

2018

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**DOMESTIC ANIMALS (DANGEROUS DOGS)
AMENDMENT BILL 2018**

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

**Presented by
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Shadow Minister for Urban Services**

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This explanatory statement relates to the Domestic Animals (Dangerous Dogs) Amendment Bill 2018 (the bill) as presented to the Legislative Assembly. It has been prepared in order to assist the reader of the bill and to help inform debate on it. It does not form part of the bill and has not been endorsed by the Legislative Assembly.

The statement must be read in conjunction with the bill. It is not, and is not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the bill. What is said about a provision is not to be taken as an authoritative guide to the meaning of a provision, this being a task for the courts.

Background

This bill amends the Domestic Animals Act 2000.

The aim of the bill is to promote a greater obligation on dog owners to manage dogs in a safe and responsible manner. In addition the bill is to promote positive relations between all dog owners and dogs and other domestic pets.

The bill recognises that dogs are important part of the lives of many Canberrans. They are companions and are often significant parts of people's daily lives. Dogs can become like family. For some, dogs are important service providers including as guide dogs, companion dogs and therapy dogs. Some dogs are used in hunting.

However, dogs can also cause injury and even death to humans. Dogs can cause death or serious injury to other dogs, cats and other domestic pets. The owners of dogs in these circumstances need to be held responsible for the actions of their dogs. There has been a rapid increase in the number of dog attacks reported in Canberra. In the past 5 years there has been a 30% average annual increase in reported attacks. This bill is presented to address this trend in increasing number of attacks.

Amendment to the Domestic Animals Act 2000.

The bill provides amends the current act in three ways. Two of these are to encourage responsible owners with concessions to encourage positive dog ownership and the last a further deterrent for those that kept dogs that are known to be dangerous.

Human Rights

This bill affects the ownership rights of dog owners. These rights are restricted in the bill to the extent that the ownership of a dangerous dog is made more expensive. The owner of such a dangerous dog has the choice to keep the dog but only under restricted conditions and at an additional annual charge.

Outline of provisions

Part 1 – Preliminary

Clause 1 - Name of Act

This clause names the amendment Act.

Clause 2 - Commencement

This clause provides for the commencement of the Act.

Clause 3 - Legislation amended

This clause states the legislation that is amended by the amendment bill.

Clause 4 – The effect of this clause is to waive a registration fee for a dog (that is not a dangerous dog) if the owner has completed an approved training course with the dog.

Clause 5 – This clause doubles the application fee for the keeping of a dangerous dog.

Clause 8 - This clause has the effect of eliminating fees for the surrendering an unwanted dog