



Office of
Local Government



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR COUNCILS AND AUTHORISED USERS



Responsible Pet Ownership Program

JULY 2016

ACCESS TO SERVICES

The Office of Local Government is located at:

Levels 1 & 2
5 O'Keefe Avenue
NOWRA NSW 2541

Locked Bag 3015
NOWRA NSW 2541

Phone 02 4428 4100
Fax 02 4428 4199
TTY 02 4428 4209

Level 9, 6 – 10 O'Connell Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

PO Box R1772
ROYAL EXCHANGE NSW 1225

Phone 02 9289 4000
Fax 02 9289 4099

Email olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Website www.olg.nsw.gov.au

OFFICE HOURS

Monday to Friday
8.30am to 5.00pm
(special arrangements may be made if these hours are unsuitable)
All offices are wheelchair accessible.

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA PUBLICATIONS

Special arrangements can be made for our publications to be provided in large print or an alternative media format. If you need this service, please contact our Executive Branch on 02 9289 4000.

DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, the Office of Local Government expressly disclaims any liability to any person in respect of anything done or not done as a result of the contents of the publication or the data provided.

© NSW Office of Local Government 2016
ISBN 978-1-922001-51-1

Produced by the Office of Local Government



www.olg.nsw.gov.au

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Will councils use the new NSW Pet Registry?	5
Who will have access to the new NSW Pet Registry portal?.....	5
What improvements have been made to the NSW Pet Registry?	5
Will my logon details change?.....	5
How will the public portal help the Companion Animals Fund?	5
Communication	6
Will these changes be advertised in the mainstream media?	6
When will promotional materials be available? Will we get them electronically?	6
The new NSW Pet Registry.....	6
What does the new 'one step process' mean?	6
Who can register their pet online?	6
What else can be done online?	6
Who will get a breeder ID number? What about backyard breeders?	6
Registering online	7
Who can enter microchip and other identification information for a pet?	7
What name should I use to register?	7
What address should I use to register?.....	7
I don't have access to a computer, how can I register?	7
What if I don't have an email address?.....	7
Is there a charge for making an online payment?.....	7
How can you tell if a pet is registered before you buy it?.....	7
How does identity verification work?	7
How does address verification work?	8
Who can enter microchip and other identification information for a pet?	8
Trouble Shooting	8
I am not able to claim my existing pets online. What should I do?	8
What if I cannot find my pet on the NSW Pet Registry?	8
My address is not available for validation on the NSW Pet Registry, what should I do?	8
Why won't the NSW Pet Registry work on my computer?	8
Moving to NSW	9
Can people moving to NSW claim their pets online?.....	9
What should council do if a person moves to NSW without identification information?	9
Paper forms	9
Should we accept existing paper forms?	9
Where can I get new forms?	9
When will paper forms be phased out?	9
Registration fees	9
What are the registration fees for pets?.....	9
When are registration fees due?.....	10
Does having a breeder ID entitle a person to cheaper registration?	10
How will discounted registration for animals from pounds and shelters work?	10

Register data	10
Will past addresses still show up on a person's profile? Will rangers be able to see these?	10
Will councils or the State Debt Recovery Office have access to Driver's License, Passport or Medicare Card information?	10
Other queries	10
Is the registered owner of a pet the legal owner?	10
Will the new NSW Pet Registry ensure pet owners and breeders cannot break the law?	11
Currently when Rangers look up a microchip number on their phone (in the field) they do not get the impound history or the notes section to show repeat offenders. Will this be changing or can this information be now viewed through NSW Pet Registry on a mobile device?	11
Can council assist pet owners with setting up an online profile for them if they can provide all the details required over the phone?	11
Desexing pets	11
When does my dog need to be desexed?	11
When does my cat need to be desexed?	11
What if the veterinarian says my dog or cat cannot be desexed yet?	11
How do you prove that your pet has been desexed online?	12
What if an owner pays the lower registration fee but does not desex their pet?	12
Transferring pets and updating details	12
What is the best way to transfer pets online?	12
What happens if a new owner does not 'accept' the pet?	12
Can people subject to declarations and orders transfer animals online?	12
Can people subject to declarations and orders change their address online?	12
Who is responsible for a pet between release and acceptance?.....	12
What happens if a new owner does not 'accept' a pet?.....	12
Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers	13
What is changing for veterinarians?	13
How will veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers be informed about changes?	13
If a veterinarian returns a lost pet directly to its owner will the local council be notified?	13
Will veterinarians be registration agents?	13
Do veterinarians and other authorised identifiers have to go online?	13
Do veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers still need to keep records?	14
Should Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers still keep records of paper forms?	14
Who is responsible for entering data after microchipping, the veterinarian or the breeder?	14

Will councils use the new NSW Pet Registry?

Not initially, but...

Council counter staff may be asked to assist members of the public with the NSW Pet Registry. There are user guides available via the "How To" tab on the NSW Pet Registry home page www.nswpetregistry.nsw.gov.au

Councils should continue to use the existing Companion Animals Register found at www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au/car

In 2017, the Office of Local Government will launch new modules as part of the NSW Pet Registry that will replace the Companion Animals Register, for councils and other authorised users with improved forms, functionality and reporting tools. Interested council staff and other users are helping to design this Registry throughout the second half of 2016.

Who will have access to the new NSW Pet Registry portal?

Pet owners and breeders will have access to their own details through the new NSW Pet Registry portal. Access will also be available to Veterinarians and other Authorised Identifiers.

What improvements have been made to the NSW Pet Registry?

The NSW Pet Registry has been built to collect more robust information over time by:

- enabling external verification of physical addresses against official information;
- enabling external verification of the identity of registered owners; and
- collecting the date of birth of pet owners.

Changes have also been made to make life easier for councils and other users. For example:

- users that make accidental mistakes will be able to correct records prior to the owner claiming their animal or for up to 30 days; and
- there will no longer be separate identification and registration certificates;

Will my logon details change?

No. Councils and other users will be able to use their current logon details.

How will the public portal help the Companion Animals Fund?

Registration fees in NSW are paid into the Companion Animals Fund. This occurs directly if the payments are made online, or indirectly via councils if they receive payments. Councils will continue to receive a significant proportion of these fees through remittance arrangements, which must be spent on companion animal activities.

As pet owners go online and use the NSW Pet Registry, local councils will need to spend less time and money processing forms and payments and will have better, more up-to-date information about pets and their owners. It will be easier for pet owners to pay their registration fee at any time without attending their local council.

This will enable councils to redirect resources to other companion animal functions, such as ranger services and public education.

Communication

Will these changes be advertised in the mainstream media?

The Minister for Local Government, the Hon Paul Toole MP, has launched a new public information campaign to encourage the public to register pets and change contact details using the online NSW Pet Registry.

The Office of Local Government has also provided information packages to key organisations that interact with pet owners including local councils, Veterinarians, Authorised Identifiers and pet shops, including flyers and posters.

When will promotional materials be available? Will we get them electronically?

The Office of Local Government has commissioned new promotional materials for the NSW Pet Registry for use by local councils, Veterinarians, Authorised Identifiers and pet shops. These will be provided as information packages and will also be available to download electronically from the Office of Local Government website www.olg.nsw.gov.au.

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 will be 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 Registry are the same as for all other pet owners. These numbers have been introduced to allow pets to be tracked over their lifetime and 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, Authorised Identifiers and authorised 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?

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

What address should I use to register?

Pet owners should use their physical house address, that is, the address where the pet is kept most of the time. There is an opportunity to provide a secondary address if necessary. The system will verify the 'official' address details as users profile are made.

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 (less than \$1). 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 they make 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 the name and contact number you used for yourself as the registered owner with those recorded for 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. You may need to make a statutory declaration to prove that you own the pet/s.

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 Registry 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 Registry.

Moving to NSW

Can people moving to NSW claim their pets online?

No. The NSW 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 until current stocks are gone.

Where can I get new forms?

New PDF forms that mirror the online NSW Pet Registry are available to download from the Office of Local Government website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au or from the NSW Pet Registry website at www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au. Councils should be aware that these forms have changed in 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?

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.

Authorised identifiers and veterinarians are to use the online system as part of their service to their clients. Using the NSW Pet Registry will minimise data entry mistakes and provide a more efficient system.

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 www.olg.nsw.gov.au and on the Pet Registry website www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au.

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 NSW Pet 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 through paper forms at 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.

Register data

Will past addresses still show up on a person's profile? Will rangers be able to see these?

Councils will continue to access the NSW Companion Animals Register with all its existing functionality.

Will councils or the State Debt Recovery Office have access to Driver's License, Passport or Medicare Card information?

No. This information is not stored on the NSW Pet Registry and must not be manually entered by councils or other authorised users into any field for legal reasons. As part of the registration process, owners verify their identity, the details of this information is not saved on the NSW Pet Registry for privacy reasons. An owner's profile will store the owner's date of birth.

Other queries

Is the registered owner of a pet the legal owner?

This depends on the circumstances. If a pet has been sold or given to another person but the registered owner has not changed, both parties have responsibilities. Compliance and Enforcement officers will need to 'prove' or establish ownership using the provisions of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

If using the new online NSW Pet Registry, the current owner should log in and release the pet. The new owner should then claim the animal on the NSW Pet Registry within 14 days of taking

ownership and they can now complete that online at the time of transfer. This can also be completed using paper forms through a local council.

Will the new NSW Pet Registry ensure pet owners and breeders cannot break the law?

No. While steps have been taken to improve the NSW Pet Registry and introduce reasonable checks, it will still be possible for some people to do the wrong thing. Our focus is on supporting pet owners and breeders who do the right thing. This enables councils to redirect resources to other companion animal functions, such as ranger services and public education.

Currently when Rangers look up a microchip number on their phone (in the field) they do not get the impound history or the notes section to show repeat offenders. Will this be changing or can this information be now viewed through NSW Pet Registry on a mobile device?

There will be no change for rangers or councils in Phase 1. However, this is one of the issues we will explore as part of the rollout of Phase 2 in early 2017 when we renew the entire system.

Can council assist pet owners with setting up an online profile for them if they can provide all the details required over the phone?

Yes. Councils may have to assist members of the public use the online system. There are user guides on the NSW Pet Registry that will help councils assist their communities.

Desexing pets

When does my dog need to be desexed?

You should consult your local veterinarian about when and how to desex your dog. The Government encourages pet owners to desex their dogs 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 before the animal is 6 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 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 transfer pets online?

The fastest option is for the seller to release, and buyer to accept, the pet when possession is transferred. The next best option is for the seller to make a note of the full legal name and best contact number of the person who bought the pet and include that information when they release the animal online. The seller will also need the pet's microchip number in all cases.

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 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 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.

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

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

Veterinarians and Authorised Identifiers

What is changing for veterinarians?

Veterinarians are able to access the Companion Animals Register online through the NSW Pet Registry at www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au. The online forms have been changed to make entering data directly to the Register much easier and to reduce the amount of identification information that must be entered when pets are microchipped.

Veterinarians will also be able to access the Register by looking up a microchip number and return a pet to its owner, if they wish, without being an Approved Person. 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 are able to access the new NSW Pet Registry portal using their existing logon information.

The Office of Local Government is working with the Australian Veterinarian Association and Veterinarian Practitioners Board to get this message out to their members. It would be appreciated if local councils contacted veterinarians in their area to make sure they are aware of the changes.

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 their details on the online NSW Pet Registry.

Going online reduces the cost to councils and ratepayers of processing forms, is a quicker way to update the NSW Pet 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. 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.