



www.helpinghand.org.au

POSITION STATEMENT

Animals at Helping Hand

1. Introduction

Pet ownership in Australia is one of the highest rates in the world¹. About 28% of elderly Australians are pet owners².

Helping Hand acknowledges that some of our clients have animals with which they already have a personal relationship and thus consider them as pets. Whilst some of our clients do not necessarily have a pet, they still enjoy the company of animals.

It is widely accepted that the elderly share a particularly strong bond with their pets, which can be as strong as or stronger than the bond they share/shared with another person³.

For many years, Helping Hand has supported this bond throughout our client's journey with us from walking a client's pet whilst the client continues to live independently, to housing a client's pet when entering residential aged care.

Helping Hand has respected the enjoyment our clients receive from animals by engaging with Animal Therapy Programs and keeping of facility animals that live permanently in our residential care homes for the enjoyment of all residents.

2. Systems

Helping Hand will have policies and procedures that respect and support the relationship between our clients and animals, as well the safety of all our clients, staff, visitors and animals.

3. Consultation

Helping Hand will continually consult with relevant stakeholders, internally and externally, to better support relationships between our clients and animals.

¹ Hordern 2015, p. 1

² Righetti 2015, p. 1

³ D'Gama 2012, p. 7



4. Workforce

Our workforce is critical to our ability to provide animal related services sought by our clients. Emphasis will be placed on staff considerations including their health and safety as well as training for staff and volunteers to respect client choice and promote inclusiveness. This will complement general workforce development strategies which aim at building a strong values base, capacity to deliver individualised and holistic services and safe and respectful practices at work.

5. Service development and delivery

Services will be tailored to the individual needs and desires of the client and the needs of the animal.

Services will be reviewed in accordance with the changing needs of the client and the animal, as well as community expectations.

6. Partnerships

We value the importance of collaboration and partnerships, internally and externally, that will enable our clients to maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with animals.

We will deliver access to services that include but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Grooming for pets;
- (b) Exercise for pets e.g. dog walkers;
- (c) Visiting Vet for health checks, vaccinations etc;
- (d) Delivery of pet food and other supplies e.g. bedding, leads, toys, feeders etc;
- (e) Pet Hygiene/Pet Health guest speakers;
- (f) Training of staff and volunteers;
- (g) Kennels & Catteries for permanent or temporary re-homing; and
- (h) Pet Loss Bereavement Counselling.