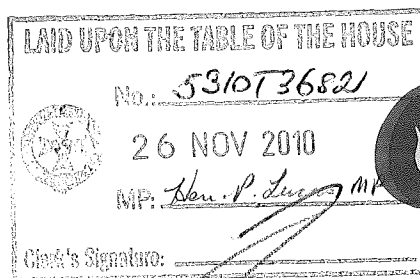




Hon Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter dated 27 October 2010, regarding petition numbers 1483-10, 1550-10 and 1551-10, tabled in Parliament on 26 October 2010. As the three petitions relate to a request to allow companion animals in the dining area of food businesses, I have taken the liberty of responding to all three in this letter. I therefore ask that this response be noted against each petition.

The requirements that relate to animals in dining areas of food businesses are contained in the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code), which has been adopted by all Australian States and Territories.

The Code requires that a food business must not permit live animals (except seafood or other fish or shellfish) in areas in which food is handled or served. Exceptions are in place for people accompanied by an assistance animal, such as a guide dog.

The Queensland Government supports national consistency of food safety laws throughout Australia. Therefore, any changes to the law relating to this subject should be made as changes to the Code.

Having said that, I am interested in further hearing Queenslanders' views on this subject.

That is why I have noted the views expressed in the petitions. I have also directed Queensland Health to refer the proposal to allow dogs in outdoor areas of cafes to Food Standards Australia New Zealand, which administers the Code. I have done so on behalf of the numerous dog-lovers who have expressed their desire for the Code to be amended.

Of course, Food Standards Australia New Zealand will also have regard to views of people who may be concerned about the interaction of dogs with each other, or who may not appreciate the presence of dogs in eating areas.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

PAUL LUCAS MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

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