

## **PET POLICY**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

Our facilities are visited by companion and therapeutic animals, and guide and assistance dogs frequently. Some facilities have animals, such as cats, dogs, birds and fish that are resident at the site. These animals play a vital role in the health, wellbeing and independence of the residents and clients within Eldercare facilities.

The Commonwealth Disability Antidiscrimination Act 1992 recognises guide, hearing and assistance dogs and has made it discriminatory to prevent a person with a disability entering public places or public transport with dogs that assist them. In South Australia the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 Act recognise the role of Disability and Guide specialist dogs.

The benefits of animal assisted intervention, facility pets and personal pet visitation is well established and documented. Animals can be colonised or infected with pathogens that can cause disease in humans. Some animals pose a greater risk of disease carriage however the risk of infections from animals can be minimised with good infection control practice. Animals may cause physical injury to residents and workers.

### **2. TYPES OF PETS/ ANIMALS**

- Guide Dogs – dogs trained by registered guide dog organisations to provide support to people with vision impairment.
- Hearing Dogs - dogs trained to provide support to people with hearing impairment.
- Assistance Dogs – dogs trained to provide support to people with physical disability.
- Animal assisted activity – animals and specially trained volunteer or professional handlers visit residents and their families at the bedside or in common areas, as a casual 'meet and greet' activity.
- Facility pets – animals in permanent residence within a facility.
- Personal pet visitation – pets of residents' family/friends, staff or volunteers.

### **3. POLICY**

#### **3.1. RESIDENTS' PETS**

- Residents are unable to bring their pets to reside with them permanently when they are admitted into the home, unless they are a Guide Dog, Hearing Dogs or Assistance Dog.
- If a resident is admitted or provided with a Guide Dog, Hearing Dogs or Assistance Dog, the site infection control nurse and WHS coordinator must be notified to establish any specific restrictions required. This will include a documented "Pet Care Plan" which will be reviewed 6 monthly.
- Residents' family/friends, or staff, may bring pets into the facility to visit residents with prior consent from the senior site staff member on duty. This consent will only be given if the pet is deemed to be in good health and has a suitable temperament. If the pet's behaviour is threatening or aggressive the owner will be asked to remove it from the facility immediately.

### 3.2. FACILITY PETS

- Facility pets housing should be kept clean eg: routine cleaning of aquarium filters, bird cages and litter trays
- The site infection control nurse and WHS coordinator must establish any specific restrictions required. This will include a documented “Pet Care Plan” which will be reviewed 6 monthly.
- Consent must be obtained from the Site Operations Manager prior to obtaining a facility pet

### 3.3. ANIMAL BASED LEISURE/LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES

- The site infection control nurse and WHS coordinator must be notified of all planned animal assisted activity to establish any specific restrictions required. This may include screening for parasites, skin problems and sighting evidence of immunisation.

### 3.4. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The Residential Site Manager, or their delegate, must be consulted prior to visitation by pets and has the authority to approve visits, or cancel or restrict such visits at any time.
- A WHS risk assessment will be conducted to ensure the safety and welfare of staff, residents and visitors, including consideration of potential for allergic reactions, and risk of biting/scratching.
- All animals are restricted from visiting during meal times.
- All animals are restricted from entering, or having contact with food preparation and serving areas.
- All animals must be on leash, contained or under effective control at all times, including in the residents room.
- All residents, staff, volunteers and visitors must perform hand hygiene either with soap and water or an alcohol-based rub after having contact with an animal.
- A Pet Care Plan, where implemented, will cover the following points:
  - Vet Checks & immunisations;
  - Registration;
  - Cleaning and grooming requirements;
  - Exercise; and
  - Allocation of staff responsibilities with regard to care.
- Residents and their relatives will be informed of this Policy prior to admission, via the Resident Handbook and Rules of Occupancy contained within the Residential Care Agreement.

<b>Relevant Acts</b>	Aged Care Act 1997 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - Section 9 Disability discrimination—guide dogs, hearing assistance dogs and trained animals South Australia Dog and Cat Management Act 1995
<b>References &amp; Procedures</b>	Accreditation Standard 3: Expected Outcome 3.4 Emotional Support Accreditation Standard 3: Expected Outcome 3.7 Leisure Interests & activities Accreditation Standard 4: Expected Outcome 4.7 Infection Control

<b>Eldercare References &amp; Procedures</b>	<b>Infection Control Policy</b>	<b>CataNo 260</b>
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