



## Assistance animals and your rights



Easy English

## Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**
  
- we write what the hard word means.

## You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book
  
- know what this book is about
  
- find more information.





## We respect Aboriginal elders

We work on Aboriginal land.



We respect Aboriginal elders.

## About this book



This book is by Canberra Community Law.

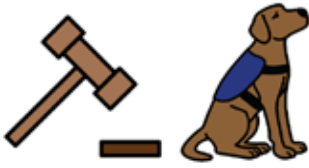


This book is about your rights if you have an **assistance animal**.

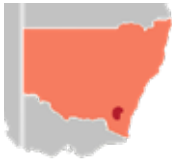


An assistance animal is an animal trained to help people with disability live a good life.

# What are assistance animals?



There are 2 laws about assistance animals.



## 1. The **Discrimination Act**

- helps people who have been treated unfairly in the **ACT**



- says assistance animals are trained to help people with disability live a good life.



## 2. The **Disability Discrimination Act**

- helps people who have been treated unfairly in **Australia**

- says assistance animals can be **accredited**.



Accredited means the animal passed a test to say it is a good assistance animal.



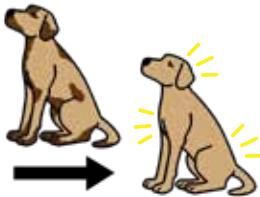
Animals can be accredited by a training organisation or the government.

Assistance animals do **not** have to be accredited.

The Disability Discrimination Act says that assistance animals can be



- trained to help people with their disability



- clean and healthy



- well behaved.

You can choose to accredit your assistance animal if you want.

## Standards for assistance animals



**Standards for assistance animals** are rules that assistance animals must follow to show they can go anywhere in public.



The standards say

- your assistance animal is healthy



- your assistance animal is calm



- your assistance animal listens to you



- you can look after your assistance animal.

## How can assistance animals help?



Assistance animals help people with disability and health needs in many ways.



Assistance animals might help you

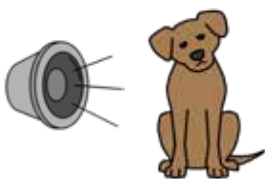
- go to places anyone else can go



- open doors or carry things



- move around if you are blind or find it hard to see



- notice sounds if you are deaf or find it hard to hear



- notice changes in blood sugar levels if you have diabetes.

# Know your rights

## Where you take your assistance animal



The **Domestic Animals Act** is a law that says you can go to any public place with your assistance animal.



You might take your assistance animal

- to hospitals



- to hotels



- on public transport



- to schools



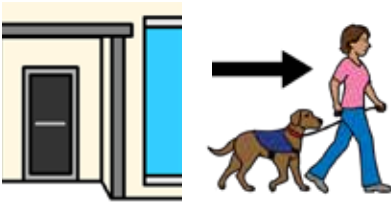
- to cafes and in shops.



The Domestic Animals Act says people and organisations



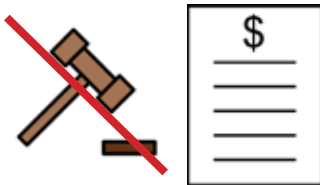
- **cannot** stop you and your assistance animal from going places



- **cannot** remove your assistance animal from a space



- **cannot** make you pay money to use your assistance animal in their space



A person or organisation can be **fin**ed if they break these laws.



Fin

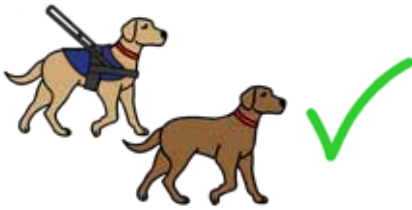
ed means someone must pay money to the government because they broke the law.



You **can** use your assistance animal even if you do **not** have an assistance animal ID card.



You **can** use your assistance animal even if your animal is **not** accredited.



You **can** use your assistance animal even if your animal does **not** have a special coat or **harness**.



A harness is the shoulder strap and handle that helps you hold onto the assistance animal.



Your assistance animal must be kept under control. For example, on a leash.

# Discrimination



**Discrimination** means you are treated unfairly because of who you are.



Discrimination because you have an assistance animal is against the law.



It might be discrimination if you are told you **cannot** use your assistance animal

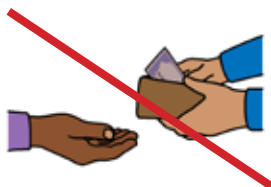
- at work or school



- on public transport



- in cafes and in shops.



It might be also be discrimination if you are told you must pay money to use an assistance animal in public.

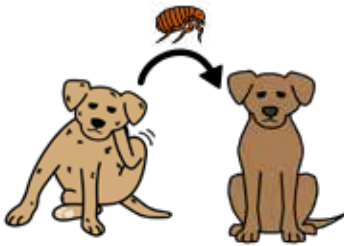
## Some things are not discrimination

There are some things that people **can** do that are **not** discrimination.



People **are** allowed to

- say they have a problem if they think your animal is **not** safe



- say they have a problem if they think your animal is sick and might make others sick



- ask you to control your animal



- ask you for proof that your animal is an assistance animal.

## Help with assistance animals



You can make a **discrimination complaint** if you are treated unfairly because you have an assistance animal.



A discrimination complaint means you say

- what the problem is



- what you want to happen next.



You can make a complaint to

- the **ACT** Human Rights Commission



- the **Australian** Human Rights Commission.



You can choose to ask a lawyer for help to make a complaint.

Contact information is at the end of this book.



You can talk to **Domestic Animal Services** if you are treated unfairly in public because you have an assistance animal.



Domestic Animal Services is a government organisation that will

- listen to your problem



- talk to everyone involved

- find out what happened.



Domestic Animal Services might tell the **ACT Director of Public Prosecutions**.

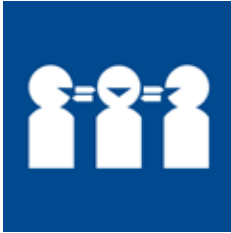


The ACT Director of Public Prosecutions can decide to solve your problem in court.



## Contact information

**Free help if you find it hard to speak or understand English**



Call Translating and Interpreting Service or TIS  
131 450

Then ask TIS to call the number you want.

**Free help if you find it hard to hear or speak**



Call the National Relay Service or NRS  
1300 555 727.

Then ask the NRS to call the number you want.



Visit the NRS website

<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service>



## Help to accredit your assistance animal

The **Assistance Animals Framework** helps people in the ACT



- accredit their assistance animal with help from the government



- register their assistance animal with the government



- get an assistance animal ID card.

You do **not** have to use the framework.



Learn more on the city services website  
<https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/pets-and-wildlife/domestic-animals/assistance-animals2>



## Canberra Community Law

Contact our Disability Discrimination Law service for more help.



Phone 02 6218 7900



Email

[info@canberracommunitylaw.org.au](mailto:info@canberracommunitylaw.org.au)



Website

<https://www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au>



Office

Canberra Community Law, Level 1  
21 Barry Drive

Turner

Corner of Watson Street and Barry Drive

We can meet you on the ground floor.



## Domestic Animal Services



Phone 13 22 81



Email [dogcontrol@act.gov.au](mailto:dogcontrol@act.gov.au)



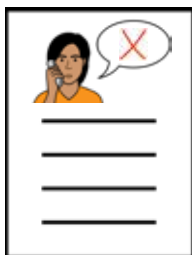
## ACT Human Rights Commission



Phone 02 6205 2222



Email [human.rights@act.gov.au](mailto:human.rights@act.gov.au)



Complaints factsheet <https://www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au/factsheet-1-disability-discrimination-complaints-act-human-rights-commission.html>

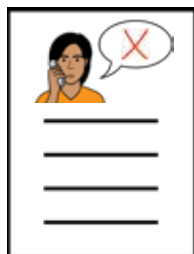


## Australian Human Rights Commission



Phone 1300 656 419

Email [infoservice@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:infoservice@humanrights.gov.au)



Complaints factsheet <https://www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au/factsheet-2-disability-discrimination-complaints-australian-human-rights-commission.html>



## Women's Legal Centre



Phone 02 6257 4377



Email [admin@womenslegalact.org](mailto:admin@womenslegalact.org)



Website <http://womenslegalact.org/>

## Legal Aid



Phone 1300 654 314



Email [legalaid@legalaidact.org.au](mailto:legalaid@legalaidact.org.au)



Website <http://www.legalaidact.org.au>

# Notes

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Canberra Community Law acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work in the ACT and surrounding region and pay our respect to the Ngunnawal elders past, present and future for they hold the stories, traditions, and the cultures of their people. We are grateful that we share this land and express our sorrow for the costs of this sharing to Australia's First Peoples. We will continue to acknowledge the legacy of our history and strive in our goals to empower our community through social justice. We hope that our efforts will contribute to a realisation of equity, justice and partnership with Traditional Custodians of this land.

The material in this fact sheet is intended as a general guide only. Readers should **not** act on the basis of any material in this publication without first getting legal advice about their particular situations. If you would like more information, please contact Canberra Community Law on 6218 7900.

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Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre wrote the Easy English version in October, 2020. To contact Scope call 1300 472 673 or visit [www.scopeaust.org.au](http://www.scopeaust.org.au).

To see the original contact Canberra Community Law.

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