

ASSISTANCE DOGS

AND PUBLIC ACCESS RIGHTS



Government of South Australia

Dog and Cat Management Board



Assistance animals are trained to provide support to people with a wide range of disabilities including those who have vision or hearing impairment, who need physical support for functional tasks; who experience episodic medical crises (e.g. epilepsy, changes in blood pressure or blood sugar); and who experience psychiatric disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, hallucinations, panic attacks or suicidal ideation.

Assistance dogs, when accompanied by a disabled person, are entitled to access areas that a dog would not normally be allowed e.g. public transport, supermarkets, restaurants, national parks etc. Assistance dogs may be refused entry to hospital intensive care units and food preparation areas.

Officers acting in their official capacity are entitled to ask for evidence that a dog is an assistance dog. If a person is unable to or does not provide the required evidence, it is not discrimination if you ask them to leave the site.

Note that there is no definition or recognition of 'companion dog' in either Commonwealth or South Australian legislation. The only type of dog that is recognised is an assistance dog. Companion dogs do not have public access rights.



What evidence can be requested to prove a dog is an assistance dog in South Australia?

There are **two ways** that a person can prove that their dog is an assistance animal.

1 Accredited Assistance Dog

In South Australia assistance dogs are accredited by the Dog and Cat Management Board or any of the following prescribed accreditation bodies - Royal Society for the Blind, Guide Dogs Australia, Lions Hearing Dogs, Assistance Dogs Australia, Righteous Pups Australia, Vision Australia, Australian Veterinary Behaviour Services, and Integra Service Dogs Australia.

An officer can request that the handler of an accredited assistance dog produce their identity card issued by the prescribed accreditation body.

2 Assistance Dog as defined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA) section 9*

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA)* in section 9(c) defines an assistance animal as a dog or other animal that:

“is trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place”.

An officer can request that the handler claiming their dog is an assistance animal under section 9(c) of the DDA produce evidence of both:

- 1 The need for an assistance animal – such as a medical certificate providing evidence that the handler has a disability and that the assistance animal alleviates the effects of the disability; and
- 2 Appropriate training – such as a training certificate from either a Vet or training organisation

A dog that does not demonstrate standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place, does not fit the definition of an assistance animal, and can be asked to leave.

Control of assistance dogs

Like any other dog, assistance dogs must be under effective control by means of a lead up to 2 metres long, or tethered (in local parks and gardens, or council defined off leash areas, dogs may be under effective control by command).

To find the facts and other tips on how to be a good dog owner, visit dogandcatboard.com.au