IMPORTING ANIMALS

If you import an animal or animals into Australia there are legal requirements that must be met.

You will need to contact the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture) to ensure the importation will meet the conditions regarding species, country of origin and other quarantine requirements before you decide to import an animal.

More information is located on the Live Animals and Reproductive Material webpage of the Agriculture website.

Goods, including animals, have been imported into Australia if purchased, ordered or otherwise arranged to be brought or sent to Australia from overseas. If goods are sent to you, even unsolicited, you have imported those goods.

Imported pets are domesticated animals. Pets that you have owned for at least 12 months before you arrived in Australia or before you had your pet sent to Australia, may qualify as your personal belongings. Personal belongings may arrive with you in Australia or you may send them separately.

PERMITS

In most cases, pets and all other animals require an import permit from Agriculture prior to export from the country of origin. It is your responsibility as the importer to obtain the required permit. Further information is available on the Agriculture website.

CLEARANCE OF ANIMALS

The welfare of animals is a high priority for the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) and Agriculture. It is an Agriculture requirement that clearance of live animals is to be conducted at the first port of arrival regardless of the final destination for the animal/s.

After Agriculture requirements are met, ACBPS will facilitate clearance. If an animal arrives outside of normal business hours please contact Cargo Support on 1300 558 099 for assistance.

CATS AND DOGS

All dogs and cats being imported into Australia, whether it is for the first time or they are returning to Australia, must meet the standard Agriculture conditions. Different Agriculture conditions apply for the importation of disability assistance dogs.

DOGS – DANGEROUS BREEDS

Dogs of the following breeds are prohibited from import under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956:

- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- Japanese tosa
- American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier
- Perro de Presa Canario or Presa Canario.

PETS

Pets that can currently be imported into Australia are:

- birds – selected species from New Zealand only
- cats – approved countries only
- dogs – approved countries only
- horses – approved countries only
- rabbits – New Zealand only

Currently no other pet animals can be imported into Australia.

ANIMALS SENT AS CARGO

Import declarations

An import declaration is required if the value of the imported animal/s exceeds AUD$1000. Duty, Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other charges may be payable. This applies if the animal is to become a pet, be used for breeding or other purposes.

For more information refer to the Import Declarations fact sheet.

Self-assessed Clearance (SAC) Declarations

A SAC Declaration is required if the value of the animal/s is at or below AUD$1000. No duty or GST is payable.

For more information refer to the Self-assessed Clearance (SAC) Declarations fact sheet.

Declarations should be made prior to the arrival of an animal to minimise any delays in clearance.
Personal belongings (pets)

Pets that arrive in Australia as, or with, your unaccompanied personal effects (UPEs) will be cleared as your UPEs. No import declaration is required.

For more information regarding UPEs, refer to the Sending your Personal Belongings to Australia as Cargo or by International Mail fact sheet.

ANIMALS BROUGHT WITH YOU

Pets as personal belongings that arrive in Australia with you on the same ship or aircraft will be cleared by ACBPS without any declaration requirements.

Agriculture requirements must still be met.

BREEDING ANIMALS

Animals, including cats and dogs, that are imported for breeding purposes are not defined as pets. Breeders must make either a SAC Declaration or an import declaration, depending upon the value of the animal, to clear the animal from Customs control.

ACBPS may require you to produce all commercial documents associated with the purchase of the animal including proof of the amount paid.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Live animals that are native species or wildlife imported under the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) may require a permit from the Department of Environment. Further information is available on the CITES webpage on Environment’s website.

EXOTIC ANIMALS

Animals that are not native to Australia are defined as ‘exotic animals’.

In order to be eligible to import a live exotic animal into Australia, the species must be listed in the List of Specimens Taken to be Suitable for Live Import which is available on Environment’s website.

To import a live exotic animal you may need a permit from Environment. You must meet all relevant laws to keep the animal legally in your state or territory before you buy it and/or apply for a permit.

COMPLIANCE

As an importer you are legally responsible for the accuracy of information provided to ABCPS, even if you use a Customs broker, freight forwarder or service provider to prepare your documents. For your own protection, ensure you retain copies of all documents supplied to ACBPS, check them for accuracy and advise your agent of any errors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on ACBPS matters:

- visit www.customs.gov.au
- email: information@customs.gov.au
- contact the Customs Information and Support Centre on 1300 363 263.