at [www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au](http://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au). Entering data directly into the NSW Pet Registry is much easier and system changes reduce the amount of identification information that must be entered when pets are microchipped.

Veterinarians will also be able to help return a pet to its owner by looking up a microchip number and contacting the owner. If the pet is a restricted, dangerous or menacing dog, veterinarians should instead contact their local council.

Veterinarians still have the choice to also be an Approved Person operating Approved Premises for the purposes of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

### **How will Veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers be informed about changes?**

Veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers can access the new NSW Pet Registry portal using their existing logon information.

The Office of Local Government is working with the Australian Veterinary Association and Vet Practitioners Board to communicate with veterinarians. Councils and veterinarians are encouraged to work together during the transition.

Those users who do not receive the information will still be able to use the existing Companion Animals Register or any paper forms they already have in stock.

### **If a Veterinarian returns a lost pet directly to its owner will the local council be notified?**

Not necessarily. It is up to the Veterinarian to decide whether to inform the local council if they believe that is warranted. The intention is that more pets are returned to their owners directly, reducing the impact on council resources and reducing the inconvenience placed on veterinarians, who are often left to house lost pets overnight and on weekends.

If the pet is a restricted, dangerous or menacing dog, veterinarians should contact their local council rather than returning it to its owner. Veterinarians will also have the option to enter notes on the NSW Pet Registry if they wish, but this is not required.

### **Will Veterinarians be registration agents?**

Veterinarians will not be registration agents as they are not processing payments. Pet owners will be able to register their own pets online once a Veterinarian or Authorised Identifier has created a record of the identification information for their animal (at time of microchipping).

### **Do Veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers have to go online?**

No. Veterinarians and other users will still have access to paper forms if needed but are strongly encouraged to update the NSW Pet Registry online. The new public portal will be available to these users and pet owners from August 2016.

Going online reduces the cost to councils and ratepayers of processing forms, is a quicker way to update the Registry and minimises data entry mistakes. Improvements have been made to make it easier and faster to use the Registry online.

### **Do Veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers still need to keep records?**

If information is entered directly on to the NSW Pet Registry it is not strictly necessary to keep a record of that information under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. However, it may be prudent to do so in case there is any uncertainty about whether the information was correctly entered or for business purposes. Practice records may also be required under other legislation. If paper forms are used, a copy should be kept as per the *Exercise of Functions Guidelines*.

### **Should Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers still keep records of paper forms?**

Yes. Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers that do not use the NSW Pet Registry online should continue their current record keeping practices and ensure the privacy of personal information.

**Who is responsible for entering data after microchipping, the Veterinarian or the breeder?**

If a breeder or other pet owner gets a Veterinarian to microchip their pet, the breeder or owner remains responsible for making sure identification information goes on the NSW Pet Registry. A Veterinarian will either directly enter the information to the Registry as a service for their customer or provide a document with the required information for processing by a local council.