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COMPANION ANIMALS AMENDMENT (GREYHOUND MUZZLING EXEMPTION) REGULATION 2011

The purpose of this circular is to advise that the Companion Animals Amendment (Greyhound Muzzling Exemption) Regulation 2011 commences today, 18 February 2011.

The amendment provides an exemption to the requirement under section 15 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* for a greyhound to be muzzled while in a public place. The exemption only applies to greyhounds that have successfully completed a greyhound re-training program, which has been approved by me, as Chief Executive of the Division of Local Government, by order published in the NSW Government Gazette.

The updated Companion Animals Regulation 2008, incorporating the abovementioned amendment, is available for download on the NSW Legislation website at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Only non-racing greyhounds (ie, retired-racing greyhounds and those kept solely for the purpose of being a pet) are eligible to complete an approved greyhound re-training program and therefore eligible for an exemption from muzzling.

The Division will issue guidelines setting out the criteria that organisations conducting greyhound re-training programs must meet in order for their programs to be approved. This will include appropriate temperament and socialisation training and testing of the greyhound at the completion of a program. The approval criteria will be designed to minimise the risk to public safety from the provision of an exemption to the greyhound muzzling requirement.

The guidelines will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, the Australian Institute of Local Government Rangers and Greyhound Racing NSW.

The Division of Local Government will not be accepting applications for approval for greyhound re-training programs until the guidelines are finalised.

Importantly, as no greyhound re-training programs are currently approved for the purposes of this Regulation, all greyhounds in NSW continue to be

required to wear a muzzle while in a public place, in accordance with the requirements of section 15 of the Act.

Other important information for council enforcement officers

To aid enforcement of the greyhound muzzling requirements of the Act, exempt greyhounds will be required to wear a distinctive collar, of a kind approved by me, as Chief Executive of the Division of Local Government, as set out in the forthcoming guidelines.

Council enforcement officers should also note that, where a greyhound that has been granted an exemption is subsequently involved in an attack, it is subject to the existing dangerous dog provisions of the Act. Where an offence is proven and a dangerous dog order is issued, the muzzling exemption will no longer apply.

The muzzling exemption does not apply to greyhounds that are declared dangerous dogs.

Further information will be provided when the abovementioned guidelines are released.



Ross Woodward
Chief Executive, Local Government
A Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet