

Transport for NSW Assistance Animal Policy



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1. Introduction

This document provides guidance on the requirements for assistance animals to access NSW public transport services and NSW public transport premises. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has the responsibility for the health and safety of all its customers.

This Policy addresses TfNSW's obligation to provide a safe service for all passengers in conjunction with legislative requirements around public access for assistance animals.

2. Definitions

Assistance animal is as defined in sections 9 and 54A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Assistance Animal Permit (AAP) means the permit issued by Transport for NSW for assistance animals

Booked services mean NSW TrainLink train or coach services where a booking or reservation is mandatory to travel on the service

Disability is as defined in section 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

NSW public transport premises mean the paid and unpaid public areas of:

- a. Sydney Trains;
- b. Sydney Metro;
- c. NSW TrainLink;
- d. Sydney Light Rail;
- e. Newcastle Light Rail;
- f. Sydney Ferries; and
- g. Newcastle Ferries

NSW public transport services mean:

- a. Train services operated by Sydney Trains, Sydney Metro and NSW TrainLink;
- b. Coach services operated by NSW TrainLink;
- c. Sydney Light Rail and Newcastle Light Rail services;
- d. Sydney Ferries and Newcastle Ferries;
- e. Metropolitan, outer metropolitan and regional regular route bus services; and
- f. Taxi, private bus and private ferry services throughout NSW

3. Categories of assistance animals

For the purposes of administering this policy, assistance animals are categorised as follows:

- A. Assistance animals carrying an Assistance Animal Permit (AAP) issued by TfNSW (see Chapter 4)**
- B. Assistance animals carrying accreditation from endorsed organisations (see Chapter 5)**
- C. Assistance animals carrying recognised interstate accreditation (see Chapter 6)**

To access NSW public transport services and premises, an assistance animal must fall under one of these categories, with the handler and their animal carrying the appropriate type of valid accreditation.

This accreditation is required by TfNSW to ensure that the animal travelling on the network is an assistance animal that exhibits the skills and actions to alleviate the handler's disability on public transport and also meet the standards of behaviour and hygiene appropriate for a public place. All assistance animals and their handlers must abide by the 'Conditions of Travel' (see Schedule A).

4. Assistance animals carrying an AAP issued by TfNSW

This Chapter applies to NSW residents. For information on interstate residents, see Chapter 6.

Unless carrying an alternative form of accreditation (see Chapters 5 and 6), assistance animals or their handlers must carry a valid Assistance Animal Permit (AAP) to travel on, or be within public transport services and premises in NSW. An AAP is issued by TfNSW and is valid for 24 months.

4.1 Eligibility requirements for NSW residents

All of the following evidence must be produced by NSW residents when applying for an AAP:

1. A medical certificate confirming that the handler has a disability within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
2. Documentation showing that the assistance animal (where relevant) has been registered with the handler's local Council
3. A colour photograph of the assistance animal
4. Documentation dated within the last six months from either:
 - a. An organisation/trainer registered with TfNSW; or
 - b. An organisation/trainer NOT registered with TfNSW; or
 - c. The handler submitting the application.

This documentation must detail the skills and actions that the animal has been trained to exhibit by stating:

- How these skills and actions alleviate the effects of the handler's disability;
- How these skills and actions meet the appropriate behaviour and hygiene standards for a public place; and
- How the handler controls the animal.

4.2 Renewal process for NSW residents

NSW residents renewing their AAP must provide documentation dated within the last six months from either:

- a. An organisation/trainer registered with TfNSW; or
- b. An organisation/trainer NOT registered with TfNSW; or
- c. The handler submitting the application.

This documentation must detail the skills and actions that the animal has been trained to exhibit by stating:

- How these skills and actions alleviate the effects of the handler's disability;
- How these skills and actions meet the appropriate behaviour and hygiene standards for a public place; and
- How the handler controls the animal.

4.3 Assessment of AAP applications

Where an application provides certification from an organisation or trainer registered with TfNSW, the application will be checked for completeness and in most cases a pass issued.

Where an application includes certification from either an organisation/trainer NOT registered with TfNSW, or the animal's handler, the application will be reviewed against the relevant criteria and assessed by Transport for NSW. When undertaking the review of an application of this nature, TfNSW may seek to contact the applicant to request further information to help clarify their application before any decision is made as to whether a pass will be issued.

It is noted that individuals who are seeking passes are not required to seek certification from an organisation or trainer registered with TfNSW

4.4 Registered Organisations/Trainers

Organisations or trainers are highly encouraged to register with TfNSW if they assess assistance animals for clients who utilise public transport with an assistance animal to assist their client and help their clients obtain a pass. For an organisation or trainer to be registered with TfNSW, they must provide the following information for assessment:

1. Details of the organisation – this includes corporate information, charity status if applicable and extent of operations
2. All policies relevant to the delivery and/or review of training programs and testing regimes for assistance animals and their handlers, as well as policies covering the qualifications of trainers and assessors.
3. Training materials – these materials should detail the training that is provided to both the animal and handler. Training materials must indicate that all assistance animals on completion of the training:
 - a. Are trained to perform skills or actions that alleviate a disability; and

- b. Meet standards of behaviour and hygiene that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.
- 4. Assessment/Testing – this information should detail the testing criteria used to assess both handlers and their animals. This information should also include information on re-accreditation processes for the handler and their animal to maintain their accreditation and how often this re-accreditation is conducted.

Organisations and trainers who provide sufficient information to satisfy the requirements will be registered with TfNSW for the purpose of enabling applicants to meet the eligibility requirements for the AAP.

[A list of organisations currently registered with TfNSW is available.](#)

5. Assistance animals with accreditation from endorsed organisations

Handlers who have an assistance animal trained or in-training with an organisation endorsed by TfNSW are able to use the accreditation provided by the organisation. The organisations currently endorsed by TfNSW are:

- **Australian Lions Hearing Dogs**
- **MindDog Australia**
- **Guide Dogs Australia**
- **Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs**

The accepted accreditation provided by the organisations listed above can be viewed at Schedule B.

6. Assistance animals carrying recognised interstate accreditation

Handlers who have an assistance animal with select forms of accreditation from interstate jurisdictions are accepted by TfNSW as valid accreditation. The accepted accreditation from such interstate jurisdictions can be viewed at Schedule C.

6.1 Interstate residents applying for an AAP issued by TfNSW

Interstate residents with such accreditation can also choose to apply for an AAP issued by TfNSW. When applying for an AAP, interstate residents must produce all of the following evidence:

1. A certified copy of the handler's active interstate assistance animal accreditation (which includes a photo of both sides of the handler's permit) as confirmation that the assistance animal has been assessed to:
 - a. Perform skills and actions that alleviate the effects of the handler's disability on public transport;
 - b. Meet the appropriate behaviour and hygiene standards for a public place; and
 - c. Be under the control of their handler
2. Agreed consent to having the details of an interstate assistance animal accreditation verified with the issuing authority
3. A colour photograph of the assistance animal

An interstate resident with an AAP issued by TfNSW can use this in lieu of their recognised interstate accreditation when travelling in NSW.

6.2 Interstate residents renewing an AAP issued by TfNSW

Interstate residents renewing their AAP must provide a certified copy of the handler's active interstate assistance animal accreditation (which includes a photo of both sides of the handler's permit).

An interstate resident with an AAP issued by TfNSW can use this in lieu of their recognised interstate accreditation when travelling in NSW

7. Other animals

7.1 NSW Police Dogs

NSW Police Dogs are permitted to access NSW public transport premises and services with their handlers at all times.

7.2 AAP for registered organisations with assistance animals in-training

An AAP may be issued by TfNSW at its discretion to an organisation registered with TfNSW whose trainer(s) travel with assistance animals in-training on NSW public transport services and premises.

7.3 Pets and companion animals

Animals that do not have an accepted type of valid accreditation are classified as pets and companion animals. Pets and companion animals may not be permitted on all NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services. [Information about whether a pet or companion animal is able to travel and any applicable conditions for travel is available.](#)

In accordance with industry recognition, therapy animals, facility animals and emotional support animals are considered to be companion animals under this Policy. For more information on this distinction, please see:

- [RSPCA – What is an Assistance Animal](#)

Full public access rights do not apply to therapy, facility and emotional support animals as these animals are generally companion animals providing physical or mental support in the home setting and may not have been specifically trained and/or certified.

- [Aware Dogs – Assistance Dogs, Emotional Support Animals and Facility Dogs](#)

An emotional support animal is a companion animal that may not have been task-trained and is used in the home. The distinction between an assistance animal and an emotional support animal is that the latter does not have public access rights and may not gain access to no-pets-allowed places.

Penalties may apply where animals not covered by this Policy are found to be accessing NSW public transport services and premises.

Schedule A

Conditions of travel:

1. A handler and their assistance animal with a valid form of accepted accreditation are entitled to access NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
2. A handler and their assistance animal must carry or display an accepted type of valid accreditation at all times on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
3. An accepted type of valid accreditation must be produced if requested by an authorised officer (including Transport Officers and Police Officers) on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
4. Only one (1) assistance animal may accompany a handler at any one time on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
5. An assistance animal must be kept under the handler's direct physical control at all times on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
6. When accessing NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services, an assistance animal must not:
 - (i) cause any distress or inconvenience to customers or staff;
 - (ii) cause any risk to the health, safety and welfare of any employee or any other person;
 - (iii) disrupt the operations;
 - (iv) sit on seats provided; or
 - (v) block, impede or obstruct doorways or aisles or any access path.
7. An assistance animal can consume food and/or water on NSW public transport premises.
8. An assistance animal must be clean and properly groomed at all times on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services.
9. A handler is responsible for the care, conduct and hygiene of their assistance animal at all times on NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services and must clean up any mess made by their assistance animal.
10. A handler must comply with all reasonable directions given by staff whilst entering, being upon, or leaving NSW public transport premises and NSW public transport services with their assistance animal.

Additional conditions on NSW TrainLink booked services

11. A handler travelling on booked services with their assistance animal must notify NSW TrainLink at the time of booking that their assistance animal will be travelling with them.
12. On booked services, the assistance animal will sit on the floor and must not sit on any seat.
13. On booked services, it may be permissible in consultation with NSW TrainLink staff for the assistance animal to be temporarily left alone and not under the direct physical control of the handler (for example, in order for the handler to obtain food from the buffet car or visit the toilet).
14. On booked services, an assistance animal can consume food and/or water following consultation with and approval from NSW TrainLink staff. All food for an assistance animal must be provided by the handler.
15. On long journeys, it may be permissible in consultation with NSW TrainLink staff for the handler and assistance animal to disembark at the most suitable designated stop for a




toilet break. This stop will be at a scheduled and timetabled location, as no special stops can be made to accommodate a requested toilet break.

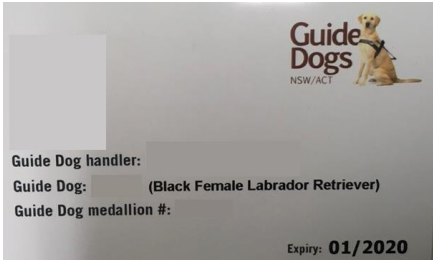
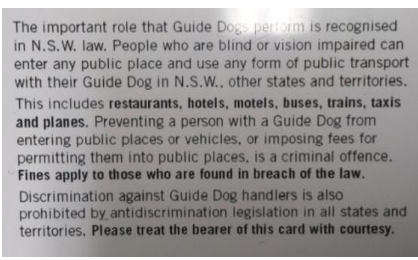




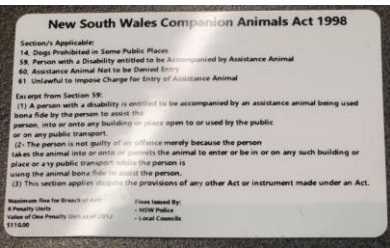

Additional conditions for Accreditation and Permits

16. Upon review, if there is sufficient evidence that a handler and/or their assistance animal do not comply with these conditions then TfNSW reserves the right to:
 - (i) revoke an Assistance Animal Permit;
 - (ii) deregister a recognised pre-approved organisation; and/or
 - (iii) remove an exemption.
17. TfNSW reserves the right to revoke an Assistance Animal Permit if any breach of relevant legislation or these conditions relating to an animal occurs. Relevant legislation includes, but is not limited to, the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (NSW).
18. An Assistance Animal Permit must be renewed every 24 months and it is the responsibility of the assistance animal's handler to renew the Assistance Animal Permit prior to the expiry of the current Assistance Animal Permit.

Schedule B

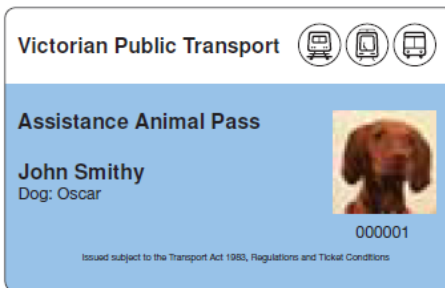

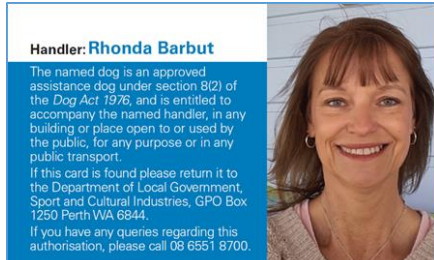



Accepted accreditation from organisations endorsed by TfNSW:

Endorsed Organisation	Accepted Accreditation (Images supplied and used with permission)	
Australian Lions Hearing Dogs		
	Identification card (front)	Identification card (back)
		
	Marked vest and leash (animals in-training are marked with L plates)	
MindDog Australia		
	Identification card (front)	Identification card (back)
		
	Marked vest (animals in-training labelled 'trainee')	

Endorsed Organisation	Accepted Accreditation (Images supplied and used with permission)	
Guide Dogs Australia		
	Identification card (front)	Identification card (back)
		
	Leather harness and handle (animals in-training wear marked vest)	
Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs		
	Medallion (front)	Medallion (back)
		
	Identification card (front)	Identification card (back)
Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs		
	Marked harness and handle (animals in-training may not have a handle)	

Schedule C

Accepted accreditation from interstate jurisdictions recognised by TfNSW:

Interstate Jurisdiction	Accepted Accreditation	
Victorian Public Transport Assistance Animal Pass		
	Identification card (front)	
Western Australia Department of Local Government Public Access Permit		
	Identification card (front)	Identification card (back)
Queensland Government Handler Identity Card		
	Identification card (front)	Identification Card (back)
		
	Alternative identification card (front)	

Interstate Jurisdiction	Accepted Accreditation	
South Australian Dog and Cat Management Board Pass	<div data-bbox="517 286 924 882"> <p>ASSISTANCE DOG Rover</p> <p>Photo of accredited assistance dog</p> <p>OWNED BY John Doe</p> <p>Photo of the assistance dog handler</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="979 286 1386 882"> <p>Government of South Australia Dog and Cat Management Board</p> <p>Certification pursuant to section 21A of the <i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>.</p> <p>The dog named and depicted on this card is certified as an assistance dog to assist the person named and depicted on this card. The dog named and depicted is not accredited for in-cabin travel by aircraft.</p> <p><i>If this card is found, it should be handed in to the nearest police station, or the Dog and Cat Management Board,</i> GPO Box 1047 Adelaide, SA, 5001</p> <p>Authorised By: Andrew Lamb Board Secretary Date of Expiry: 21 August 2019</p> </div>
	Identification card (front)	Identification Card (back)

The following passes accepted in South Australia under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (SA):

Passes
accepted in
SA

Accepted Accreditation

Assistance
Dogs
Australia

Identification card (front)

Identification Card (back)

Righteous
Pups
Australia

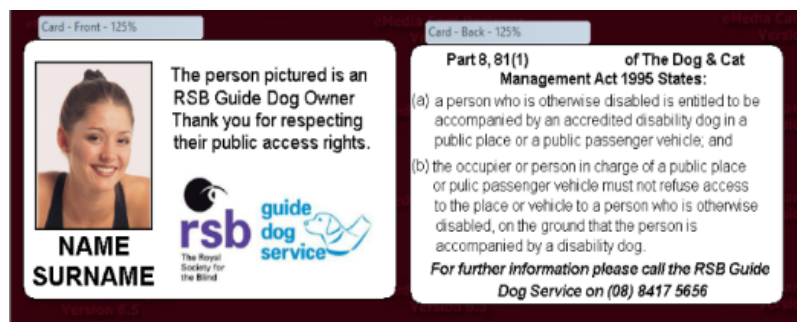
Identification card (front)

Identification Card (back)

**Passes
accepted in
SA**

Accepted Accreditation

**Royal Society
for the Blind**



Guide dog – Identification card (front and back)



Assistance dog – Identification card (front and back)



Trainer – Identification card (front and back)

transport.nsw.gov.au

Tel (02) 8202 2200

231 Elizabeth Street Sydney NSW 2000

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