

ASSISTANCE ANIMALS:

Guide Dogs, Seeing Eye Dogs and Lions Hearing Dogs

Are you aware that people with a vision or hearing loss accompanied by an assistance animal can go to restaurants, retail outlets, hotels, motels, supermarkets, taxis, buses, trams trains and all other public areas and buildings, including hospitals, aged care facilities, police stations, accommodation or anywhere a member of the general public is admitted?

Victorians are generous in providing open access to people accompanied by their assistance animals.

However, not everyone is aware of their legal obligations. The rights of a person accompanied by an assistance animal are covered under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Both these Acts override the Food Act 1984 which in other instances prohibits animals from entering food premises.

These Acts protect handlers and the assistance animals which have been trained by accredited

organisations, or are in the process of being trained. Guide Dogs, Seeing Eye Dogs and Hearing Dogs are all assistance accredited working dogs.

The dogs should be wearing a harness, identification lead or a coat identifying them as working dogs.

Compliance with the laws will ensure that owners and managers of public facilities will avoid prosecution and/or embarrassment resulting from refusing access to assistance animals and their handlers.

Remember:

Never pat, distract or offer food to a Guide Dog, Seeing Eye Dog or Hearing Dog while it is in its identification harness or coat. It is a working animal under the control of its owner.

Further information about Guide Dogs, Seeing Eye Dogs and Hearing Dogs:

Guide Dogs Victoria
Phone: 1800 013 015
Email: info@guidedogs.asn.au
Website: www.guidedogs.asn.au

Lions Hearing Dogs Inc. Australia
Phone: (08) 8388 7836
Website: www.hearingdogs.asn.au

Vision Australia blindness & low vision services
Phone: 1300 847 466
Website: www.visionaustralia.org.au

SEDA Seeing Eye Dogs Australia
Phone: 1300 847 466
Website: www.seda.org.au

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For more information