

To  
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand  
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I am writing once again to bring to attention the situation regarding the laws relating to allowing leashed companion dogs in alfresco dining areas of café's at the discretion of the cafe owner.

Last year, thousands of signatures and letters were sent to Paul Lucas the then Minister for Health in Queensland, in support of change in the existing laws governed by FSANZ. I am hopeful that with the change not only in State Government but also our local Council that now is the time to once again try to amend these outmoded and draconian laws. I have tried to be objective and to the point.

This issue requires attention for three key reasons:

**1. The Government: The Forward Thinking Health Perspective:**

Queenslanders are seeking concrete evidence that their government is taking positive steps to secure the best possible healthcare solutions for them. They want demonstrations of a proactive and progressive approach that is based on modern facts. They want policies founded in common sense. They also want acknowledgement and response when laws are redundant or need to be changed.

Modern research and professional opinions tell us that the current law relating to dogs in alfresco dining areas is indeed redundant. Here presents an opportunity where the facts speak for themselves and the new Queensland government can quite safely adopt a new law that fulfils the needs of all stake holders in the modern community.

This is the time for the current government to recognise the value of seizing this opportunity to make a positive and highly visible change.

**2. Cafe Owners: The Nanny State Perspective:**

The current law relating to dogs in cafes removes choice from the menu for cafe owners. As it stands they have no say in the way that their business deals with a potentially highly lucrative customer base - dog owners. This is both an insult to their intelligence and another example of government over regulation.

Every cafe owner will have their own perspective on the issue but surely it comes down to recognition of their right to run their business as they see fit - by allowing dogs, by not allowing dogs, by having a dog friendly area. Whatever works for them and their customers. Given there are no health risks for having dogs in outdoor cafe areas no regulations are required other than to respect the choice of the cafe owner.

**3. The Aging and Disabled Population: The Quality of Life Perspective**

Current thinking has it that our care of the aging and disabled population is in crisis. In these circumstances positive steps must be taken by the government to foster the health of the whole individual particularly in terms of enabling independence and a good quality of life.

It is a proven fact that ownership of, and interaction with, dogs is of a health benefit to older people and the disabled. For many people in these categories their dog is the only true companion they have. Their dogs are the reason they get out of the house, interact with others, form friendships and experience play.

By enabling dogs into al fresco dining areas we are providing yet another place for our older and disabled citizens to experience some of life's true pleasures - a chance to join and interact with other people, to have a good cup of coffee in pleasant surroundings and to do it all with man's best friend.

The Government and its laws must enable these simple pleasures to be possible. Best of all these simple pleasures are also healthy ones.

Thanking you for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to your support.

Yours sincerely  
*Suzanne Wright*

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