

2026

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY

**Response to Assembly Resolution of 26 February 2026 - Pets-Greater access to public transport
and facilities**

Government Response

Presented by

**Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport
June 2026**

The Government recognises the importance of pets in the lives of Canberrans and the benefits that improved access to public transport could provide. For many residents, pets are part of daily life, and facilitating safe, reliable travel with pets may support participation in community activities, reduce reliance on private vehicles, and enhance wellbeing.

The resolution of the Legislative Assembly of 26 February 2026 regarding greater access for pets on public transport and other public facilities presents an opportunity to modernise public transport settings in line with evolving community expectations. As pet ownership continues to grow, there is increasing interest in more flexible and inclusive transport options.

Unlike accredited assistance animals, domestic pets do not have legislated access rights. Their presence on the public transport network introduces practical challenges including vehicle crowding, hygiene and cleanliness requirements, passenger allergies and sensitivities, and the need for staff to enforce rules in real time. These factors must be carefully managed to protect both passengers and frontline workers, and to ensure service reliability across the network.

While a carefully designed and well-managed approach can support a more connected and accessible city, it is important to state that any expansion of pet access involves significant operational, safety, and financial considerations. Transport Canberra is responsible for delivering an integrated, safe, and sustainable public transport system, therefore any policy change must maintain the high standards of safety and service expected by passengers and the Transport Canberra workforce.

For this reason, the Government has determined that progressing this matter requires more than a single policy decision or discrete operational change.

The City and Environment Directorate (CED) is leading a structured stakeholder engagement process to bring affected parties together to better understand interest, risks, and opportunities associated with greater access for domestic animals on the public transport network. This process is designed to generate a robust shared evidence base to inform future policy decisions, including whether any changes to access arrangements are feasible, sustainable, and in the public interest.

The purpose of this process is not to pre-determine an outcome, but to develop a shared understanding of the practical, safety, and operational implications of expanded pet access, and to explore potential models that could, if appropriate, guide future decisions.

This engagement commenced in the form of an in-person, roundtable discussion held on 1 May 2026. Attendees represented public transport users, advocacy groups, workforce representatives, operators, and other relevant stakeholders, including:

- Transport Canberra and Canberra Metro Operations (CMET);
- the Transport Workers Union;
- Guide Dogs ACT/NSW;
- RSPCA ACT;
- the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC);
- Pets and Positive Ageing ACT (PAPA);
- the Public Transport Association of Canberra (PTCBA);
- local veterinary practices; and
- officials from the City and Environment Directorate (CED) from relevant policy areas, including Safety and Wellbeing, Access and Inclusion, Domestic Animal Services, and strategic policy and legislation.

Feedback on the roundtable was overall positive, with attendees acknowledging the complexities associated with any policy change, and that ongoing works needs to be undertaken in a proportionate and responsible manner, with careful attention to operational impacts.

Transport Canberra has resolved to meet individually with representatives individually to further explore their considerations, before reconvening a roundtable for a “what we heard” session. Subject to agreement, it is likely any proposed policy change would be subject to broader community consultation.

Transport Canberra will continue to assess options to expand pet access to public transport in a way which priorities the integrity of our public transport network, ensures safety for all passengers and staff, and maintains an equitable and reliable service.

The Government will update the Assembly as appropriate as this work progresses.

END