

submissions

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 16 May 2012 9:19 AM
To: submissions
Subject: Submission re Proposal P1018 - Companion Dogs in Outdoor Dining Area

I refer to the proposal to remove restrictions on the presence of companion dogs in outdoor dining areas of food premises and wish to record my opposition on the following grounds:

The FSANZ risk assessment has concluded that there is a risk, however low or negligible, of foodborne transmission of zoonotic agents to humans from companion dogs in outdoor dining settings. Public health and safety should therefore not be unnecessarily compromised by the removal of the current restrictions. This risk would increase due to the cumulative effect of more than one dog as the potential for contact and consequently the transmission of pathogens from dogs in outdoor dining settings to humans would also increase. The fact that human illness is currently rare is can be attributed to the exclusion of dogs from food businesses including outdoor dining areas.

Given the potential risks, the restrictions should be extended, rather than removed, to cover all jurisdictions.

The risk assessment fails to account of the risk caused by potentially dangerous dogs in a confined location, potential dog fights, trip hazards from dogs tied to tables and chairs, the adverse health impact on those who are allergic to dogs, the adverse impact on persons who are scared of dogs and the risk to small children in particular from dog bites and transmission of ticks, fleas etc.

Removal of the restrictions would also amount to discrimination against non-dog owners whose amenity, health and safety would be compromised by the unwanted presence of dogs. It is unacceptable that people should be exposed to risk against their control if someone subsequently sits down next to them with a dog.

Many dog owners have not trained their dogs to follow proper standards of behaviour and hygiene in public areas and will present an unacceptably high risk of transmitting zoonotic diseases to consumers through food if they were allowed in alfresco dining areas. On the other hand, assistance animals have received specific training which minimises any such risks.

Individual food business owners would generally not be able to determine whether any specific prospective dogs pose a potential risk and should not be put in the position of making such a determination where there is also potential for conflict with dog owners.

The lowering of the food standards by removing a restriction which has recognised health risks would result in a dangerous and unacceptable precedent across all aspects of food safety practices.

In summary, I conclude that the proposals should be rejected and the current restrictions maintained.

Please note that I wish to keep my personal details confidential although my submission may be posted anonymously.

I trust my comments will be taken into account.

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