

Australian Capital Territory

Domestic Animals (Accredited Assistance Animal Public Access Standards) Determination 2020

Disallowable instrument DI2020-169

made under the

Domestic Animals Act 2000, section 95 (Assistance animal standard and accreditation guidelines)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 95(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 2000* (the Act) provides that the Minister may determine the standards of training, behaviour and hygiene for assistance animals in public places in the ACT under a Disallowable Instrument.

This instrument determines the minimum standard of behaviour and hygiene for assistance animals accessing public places in the ACT, which closely reflects the Public Access Test form to be used by registered trainers and assessors to test and accredit assistance animals.

The standards are based on assistance dogs and were developed in close consultation with industry representatives and are designed to uphold animal welfare and community safety. The standards were also developed closely considering established frameworks in other Australian jurisdictions to ensure national consistency.

In summary, the assistance animal public access standards cover:

- the management, care and welfare of assistance animals, including a health declaration from a registered veterinarian and a demonstrated awareness by the handler of the animal's toileting routine and stress signals;
- signs of stress in assistance animals and detecting signs of aggression;
- grooming and hygiene of the assistance animal;
- obedience, focus and behaviour of the assistance animal in various modes of transportation and busy public places; and
- the abilities of the handler/s to manage the assistance animal appropriately and ensure effective control at all times.

The determination of the assistance animals public access standards is made by disallowable instrument.