

New dog laws now effective

After many years of consultation and development, the amendments to the *Dog Act 1976* were passed by Parliament on 24 October. The provisions, together with a new set of regulations, came into effect on 1 November 2013.

The amendments include a requirement for all new dogs to be microchipped, changes to the length of impounding for dogs where the owner can be identified, more uniform restrictions on dangerous dogs and improvements in the nuisance provisions.

Microchipping is compulsory from the following dates:

- From 1 November 2013, dogs must be microchipped when they are registered for the first time or when a change of ownership occurs.
- By 30 November 2013, all dangerous dogs, including restricted breeds and commercial security dogs, must be microchipped.
- By 1 November 2015, all other dogs must be microchipped.

If microchipping is likely to adversely affect the health and welfare of the dog, a veterinarian can provide an Exemption Certificate.

Among the changes, the definition of what constitutes a nuisance has been improved. A single complaint as to nuisance can be investigated.

If the authorised officer is satisfied that a nuisance is occurring, he or she can issue an abatement order which stays in effect for six months. This requires the owner to take action to address the nuisance.

A breach of the order creates an offence. The Department will be preparing a Best Practice Guideline on the Identification, Investigation and Handling of Nuisance to assist local governments.

As part of the changes, penalties have been increased for all offences. A higher level of maximum penalty is specified for offences by dangerous dogs. In some cases, minimums also apply.

Other key amendments include:

- Banning the advertising, sale, transfer and breeding of dogs that are restricted breeds
- Making it a criminal offence for the owner when a dangerous dog kills a person or puts a person's life in danger
- Amending the provisions for guide dogs to include other types of assistance dogs used by people with a disability
- Enabling retired racing greyhounds after completing a training program, to return to the community as pets, without a muzzle.

A full explanation of all changes made through the Dog Amendment Act are outlined in [Departmental Circular 33-2013 Amendments to Dog Act](#) on the Department's website.

With the very short period between the Bill passing through Parliament and the amendments taking effect, little time was provided for the Department to notify local governments of the new provisions.



Find the updated Dog Brochure on the Department's website.