

# Media Release

**Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP**  
Minister for Regional Development  
Minister for Agriculture



Thursday, 24 February 2022

## REUNITING LOST PETS MADE EASIER FOR VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring lost pets get home quicker and safer with new legislation passing Parliament today.

The *Domestic Animals Amendment (Reuniting Pets and Other Matters) Act 2021* will allow Victorians to take a lost dog or cat to a participating vet clinic or registered animal shelter to be reunited with its owner, rather than relying solely on councils.

Before this, lost cats and dogs had to be handed in to an authorised officer in the council area where the animal is found, or to a small number of vets and shelters that have an agreement under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

In addition to the robust verification process to ensure pets are returned to the correct owner, the legislation also keeps the health and safety of animals at the forefront, reinforcing the Labor Government's landmark puppy farm legislation reforms with better regulations and more efficient services.

Key improvements include:

- Anyone found guilty of certain offences under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* will now be banned from working for all breeders in Victoria
- Victoria's Chief Veterinary Officer will be able to make recommendations about commercial dog breeder approval or renewal, ensuring animal care and management standards are tailored to the facility and breed requirements
- Microbreeders will undergo more assessments and need to declare any prior convictions related to animal welfare.
- All source number applicants will be required to supply their address and contact details to improve compliance and prevent fraudulent practices
- Regulatory partners, including Victorian councils and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Victoria will have enhanced powers to enable quicker and more effective animal management and welfare services.

These reforms are important as Victoria has high pet ownership rates, with an average of 665,000 dogs and 215,000 cats registered with councils each year.

The changes will be in effect by 1 October 2022. For more information visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

*"Pets are an important part of any family, and these reforms will make the reuniting of lost pets with their owners easier and quicker, improving the welfare outcomes for all."*

*"This new legislation builds on our commitment towards improving animal welfare, and highlights other work we are doing to ensure breeding practices across the state remain robust, humane and safe."*

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