

20 April 2017

Our Ref: PF/FM  
File No.:

Greg Brown  
Deputy Director  
Local Government Division  
GPO Box 123  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Greg

### **Dog Control Amendment Bill 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the *Dog Control Amendment Bill 2017*. As stated in your letter, previous consultation supported a number of proposed amendments to the Act.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT / the Association) is incorporated under the Local Government Act 1993 and is the representative body for Local Government in Tasmania.

The objectives of LGAT are to:

- protect and represent the interests and rights of Councils in Tasmania;
- promote an efficient and effective system of Local Government in Tasmania; and
- provide services to Members, councillors and employees of Councils.

LGAT sought comment on the *Dog Control Amendment Bill 2017* from our member councils and Break O'Day, Devonport, Tasman, Northern Midlands, Kentish, Derwent Valley and Clarence City Councils have responded supporting the amendments. Each of these councils noted that the proposed amendments provide clarity regarding nuisance dogs and enforcement provisions, and that they supported the proposed DNA sampling.

The following additional singular comments were also provided and while we believe they have some merit, we would note these have not been widely tested with the Local Government sector broadly. It is LGAT's view that the comments with regard to DNA sampling and dangerous dogs are particularly likely to have support. We would be happy to canvas these matters with Members if required.

#### **Exempting greyhounds that have graduated from Greyhound Adoption Program from the requirement to wear a muzzle in a public place.**

All greyhounds which have completed the Greyhound Adoption Program, when being walked in a public place, should wear a tag that identifies the dog as having completed the program; and that all greyhounds in a public place (including off lead areas) would still be required to be secured and restrained by a lead not exceeding two meters in length'.

#### **Proposed amendment to allow authorised officers to take DNA samples from a dog suspected of being involved in an attack.**

While DNA sampling is supported in principle, the costs associated with training Authorised Officers taking DNA samples needs to be considered as part of these proposed changes.

Additionally, as the handling of an animal that has been involved in an attack may be unpredictable, extensive training and formalised procedures will also need to be considered.

**Other comments**

While not part of the proposed amendment, one council raised the issue of the adequacy of the *Dog Control Act 2000* for dealing with dangerous dogs.

It was noted that because some owners of dangerous dogs are willing to openly threaten council staff, there is now a case to consider if:

- a. The Police should be automatically involved in a case of a dog attack.
- b. Animal Control Officers should operate under the jurisdiction of local law enforcement in such cases.
- c. Police should have greater involvement in dealing with dog owners whose dogs have attacked.
- d. Animal Control Officers should be given stronger legal powers within the Dog Control Act.
- e. There should be stronger penalties for owners whose dogs have been involved in an attack.
- f. Tighter controls and a statewide register of dogs declared dangerous are needed.
- g. The magistrates court should have greater involvement in determining a dog dangerous.

Should you require further information on any aspects of this submission then we would be pleased to meet with you to discuss it.

Yours sincerely



Dr Katrena Stephenson  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**