

# DOG CONTROL ACT 2000

## MICROCHIPPING DOGS

INFORMATION SHEET  
July 2010

### ***Dog Control Act 2000***

The *Dog Control Act 2000* (the Act) provides for the control and management of dogs. It gives councils certain powers in relation to the management of dogs within their local government area.

### **2009 amendments – microchipping**

Amendments to the Act were made in 2009 with the aim of increasing public safety and highlighting the responsibilities of dog owners.

The major amendment that will impact all dog owners is the inclusion of a requirement that all dogs be microchipped. This requirement will take effect from 1 July 2011, and from that date all dogs over six months of age will have to be microchipped.

Owners of dogs that are not currently micro-chipped should do so prior to 1 July 2011.

### **Why microchip all dogs?**

There are a number of benefits for owners in having their dogs microchipped. If a dog is lost or stolen, its collar and registration tag can be easily removed, making the dog difficult to identify.

Each microchip is individually identifiable through a unique number, that is stored in a database with details about the dog and the owner's contact details. If a dog is microchipped and its loss or theft is reported to the registry, a veterinary surgeon, animal shelter or council may contact the owner or detect any errors in ownership information.

Some councils offer a discount on the cost of registration if a dog is microchipped.

### **Where to get a dog microchipped**

Local councils, veterinary surgeons, and animal welfare agencies such as the Dogs' Homes of Tasmania or the RSPCA, or pet shops, can either microchip a dog or provide owners with information regarding where to take a dog to be microchipped.

### **How much does it cost to micro-chip a dog?**

The cost of micro-chipping varies but is generally between \$30 and \$70. However, councils and animal welfare agencies sometimes hold microchipping clinics that offer discounted microchipping, at a cost of approximately \$25. The cost may also be reduced if the microchipping is carried out in conjunction with other treatments such as vaccination or neutering.

### Does a microchipped dog have to be registered?

All dogs still have to be registered with the council in the area in which they live, even when they are microchipped. This allows councils to enforce requirements related to the maximum number of animals allowed on a property.

The registration disc that a dog is required to wear enables a council to easily return a dog to its owner if it becomes lost or strays and is impounded by a council ranger, and an additional disc containing personal details would also enable a member of the public to return the dog.

### What happens once a dog is microchipped?

Soon after a dog is microchipped, the owner will receive confirmation by mail of the microchipping and a record of the microchip number. This is called the Certificate of Identification. Some operators may provide this information by email.

If any contact details change, owners will need to have the microchip registry details updated. A Change of Particulars section should be included on the Certificate of Identification and can be detached, filled out and sent to the relevant microchip registry. Some registries may provide an online form for this purpose.

If a dog is sold or given away, the contact details held by the microchip registry will need to be updated and the registry will need confirmation of the change from both parties.

### Does microchipping hurt dogs?

Microchips are very small – about the size of a grain of rice. Implanting a microchip is very similar to giving a dog a vaccination. Microchipping will only be carried out by an approved implanter who has been trained to carry out the procedure. It will not cause the dog any discomfort.

Microchips are inert – they do not contain chemicals or batteries, do not have side effects, and should last for the lifetime of a dog. Microchips must be put in a standard location, just under the skin between the shoulder blades at the back of a dog's neck.

A veterinary surgeon may exempt a dog from microchipping if he or she considers that it may adversely affect the dog's health and welfare.

### Failure to microchip a dog

If an owner of a dog over six months of age does not ensure that the dog is implanted with a microchip, the owner could be liable for a fine of up to 10 penalty units.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As of 1 July 2010, one penalty unit is equal to \$130.

**Disclaimer: This information is provided as a brief and general guide to the main requirements of the dog control legislation. The information is not professional legal opinion and should not be relied upon as such.**