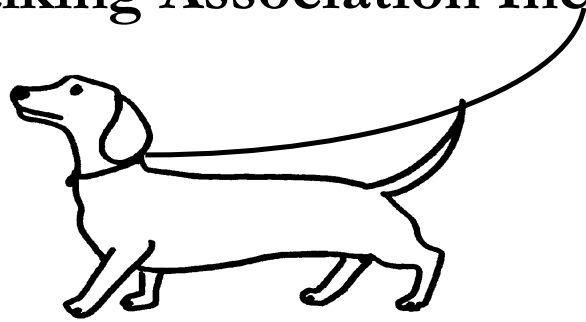


Huon Valley Dog Walking Association Inc



May 25th 2012,

**A Submission to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
in support of
Proposal P1018 Companion Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas.**

Huon Valley Dog Walking Association supports **Proposal P1018, Companion Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas** as we strongly agree that there is a need for consistent nation wide legislation in this matter.

The Huon Valley is situated south of Hobart in Tasmania and, as a result of recent population growth, has almost 4,000 registered companion dogs. The aims of our association include promoting responsible dog ownership and enhancing the image of well controlled dogs as a benefit to society, including health and social benefits.

We make the following points in support of the issues raised in the FSANZ proposal.

Dr. Peter Higgis of Dogs NSW in his article **Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership** posits that *“Although Australia has the highest rate of pet ownership in the world (63% of households own a pet) our attitude towards animals in public places is outdated and in need of review...a more liberal approach to dogs is required and would be warmly welcomed by dog lovers.”*

We are also aware that there is a misconception in some sections of the community that allowing dogs in outdoor eating areas will lead to an increase in disease. However, as stated by Dr Scott Weese and Dr Maureen Anderson , Ontario University Veterinary College – Centre for Public Health and Zoonoses, *“In reality simply having a dog in a restaurant should be less risk than having people in a restaurant since people can transmit some infections to each other over short distances by coughing and sneezing. (As long as) people who touch a dog wash their hands before touching food and restaurant staff do not touch dogs.”* This supports the argument that as long as normal hygiene procedures continue to be observed there is no increased risk of disease.

Tasmanian author, Judy Redeker, in her article, **May I Bring a Friend**, describes a recent trip to Europe. *“In Europe al fresco dining is very popular and on a sunny day dogs lying under tables outdoors are a common sight.....they lie quietly, well socialised, happy to be with their favourite people.”*

According to the **New South Wales Companion Animals Act of 1998** this situation has also been acceptable in New South Wales for the last fourteen years without any noticeable outbreak of disease.

We also note that the website www.doggydining.com.au describes the benefits associated with dining out with your dog as follows:

- *Building Bridges- Dogs are a conversation starter (and) the building of social capital is known to have positive effects on the health and economic viability of a society.*
- *Business Benefits- Dog owners make a vital contribution to the cafe culture across Australia. Many dog friendly cafe and restaurant owners, in dog friendly states, say they would potentially go out of business if they had to ban dogs.*

Tasmania relies heavily on tourism and a large proportion of this market consists of visitors travelling in mobile homes. These visitors often have their dogs with them as part of their family. The introduction of **Proposal P1018** will enable them to eat at local cafes and restaurants with their companion dog and will enhance their holiday experience in Tasmania. It will also benefit local businesses and encourage tourism as Tasmania becomes known as a dog friendly state.

We have spoken with the proprietors of a number of local eateries about this matter and have found that they are extremely supportive of the proposed changes in legislation.

This submission has been prepared on behalf of the committee and membership of
Huon Valley Dog Walking Association Inc.


Secretary and Public Officer