

submissions

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Subject: FSANZ: Applications and Submissions - Submission [SEC=INCONFIDENCE]



FSANZ: Applications and Submissions - Submission

Tuesday, 12 June, 2012

- 1. Assessment Report Number:** Proposal P101
- 2. Assessment Report Title:** Companion Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas
- 3. Organisation Name:** Sentient, the Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics
- 4. Organisation Type:** Individual
- 5. Representing:** Sentient Executive
- 6. Street Address:** PO Box 223 Oatley NSW 2223
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- 8. Contact Person:** Rosemary Elliott, Secretary
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- 10. Fax:**
- 11. Email Address:** [REDACTED]
- 12. Submission Text:** The Executive members of Sentient, the Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics, support Proposal P1018 to remove restrictions on the presence of companion dogs in outdoor dining areas. As a group of veterinarians, we agree with the comprehensive risk assessment prepared by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. The research cited shows that in essence, the risk of zoonotic disease transmission from dogs in outdoor dining areas is negligible, and no greater than the risks involved to humans encountering dogs in any other public setting. We believe that allowing companion dogs in outdoor dining areas has a positive impact in several regards. Firstly, it acknowledges and promotes the human-animal bond by making outdoor dining more inclusive. An increasing number of people now live alone, particularly the elderly, and having the option of taking their companion dogs to public dining areas decreases their social isolation. There is ample evidence that the presence of dogs has a calming effect and can promote positive interactions between people. Secondly, it highlights the need for responsible pet ownership, such as providing dogs with socialisation opportunities, basic training, parasite control and appropriate forms of restraint. Finally, the risk assessment places the focus of disease prevention on compliance with food hygiene standards, without which diners are at risk regardless of the presence of dogs. In the interests of both animal welfare and human safety, we would advise food businesses welcoming companion dogs to ensure:
 - Water bowls and access to shade for dogs
 - Sufficient space between tables to prevent people stepping on dogs or dogs becoming fearful due to close exposure to unfamiliar dogs
 - Signs with reminders that dogs are welcome providing they are under the control of their

owners at all times and advising parents not to allow children to approach unfamiliar dogs.

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