



## **Australians Rally for Pets in Aged Care: 96% Believe Residents Should Be Able to Own a Pet, CANA Report Reveals**

- *86% Say Pets in Aged Care Are 'Vitaly Important'*
- *Older Australians Forego Healthcare Because There's No Help for Their Pets*
- [CANA 2025 Pets Friendly Aged Care Survey Report](#)

**AUSTRALIA: OCTOBER 2025:** Australia may be a nation of animal lovers, but new research from [Companion Animal Network Australia's \(Australia CAN or CANA\) 2025 Pet Friendly Aged Care Survey](#) shows most aged care facilities still don't allow residents to keep their pets, even though 96% of Australians believe they should be able to.

"The emotional harm of being forced to give up a beloved animal is profound. Older Australians shouldn't have to choose between care and companionship," says Trish Ennis, CEO of CANA, a national animal welfare charity and advocacy group representing animal welfare member groups across the country.

"Despite **86% of Australians** saying pets in aged care are 'vitaly important', external data indicates that **only 18% of facilities allow pets\*\***, says Ms Ennis. "From our survey, half of all facilities rated themselves **low on pet-friendliness**, and **23% have formal pet policies** in place."

At the same time, **96% of Australians believe residents in aged care should be able to have pets**, suggesting a widening gap between public attitudes and the realities of aged care policy and practice.

CANA's latest survey attracted **2,846 responses — more than double the number from 2023's survey\*** — yet the results remain strikingly similar to previous years. Similarly to the last survey, the 2025 survey reveals **78% of respondents believe that pets improve** mental and physical health in aged care settings.

"Both facilities and residents understand how important pets are to health and happiness, but the sector still struggles to turn that understanding into action," says Ms Ennis.

### **In-Home Aged Care – Support Still Falling Short**

Like in the 2023 survey, the 2025 survey also found companionship and reduced loneliness are the most highly valued benefits of pet ownership among those surveyed.

However, older adults living at home continue to face major barriers to keeping their pets. Many rely on government-funded Home Care Packages\*\*\* (HCPs) but receive little to no assistance with pet care tasks such as walking, grooming or transport to the vet, according to survey results.

"Of the 325 respondents receiving in-home care, only **9% are receiving pet care services** from their current aged care package provider," says Ms Ennis.

The most requested services are: **emergency fostering (91%); support with walking (64%)** and **help taking a pet to the vet (59%)**. Concerningly **22% said they have delayed personal medical care** because they do not have anyone to look after their pet.

“The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and HCP should include provisions for pet care to help people stay healthy and at home for longer and help to prevent animals from being euthanised or surrendered to shelters,” she concludes.

### **Barriers and Opportunities**

According to the survey, aged care providers cite a **lack of education (45%), resources (42%) and funding for facility design changes (45%)** as major barriers to becoming pet-friendly.

“Education and understanding are key,” says Ms Ennis. “Facilities that welcome pets see happier residents, stronger family connections and greater community interest. It’s not just good welfare – It’s good business.”

Through its [Pet Friendly Aged Care initiative](#), CANA provides resources, including sample policies, risk assessments and best-practice guidelines to help residential aged care providers and home care services manage pets safely and compassionately.

“As our population ages, keeping people and pets together is an essential part of maintaining both physical and mental health,” says Ms Ennis. “The evidence is clear - pets are good for people. Now it’s time for aged care to catch up.”

*\* The [2023 Pet Friendly Aged Care Survey data](#) is based on 1,130 participants including older adults, aged care staff and the wider public.*

*\*\* The most [comprehensive report](#) available on pet-friendly aged care facilities was done in 2018 by the Stafford Group. An online audit of 2,933 facilities found that only 18% allowed residents to keep a pet.*

*\*\*\* Home Care Packages (HCPs) will be renamed [Support at Home program](#) starting Nov 1, 2025, replacing both the HCP and Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) programs.*

### **# END**

#### **About Pet Friendly Aged Care**

Pet Friendly Aged Care is run by the Companion Animal Network Australia (CANA or Australia CAN) whose member agencies aim to make the world a better place for pets through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives. Pet-Friendly Aged Care was established to highlight the often-catastrophic emotional harm caused when older people are forced to give up their pets upon moving into an aged care home, and to provide a more practical way forward. To discover more, visit <https://petfriendlyagedcare.com.au/>

#### **About Companion Animal Network Australia**

Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN or CANA) is a registered charity and advocacy network representing companion animal welfare work nationwide. Our members provide rescue, shelter, re-homing, fostering, health care and enrichment services to more than 20,000 animals every year. Through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives, we advocate for the human-animal bond and promote responsible pet ownership. We use our national voice to lobby for the humane treatment of all companion animals, and we rally support for our member programs that deliver high welfare standards. Australia CAN national campaigns include Pet Friendly Aged Care, Rent with Pets and Pets in Business. To discover more, visit [www.australiacan.org.au](http://www.australiacan.org.au)



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