Review of the NSW Companion Animals Laws – Submission on the Discussion Paper

**What is this all about?**

The NSW Government made a commitment to review the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (CA Act).

The CA Act is the legislative framework for the management of pet cats and dogs in NSW. It legislates the identification and registration requirements of companion animals and the duties and responsibilities of their owners, with the principal object being to ‘provide for the effective and appropriate care and management of companion animals’.

As part of this review, the Office of Local Government (OLG) is gathering feedback on the emerging trends and issues involved in animal care and management. This is an opportunity for your input to inform future amendments to the CA Act.

It is intended that this review will ensure the legislation effectively enhances responsible pet ownership across NSW, ensuring the well-being of pets and the safety of our communities.

**Who are we seeking feedback from?**

Many households, communities, and institutions across NSW play a key role in animal management and ownership. If you are part of one of the following groups, we encourage you to make a submission:

* Councils
* Pet owners
* Breeders
* Industry / advocacy organisations
* Veterinarians
* Authorised identifiers
* Rehoming organisations / rescue groups
* NSW State Government agencies
* Individual members of the public

**What are you being asked to do?**

OLG has prepared a Discussion Paper outlining the key focus areas of the review. We are seeking your input on these matters through the questions below.

When providing your feedback, we encourage you to keep responses outcomes-focused. There is no need to suggest draft wording or clauses for the legislation.

Note: organisations with multiple teams or individuals contributing responses may wish to save a shared copy of this form and make one submission on behalf of the organisation.

Instructions on submitting your feedback are included at the end of this form.

Not all questions need to be answered.

**Information of privacy and confidentiality**

When you give us your feedback, OLG will be collecting some personal information about you, in particular:

* your name
* your email address
* any personal information you decide to put in the additional comments fields.

All feedback received through this consultation process may be made **publicly available**. Please let us know below if you **do not want** your name and personal details published.

As part of the consultation process, we may need to share your information with people outside OLG, including other public authorities and government agencies. We may also use your email to send you notifications about further feedback opportunities or the outcome of the consultation.

There may also be circumstances when OLG is required by law to release information (for example, in accordance with the requirements of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*). There is a privacy policy located on OLG’s website that explains how some data is automatically collected (such as your internet protocol (IP) address) whenever you visit OLG’s website. The link to that policy is <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/privacy>.

**Provide your feedback below**

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| Your Details |
| Question | **Response** |
| I would like my name and personal details to be treated as confidential: | [ ] Yes, please keep my details confidential[ ]  I consent to my details being shared |
| Name  |  |
| Name of Organisation (If applicable) |  |
| Role/position |  |
| Postal Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email address |  |
| Which of the following best describes you? | [ ]  Council Metro[ ]  Council Metro- fringe[ ]  Council Regional[ ]  Council Rural[ ]  County council[ ]  Joint Organisation/Regional Organisation of Councils[ ]  Pet owner[ ]  Breeder[ ]  Industry / advocacy organisation[ ]  Member of the public[ ]  Veterinarian[ ]  Authorised identifier[ ]  Rehoming organisation / rescue group[ ]  NSW State Government agency[ ]  Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| 1. Strategic framework for encouraging responsible ownership of companion animals (see Part 1 of the Discussion Paper for background information) |
| Question | **Response** |
| Do you support the CA Act being amended to focus more on encouraging responsible pet ownership outcomes over strict compliance processes? |  |
| How can responsible pet ownership education be used to manage menacing or dangerous dogs? |  |
| How could the legislation be improved to motivate better dog owner behaviour and encourage owners to manage their dogs more responsibly? (For example, what does responsible dog control in public look like?) |  |
| How could the legislation be improved to motivate better cat owner behaviour and encourage owners to manage their cats more responsibly? (For example, cat containment) |  |
| Are there other matters that should be considered? |  |

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| 2. Compliance and enforcement role of councils (see Part 2 of the Discussion Paper for background information) |
| Question | **Response** |
| What changes to NSW laws, regulations, codes or guidelines could be provided to councils and other enforcement authorities to better support responsible pet ownership? |  |
| How could NSW laws, regulations, codes or guidelines be improved to support councils to better manage dangerous and restricted dogs? |  |
| Are the current enforcement provisions under the Act (including penalties for offences - see Appendix B of the discussion paper) appropriate? If not, what enforcement provisions should be changed? |  |
| Are there other compliance and enforcement matters that should be considered? |  |

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| 3. Companion animal population and rehoming (see Part 3 of the Discussion Paper for background information) |
| Question | **Response** |
| What more could be done to reduce stray and homeless cats and dogs in NSW? |  |
| What changes can be made to NSW laws, regulations, codes or guidelines to reduce the number of companion animals entering the pound and rehoming system in the first place? |  |
| For companion animals needing to enter the ‘pound’ system, what could be done to increase rehoming? |  |
| Are there other dog and cat population and rehoming matters that should be considered? |  |

**Please send your completed submission form, via:**

* Mail to C/- Office of Local Government, Locked Bag 3015, Nowra, NSW 2541; or
* Email to: ca.review@olg.nsw.gov.au
* Online via: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/policy-and-legislation/acts-and-regulations/companion-animals-act-review>