

Welcoming Assistance Dogs

Thank you for opening your doors to Assistance Dogs!

We at Assistance Dogs Australia feel it's important for everybody to know about the great work Assistance Dogs do in our communities, and the laws that make this work possible. This document will help to answer questions about Assistance Dogs, what they do, and their rights in the public. We hope this will help you welcome Assistance Dogs in.

What is an Assistance Dog?

An Assistance Dog is any dog that is helping a person with a disability and has met the state standards for public access rights.

How do Assistance Dogs help?

Assistance Dogs can help with a range of conditions. They can help people with physical disabilities and limitations complete day to day tasks around their homes and in the community. They can help people with psychological conditions, like PTSD and Autism Spectrum Disorders, feel safe, calm and confident when out in public spaces. They provide highly specialised skills to address specific needs a person might have. Guide dogs for the blind and deaf are technically Assistance Dogs.

What are the rights of a person with an Assistance Dog?

The rights of a person with an Assistance Dog are protected under Federal Law through *the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA 1992)*. *The DDA* recognises that a suitably trained Assistance Animal is a tool facilitating the functioning of a person with a disability, similar to a wheelchair. The DDA recognises both physical and psychosocial disabilities and acknowledges that an Assistance Animal can assist in either case. *The DDA allows qualified Assistance Dogs to accompany their handler into all public spaces.* The only exceptions to this may be spaces in which a person's disability is being addressed by other means, or areas with stringent sterility requirements, for example:

- Specific Clinical Settings
- Surgically sterilised areas
- Industrial food preparation areas (kitchens)
- Quarantined areas

Assistance Dogs are a necessary aid to allow a person with a disability to engage in their community. You wouldn't ask someone who need a walking stick to leave it at the door.

What are your rights and what can you expect as a proprietor?

You are legally allowed to ask for some documentation showing that the Assistance Dog is qualified, accredited, and serving the person they are with. We encourage you to do this, but ask that you do so with sensitivity and respect. An Assistance Animal will have a jacket with branding from the organisation that qualified it – a photo of Assistance Dog's Australia's jacket on a dog is included as an example below. You can expect the dog to be clean, well maintained, very well behaved, and highly obedient to its handler.

How should you interact with the Assistance Dog?

It is best to just ignore the Assistance Dog as much as possible. You can think of the dog like a wheelchair. If you would not, touch, stare at, or ask about a person's wheelchair, then it's best to do the same for their Assistance Dog.

We hope this document has been helpful in answering any questions you might have had about Assistance dogs.



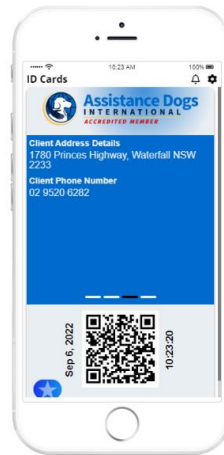
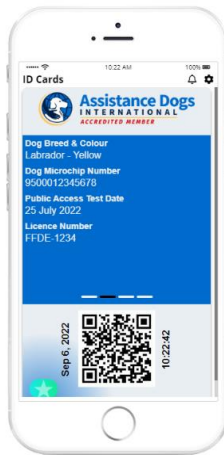
An Assistance Dogs Australia accredited Assistance Dog in its jacket



Assistance Dogs International logo



A Public Access Licence denoting the legal rights of the handler and showing the details of the handler, dog and accrediting organisation



You can contact Assistance Dogs Australia at info@assistedogs.org.au or 1800 688 364

If you have any further questions regarding the rights of Assistance Dogs, or the laws specific to your state, below are the contact details for the relevant human rights organisations.

Australian Human Rights Commission

www.humanrights.gov.au/about/contact-us - (02) 9284 9600

Attorney General's Department

www.ag.gov.au/About/Pages/Contactus.aspx - (02) 6141 6666

NEW SOUTH WALES - Anti Discrimination NSW

<https://antidiscrimination.nsw.gov.au/contact-us> -1800 670 812

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY - Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Commission

www.hrc.act.gov.au/contact-us - (02) 6205 2222

QUEENSLAND - Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland

www.adcq.qld.gov.au/contact-us - 1300 130 670 (state wide)

NORTHERN TERRITORY - Northern Territory Anti Discrimination Commission

www.adc.nt.gov.au/contacts.html - 1800 813 846

TASMANIA - Equal Opportunity Tasmania

www.equalopportunity.tas.gov.au/contact_us - 1300 305 062

VICTORIA - Victorian Equal Opportunities & Human Rights Commission

www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/home/about-us/contact-us - 1300 292 153

SOUTH AUSTRALIA - South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission

www.eoc.sa.gov.au/contact - (08) 8207 1977

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – Western Australia Equal Opportunities Commission

eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au – (08) 9216 3900

State Specific Legislation

Queensland - www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-004

South Australia - www.dogandcatboard.com.au

Western Australia - <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/community/cats-and-dogs/applying-for-assistance-dog-approval>