

Dogs in the Workplace Policy

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to provide a safe and professional workplace that welcomes and appropriately manages dogs in the workplace, whilst maintaining a healthy, safe and professional workplace for all Company people.

2. SCOPE

This policy and associated procedural principles apply to all Melbourne Theatre Company people i.e., employees, contractors and visitors across all Melbourne Theatre Company worksites including Headquarters, Southbank Theatre workspaces and external Company event venues.

NOTE: Exempt from this policy are guide, hearing, and assistance dogs as defined under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

3. PRINCIPLES

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- Dogs are welcome at Melbourne Theatre Company where operationally practical and safe.
 - All approvals are subject to manager and Department Head discretion and must follow the documented procedure.
 - Past practices or informal permissions do not override this policy.
 - Melbourne Theatre Company seeks to provide an equitable experience, recognising that workplace settings differ in their ability to accommodate dogs.

4. RESTRICTIONS

Permission shall not be granted, or granted permission withdrawn, in the event a dog:

- Is a Restricted Breed Dog as defined in Animal Welfare Victoria's, *Approved Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria*. This includes any dog of a mixed breed that visibly contains any of the below Restricted Breeds:
 - American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)
 - Dogo Argentino (Argentinian fighting dog)
 - Fila Brasileiro (Brazilian fighting dog) - Japanese Tosa; and
 - Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario).
- Demonstrates it is distressed or uncomfortable in the workplace.
- Is incontinent or is not house-trained.
- Demonstrates behaviour which distracts the Employee/dog owner or other Company people from their work duties e.g., excessive barking.

- Is considered dangerous, meaning a dog that has been trained to attack or bite any person or anything that is attached to or worn by a person, under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- Is considered menacing, meaning a dog that causes any person to reasonably feel uncomfortable, unsafe, threatened or causes a serious or non-serious bite injury to a person or animal.
- Possesses destructive tendencies, especially to equipment, furnishings, and property.

General Restrictions

Dogs may not be brought into any Company workplace without prior written approval in accordance with this policy.

Location Restrictions

Dogs are permitted in most Administration areas but must remain on a lead in all common or public areas i.e., corridors, stairwells, HQ Reception, and Theatre foyer areas.

Areas strictly off limits include:

Melbourne Theatre Company HQ	Southbank Theatre
• Welding Bay Area • Wardrobe Storeroom • Props Storeroom • Bathrooms	• Bar areas, food and beverage stores • Fly floor, Grid, Lighting bridges • Cleaning offices and storerooms • Public and shared use toilets • Box Office & Front of House areas

Any location used for the preparation of food or where a function is being held and food and drink is being served and consumed, is also off limits.

Restricted Areas requiring written permission from the Executive Director and Co-CEO include:

- Scenic Workshop (HQ)
- Scenic Art area (HQ)
- Props Workshop (HQ)
- Sumner Theatre stage and Lawler Theatre stage (Southbank Theatre)
- General Back of House Areas except offices (Southbank Theatre)

3. PROCEDURE

- The Employee/dog owner must request written permission from their immediate manager, endorsed by their Department Head, by completing the Dog in the Workplace Checklist with reference to Animal Welfare Victoria website guidance. <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare/victoria/dogs/health/routine-healthcare-for-dogs>
- The Employee/dog owner must provide written evidence the dog is fully vaccinated as per the Dog in the Workplace Checklist.
- The Employee/dog owner must demonstrate they have consulted with and confirmed support from colleagues most likely to be impacted by having a dog in their workplace. This support is to ensure safety, health, and professional concerns such as allergies, psychological wellbeing and/or ability to perform duties are addressed.
- Dogs are required to be tethered or restrained whilst in the workplace, or be kept confined to a designated area i.e., dogs are not allowed to roam freely across the Company.

- Permission will be confirmed in writing with the Employee/dog owner for a period of no more than 12 months. A new application is required on expiry of a permission.
- Permission may be withheld or withdrawn if it is anticipated that too many dogs will be in the workplace at any one time.
- In the event a request to bring a dog into the workplace is denied, and the Employee/dog owner believes this to be unfair, an appeal may be made to the Director People and Culture or the Executive Director and Co-CEO.
- All related documentation will be held by People and Culture for reference.

Once permission is granted, and the dog onsite, the Employee/dog owner is required to:

- Determine the frequency and specific days that the dog is allowed onsite, after considering any concerns of your nearby colleagues and other dogs that may be onsite. Share this information with colleagues.
- Ensure the dog is cared for and regularly groomed to a reasonable standard of hygiene and wellbeing.
- Ensure the dog is always supervised by the Employee/dog owner.
- Take the dog outside at required intervals to relieve itself and make every effort to ensure accidents are minimised.
- Clean up after the dog in the event it has created any kind of mess.
- Ensure any dog bedding, toys, food, treats, or other paraphernalia is moved or removed at the end of the day, so as not to obstruct any cleaning processes.

4. RIGHTS OF THE COMPANY

The Company may, in its absolute discretion:

- Deny approval or withdraw approval for any dog to be in the workplace in the future.
- Decide whether a dog should be permitted, or should be allowed to remain, in any location.
- Decide that a dog's presence in the workplace be delayed e.g., there are too many dogs in the workplace, the dog is still being trained or is unwell.
- Instruct a dog is to be removed from an unauthorised workplace. Failure to immediately do so will be managed as per the CAST Disciplinary Procedure.
- Recruiting managers should ensure that all prospective Employees are advised of the dog friendly policy during the recruitment process.

5. LIABILITY

Any dog brought into the workplace is at the Employee/dog owner's own risk and Melbourne Theatre Company is indemnified from any loss, liability, costs, or damages caused by the Employee/dog owner's dog whilst onsite.

The Employee/dog owner is responsible and may be held liable in the event the dog perpetrates any of, but not limited to, the following offences:

- Destruction or damage of equipment, furnishings, or property.
- Any kind of physical injury toward another dog; and

- Any kind of physical or psychological injury to a person or persons.

6. BREACH OF POLICY

In the case where this or related policies are breached resolution may be according to the CAST Disciplinary Procedure.

7. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Domestic Animals Act 1994 (*Vic*)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (*Vic*)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (*Vic*)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (*Vic*)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (*Comm*)

8. RELEVANT COMPANY DOCUMENTS

- CAST National Code of Behaviour
- CAST Respectful Workplace Policy
- CAST Grievance Procedure
- CAST Disciplinary Procedure
- The University of Melbourne Health and Safety Policy

9. RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

- Executive Management
- Managers and Supervisors
- Employees / Dog Owners

10. IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

Director People and Culture

11. REVIEW

Routine review, branding update, addition of checklist.

12. VERSION HISTORY

Version Control			
Document Name:	Dogs In the Workplace Policy	Approved by:	Director People and Culture
Department	People & Culture	Approved Date:	14/10/2025

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Request Approval Form - Dog in the Workplace

Employee Name		Dog Name	
Position		Department	
I have attached documentary evidence that confirms my dog is vaccinated for the following diseases as per Animal Welfare Victoria website guidance. • Parvovirus • Canine Hepatitis • Distemper • Canine Cough • Leptospirosis I confirm my dog receives regular preventative treatments for parasites e.g., fleas and worms.			
I have consulted with my immediate colleagues to confirm support for my dog in the workplace. I agree to tether and/or restrain my dog whilst in the workplace and keep my dog confined to a designated work area. I agree to care for my dog to ensure they are healthy and clean at all times e.g.; they do not smell; do not have fleas and/or worms etc. I agree to action to ensure my dog does not relieve itself in the workplace. I agree to manage any such event if it occurs. I agree to take my dog outside at regular intervals to allow my dog to relieve itself. I agree to appropriately dispose of related matter. I agree to remove my dog from the immediate workplace if it barks and becomes distressed. I agree to remove all dog bedding, toys, food, treats or other paraphernalia at the end of each day so as not to obstruct any cleaning processes. I agree to request permission each time I wish to bring my dog to an 'all Company' event. I agree I will NOT bring my dog to any Company event where food and drinks are served and/or external guests are attending. I agree I will NOT bring my dog to a Company workplace outside standard working hours.			
I have met all the Checklist requirements in my request to bring a dog into the workplace.		Employee Name: Signature: _____ Date: _____	
I support and approve the Employee request to bring a dog into the workplace.		Manager Name: Signature: _____ Date: _____	

I support and endorse the approval for the Employee request to bring a dog into the workplace.	Department Head Name: Signature: Date:
I have noted and recorded the approval for the Employee to bring a dog into the workplace.	Director People and Culture Signature: Date: