



Barking Mad is a national lobby group representing responsible pet owners. We work for access to a fair-share of public space, to accommodation and to transport – with our pets.

Submission “[Pets On Public Transport](#)” to:

The Inquiry into the investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services.

TO:
The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
By email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

FROM:
Ms. Eedra Zey
Proprietor, Barking Mad
PO Box 310
Woy Woy, NSW 2256
Phone: 0418 463 360
info@barkingmad.org.au
www.barkingmad.org.au



Senate Inquiry - Public Transport

Equitable Access to Public Transport for Pet Owners and Carers

We don't need fridge magnets, free leads or poo bags – just good policy and practice.

A renewed vision for companion animals:

- Actively promote environmentally responsible pet transport.
- Encourage the positive health impacts of companion animals, especially to the elderly and single-person households.
- Acknowledge the canine contribution to creating community and a safe society.
- Actively promote the utilitarian roles of dogs in health care, community welfare, and in creating social capital.

Regulate for greater societal need, not for intolerant people who complain.

"... We would like dog owners to have the opportunity to include their dog in activities which may involve travel on public transport provided that the dog involved could deal with this sort of situation and it could be managed in such a way so as to not impact on other transport users." RSPCA Australia.



With families getting smaller and more people living alone companion animals have an important role in our community." Rob Stokes MP, Member for Pittwater

INSURANCE, LEGISLATION AND TOLERANCE

Many dogs have a \$10 million liability insurance policy via their owners' home-contents insurance. This applies to dogs off their property as well. The legislation also puts the responsibility for misadventure back onto the owner of the dog. Just 25% of our members surveyed knew that they may have liability insurance for their dog – did you know?

- Most States have laws preventing the cruelty to animals; these laws include providing vet care when required: *Therefore* governments should provide transport options for its residents including a national public transport policy for domestic pets.
- Most states require policy that has regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development. *Therefore* governments should provide adequate public transport that does not exclude the 60% of the public that include domestic pets in their household.

A healthy community is one that co-exists peacefully with moments of tolerable but utterly frustrating annoyances. The majority of dog owners are responsible. Existing laws provide adequate regulation of anti-social behaviour if enforcement resources are provided.



Background

Barking Mad Equity for Pet Owners works nationally. We aim is to create safe and pet-friendly communities and policy that recognises the importance of pets in our lives. The majority of Australian households have pets. The number of homes with dogs or cats is approximately double that of homes with children, although households with children 16 and under are the largest demographic of dog owners.

The economic contribution of the pet industry (which excludes horses) is approximately [\\$4.6 billion](#) annually. This is a larger contribution than that of fishing and forestry combined.

Pets are important to our welfare. This is especially so as our demographic changes to smaller households, more single-occupant residences and an increase in the overall percentage of aged and elderly residents. Pets are an important strategy to maintain independence in our ageing population; providing companionship, a reason to go out for a walk, the potential to raise the alarm and have social interaction via a pet.

Each day health facilities play host to therapeutic and companion animals. Animals visit older people in nursing homes, young people in paediatric wards, trauma victims in acute care wards, and people under care in mental health and palliative care services. They provide comfort, entertainment, distraction, solace and a unique form of interaction. The [benefits of these visits](#) are well established and comprehensively documented.

NSW Government [research](#) has shown that walking the dog and cuddling the cat provide a sense of well-being to children. The greatest risk to children's health is at the hand of their parent; though politically incorrect, this fact places the risk of injury to a child (and any person) from a dog into the "miniscule" category. Another factor to consider is that with the risk of dog bites, the majority are predictable and preventable with simple precautions and education. We have seen an increase of such education over the past ten years.

Dogs have made a vital contribution to the European settlement in Australia and still assist with stock movement and handling. Our culture has elevated the family dog from family pet to family member. This change has come about in the last twenty years and is evidenced by research and the doubling in economic value of the pet industry in the last ten years. Yet, at the same time, we have seen the rise of draconian dog regulations in direct contrast to their rise in importance and utilitarianism.

Despite the value of pets to society both economically and socially, their elevation from the family pet to family member, the vital utilitarian role dogs contribute to public safety, security and health, and their importance in our heritage, many regulations have come into force in directly opposing the public reality. Many of these regulations are also in direct opposition to trends and policy overseas in Europe and the United States. Barking Mad suggests it is easier to 'go the dog' than to deal with youth crime, graffiti, noise and other annoying and potentially dangerous public behaviour. We advocate for laws that reflect the importance of pets in our lives.

The family dog reduces childhood obesity.

A Deakin University study which looked at more than 1100 children aged five to 12, found young children who have a dog were 50 per cent less likely to be overweight or obese compared with those who do not have one in the family home.

[The study](#), found they were in better shape if they had a dog, even if they did not walk it



Public Transport with Pets – a Snapshot

- Dogs and other pets are allowed on metro trains in Melbourne, but not on buses.
- Dogs are allowed on buses in NSW, but the majority of bus drivers don't know their own regulations.
- In Queensland, the Regulations permit a passenger to bring an animal on a bus with the driver's permission. However Translink decided that **only** approved assistance animals are allowed.
- Queensland claims that pets present a risk – but they haven't done a risk analysis!
- Although dogs are allowed on buses and ferries in NSW, they are not allowed on trains.
- Yet they are allowed on trains if the dog provides 'therapeutic benefit to its owner or another person'. Most dogs provide this.
- RailCorp goes one better, requiring an annual pass for an Assistance Dog with medical proof of a disability (of the person), and proof of toileting on command (the dog, we hope.)
- RailCorp further outdo themselves by prohibiting an animal to drink water on the train OR at the station. Logically it follows, that dog is not allowed to wee on railway property either.
- It gets better – dogs are not allowed onto railway land. A level crossing is railway land.
- Sydney Monorail and Metro Light Rail allow dogs, cat, birds or other animals and they sign-post it.
- Most private ferries and punts NSW welcome pets, with operators stating they are usually better behaved than children.
- Barking Mad has correspondence from the NSW Transport Minister and the Director General stating pets are permitted at the discretion of the driver/operator. This discretion is a rare display of common sense considers the cleanliness of the animal and whether the animal is restrained.

Empty bus and travel nightmare

Yesterday I tried to get home from Ettalong by public transport.

The ferry trip to Palm Beach was fine. But at Palm Beach I waited 2 ½ hours trying to get on no less than 5 buses. All 5 drivers refused entry to me because I had my dog Tui. They refused to have him on board, even though I had a copy of the regulations and the drivers' code of conduct.

I got the feeling that the whole depot may have been told to say no to dogs.

It was very depressing. I finally took the ferry back to Ettalong & I've had to leave Tui up there with a paid minder. I had to come back to Sydney to work.

Public Transport – Rhetoric

- The Government is committed to ensuring public transport is affordable convenient, easy to use and able to connect people to key activities in the community. (NSW Ministry of Transport, Annual Report 2007) and
- 'creating greater travel opportunities for the community' (Sydney Buses).



Public Transport – Public Policy

THE ISSUE

Clean, well-behaved pets should be able to accompany their responsible owners on buses, coaches, ferries, trams, punts, light rail and trains throughout Australia.

THE SOLUTION – LONDON STYLE

1. You can travel with your dog or other inoffensive animal, unless there is a good reason for us to refuse it (such as if the animal seems dangerous or is likely to upset other customers).
2. You must keep it under control on a lead or in a suitable container, and must not allow it on a seat.
3. Staff are not allowed to take charge of any animal.
4. If you bring an animal with you, for safety reasons you must carry it on moving escalators or through automatic ticket gates. [Reference](#)



This is the current policy in London. It is easy and it works. So what are Australian transport authorities so afraid of?

Our own Transport Council comprising Australian, State and Territory Transport Ministers, the New Zealand Minister for Transport Safety and the President of the Australian Local Government Association have publically acknowledged the need for a national transport policy, including public transport:

A NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY FOR AUSTRALIA

Australians want a national transport system that is safe and secure, efficient, competitive and integrated, sustainable and reliable and which supports and enhances the nation's social, environmental and economic prosperity. ([ATC](#) Joint Communiqué May 08).

This means that “People can access employment and the services and community resources they need safely, reliably and routinely without undue delay because of urban congestion or lack of public transport.”

Calls for a seamless national transport system have come from both industry and the community, and reflected strongly at the 2020 Summit.

Australian Transport Council





A Social Imperative

Although the majority of households have a pet, it is usual to deny public transport to this large contingency of voters if they choose to travel with their pet. Often, their choice of public transport is necessitated by the need to get health care for the pet. Other factors beyond a concern for the environment include a vehicle breakdown or accident that removes the option for private transport, the unavailability of a car or drivers license due to illness (e.g. epilepsy) or economic situation.

Lack of public transport for the mainly female care givers with pets and young children at home during a 'workweek' causes social exclusion and hardship and restricts utilisation of a community resource when it is off-peak. That does not make economic or social sense.

Dogs – Public Risk or Mans' Best Friend?

We have been told that pets present a risk on public safety by TransLink, the public transport provider in South East Queensland. However, despite several requests, we have not yet been advised of any risk analysis done to support this claim. We suspect none has been done, so we offer the following.

The 10 most common injuries to Australian children up to age 14 are: as car passengers, as pedestrians, drowning, fires, falls, furniture, scalds, poisoning, bicycles and skates and skateboards.

Each year about **300** Australian children (aged 0-14 years) are killed and 60,000 hospitalised by unintentional injuries (accidents). 75% of these come from just four causes: car crashes, pedestrian accidents, drowning and house fires.

Logic would say we should ban the car, ban walking where we have cars, ban swimming pools and access to the ocean and water if we want to keep our children safe. Although we have fenced most of our rail tracks in urban areas, we have yet to fence around every other risk. Logic is not the main driver of legislation.

Death resulting from dog-related injury is a rare event. During the seven year period 1997–2003, [11 deaths](#) were registered as being due to this cause.

Reports on the number of lives saved, such as a relatively common event of a dog alerting an owner to the presence of a venomous snake, or barking at an intruder would be useful for comparison, but are not available.

The story of a dog protecting a child from an Eastern Brown Snake can be found [here](#) and a similar story of a dog and an adult [here](#).

Living involves risks. Living is also guaranteed to kill you.

It is vital the risks presented by pets, in particular dogs, is balanced against the benefits of pets.

Public policy should reflect the importance of pets in our lives, is to balance their risk with other factors.

Regulate for greater societal need, not for intolerant people who complain.

More children are killed each year by their parents than by a dog.

The reality of our mortality should not be excluded from public policy, nor should risk management.



Man's Best Friend – Risk in Perspective

ACCIDENTS – UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

- In [2006](#) in NSW 2 children died by a bite or strike by a dog and one by another mammal.
- [Each year](#) about **300** Australian children (aged 0-14 years) are killed and 60,000 hospitalised by unintentional injuries (accidents). 75% of these come from just four causes: car crashes, pedestrian accidents, drowning and house fires.
- In Victoria, approximately 435 of those 60,000 hospital admissions were from dog related incidents.

ABUSE, VIOLENT CRIME

- On average, 25 Australian children are [killed by their parents](#) each year.
- 6 people are killed, by other people, each and every week – a total of **319** in 2006
- 465 people are assaulted by people each day; that's **171,000** in 2006.
- 50 people are sexually assaulted every day, by one or multiple perpetrators; **18,211** a year.
- **331 people are violently robbed each and every week** by a person or persons; **17,284** a year.
- And 725 people were kidnapped in 2006.
- In [2006](#), there were 207,446 incidents of violent crime, over **550 each day**.

ROADS

- 1616 people died on our [roads](#) in 2007 including 41 cyclists and 201 pedestrians. That is more than 4 deaths for each day of a year.

CLIMATE, POLLUTION, AVAILABILITY OF POWER AND HEALTH CARE

- There are 1000 heat-related deaths a year.
- 400 people die a year from [Asthma](#) and in W.A. the Premier claimed that 150 people die a year while waiting for a hospital bed!

In the [most recent data](#), 134 babies died a year from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

SUMMARY

It is important to consider the public health risks of pets, dogs in particular, in context. The media has been the dog's worst enemy, creating public outcry that some short-sighted politicians have responded to with poorly thought out laws.



Zoonosis and Public Transport

[Zoonosis](#) refers to diseases humans can contract from other animals. Due to our hot and/or dry climate, our absence of rabies and our robust [AQIS](#) quarantine system, Australia has a lower domestic pet zoonosis risk than many other countries. Comments here are exclusive of farm animals. Although animals can carry or transmit disease, you are more likely to get infections from contaminated food or water than from your pet or another animal you [encounter](#). Research has shown that people who own pets are healthier and live longer.

The occurrence of zoonotic disease is uncommon and contact is preventable by [taking a number of precautions](#) including:

- practicing good personal hygiene
- providing prompt and effective first aid treatment to cuts and scratches
- worming pets



[Less than](#) 10% of children wash their hands every time they come into contact with their pet or another animal.

There is a public stink about dog poo in public spaces; although socially unacceptable (even if next to a discarded plastic bottle, straw and cigarette butt), the health risk is minimal. There is little risk from 'fresh' dog poo as a gestation period for zoonotic diseases is required. Our hot or dry climate reduces this risk. Even in wet areas such as northern Australia, the warmth is not conducive to the development of pathogens that present a zoonosis risk.



[Download](#) the 2008 report prepared for Canberra Urban Parks – The Risk of Zoonoses from Dogs on Sporting Fields (pdf 200Kb). The report concludes: the risks to humans of dog faeces on sporting fields do not justify the banning of dogs from these areas, and recommend that the government take other measures to minimise the small risks which do exist.

[RSPCA Victoria - Zoonosis](#) [Factsheet - Hydatid](#)

Allergy (and the Crux)

NO DOGS ALLOWED: I'M ALLERGIC. We've heard it over and over. When we advise these hyper-vigilant people (often service providers to the general public such as hoteliers) that the allergen from dogs is saliva, they then play dumb with phrases such as 'how was I to know'? An allergen that is saliva (in comparison to hair or fur) can be avoided by not having contact. No contact with dog results in no allergic reaction in all but the most severe cases.

And here we have the crux of this submission. It's easier to make bold, unsupported, unrelated claims and follow those with policy decisions, than it is to use a scientific method which delivers a logical and relative outcome.

The major dog allergen, called [Can f 1](#), is primarily found in dog saliva. Unlike cat allergen, which is found in the [dander](#) from sebaceous glands in the skin, the skin of dogs does not appear to be a major source of Can f 1. Barking Mad recommends that cats be contained in a box or blanket on public transport, for precisely this reason. There are situations where cats are trained on leads; however, in the interest of public health we recommend even felines so trained be contained when on public transport.



DOGS CAUSE ASTHMA. This is simply incorrect. Asthma is a disease of hyper-sensitivity in the airways. It can be triggered by an allergy, and that allergy can be dander, but that doesn't cause asthma. [Other triggers](#) of Asthma include air conditioning, air pollution, bushfires, chemicals, colds and flu, dust mites, emotions, exercise, food, heating, food, hormones, medications, mould, pollen, sex, smoking and weather!

People who live with some sort of allergy ([40%](#) of Australians) have to manage their condition on a day to day basis. 80% of people with asthma have some sort of allergy, which requires day to day management as do the numerous other asthma triggers.

Conclusion

Barking Mad – Equity for Pet Owners recommends that Australia adopt the pets on public transport policy that exists in London, as follows.

1. You can travel with your dog or other inoffensive animal, unless there is a good reason for us to refuse it (such as if the animal seems dangerous or is likely to upset other customers).
2. You must keep it under control on a lead or in a suitable container, and must not allow it on a seat.
3. Staff are not allowed to take charge of any animal.
4. If you bring an animal with you, for safety reasons you must carry it on moving escalators or through automatic ticket gates. [Reference](#)



We submit this is the best practice international example of public passenger transport services and infrastructure that includes voters who have a pet in their household.



Appendix 1 – Cruelty to Animals and Animals on Railway Land

NSW Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979

Part 2, Section 5 Cruelty to animals

- (1) A person shall not commit an act of cruelty upon an animal.
- (3) A person in charge of an animal shall not fail at any time:
- (c) where it is necessary for the animal to be provided with veterinary treatment, whether or not over a period of time, to provide it with that treatment.

33C Complicity and common purpose

- (1) A person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission of an offence against this Act or the regulations by another person is taken to have committed that offence and is punishable accordingly.
- (2) For the person to be found guilty:
- (a) the person's conduct must have in fact aided, abetted, counselled or procured the commission of the offence by the other person, and
 - (b) the offence must have been committed by the other person.

COMMENTS: A recent prosecution was successful of a party that **failed to prevent** cruelty. If a passenger is denied access to public transport when with an animal requiring veterinary care, it follows that the transport operator may be committing an offence of failing to prevent cruelty by denying transport to a vet.

Rail Safety (General) Regulation 2003

45 Control of dogs on stations

A person must not, without the permission of an authorised officer, take a dog onto any part of a station, or have a dog in his or her charge on a station, unless the dog is under the person's direct physical control by means of a lead, chain or frame (such as those used to control assistance animals) or otherwise.

46 Animals on trains or railway land

- (1) A person must not take an animal onto a train intended for the conveyance of passengers, or have an animal in his or her charge on such a train, except under the conditions imposed by the accredited person for the relevant railway for the conveyance of the animal.
- (2) A person must not allow an animal under the person's care or control on, or to stray onto, railway land, except as provided by subclause (1).

COMMENT: A level crossing is railway property, so therefore if you are on the wrong side of the tracks with your dog, you have will to commit an offence to cross the tracks! What about movement of stock in rural areas? You can't take your dog onto railway land, but you can take it to a station if on a lead. This is illogical.

I have two dogs, and when I got them as puppies, I did not have a car. One day we noticed one of our little dogs (then about 3 months old) was limping. When this did not improve, we decided we had to take him to the vet.

Knowing that they weren't allowed in taxis, I hoped to be able to take him on the bus. Almost nobody catches the local bus, so the likelihood was that there would be no more than 2 or 3 people on a full sized bus, together with me, my husband and our little bundle in our arms. He was on a leash, and would not have even been put on the floor - he would have sat on our laps.

Needless to say, we were refused entry to the bus.

The nearest vet was more than 3km away. Our new puppy was already too heavy to carry the whole way so he had to walk a fair distance on what turned out to be a broken leg. Poor little mite.

I have also lived in the UK, where dogs are a regular feature on public transport. I see no reason why as long as a dog or a cat is properly restrained and properly behaved, it should not be allowed on public transport. L.P. East Killara, NSW.



Appendix 2 – RailCorp (no drinking or weeing)

RailCorp make up their own law on what an assistance animal is. By federal law, it is an animal trained to assist a person to alleviate the effects of a disability, or because of any matter related to that fact.

Yet, RailCorp says it has to be a dog trained to alleviate the effects of their disability on public transport.

Example:

I'm travelling with an Assistance Animal. After extensive delays, I get off the train at an unstaffed station. But these conditions say my dog can not toilet without the permission of RailCorp Staff!

I guess that's ok because it was not allowed to drink water on the train either – or not even at the station.

If I breach this condition by allowing my dog to drink or wee, RailCorp can then revoke my pass to travel. Treating less favourably because of an assistance animal? I think so.

Excerpts from NSW RailCorp Standard: Animals on City Rail and Country Link Services and Premises.

Comments: This 'standard' contradicts requirements of Disability Discrimination Act, [Section 9](#) by way of an exception; an exception we hope to see the end of soon.

It echoes the annoyance provisions brought in for World Youth Day, gazetted by, coincidentally, the (then, now retired) NSW Minister for Transport.

It contains conditions that are unnecessary, redundant, offensive and unachievable. In short, it is off-track.

Although RailCorp claims only to allow:

1. Guide dogs
2. Hearing dogs
3. Dogs trained to assist a person to alleviate the effects of their disability on public transport
4. Assistance dogs in training
5. Police dogs on duty and Police dogs in training.

They also allow "Therapy Dogs" which by their definition means a dog that provides a therapeutic benefit to the handler or someone other than the handler. Most dog owners would derive therapeutic benefit from their dog.

They also require an Assistance Dog Pass – every year; if this isn't treating someone with an assistance dog less favourably, I don't know what is. Who in RailCorp is going to make these decisions and what is their medical experience? Some of the conditions of this dog pass follow (with Barking Mad comments):

- Evidence of disability (ok if limited to a letter from a doctor).
- Evidence that dog is trained to assist on public transport (this is not a DDA requirement to have an

assistance animal).

- Dog *and* handler trained by RailCorp approved training or breeding organisation (self-trained assistance animals are legal and RailCorp do not approve training or breeding organisations!).
- Non-aggressive, obedience to handler, crowd tolerant (fair enough, but how is RailCorp to determine this when issuing a pass).
- Toileting on command (nice, but not applicable to all assistance animals).
- Refresher training every 12 months (this is definitely beyond reasonable, perhaps a better application of training would be training staff in customer service).
- Signing of an indemnity form. (Passengers without an assistance animal need not sign a form, so neither should passengers with an animal. Both disability and companion animal laws put the onus of a dogs' behaviour on to the handler. The contact with offer and acceptance of a ticket or authority to travel carries with it conditions of behaviour.



Appendix 2 – RailCorp continued

CONDITIONS OF TRAVEL

- The assistance / therapy dog must be kept under the handler's direct physical control at all times on the Services and/or the Premises by means of a lead, chain or harness. (Not appropriate, assistance animals are trained to sit and stay).

The World Youth Day Annoyance Regulation returns:

- The assistance / therapy dog must not:
 - (i) cause any distress or inconvenience to other RailCorp customers or staff;
 - (ii) cause any risk to the health, safety and welfare of any RailCorp employee or any other person whilst on the Services and/or the Premises;
 - (iii) disrupt the operations of RailCorp, the Services and/or the Premises
 - (iv) sit on seats provided on the Services and/or the Premises
 - (v) toilet on the Services and/or the Premises, without the permission of RailCorp staff.
- The assistance / therapy dog must not consume food and/or water on the Services and/or the Premises.
- RailCorp reserves the right to revoke the Pass issued to / right to travel for an assistance / therapy dog at any time in the event that the handler and/or assistance dog breaches any of the Conditions of Issue of the Pass and/or Conditions of Travel.

[View](#) the full RailCorp Standard and Application, and don't get confused with the [Chaser's](#) War on Everything version.

OTHER ANIMALS AND PETS

RailCorp regrets that animals, other than those listed above, are not permitted on the Services and/or the Premises. Penalties may apply where animals not covered by this Standard are found to be travelling on the Services or on the Premises.

(What's the regret? Allow pets to travel and if segregation is required, restrict them to car 1 in a 2 or 4 carriage train, or cars 1 and 2 in a 6 or 8 carriage train.)



Appendix 3 – A ‘good’ dog

Barking Mad proposed the concept of a ‘public access dog license’ to members and interested parties. It is useful to know that approximately 1/3 of our members have travelled or lived overseas in areas where dogs are truly companions.

The response we received can be summed up as follows:

Choice A: I am so exasperated by non-sensical restrictions on where I can take my pet so if I have to pass a doggie public access test to use public transport I will.

Choice B: No other city in the world requires such a thing, stop playing politics and get real.

The Good Dog Criteria introduced to this debate is as follows (with comments):

1. **Accepting a friendly stranger** (is this necessary?)
2. **Sitting quietly**
3. **Clean** (what happens with wet dog having walked in the rain?)
4. **Walking on a loose lead.**
5. **Calm walking through a crowd**
6. **Sit or down on command and staying in place** (may need to use both hands to get through ticket barriers or buy a ticket).
7. **Coming when called** (necessary if we have the dog on lead for the entire journey?)
8. **Reaction to another dog** (compare this with humans, we don't like everyone, do our dogs need to?).
9. **Reaction to distraction** (do we want a dog howling when the train goes over a noisy railway bridge - but then it could be very funny....)
10. **Supervised separation** (again, needed if we have the dog on the lead for the entire journey?)

Results: Responses from members and interested parties.

(Identify for publication via writers initials. Writers full detail available on request).



Appendix 3 – continued

GENERAL COMMENTS: PETS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

INCLUDING A PROPOSED PUBLIC ACCESS TEST FOR DOGS AND A PROPOSED DOG-TICKET

I'm a Sydney dweller that is currently in Melbourne for work and have brought my dogs. How fantastic to be able to take my dogs on the train with me.

I think we are over-thinking the whole situation. Here you don't see very many dogs on trains, they aren't restricted to certain carriages and don't need any certificate. And having travelled in many countries where dogs are allowed freely on public transport, I haven't seen anything to suggest that any of the fears expressed in arguments against pets on public transport are ever going to eventuate.

As usual, it's just the usual paranoia about any sort of change in Australia giving our politicians an excuse to not do a thing. January 2009

I've just moved from Sydney to the UK. I'm in a small village in the North near the Peak district; about 5 minutes walk to pastures with horses, cows and sheep along public foot path.

It seems like dogs are everywhere, on the buses, in the shops and pubs and what a difference from Sydney! A.B. January 2009

I would really appreciate being able to take my dog on public transport and into more public places. I subscribe to the notion that the dog should be well behaved and under the total control of the owner at any given time.

- It is time that we the dog lovers/owners voiced our opinions to the many and various councils around this great country.
- It would help if it was a federal ruling so that the rules would be the same all over the country. L.P.

I'm in favour of anything that allows us to take our dogs on public transport. Training, registration - whatever it takes really. J.T.

A nurse who used to bring her little dog to my park tried to get on a half-empty bus to go to the vet. Her dog was in a hard carry case to go on her lap, and still the driver refused to let her on. The nurse had to walk from Marrickville to Erskineville as a result. November 2008

I am VERY STRONGLY opposed to any kind of "training certificate." It should be enough that a dog is clean, well behaved and not causing any disturbance. Don't impose an additional expense (training costs) onto the very people who probably can afford it least - those without access to private transport.

Please give up this idea. In Europe or the USA there is no requirement for "training certification." The suggestion implies that dogs are inherently dangerous if allowed on transport but you plan to overcome that inherent problem by mandating a training certificate. Pets are not inherently a problem on public transport if they are clean, well behaved and restrained. We should simply insist on this. It is reasonable and it is simple.

Don't complicate a simple issue of access. Can you imagine the mountains of paperwork to be generated by the certification? Please don't accept the dogs are inherently a problem on public transport - you are playing into the hands of the prejudiced, bureaucratic buffoons. Jendi, Nov. 2008



I agree with Jendi. We need to have officials look somewhere besides their own tiny backyards and muddled reasoning. In recent correspondence with management at the Opera House over their ban on dogs anywhere I was told "It is entirely valid to prohibit animals when we have special events and large crowds on the forecourt."

My reply: "I don't agree with your contention that 'It is entirely valid to prohibit animals when we have special events and large crowds on the forecourt'."

- Large crowds and special events are held all over the city without these sorts of nanny-ish controls.
- Most public fairs even encourage people to bring their pets along too.
- I've attended at least 3 public rallies in the (Sydney) inner city area in recent months, with one or both of my dogs (one is a young pup) - completely without incident, other than the number of police officers who wanted to greet them.

If I was attending an indoor event (like the Spiegeltent shows I have tickets for) then I wouldn't even think to have the dogs. On the other hand, if I'm out for a pleasant day's walk then I almost always take them along.

In my recent times in Europe and North America I've taken my dog along to many extremely busy outdoor events like the Edinburgh Festival's Royal Mile, the courtyard of the Louvre, London's Notting Hill Festival, Pisa's Field of Miracles etc and it doesn't even occur to anyone to police dogs so aggressively.

It's like council officers going after pets sitting at outdoor tables on grounds of proximity to food preparation, when they don't give a damn about proximity to road exhaust, or to animals near outdoor food take-away vendors such as the recent Sydney Food and Wine Fair.

State representatives need to be called out for irrational behaviour at every step.

We should be able to take our dogs onto public transport as long as they are well behaved, and on a short lead. In Europe dogs travelling on trains are so well behaved, there are times you would not notice the dog at all even sitting next to it. I feel we have so many restrictions on where we can take our dogs, in the end it has caused so many problems as they are not socialised enough. D.O.

I would love to be able to take my dogs on a train and bus so I would be happy to comply with any form of test/ fee/ regulation. All I want is to be able to catch a train so I can meet friends in the park or on the beach, be able to have a few drinks and then get home safely. S.A.

If someone (pet or people) does not behave well on public transport they should not be allowed to use it. The problem is to define what bad behaviour is. There have to be some guidelines (that are almost the same as for humans).

- Pets not on seat - no shoes on seats
- No noise - barking, whining, excessive use of mobiles and loud iPods
- No aggression - growling, lunge, elbows, stepping on toes
- Other traveller should not be soiled - jumping, dribble, sweat and alcohol perspiration
- No food/feeding.

So basically the same as for humans - which shows that there are no extra rules necessary really; and it shows as well what a highly regulated society we already live in. Definitely all rules should be applied with the same lenience as towards the human travellers.

It is up to the conductor/driver to enforce good behaviour in their vehicles; they are the only ones that would need training. A.A.



I have been in the situation where my car has broken down & I have had my dogs with me & it would have been so much easier for me to get home if I could have travelled by train with my dogs.

And if owners don't act responsibly with their dogs on public transport i.e. not keeping them under control etc then they could be fined & repeat offenders could also be banned from travelling with their dogs on public transport. Dec. 2008

My dog is the love of my life. He currently travels on my motor scooter with me and is the reason why I got my scooter license. I can't afford a car and wanted to take him everywhere I could with him. Its not particularly good on longer trips and when weather is inclement. Having the option to travel by train to see my parents would be great. Currently I would not attempt the trip on the M5 on my bike...far too dangerous, so my elderly parents have to drive down to my place in Redfern.

I am one of the many pet owners with an unseen disability. For nearly 20 years I have suffered with (edited for privacy). Although I am still on medication and probably will be for the rest of my life, my dog has helped me so much I can't explain. He knows when I'm not well and snuggles with me. He gives me a reason to wake up, get out to the park and feel better. He is priceless and there is nothing I wouldn't do for him. L.C.

Not everyone can afford to own a car or even get access to one when it is needed. We need to be able to provide a service for all pet owners. J.L.

I think it is very important to have some sort of training program in place as a large or even a small poorly controlled dog with aggression issues (either to other dogs or humans) could put the whole cause back in the dark ages. Socialising dogs and teaching them appropriate manners is a lot different from an obedience trained dog. Some sort of temperament testing as well as handler control testing, maybe even requesting that some dogs be required to wear a muzzle on public transport might not be as bad as it sounds to some people.

I'm a single woman with one small dog and two cats. I don't drive or have access to a car. For me to get my pets to a vet costs me at least \$30 each way in a cab, which isn't cheap. Generally the cab drivers are quite rude as they don't want 'hair in their cabs' and so it is difficult to pin one down- not helpful in emergencies.

It is vital to have a service for people with pets who don't have cars to transport their pets. Public transport is paid for by tax payers and we have the right to be able to use it for ourselves and our animals. Obviously the animals need to be restrained, confined and should be well behaved. We really need this. I'd hate to think of animals going untreated due to the difficulties getting them to a vet.

I would also love the opportunity to be able to take my dog to agility classes, dog training etc (as there is none available in my area) on public transport. I lived in London where pets are always allowed on public transport and there is never any problems. Done properly, this is a vital service for communities and individuals.

Not everyone can afford to own a car or even get access to one when it is needed. We need to be able to provide a service for all pet owners. J.L.

Most dog owners that I know have had their dogs do some sort of training. Mine, for example, has a Canine Good Citizen certificate, which means that he is well behaved and can follow commands. I support your efforts and also think that some sort of training/certificate should be sufficient for the powers that be. U.A.



I think some sort of test to gain a 'ticket' for dogs to travel on public transport would be necessary. Maybe this would act as an encouragement for dog owners to train their dogs adequately. No one wants an antisocial dog next to them on public transport - but then a well-behaved one would be a great advertisement! D. B.

I think the proposal should be accepted-ie test for transport. We need to have some way to prove that we can be responsible, and it is a starting point. Moving forward from this point should be easier if people are responsible, thank you for the hard work. S. A.

Self regulation is another option. I've seen people sharing a train or bus take on people using offensive language and it worked. B.M.

In NSW anyway, the law says that your dog must be under the effective control of an adult. Rather than banning ALL dogs from a situation, the provisions of the law should be used to limit the activities of those who don't obey it. There is no difference in saying "some people drive badly - ban all drivers" We don't do that - we just deal with the ones who do drive badly.

Back to the original question - I have been "groped" by men (many times), vomited on, had someone try to grab my bag, had beer spilt on my hair (from the seat behind) and caught almost in the middle of a knife fight on public transport. It's hard to think what a dog (even an uncontrolled one) could dish up that would be worse than any of this stuff.

I have four dogs, and a big car to drive them around in, so I probably wouldn't be taking any of my dogs on public transport. However, I would be perfectly happy to sit next to a dog any time - even if I was dressed up to go out.

BTW, I've met a couple of pretty stinky Labrador assistance dogs - one very memorable one in the opera house - Dogue # 5 big time! People with assistance dogs don't always look after them well, particularly if they aren't really "dog" people in the first place, and just see the dog as a "tool". It does happen! J.B. + four

I have worked hard to train my dog to walk with me politely in most places (he is two and has been attending weekly obedience training for 18 months), but never on public transport. I would only rarely need to use public transport because I have my own car, but for instance, I'd love to be able to catch a bus with my dog on weekends and take him into the city.

I'm a little suspicious of driver-discretion. If a bus-driver doesn't like dogs at all they sometimes won't stop for you (guide dogs included).

Muzzles should simply be for dogs who require muzzles in public anyway. In a couple of places where all dogs were required to wear muzzles, people assume that it's because your dog is dangerous, not because it's mandated.

If our government officials say that its citizens can't be as responsible as those in other countries, what does it say about them?

I have also lived in the UK, where dogs are a regular feature on public transport. I see no reason why as long as a dog or a cat is properly restrained and properly behaved, it should not be allowed on public transport. L.P.



Appendix 4 – Pets Ok, but only in this spot.

COMMENTS ON A SUGGESTION TO DESIGNATE CERTAIN TRAIN CARRIAGES WHERE PETS ARE ALLOWED AND CARRIAGES WHERE THEY ARE NOT.

I am worried about there being a single carriage for animals. I don't think the numbers travelling with animals will be huge. In situations where there more than one dog is travelling on a train, placing them all in the same carriage is inviting problems. My dog is most unreliable where he meets another dog – he wants to greet it, mark territory and other typical dog behaviours. I can manage this by sheer force, but the easiest thing to do is to place greater distance between the dogs. Not to get onto the same carriage, or to sit upstairs when the other dog is downstairs.

Those with perfectly trained dogs may forget that many well trained dogs are not perfect in all circumstances. Pretending anything else is probably inviting any progress to be undone by people naively presenting the training of large dogs for unfamiliar on-lead situations as totally routine. A better approach is to emphasise everyone's willingness to work towards ensuring their dogs can travel on public transport without causing any problems. N.S.

Some carriages are for dogs some are not - there actually are people who don't like dogs! this is displayed beside the carriage door (the same for mobile phones but that's another issue)

Dogs should have a ticket - half a child fare as they don't take up a seat. I.B.

Congratulations on having achieved governmental attention for the public transport issue and dogs.

My opinion, at this stage, is that dogs should travel in the first carriages. The point is not about dogs but that other members of the public might complain if they could encounter a dog in any carriage. By giving less sympathetic users of public transport the choice, there will be no basis for complaints (i.e., no risk to lose the hard-won rights).

As to training or no training for dogs to alight trains-- 'on short leash' and 'well-behaved' should be the main criteria. Some dogs (as ours) would need training to alight a train and not panic, others may do this gracefully. Is this a way to achieve a compromise? Thanks for all your good work. Prof. G.K.

I would be fine with being restricted to a certain carriage if that was the only way to get this to happen – perhaps with a review clause e.g. If no incidents for 12 months then general access H.J.

It still perplexes me that this situation exists - Australia is so far behind the rest of cultured civilisation that it beggars belief. My opinion is that all pets should be allowed on public transport - as is the case in most 'civilised' countries.

The Aussies make me laugh because they think they are the best at everything, they love to criticise other cultures but cannot see that they are living in a very mediocre country trying its best to disguise that it is in fact a dictatorship.

We're heading home to London next year ... enough is enough! R.P.



I think allocating carriages for people to travel on is also an excellent idea. It allows people who are not dog friendly (either psychologically or physically) to be sure they will not have to have dogs in their faces. I would love to be able to get on the ferry at Stockton and cross the harbour across to Newcastle with my 2 dogs. It would mean an easier access to the dog beach at Horseshoe Beach on Newcastle Harbour. Also being able to travel by train & bus from Newcastle to Sydney with my dogs would be great.

To facilitate pets to travel on trains and avoid animal haters from complaining I think the dedicated pet-carriage is a good idea. Then people who like animals can choose to travel in that compartment with other people and their pets. Then you won't have the others complaining about noise, smell etc.

Clearly identify that persons and their companion animals can travel in a particular carriage. This will provide persons who do not have private transport the ability to commute without having to pay expensive pet taxis. Additionally, it will also create a community environment, because you know that people who travel in that dedicated area are pet lovers, whether they have one or not.

I think some people assume that if pets are allowed on public transport that every carriage is going to fill up. It's just not going to happen. Having probably more experience of travelling with a dog on public transport than most (2 plus years full time travel in Europe and USA) I would note that in all the many cities of many countries where pets travel on buses, trains and ferries:

1. You don't see it a lot, but it's a simple fact of public access
2. The reactions are 99.9% positive. In fact out of dozens of countries and hundreds of rides, the only man who complained came from the other end of an otherwise empty carriage to sit next to us and humph about my dog having mud on his paws. I pointed out that the city was yet to be totally cemented over and that we both had mud on our shoes. Silly man.
3. On those occasions when I encountered another dog in a carriage, I had enough common sense to at least go to another door/carriage.
4. I've never seen/smelled pet urine on public transport; humans.. yes. My dogs don't pee indoors, period.
5. If people don't like the dogs they can move away, just like I do when a human has offensive odour or perfume. Some people just live to complain about their hurt feelings but won't speak up about genuine problems.
6. **No city requires any kind of certification or training**

As I've done before, just look at the rules of carriage for places like London. Simple and to the point. Not nanny rules like Australia. November, 2008

Appendix 5 – The benefit of pets

Family dog saves little mate from a deadly snake



14 Nov 08 [The Noosa Journal](#)

Man's best friend has proven himself again, this time saving a three-year-old toddler from the bite of a venomous snake.

Diesel, a blue cattle dog-cross, leapt between his young friend and a huge brown snake, receiving a near-fatal bite himself.

Much to his owners' relief and after two days of intensive veterinary care Diesel survived and will be presented with a special Animal Achievement Award tomorrow.

Eerwah Vale couple Stan and Sue Gralike adopted Diesel after the death of his owner, and their friend. The dog quickly became a cherished family member, making good friends with the couple's other dog, Lucy, and doting on the couple's three-year-old grandson, Drew.

"Drew usually spends Friday with us while his mummy and daddy are at work," said Sue. "Diesel just dotes on him and is his shadow, always by his side."

And so it was one day last October when Stan, Drew and the dogs went for a walk to a remote part of the property. Drew was playing on a swing when, to Stan's horror, a huge brown snake arched up out of the grass to strike at Drew's back.

"The world just stopped and everything moved in slow motion," said Stan. "Drew was swinging back straight into the snake's path and I couldn't get up the hill fast enough to grab him. Diesel propelled himself sideways in the air and attacked the snake in mid-strike. This action alone saved Drew's life as the snake was massive and its bite would have been lethal."

Sue said: "If Diesel had not intervened, Drew would have been bitten and most likely Stan also, in an attempt to save Drew. We would have lost both of them."

"Where they were on the property is not even accessible by 4WD. So I can't begin to imagine how an ambulance could have tried to reach them. The thought just gives me chills."

But horror struck again as the group headed for home. "After only 20 metres, Diesel collapsed," said Sue. "Stan picked him up and carried him home a heroic act in itself as Diesel weighs 23kg and it's a fair walk up a hill to get back home."

The family rushed Diesel to Cooroy Veterinary Clinic where owner Brian Batch went to work. Diesel received a large dose of anti-venom and was kept in hospital to await the outcome. Diesel pulled through after a second dose of anti-venom and returned home.

"The cost was high but what cost do you put on the life of a heroic dog?" said Sue.

Appendix 5 – continued

Dog saves owner from a deadly snake attack



[Gold Coast News](#), Andrew MacDonald

31Oct07

A BRAVE kelpie called Tess is in a coma after saving her owner from a deadly eastern brown snake, possibly at the cost of her own life.

Tallebudgera Valley retiree Fay Palethorpe, 68, was in the garden of her 8ha (20 acre) property in Syndicate Road when she came across the snake about 9.30am on Sunday.

One-year-old Tess and Ms Palethorpe's two other kelpies, including the puppy's father Widgee, sprang into action and attacked the highly venomous snake as it lunged for their owner.

The snake was injured and fled but Tess was bitten on the ear in the melee.

The brave dog now lies fighting for her life in a Tugun veterinary surgery.

"He was the biggest snake I've ever seen. I would have said about 6 feet (1.8m)," said Ms Palethorpe, who lives alone on the land she has owned for 30 years. "I couldn't have got away from it. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for her (Tess).

"The snake was lying on a rock and it saw me the same time I saw it. It reared up and just went for me. "I just screamed and screamed and turned and ran.

"All of the dogs just came out of nowhere and went for it. I knew it was a brown snake so I screamed out for them to leave. "The other two left but Tess wouldn't. She had it and was throwing it back and forth. I heard Tess scream. It had got her on the ear."

Postscript: Tess recovered after weeks of treatment and rest.

Pet saves owner from house fire

Jul 20, 2004 [ABC NEWS](#)

A 43-year-old man has told police his dog saved him from a blaze that destroyed most of his Gold Coast hinterland home, in south-east Queensland, last night. Police believe a fan heater sparked the fire at the Tamborine Village home just before 10:00pm (AEST).

The man fell asleep while working at the dining room table and was woken by his loyal pet tugging at his clothes.

Both escaped unharmed and fire investigators are expected to examine the scene this morning.