

# Bringing a dog to Tasmania

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## Biosecurity Basics

The importation of dogs presents a limited risk to the Tasmanian economy, primary industries, and environment through the possible introduction of unwanted pests and diseases.

The Import Requirement for bringing dogs to Tasmania requires that dogs **must be**:

- Treated for **hydatid tapeworm** (*Echinococcus granulosus*), unless exempted (more information on exemption below); and
- Apparently healthy and **free from ticks**.

## Special Import Requirements for bringing a dog into Tasmania

Tasmania is the only Australian state to be provisionally free of **hydatid disease**. To keep it that way, Tasmania has special Import Requirements **that you must meet** before you can bring your dog into the State.

Tasmania is also not known to have an established presence of some dog parasites, including the **brown dog tick**. The brown dog tick transmits **ehrlichiosis**, a serious disease of dogs present in some parts of mainland Australia.

To help keep hydatids out of our state, and to reduce the risk of the brown dog tick infecting our dogs, Biosecurity Tasmania requires that a **declaration** be made by people bringing dogs to Tasmania. On their entry into Tasmania dogs will need to be declared as having been treated for hydatid tapeworm, and that they have also been checked for ticks.

**The Declaration Form is available on the [Biosecurity Tasmania website](#).**

## Hydatid disease

Hydatid disease is a serious and sometimes fatal disease of humans. It is “caught” by close contact with an infected dog. An infected dog rarely shows any signs of being unwell.

Tragically, children are more susceptible to hydatid disease because they are the more likely to cuddle a dog, or let it lick them, and not wash their hands before eating.

Hydatid disease was a significant public health problem in Tasmania in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The number of human cases was much higher in Tasmania than any other part of Australia. As a result, a statewide hydatid disease eradication program was established in the late 1960s. It was a huge undertaking that included mass testing and treatment for Tasmania’s dog population.

The disease was effectively controlled in the mid-1990s and Tasmania became officially recognised as having provisional freedom from hydatid disease. Part of that hydatid program is still in place – namely, the special Import Requirements for dogs entering Tasmania.

## Ehrlichiosis and the brown dog tick

**Ehrlichiosis** is a serious disease of dogs caused by a bacteria (*Ehrlichia canis*) that is transmitted between dogs by the brown dog tick. Ehrlichiosis is now known to be established in areas of mainland Australia. Ehrlichiosis can be treated by your veterinarian if found early but is difficult to treat and often fatal if not recognised in time.

Ehrlichiosis could be carried into Tasmania from mainland Australia via an infected dog, or a brown dog tick. However, because brown dog ticks are not known to be established in Tasmania, the risk of transmission of the disease within the state is considered very low.

## Import Requirements for bringing a dog to Tasmania

### Treatment to prevent hydatids tapeworm

Before a dog can enter Tasmania, its owner **must** have **evidence that it has been treated** with a dog

worming product containing the active ingredient **praziquantel**, at a dose of rate of 5mg/kg body weight, **within 14 days before entry to Tasmania.**

This evidence can be:

- An official statement/certificate from a vet stating the name of the dog, date of treatment for hydatid tapeworm, active ingredient name and dosage rate, Vet's signature and contact details for the Vet clinic;
- A statutory declaration by the owner; or
- Other evidence of treatment (such as the pill packet and purchase receipt) carried by whoever accompanies the dog into Tasmania.

If your dog arrives in Tasmania without the prescribed evidence of worming; or if treatment was administered more than 14 days ago; or your dog is returning to Tasmania after more than 14 days interstate; you will be provided with tablets containing praziquantel by Biosecurity Tasmania during border inspection operations at your port of arrival.

A fee for service is issued to record this non-compliance. The owner will also risk an on-the-spot fine, in line with relevant legislation.

Further information on hydatids and the worming treatment of dogs can be found on the [Biosecurity Tasmania website](#).

## Worming treatments

You do not need to visit the vet to treat your dog – you can do it yourself.

Check the box (pill packet) instructions to make sure that it includes **praziquantel**, and that you are giving your dog the correct dose - at a rate of 5mg/kg body weight.

**It is important that you do not under-dose.**

There are several worming treatments on the market. Some are praziquantel only, some are combination intestinal wormers and some are heart worm treatments that include praziquantel.

**NOTE: some worming treatments DO NOT contain praziquantel and are NOT effective against hydatid tapeworm.**

## Declare your dog free from ticks

To keep their dogs healthy and free from ehrlichiosis, owners are also required to **declare that the dog is healthy and free from ticks.**

The owner of a dog that is obviously tick-infested may be directed by a Biosecurity Tasmania Inspector to

immediately treat the tick infestation at their own expense upon entry into the state.

More information on how to check your dog for the presence of ticks can be found on the [Biosecurity Tasmania website](#).

## Talk to your vet about ticks

It is recommended that you talk with your veterinarian about the most suitable preventative tick treatment for your situation.

If you plan to take your dog to an area where ehrlichiosis is present, the treatment needs to effectively prevent the tick from attaching, as the disease can transmit from a tick to your dog within a few hours.

## Exemptions from the Import Requirement

Dogs arriving in Tasmania are exempted from worming treatment if they are:

- returning to Tasmania after no more than 14 days in another State or Territory; or
- puppies under the age of 12 weeks; or
- greyhounds racing in Tasmania within six days of their importation; or
- accredited assistance dogs; or
- law enforcement dogs.

## Prohibited dogs

Dingoes, foxes, and wolves cannot be imported into Tasmania.

## Other restrictions on dogs in Tasmania

In a further effort to reduce the risks from hydatids, it is illegal in Tasmania to allow dogs to access or feed on cooked or uncooked offal (internal organs) from cattle, sheep, goats or pigs. The life cycle of the tapeworm is completed when a dog eats raw, untreated, infected offal and consequently becomes infected themselves.

Fresh livers and hearts from butcher shops and supermarkets **should not be fed to dogs**. Offal is sometimes found in manufactured pet food. This is safe and legal to feed to dogs because it has usually been commercially sterilised or heat-treated under an approved process.

You must never allow your dog to roam, especially in rural or semi-rural areas where there is a risk of it coming across a carcass and thereby accessing offal.

**For more information visit the [Biosecurity Tasmania website](#), phone: 03 6165 3777, or email: [biosecurity.tasmania@nre.tas.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity.tasmania@nre.tas.gov.au)**