

# Food Businesses and Animals

The following information is provided to assist food businesses and the public to understand the requirements when bringing dogs and/or assistance animals to food businesses.

## Are animals allowed at food businesses?

All animals, unless they are an assistance animal or live seafood, fish or shellfish are not permitted inside a food business.

However food businesses are permitted under Food Safety Standard 3.2.2 (24)(3) of the Food Standards Code to allow a dog that is not an assistance animal to be present in an outdoor dining area. Please note that this only applies to dogs in outdoor dining areas, other animals such as cats or rabbits are not permitted in outdoor dining areas, unless that animal is an assistance animal.

It is not a mandatory requirement that food businesses must allow dogs in their outdoor dining areas, and have the choice as to whether they permit them. Food businesses also have the choice to exclude a dog that is not an assistance animal, for any reason.

## What is an assistance animal?

An assistance animal is a dog or other animal trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of a disability, as referred to in section 9 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth).

Food businesses must allow an assistance animal in any area used by customers, this includes both outdoor and indoor eating areas and drinking areas. Assistance animals are not permitted to enter non-customer areas such as the kitchen or other places where food is handled.

Please note that the Food Standards Code does not extend to companion animals.

## What is an outdoor dining area?

An outdoor dining area is an area that:

- Is used for drinking or dining, or both drinking and dining;
- Is accessible by the public without passing through an enclosed area;
- Not be used for the preparation of food; and
- Not be an enclosed area (e.g. an outdoor area with a roof and plastic sheeting which can be rolled down is considered to be an enclosed area under the Code).

## What are my responsibilities as a food business?

Food businesses who allow dogs in their outdoor dining areas must ensure high standards of food safety and personal hygiene are maintained and that cross contamination does not occur. This could be done by:

- Ensuring staff refrain from touching dogs or wash their hands directly after touching a dog;
- If providing dog water bowls, ensure they are appropriately stored in an area that will not cause cross contamination; and
- Removing and appropriately disposing of dog urine/excrement.



Other things food businesses can do include:

- Consider and develop procedures on how to manage issues such as how to deal with dog waste, dogs not under effective control or customer complaints about dogs;
- Provide a specific area of your outdoor dining area for people with dogs to use;
- Provide tether points for dogs;
- Provide information or signage to inform customers if the food business allows or does not allow dogs or which section of the outdoor dining area they can be in; and
- Check your insurance and public liability to ensure your food business is covered in the unfortunate event of an incident or accident.

### **What are my responsibilities as customer at a food business with a dog?**

If you are taking a dog to an outdoor dining area at a food premise, it is your responsibility to meet the following requirements:

- Check if the food businesses allows dogs in their outdoor dining areas, and respecting the decision of food businesses who choose not to allow them;
- Dogs must be on leashes and on the ground;
- Maintaining control of your dog at all times, including control of behavioural issues such as barking and unwelcome contact with others;
- Taking your dog to another location if you become aware that it needs to urinate or defecate;
- You must always pick up after your dog; and
- Always act in accordance with the *Dog Control Act 2000*.

When dining with your dog, you should refrain from touching your dog while eating or allowing or encouraging others such as food service staff to touch your dog, for food safety and hygiene reasons.

### **Further information.**

For further information, phone Council's Customer Service Centre on (03) 6323 3000 or visit our website at [www.launceston.tas.gov.au](http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au)