

# MEDIA RELEASE

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Promoting  
Responsible  
Dog  
Ownership



## Let dogs travel on public transport

**-Review of current regulations is required-**

For a nation of animal lovers, Australia has a relatively narrow perspective on allowing pets on to public transport. Buses and trains allow animals that are in crates or cages, though this is impractical for owners of medium to large sized dogs. Australian airlines treat dogs as cargo by storing them below the main deck, but this experience can be traumatic for the owner and the dog. It is time for a review of all public transport rules that restrict the carriage of animals.

“Although Australia has one of the highest rates of pet owner in the world, our attitude towards animals in public is outdated and in need of review. Buses, trains, planes and taxis, should allow well socialised, trained and healthy animals on board.”, says veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesperson **Dr Peter Higgins**.

“So many other places in the world are open to dogs being treated like the owner’s children. Many cities in Europe, especially in Scandinavian countries, let dogs into cafes, restaurants, hotel rooms, on public transport, and in to shops without a problem. Australians frown upon even a toy-size dog being taken into a café to order a take-away coffee.”, observes **Dr Higgins**.

Current local public transport regulations allow animals on buses and trains so long as they are contained in a suitable box and do not bother or threaten other passengers, with the exception of human-assistance animals. These provisions are inadequate for the majority of dogs that are too large to be carried around in a crate by their owner.

“Dog owners who don’t own cars struggle to look after the health of their animal independently because they cant even make a trip to the vet.”, argues **Dr Higgins**.

“We claim to be a nation of animal lovers, but I believe a more liberal approach to dogs is required, and would be warmly welcomed by dog owners who don’t want, or can’t afford, a car.”, believes **Dr Higgins**.

Australian airlines treat dogs as cargo, placing them in crates and loading into the pressurised and temperature controlled cargo area of the plane. Some airlines do not allow animals on any of its flights. Other domestic airlines around the world, such as USA airlines *Southwest*, *American*, and *Continental*, allow dogs to travel in the main cabin the plane with the passenger on domestic flights so long as they are vaccinated, clean and healthy. There was also a dedicated pet only airline launched in the USA last month.

“Putting dogs into the cargo hold of an aircraft can be a traumatic experience for the dog, especially during take off and turbulence. Traumatized dogs in crates sometimes try dig themselves out, and can really injure their sensitive nose and paws by doing this. This is a real commercial opportunity for a smart progressive airline. A community service, an Australian first and they would also be financially rewarded.”, says **Dr Higgins**.

“Compared to the rest of the world, our attitude towards dogs and other pets on public transport is outdated, and I believe we should review these restrictions to make responsible dog ownership easier.”, proposes **Dr Higgins**.

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