

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 16

3 March 2026

Question No. 884

Ms Jo CLAY MLA: To ask the Minister for City and Government Services -

1. Does the Government recognise animal assistance permits, including travel or transport permits, from other states; if not, why not.
2. Do any of the providers listed on the City Services website list of trainers and assessors located in the ACT and surrounding region who offer Public Access Testing offer it for animals that aren't dogs; if not, why not, and are there plans to include non-dog trainers and assessors; if so, how is this done and are there any special fees including charges by the listed assessors that apply.
3. Have there been any complaints to the Human Rights Commission or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal about (a) recognition and access for assistance animals in general and (b) assistance animals that are not dogs.
4. Why doesn't the ACT offer five-year registration rather than two-year registration, given that Queensland provides five-year permits for assistance animals, and that this increases regulatory work for the Government and costs for Canberrans who need assistance animals

TARA CHEYNE MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government recognises the important role that assistance animals play in supporting people with disability to access services, participate in public life, and be fully included in our community. This is why the ACT introduced its own voluntary Assistance Animal Accreditation Framework.

The ACT does not automatically recognise all interstate permits or travel/transport permits, as accreditation systems and assessment standards vary between jurisdictions. Individuals with assistance animals accredited interstate may still access public places in the ACT under *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* protections, but formal ACT registration requires meeting the ACT framework requirements.

2. Currently, none of the trainers and assessors based in the Canberra-region listed on the City Services website offer PAT assessments for animals other than dogs. No ACT-based trainers hold feline-specific or other non-dog qualifications required for Public Access Test (PAT) under the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*. ACT-based trainers have been canvassed, and have advised that they do not intend to expand into non-dog assessment.

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Interstate assessors with appropriate feline qualifications are available, and ACT residents may engage them to complete assessments. Domestic Animal Services has previously assisted applicants by arranging interstate assessors where needed.

As at March 2026, there are 135 assistance animals with active registrations under the ACT framework. While most are dogs, registrations also include four cats. At this stage, there are no immediate plans to recruit or certify ACT-based non-dog assessors, as accreditation requires specific training and nationally recognised competencies that are not widely offered locally. Existing assessors set their own fees, and any additional cost for interstate travel is a matter between the assessor and applicant.

3. The City and Environment Directorate have not been made aware of any reports to the HRC or ACAT relating to access refusals generally. There has been one known complaint made to the ACT Human Rights Commission relating specifically to a non-dog assistance animal (a cat), which was later referred to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) and ultimately dismissed.
4. The ACT framework requires two-year registration to maintain:
 - appropriate oversight of animal behaviour and welfare
 - up-to-date verification of training standards
 - public-access safety
 - the integrity and accountability of the voluntary accreditation system.

While Queensland issues five-year permits, each jurisdiction sets its own regulatory approach. The ACT considers two-year intervals an appropriate balance between supporting access for individuals with disability and ensuring ongoing compliance and safety.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City and Government Services

Date: 23/3/26

This response required 1hr to complete, at an approximate cost of \$115.32.