



1. Introduction

1.1 In the last two decades or so, there has been a visible increase in awareness of animal welfare and rights and its importance in many places around the world.¹ Animal welfare is about how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives, which encompasses its physical and mental states and ability to fulfill its natural needs and desires.² Meanwhile, animal rights denote the philosophical belief that animals should have rights, including the right to live their lives free of human intervention. Humans should not invariably overrule the interests of animals with human interests, and should always treat animals humanely and eliminate the human made causes of animal suffering.³

1.2 Animal welfare and rights require an animal-friendly society which facilitates close integration of animals into human society. Many European countries, such as the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and the United Kingdom, are notable for their animal-friendly measures. They are renowned for their liberal attitude towards pet animals, being receptive towards the adoption of measures that can enable pet animals to integrate into the daily lives of the citizens.

1.3 In the Asia-Pacific region, residents are relatively more restrictive towards pet animals. Nevertheless, Taipei of Taiwan and New Zealand have been progressive in building an animal inclusive society in recent years. They have adopted a holistic approach in promoting animal-human integration and achieved positive outcomes from the animal-friendly measures implemented by them.

¹ For example, the European Union officially recognized animals to be "Sentient Beings" in 1997.

² According to the World Organisation for Animal Health, an animal experiences good welfare if the animal is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress, and is able to express behaviours that are important for its physical and mental states. See Food and Health Bureau and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (2019).

³ See Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (2010).

1.4 In Hong Kong, it was estimated that the number of dogs and cats kept as pets totalled 221 100 and 184 100 respectively in 2018. Some 241 900 households, or about one in every 10 households, kept pet dogs/cats.⁴ The prevalence of keeping pets inevitably invites the concern over the need for protection of animal welfare and their rights in Hong Kong.⁵ In recent years, the Government has sought to enhance animal welfare/rights through measures such as tightening regulation of animal trading and breeding and increasing the number of designated pet gardens. Nevertheless, there are criticisms over Hong Kong lagging behind many other developed economies in animal-friendly policy, noticeably restricting pet animals from accessing public transport, parks, restaurants and shops. As a result, there have been repeated calls for the Government to consider implementing more animal-friendly measures to better protect animal welfare/rights.

1.5 At the request of Hon KWONG Chun-yu, the Research Office has prepared this information note on the implementation of animal-friendly measures in Hong Kong, with special reference to the access of animals to public transport and keeping of pets in Public Rental Housing ("PRH") estates. The information note also studies the implementation and latest development of animal-friendly measures in Taipei and New Zealand, as well as the observed outcomes from the measures implemented in recent years. The salient features of animal-friendly measures implemented in the places studied are summarized in **Appendix**.

2. Animal-friendly measures in Hong Kong

2.1 According to the Government,⁶ the objective of animal welfare and management policy is to ensure that animals and people co-exist in a harmonious way. As such, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") has increased the number of pet gardens from 19 in 2010 to currently 45, which are equipped with dog latrines, drinking fountains and play facilities for animals (e.g. jumping hoops for dogs). For pet owners, they can also walk their dogs in pet gardens while enjoying the beautiful landscape.

⁴ A round of Thematic Household Survey was conducted by the Census and Statistics Department during March-June 2018 to collect information, among other things, on keeping of dogs and cats in Hong Kong. See Census and Statistics Department (2019).

⁵ See Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (2010).

⁶ See GovHK (2017).

2.2 In addition, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") has adopted a multi-pronged approach for animal welfare and management. This include: (a) a new licensing regime which came into force in March 2017 to tighten the regulation of dog breeders and sellers and increase penalties for contravention of the regulations;⁷ (b) dedicated investigation teams within the Hong Kong Police Force ("the Police") to investigate animal cruelty cases⁸ and inter-departmental cooperation in handling those cases;⁹ and (c) AFCD partnering with animal welfare organizations to provide animal re-homing services and encourage the public to adopt stray animals.¹⁰

2.3 AFCD has also strengthened public education as a strategy to prevent animal cruelty acts and animal abandonment. It has implemented education and publicity programmes to promote responsible pet ownership and proper care for animals, inform dog owners about the need for dog licensing and rabies vaccination¹¹ and advise against abandonment of pets.

Recent developments

2.4 To address pet owners' request for opening up more public spaces for access by pet animals, LCSD has put on trial an "inclusive parks for pets" scheme in six selected parks in January 2019, enabling general park users and pet owners who bring their pets into LCSD parks to use the park facilities together in an inclusive environment. Nevertheless, the pets brought into the parks have to be kept under proper control and dogs have to be kept on a leash. LCSD will review the effectiveness of the trial scheme in early 2020 with a view to considering whether to provide "inclusive park for pets" in more districts.

⁷ The new regime requires any person who keeps for breeding and sells, or offers to sell, a dog, must obtain a trading licence or a one-time trade permit. Before that, only animal traders were required to obtain a licence to sell animals.

⁸ At present, all 22 police districts with crime investigation units have designated teams to investigate animal cruelty cases.

⁹ Under the Animal Watch Scheme launched in 2011, the Police have worked with stakeholders such as AFCD, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, veterinary associations and animal welfare organizations to combat animal cruelty through education, publicity, intelligence gathering and investigation.

¹⁰ See Food and Health Bureau (2017).

¹¹ In accordance with the Rabies Regulation (Cap. 421A), all dogs aged over five months are required to be microchipped, licensed and vaccinated against rabies.

2.5 Most recently, the Government launched a three-month public consultation in April 2019 on the legislative proposals for enhancing animal welfare.¹² The proposals include imposing a positive "duty of care" on persons responsible for animals to look after their animal well.¹³ The responsible person must take steps to ensure the welfare needs of the animal are met to the extent required by good practice.¹⁴ A public officer would be empowered to issue an "improvement notice" to an owner who fails to fulfil the duty of care, specifying the required improvement measures. Failure to comply with the improvement notice within the specified period may lead to prosecution for the contravention of the "duty of care".

Issues and concerns

2.6 Notwithstanding tightening the regulatory regime for animal protection and increasing the provision of pet-related facilities, some stakeholders have urged the Government to step up efforts to build Hong Kong as an animal-friendly city.¹⁵ These include:

- (a) improving existing measures – e.g. relaxing the restriction regarding dog keeping in PRH estates, further increasing the number of pet gardens (particularly in those districts with inadequate provision);¹⁶ enhancing public education to promote understanding of animal rights; and regulating animal hospice services through licensing;¹⁷ and

¹² See Food and Health Bureau and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (2019).

¹³ Other proposals are to enhance the provisions for prevention of cruelty and to enhance enforcement powers for safeguarding animal welfare.

¹⁴ These include (a) the need for suitable nutrition; (b) the need for a suitable environment; (c) the need to be able to exhibit normal patterns of behaviour (including social needs); and (d) the need to be protected from pain, suffering, disease and injury.

¹⁵ See Minutes of Meeting of the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights (2017) and Food and Health Bureau (2017).

¹⁶ Some stakeholders are concerned that the distribution of the pet gardens is not in proportion to the population size of the respective districts served by them. In addition, some pet gardens are too small and inconveniently located. See Minutes of Meeting of the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights (2017).

¹⁷ At present, the Government does not have a dedicated licensing system for regulating the operation of providers of animal hospice services. The relevant government departments may, according to their respective mandates, inspect premises where animal hospice services are provided for the purpose of checking compliance or otherwise with the relevant legislation and requirements.

- (b) introducing new measures – allowing the access of animals to public transport, e.g. permitting passengers to travel with their pets on the Mass Transit Railway ("MTR") trains or public buses and introducing designated animal compartments in the MTR trains.

Keeping of animals in PRH estates

2.7 Keeping of small household pets such as de-sexed cats, birds and rabbits is allowed in PRH estates. However, keeping of dogs and livestock is not allowed under the tenancy agreements signed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and the tenants, unless discretionary approval has been obtained from HA on specific health grounds such as having visual or hearing impairment or under the Temporary Permission Rule.¹⁸ HA has no plan to relax the existing policy, as it considers that dog keeping may induce safety risks and noise and hygiene nuisances in PRH estates which are densely populated.

Access of animals to public transport

2.8 Regarding the access of pet animals to public transport, public light buses, taxis, ferries and non-franchised buses may currently allow passengers to carry pet animals on board at their discretion. But for MTR trains and franchised buses, passengers are not allowed to bring pet animals on board under the relevant by-laws or regulations, except for a guide dog accompanying the visually impaired. The Government has indicated that it would not change the existing arrangement, in view of the high patronage of MTR and franchised buses, the crowdedness of the compartments especially during peak hours, and other factors such as acceptance of other passengers.

2.9 The MTR Corporation Limited has also responded that it will not adopt the suggestion of setting up designated animal compartments in MTR trains or allowing passengers to bring their pets on board, as it has to consider

¹⁸ In 2003, HA introduced the Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement under which unauthorized animal-keeping was included as one of the misdeeds where points would be allotted. In order to avoid possible abandonment of large number of dogs by tenants, HA has implemented the Temporary Permission Rule as a one-off measure to allow PRH tenants to continue keeping small dogs that have been kept in their PRH flats before 1 August 2003 until the death of such dogs.

the interests of passengers at large and aims to provide safe, reliable and comfortable railway services to all passengers.¹⁹ As for public bus services, it was reported that the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited had adopted an open attitude towards allowing pet animals on board, but had to consider a number of factors such as amendment of the relevant legislation, types and size of pet animals to be allowed on board and impact of the arrangement on other passengers and the operation of the bus services.²⁰

3. Animal-friendly measures in Taipei

3.1 In Taiwan, people kept 1.8 million dogs and 733 200 cats as pets in 2017, representing increases of 34.5% and 161.3% respectively over 2007.²¹ As more and more people get used to keeping pet dogs/cats, the Taiwanese government has sought to reform its animal welfare regulatory regime to better protect animal welfare and rights. The reform includes the launch of a number of progressive policies such as the "no-kill" policy for managing stray animals²² and doubling the maximum penalties for acts of animal cruelty.²³

3.2 At the local level, individual city and county governments have devised and implemented their own policy measures to support the animal protection policy of the central government. The Taipei City government has distinguished itself in adopting a **holistic approach** in protecting animal welfare with the formulation of a **comprehensive action plan to promote Taipei as an animal-friendly city** ("the Animal-Friendly Action Plan") ("動物友善城市行動計劃") in 2015.

¹⁹ See Transport and Housing Bureau (2017).

²⁰ See 東方日報 (2017).

²¹ See 行政院農業委員會 (2018).

²² The "no-kill" policy, which was introduced in February 2017, bans euthanizing stray animals kept at public animal shelters. Before that, animals that had been held at public shelters for 12 days or more would be put down after a notice or public announcement. Taiwan is one of a few places in Asia that has adopted the "no-kill" policy.

²³ The amended Animal Protection Act provides that deliberate harm that results in shattered limbs, organ failure or death is punishable upon conviction with a sentence of up to two years of imprisonment and a fine of between NT\$200,000 (HK\$51,000) and NT\$2 million (HK\$510,000). The original provisions involved a sentence of up to one year of imprisonment and a fine of between NT\$100,000 (HK\$25,500) and NT\$1 million (HK\$255,000).

Action plan to promote Taipei as an animal-friendly city

3.3 In Taipei, the number of dogs and cats kept as pets increased by 22.6% and 53.4% respectively during 2007-2017 to 169 300 and 85 900 in 2017. The figures accounted for 9.5% and 11.7% respectively of Taiwan's total number of pet dogs and pet cats in 2017.²⁴ According to the latest figures available, about 147 000 or 14% of the households in Taipei kept dogs as pets in 2013. The corresponding figures for pet cats were 102 000 and 10%.²⁵

3.4 In view of the sheer number of pet animals, the Taipei City government has strived to build an animal-friendly environment and foster human-animal integration. It has partnered with the upstream pet industry to promote the "Animal-Friendly Action Plan", as well as integrating the midstream pet owners' responsibility and downstream stray dog management into the action plan. Major measures implemented include: (a) tightening regulation on animal trading; (b) setting up a reporting system and increasing the penalties for animal abandonment; (c) setting up a registry and promoting neutering of pet dogs; and (d) implementing the "trap, neuter, vaccinate, return" programme for controlling the population of stray dogs.

3.5 Meanwhile, the Taipei City Animal Protection Office (臺北市動物保護處) ("TCAPO"),²⁶ has also introduced various animal-friendly measures under the "Animal-Friendly Action Plan". These include: (a) providing activity spaces for access by pet animals; (b) allowing bigger pet animals' access to specific public transport; (c) offering training programmes for pet owners and their pets; and (d) subsidizing private organizations to set up hospice services for animals.

Providing activity spaces for access by pet animals

3.6 In Taipei, pet owners are allowed to bring their pets to any parks and playgrounds provided that they are kept on a leash or under proper control. During 2016-2018, TCAPO established designated activity spaces for dogs (狗活動區) in three public parks and opened two larger size dog parks (狗運動公園) as public open spaces where dogs could freely move and exercise without the requirement to put on a leash. These animal-friendly

²⁴ See 行政院農業委員會 (2018).

²⁵ See 臺北市動物保護處 (2014).

²⁶ TCAPO is the responsible authority for animal management and protection in Taipei.

spaces have attracted some 130 000 visits per year. In addition, TCAPO has since 2018 put in place a mechanism to evaluate and approve proposals submitted by members of the public to set up dedicated activity spaces for dogs in existing public parks.

3.7 TCAPO also introduced a voluntary scheme, Animal-Friendly Spaces Campaign (動物友善空間計劃), in 2016 to encourage private and public establishments such as shops, restaurants and recreation facilities to open up their facilities for access by pet owners together with their pets. The scheme aims to provide additional avenue for integration of pet animals into the daily life of their owners, and participating establishments are required to meet the specified animal-friendly criteria. In return, these establishments will receive a specially designed label awarded by TCAPO to be displayed at the shop front to advertise them as animal-friendly spaces and facilitate easy identification by visitors. As at July 2018, 106 establishments have joined the scheme.

Access of animals to public transport

3.8 In Taipei, public transport operators have all along allowed passengers to **carry a small animal on board** if they can meet the regulatory requirements of ensuring that the animal does not cause any nuisances to other passengers. This contrasts with Hong Kong which has a restrictive policy regarding the access of pet animals to public transport.

3.9 Currently, the Taipei Mass Rapid Transit system ("MRT") (台北捷運) allows each passenger to bring one small animal on board at no extra fare. Animals brought into stations or trains should be kept in a container such as a cage or a pet stroller of specific size.²⁷ The container should be assembled properly to make sure that no excrement or liquids can escape. The head, tail and limbs of the animals may not be exposed outside of the confines of the container.²⁸ As for carrying an animal on board public buses, passengers are required to pay half of the regular fare for their pet animal, and the size of the container allowed to be carried on board is relatively smaller.²⁹ Passengers violating the regulations of the respective public transport operators may be

²⁷ The container should not exceed 55 cm in length, 45 cm in width and 40 cm in height.

²⁸ The access requirements do not apply to police dogs or certificated guide dogs accompanying disabled passengers.

²⁹ The container should not exceed 30 cm in length, width and height. Specific types of animals that may pose safety risks to passengers such as reptiles are not allowed to be carried on board public buses.

denied access to their services. Reportedly, pet owners have generally complied with the requirements imposed by the public transport operators on carrying pet animals on board.³⁰

3.10 In 2017, TCAPO piloted a "dog-friendly" bus services programme (友善狗狗公車計劃) **allowing passengers to travel with their dogs** if they are kept on a leash (bigger dogs) or in a container (small dogs) on seven bus routes on weekends and holidays. Each "dog-friendly" bus route offers three departures on the day of service, travelling to various dog parks and designated activity spaces for dogs. Under the programme, passengers carrying a pet animal on board are required to observe several conditions, including: (a) each passenger can only carry one pet animal on board at no extra fare; (b) the dog carried on board must be a registered pet animal and vaccinated against rabies; (c) the dog must be in a healthy and clean condition; and (d) the passengers have to keep the bus compartment clean and remove any mess caused by their pet.

3.11 According to a survey conducted by TCAPO between December 2017 and January 2018,³¹ over 80% of the interviewees were satisfied with the "dog-friendly" bus services. Between January 2017 and April 2018, 226 dogs had been carried on the respective bus routes, and no public complaint had been lodged against the services. The above findings reflect the acceptance of the "dog-friendly" bus services programme by the pet owners and the general public alike.

Training courses for pet owners and pet animals

3.12 TCAPO has considered pet owner education and pet animal training important in building an inclusive environment, where pet animals can interact with humans in a harmonious manner and hence promote acceptance of pet animals among the general public. As such, TCAPO has sponsored community colleges to organize and provide regular free classroom training courses for pet owners and their pet dogs or cats since 2015. Besides, free online training

³⁰ It was reported that MRT had only issued two penalty notices in 2017 to passengers who had violated the conditions relating to carrying pet animals on board. Most of the passengers would comply when requested to rectify the breach of conditions, such as not letting their pet animals expose their body outside the container. See 公民黨(2018).

³¹ See 臺北市政府交通局(2018) and 台灣動物新聞網(2018).

courses are offered through Taipei e-Campus.³² The training courses cover topics such as responsibilities of pet owners, relationship building between pet owners and their pet animals, socialization of pet animals, and management of pet animals' behaviours.³³ As at July 2018, 5 921 pet owners had participated in various training courses. In addition, TCAPO has organized free training courses for pet owners on pet etiquette when going out³⁴ (寵物外出禮儀), as part of its promotion efforts to recruit more establishments to open up activity spaces for pet animals.

Hospice services for pet animals

3.13 Under the Animal-Friendly Action Plan, TCAPO has also encouraged private organizations such as animal hospitals to set up animal hospice service centres to support needy pet owners to take care of their aged pet animals. Since 2016, TCAPO has provided subsidy to accredited animal hospice service centres which meet the specified service and facility standards to cover rental, staff salary and facility installation costs.³⁵ In 2018, there were 12 accredited animal hospice service centres in Taipei.

Observed outcomes

3.14 TCAPO has received positive feedback on the "dog-friendly" bus services from pet owners and the general public. In early 2019, it announced to extend the pilot period of the programme to end-2019 and provide drivers of the respective bus routes with training course on how to interact with dogs for better provision of the services. Meanwhile, TCAPO has continued its publicity programme for encouraging private and public establishments to open their facilities for access by pet animals.

³² Taipei e-Campus is the e-learning network sponsored by the Taipei City government to provide lifelong learning opportunities for civil servants and citizens.

³³ The classroom courses usually comprise six lessons with each lasting for two hours. Pet owners may attend the courses with their pets.

³⁴ These include not to bark and fight with other dogs in public.

³⁵ The subsidy provided for installing new facilities is up to a limit of NT\$200,000 (HK\$51,000). The subsidy for staff salary is NT\$1,000 (HK\$255) per person, up to a limit of NT\$10,000 (HK\$2,550) per month while the rental subsidy is up to NT\$10,000 (HK\$2,550) per month.

3.15 Stakeholders have generally accepted the approach and policy measures adopted by TCAPO for promoting animal-human integration in Taipei. Some of them have called for further enhancement of the measures such as opening more dedicated dog parks and public or private facilities for access by pet animals, and making available more training opportunities for pet owners and pet animals.³⁶

4. Animal-friendly measures in New Zealand

4.1 In New Zealand, the number of dogs and cats kept as pets totalled 683 000 and 1.1 million respectively in 2015.³⁷ About 28% of households had pet dogs and 44% had pet cats. In addition to having one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, New Zealand also has a large population of livestock consisting of 6.5 million dairy cattle, 3.6 million beef cattle and 27.5 million sheep as at 2017.³⁸ As an economy that relies heavily on animal husbandry, New Zealand has put in place a comprehensive animal welfare system which has been highly rated globally.³⁹ The system is based on the "New Zealand Animal Welfare Strategy" ("Animal Welfare Strategy"), which was formulated by the Ministry for Primary Industries ("MPI")⁴⁰ in 2013 as the framework of the animal welfare system and foundation of the animal welfare legislation and policy.

4.2 In New Zealand, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and various animal welfare-related regulations govern the protection of animals (including pet animals) against abuse, negligence and abandonment. In particular, the Act establishes a basic duty of care for animals and the associated obligations of animal owners to meet an animal's physical, health and behavioural needs. It also contains provisions to prevent ill treatment and inadequate care of animals. Codes of welfare for major categories of animals, including pet cats and dogs, have also been issued by MPI to inform and guide animal owners on the minimum standards of animal care that they must achieve in order to meet

³⁶ See 財團法人公共電視文化事業基金會 (2018).

³⁷ See The New Zealand Companion Animal Council Inc (2016).

³⁸ See Stats NZ (2019).

³⁹ New Zealand was highly rated on most of the key indicators of the 2014 World Animal Protection Index, which ranked a total of 50 countries around the world according to their legislation and policy commitments to protecting animal. See World Animal Protection (2014).

⁴⁰ MPI is the responsible authority for administrating the animal welfare policy and practice in New Zealand.

their obligations under the Animal Welfare Act 1999. The codes of welfare also serve as education tools providing the recommended best practices for animal care and management.⁴¹

Animal-friendly measures

4.3 The Animal Welfare Strategy only sets out a high-level framework for how animals are treated in New Zealand and provides a formal foundation for New Zealand's animal welfare legislation and policy. The efforts to build an animal inclusive society have rested with the central and local government authorities, which have introduced various animal-friendly measures to cope with the Animal Welfare Strategy.

Central government

4.4 MPI has taken animal-friendly issue into consideration when it revamped the food safety regulatory regime in 2014, exemplified by its relaxation of the rules governing the access of pet animals to food premises. Prior to the enforcement of the new regulatory regime in 2016, no animal is permitted to access food premises except for assistance animals such as a guide dog. At present, while ensuring that animals do not contaminate food, Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code does not restrict live animals to access food premises except for areas in which food is handled.⁴² However, pet dogs may only be allowed in outdoor dining areas at the discretion of the business owners.

4.5 Up until 2018, Housing New Zealand⁴³ required public housing tenants to seek prior approval for keeping pets in their flats. Yet, keeping dogs was generally not allowed except under special circumstances.⁴⁴ In 2018, Housing New Zealand relaxed its restriction on pet keeping in public

⁴¹ The codes of welfare are not legally enforceable but they can be used as evidence of substandard welfare in a prosecution.

⁴² The only exceptions are fish, seafood and shellfish which are allowed in areas where food is handled. This means business owners can keep decorative fish in tanks and keep and sell live seafood, fish and shellfish on their food premises.

⁴³ Housing New Zealand is the statutory authority responsible for providing public housing services for New Zealanders.

⁴⁴ For example, tenants with physical disabilities may keep an assistance dog in their flats.

housing, as it considered that keeping a pet would contribute to the health and wellness of residents, particularly the elderly, small children and those living on their own. Nevertheless, public housing tenants keeping cats, dogs or livestock animals such as pigs and goats, are required to register with Housing New Zealand. Those keeping dogs or livestock animals which may pose higher safety risks and nuisances to the neighbourhood are also required to sign a form agreeing that they will take proper care and control of their pets. In addition, all tenants keeping pets are required to comply with the relevant provisions of the animal welfare legislation including the duty of care for animals and by-laws for keeping of pets.

Local governments

4.6 At the local government level, individual local councils have set out policy governing the keeping and management of pet animals so as to minimize nuisances caused to the public and natural habitats. For example, Wellington⁴⁵ and Auckland⁴⁶ have rules controlling the access of dogs to public places. These include (a) prohibiting the access of dogs to certain places that are frequently accessed by the public and areas where significant wildlife habitat is present;⁴⁷ and (b) designating public places where dogs can access on a leash and under control. Nonetheless, both cities have designated a number of dog exercise areas,⁴⁸ mainly parks and beaches, where dogs can exercise and socialize off-leash as long as they remain under the control of their owners.

4.7 In early 2018, the local councils of Wellington and Auckland approved the proposal to amend the relevant rules for allowing passengers to travel with their pets on public transport, particularly on trains. The policy change came after repeated calls from councillors and pet owners, who had considered that the relaxation of access to public transport would (a) provide more affordable options for pet owners to get their pet animals to the veterinarians and dog exercise areas; (b) encourage pet owners to go out and exercise with their pet

⁴⁵ In 2015, 25% and 40% of the households in Wellington had kept pet dogs and pet cats respectively. See The New Zealand Companion Animal Council Inc (2016).

⁴⁶ In 2015, 28% of the households in Auckland had kept pet dogs and 39% kept pet cats. See The New Zealand Companion Animal Council Inc (2016).

⁴⁷ In Auckland, pet dogs are not allowed to access public places such as libraries, cafes, shopping malls and school grounds. In Wellington, pet dogs are prohibited from accessing places such as children's play areas, certain sports fields and specified beach areas.

⁴⁸ There are some 60 designated dog exercise areas in Wellington and over 400 in Auckland.

animals, contributing to improvement of the health and well-being of the pet animals and strengthening of animal-human bond; and (c) discourage car trips that are related to the need to transport animals.

4.8 Following the approval by the city council, Wellington implemented the new policy of allowing small pet animals on board public trains and buses for free in July 2018. Auckland conducted a customer survey after the approval of relaxing pet animal access to public transport, and the survey revealed high acceptance of the arrangement if the pets were always kept under control.⁴⁹ In response, the transport authority – Auckland Transport – has launched a three-month trial programme between 16 June and 15 September 2019 which allows train passengers to bring small pet animals on board for free.

4.9 Both Wellington and Auckland have imposed conditions regarding the carriage of pet animals on board public trains and/or buses, with the objective of easing the concerns such as noise nuisance and hygiene problems caused by the pet animals. These conditions are similar in terms of requiring per owners to: (a) carry their pet animals on board during off-peak hours;⁵⁰ (b) keep their pet animals caged in a suitable pet carrier that is small enough to be stored under the seat/in the available space for luggage or held on their lap; and (c) keep their pet animals under control during the journey and clean up any mess caused by the pet animals. Furthermore, pet owners may be refused entry to board the train or bus if it is crowded, or may be asked to leave the vehicle with their pet animal if it is causing or likely to cause a safety risk or nuisance to other passengers.

Observed outcomes

4.10 The animal-friendly measures introduced at the central and local government levels have generally been welcomed by stakeholders. As for the policy on allowing pet animals to access public transport, customer feedback collected in Auckland and Wellington before implementation of the policy had indicated that general passengers accepted the policy if the pet animal was contained in a pet carrier and was kept under proper control by the pet

⁴⁹ In Auckland, the new policy does not cover public bus services which have restricted the access of pet animals on board.

⁵⁰ For example, off-peak hours of train services in Auckland refer to 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and after 6:30 pm on weekdays, and all weekends and public holidays.

owner.⁵¹ In Wellington, it was reported that there had not been any reported negative incidence in the first eight months of implementation of the new policy.⁵² Outcomes of launching the new policy in Auckland have yet to be ascertained upon completion of the three-month trial period ending in September 2019. Nevertheless, some stakeholders in Auckland have called for further relaxation of the access rules, with allowing bigger dogs to travel on leash on public transport⁵³ and opening up activity spaces for pet animals in shops and cafes that have all along restricted the access of pet animals.⁵⁴

5. Concluding remarks

5.1 In light of the growing popularity of keeping pets and increased recognition of animal welfare and rights, many places around the world have introduced animal-friendly measures to facilitate the integration of pet animals into the daily lives of their owners. These measures usually centre on allowing pet animals in public transport, public open spaces, and various public and private facilities.

5.2 The Hong Kong Government has increased the number of pet gardens from 19 in 2010 to the current 45, thereby opening up more public spaces for access by pets. But it has remained restrictive towards pet animals' access to public transport and dog keeping in PRH estates. Concerns about safety issues, noise and hygiene nuisances, and lack of space have often been cited as the reasons for the caution. Nevertheless, experiences in Taipei and New Zealand indicate that those concerns can be addressed by setting specific conditions to control safety risks and minimize nuisances caused by the pet animals as a result of the animal-friendly measures.

5.3 For example, Taipei and New Zealand allow passengers to travel with their pet animals on public transport, if they can meet the specific conditions set out to safeguard the safety of other passengers and minimize nuisances caused by the pet animals. These conditions include: (a) requiring the small pet animals to be kept in a container within specific size or requiring larger animals to be kept on a leash; (b) limiting access at off-peak service hours;

⁵¹ See Radio New Zealand (2018) and Auckland Council (2019a).

⁵² See Stuff (2019).

⁵³ See NZ Herald (2019a).

⁵⁴ See NZ Herald (2019b).

(c) requiring pet owners to keep their pets under control and clean up any mess they bring; and/or (d) allowing the discretion of transport service operators to deny passengers on board if the compartments are crowded or the pet animals are causing nuisances.

5.4 In addition to access of pet animals to public transport, New Zealand also allows public housing tenants to keep pet animals after registering with Housing New Zealand, and signing a form stating that they will take proper care and control of their animals if they are keeping dogs or livestock animals that pose higher safety risks. In addition, they are required to comply with the relevant provisions of the animal welfare legislation, including the duty of care for animals and by-laws for keeping of pets.

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Animal-friendly measures in selected places

	Hong Kong	Taipei	New Zealand
A. Background information			
Population of pet dogs and pet cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 405 200 (2018). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 255 200 (2017). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.8 million (2015).
Number of households owning pet dogs and/or pet cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 241 900 or 9.4% of households in 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 147 000 or 14% of households kept dogs and 102 000 or 10% of households kept cats as pets in 2013. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28% and 44% of households kept dogs and cats as pets respectively in 2015.
B. Animal-friendly policy measures			
Overview of policy measures to promote animal-human integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited measures have been implemented by responsible Government departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The animal protection authority, TCAPO, has coordinated and implemented relevant measures as part of the comprehensive action plan to promote Taipei as an animal-friendly city ("動物友善城市行動計劃"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual central and local government authorities have initiated animal-friendly measures to supplement the animal welfare system administered by MPI.
Providing activity spaces for pet animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing 45 pet gardens; and piloting an "inclusive parks for pets" scheme in six selected parks in 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening all parks and playgrounds for access by pet animals provided that they are kept on a leash or under proper control; establishing dedicated dog parks and designating activity spaces for dogs in specific public parks; and implementing the voluntary Animal-Friendly Spaces Campaign ("動物友善空間計劃") to encourage public and private establishments to open their facilities for access by pet owners together with their pets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual local governments have designated dog exercise areas such as parks and beaches where dogs can exercise off-leash.

Animal-friendly measures in selected places

	Hong Kong	Taipei	New Zealand
B. Animal-friendly policy measures (cont'd)			
Access of pet animals to public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some public transport modes such as public light buses, taxis, ferries and non-franchised buses may allow passengers to carry pets on board at their discretion, but MTR and franchised buses do not allow passengers to carry animals except for guide dogs on board. The Government has no plan to change the existing arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most public transport operators allow passengers to carry a small pet animal on board if it is kept in a container. TCAPO has piloted a "dog-friendly" bus services programme (友善狗狗公車計劃) allowing passengers to travel with bigger dogs and other pet animals on seven bus routes on weekends and holidays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some major cities such as Wellington and Auckland have relaxed the access rules allowing pet owners to travel with a small pet animal during off-peak hours provided that it is kept in a pet carrier.
Education/training programmes for pet owners and/or pet animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and publicity programmes targeting at pet owners have been implemented to promote responsible pet ownership and proper care for animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free training courses for pet owners and pet animals are provided to promote responsible pet ownership, relationship building with pet animals, and proper management of pet animals' behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The codes of welfare for specific animals such as pet cats and dogs provide information and guidelines on the standards and best practices for animal care and management. Relevant pet animal training programmes are mainly offered by private organizations.

Animal-friendly measures in selected places

	Hong Kong	Taipei	New Zealand
B. Animal-friendly policy measures (cont'd)			
Other measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping of small household pets is allowed in PRH estates but there has been no plan to relax the restriction on dog keeping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private organizations are subsidized to set up animal hospice service centres to support needy pet owners to take care of their aged pet animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The restriction on pet keeping in public housing has been relaxed.
C. Observed outcomes			
Observed outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a gradual increase in public activity spaces for pet animals but limited progress is achieved in improving pet animals' access to public transport and building an "animal-inclusive" culture as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive progress has been achieved in (a) increasing public and private activity spaces for pet animals; (b) improving access of larger pet dogs to bus services; (c) expanding education and training services for pet owners and pet animals; and (d) enhancing the animal hospice services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The animal-friendly measures were generally welcomed by stakeholders. No negative incidence was recorded in Wellington after relaxing the rules for pet animals to access public trains and buses.

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