

# Microchip for life!

Microchipping not only identifies your pet for life, but it can save your pet's life.

All cats and dogs registered with a council for the first time must be microchipped prior to registration...

## What is microchipping?

A microchip is a tiny computer chip about the size of a grain of rice, which has an identification number programmed into it. The microchip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy, and will last for the life of the animal. The microchip is injected under the animal's skin between the shoulder blades and is a simple procedure, which causes no side effects. To identify the animal, a scanner that reads microchip numbers is passed over the animal's skin. The scanned number can then be checked against a register, which provides details of the animal's ownership.

## What are the benefits of microchipping?

A microchip provides a permanent form of identification which can quickly reunite owners with lost or injured pets. This could literally save your pet's life – sadly, many pets that end up in pounds and shelters are not identified, and have to be euthanased because their owners cannot be located. Microchips cannot be removed or fall off like the traditional collar and tag. Additionally, pet owners receive a discount on their registration fee if their cat or dog is microchipped.



## When does compulsory microchipping apply?

All cats and dogs being registered with a Victorian local council for the first time must be microchipped prior to registration. You can be fined if you do not comply. In addition, councils have the power to require compulsory microchipping of all cats and dogs housed in their municipality. You should check with your local council as to what is required in your area.

All cats and dogs aged three months and over must be registered with the local council.

Laws are already in place requiring microchipping of restricted breed dogs, and declared menacing or dangerous dogs. It is also a requirement to microchip all cats and dogs when they are sold or given away from pet shops, commercial breeders and pounds or shelters.

In the unusual event that the implantation of a microchip is likely to significantly prejudice the health of an animal, a supporting letter from a vet will exempt the owner from microchipping requirements.

## Why has compulsory microchipping been introduced?

Tragically, thousands of impounded cats and dogs have to be euthanased each year in Victoria, because they can't be identified and returned to owners. Compulsory microchipping will benefit animal welfare by helping prevent the needless destruction of so many animals.

In addition, compulsory microchipping may encourage responsible pet ownership, by assisting with the identification of owners of dangerous or nuisance animals, and increasing owner accountability.

If a pet is injured and a veterinarian needs to contact the owner urgently, a microchip enables them to quickly identify the owner and contact them to allow the owner to make decisions on the animal's treatment.

Research has demonstrated majority support from the general public and animal welfare groups for the introduction of compulsory microchipping of cats and dogs.

## How do I have my pet microchipped?

Only authorised implanters (such as registered veterinarians or authorised implanters who have completed the required training) can implant microchips.

Implanters are required to scan an animal before implantation to ensure it is not already microchipped. A second microchip cannot be implanted unless the original microchip is not working, the ID number does not uniquely identify the animal, or the microchip has migrated out of the scanning region.

The implanter is responsible for sending the application form containing all the required information to a licensed registry within 2 days of implantation, and must keep a copy of the completed application form until they have confirmed the information has been received by the registry and entered onto the database.

Owners may have their pets microchipped at a vet clinic, or at a local council microchip day (contact your local council for details on upcoming events). The cost of microchipping will generally be recovered within the first few years if owners had previously been paying full registration fees (ie due to the discount for microchipped pets). It also means owners can have confidence they will get their pet back if it is lost and ends up in the council pound or injured and at a vet clinic.

## What else should I know about microchips?

Owners of newly microchipped animals will receive a certificate of identification from the licensed registry where information is kept.

It is important to check the information on the certificate and make sure it is accurate. In future, if your residential or contact details change, it is vital that you update the information on the microchip registry.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969, or email [customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au).

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There are a number of requirements in place to maximise the effectiveness of microchipping in returning identified lost pets to owners. Within 3 days of entering a pound or shelter, it is a requirement that cats and dogs are scanned to determine whether they are microchipped.

Additionally, in December 2005, standards were introduced for microchips, implanters, scanners and registries – for more information, visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare) (see Permanent Identification of Dogs and Cats link), or call the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Information on the microchip registry can only be accessed by the authorised implanter, the owner of the animal, certain authorised government employees, and any other person providing the owner has given their consent, for the purpose of reuniting the owner with the animal.

## Who can I contact for more information?

Contact your local council or veterinarian for more information about microchipping.

Contact your local council if you have questions about your rights and responsibilities as a pet owner. Your council will also deal with concerns about wandering or nuisance pets.

For general information about responsible pet ownership, visit [www.dpi.vic.gov.au/pets](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/pets) for contact details for such organisations, or call 136 186 for the cost of a local call.



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