

INTRODUCTION

The *Companion Animals Regulation 2008* (the Regulation) is made under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the Act) to support the operation of that Act by providing key information about how pet cats and dogs (companion animals) are identified, registered and managed in NSW.

Regulations are reviewed every five years unless a deferral is approved. The Regulation has been postponed five times and will be repealed under the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1989* on 1 September 2018 unless the Government makes a new Regulation. It is therefore timely to review how the Regulation is working to ensure it continues to support responsible pet ownership.

Consultation with stakeholders is critical to inform the development of regulations to assist the Government to thoroughly understand impacts and ensure the benefits of regulation outweigh the costs.

Two separate consultations are being undertaken as part of the review of the Companion Animals Regulation. The first, held in 2017, gathered feedback in relation to a Discussion Paper which identified a number of focus areas where the current Regulation could be updated and improved. A total of 112 submissions were received, with councils and pet owners being the primary respondents. Additionally, the Office of Local Government (OLG) held three targeted consultation sessions, with the Ministerial Responsible Pet Ownership Reference Group, a diverse range of councils from across the State and industry representatives, as well as State agencies with an interest in the legislation.

Feedback related to the effectiveness of the Regulation and the Act in practice, as well as ideas for improvements to guidance, education and the Register.

A significant proportion of the suggestions contained feedback would require amendments to the Act, and so could not be undertaken as part of the statutory regulation review. However, the value of these suggestions are recognised and have been noted for inclusion in the next Companion Animals Bill.

Responses to the Discussion Paper which were supported and able to be implemented under the Regulation, were used to inform the development of a draft Regulation and a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). The RIS provides an assessment of whether the benefits of the draft Regulation outweigh the costs associated with compliance, and economic, social and environmental impact. Following this consultation process, the Government will determine which changes should be made to the draft Regulation.

The new Regulation will come into effect after it has been approved by the Governor and tabled in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council by the Parliamentary Counsel. This is expected to occur later in 2018.

PROPOSED AREAS FOR CHANGE

Public and stakeholder feedback highlighted a number of areas for change. There are three key proposals for change in the Regulation to be further tested during this public consultation period:

- changes to registration fees reflecting annual inflation adjustments;
- extending the definition of eligible pound or shelter operator to allow animals adopted from rescue groups to access subsidised registration fees; and
- increases in penalty notice offences to reflect inflation and reduce the high rate of offending in relation to certain offences.

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

There are two ways to provide your feedback:

1. [Online via the consultation website \(external link\)](#)

OR

2. Print the feedback form from OLG's website and post or email it to:

Companion Animals Regulation Review

Locked Bag 3015

Nowra NSW 2541

Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au

Submissions can now be made and will be accepted until **5pm Tuesday 22 May 2018**.