1. In 2013, a full review of the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (the Act)commenced to ensure the Act continues to deliver on its objectives for people with disability as well as industry.
2. A stakeholder review panel was established to assist in the review of the Act. The panel consisted of government and non-government representatives, including peak/advocacy bodies, tourism and housing agencies and a cross-section of sector representatives.
3. Eight recommendations were made as a result of the review. Of these recommendations, three are non-legislative and involve practice and communication improvements while five require legislative amendments.
4. The Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Amendment Bill 2015 (the Bill) gives effect to the recommendations requiring legislative amendments. The Bill makes the following changes to the Act to reduce red-tape for training institutions and make it easier for guide, hearing and assistance dog users to obtain handler identity cards:
* removing duplication in the issuing of handler identity cards by authorising approved trainers and training institutions to issue these cards
* recognising alternative handlers to enable more people with disability the opportunity to apply for a primary handler’s identity card
* relaxing the requirements around proof of disability when a handler renews their card
* providing more flexibility to the Chief Executive to call upon the advice of experts in the approval and standard setting process
* allowing an approved training institution to certify a guide, hearing or assistance dog of a shareholder, director or employee trainer of that institution.
1. The Bill also strengthens the monitoring, investigative and enforcement provisions of the Act to equip authorised officers with a greater continuum of powers to monitor, investigate and enforce compliance with the Act. These include the power to request information and enter premises by way of a warrant.
2. Cabinet approved the introduction of the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Amendment Bill 2015 into the Legislative Assembly.
3. *Attachments*
* [Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Amendment Bill 2015](Attachments/Bill.PDF)
* [Explanatory Notes](Attachments/ExNotes.PDF)