



Trainers of Assistance Dogs User Guide

version 1.0

Supporting the
**ACM Animal Care and Management
Training Package**

2022

Contents

Contents

Background	5
Human bond with dogs	6
Animal welfare – 5 domains - the types of enrichment	7
Types of Assistance from dogs	8
Guide dogs	8
Hearing dogs	8
Assistance dogs	8
Legislation relevant to Assistance dogs	9
Assistance dogs - the Commonwealth Definition	9
Commonwealth Legislation	9
State and Territory Assistance Animal Regulation/Certification	10
Relevant State and Territory legislation and weblinks.....	10
New South Wales	10
Queensland.....	11
Western Australia.....	12
Australian Capital Territory	12
Victoria.....	13
Tasmania.....	14
South Australia	15
Northern Territory.....	15
Regulations in relation to airline travel with assistance animals	15
NDIS Assistance Animal funding	16
Dog Training Establishments Code of Practice	17
1. Introduction.....	17
2. Staff.....	17
3. Husbandry.....	18
4. Protection training establishments	20
Public access examination checklist	22
Associative and non-associative learning	25
Associative Learning	25

Non-Associative Learning in Dogs	26
Two Types of Non-Associative Learning	26
The four quadrants of dog training.....	27
Operant and classical conditioning technique	28
Choosing an Assistance dog	29
Considerations to determine if a dog can be an assistance dog:	29
Training an assistance dog depends on the disability you need them to accommodate, the temperament of the dog, and other factors. Most of the time, it can be done but it is important to note that some cases are unsuccessful.....	29
Owner/handler expectations about the assistive support of a dog and contingency planning	31
Mental welfare of Assistance dogs during their working life and retirement	31
Retirement.....	33
Assistance dog training	34
Basic training.....	34
Eye contact.....	34
Off-leash training	34
Specialise/conduct complex tasks	34
Human disability or disorder that may benefit from dog assistive intervention	35
Assistance dogs employed for hearing assistance	35
Assistance dogs employed for mental/developmental/neurological health assistance	35
Assistance dogs employed for mobility assistance	35
More examples ? should we include case studies from websites such Case Studies - Australian Lions Hearing Dogs ?.....	36
Appealing to dogs' olfactory perception/ target odours.....	36
Feeding dogs	37
Good Basic Feeding Tips from the Dog Breed Info Center:	37
Dog Training Equipment: The Right Tools for the Job	38
Organisational links	39
Link: Canine Helpers for the disabled	40
Link: Welcome to Leader Dogs for the Blind	44
Heading 3.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Links	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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Appendix 2: Xxx Error! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix 3: Xxx Error! Bookmark not defined.

Background

Guide dogs or therapy dogs have traditionally been employed to assist individuals with physical disabilities, such as vision or hearing impairments, and those with limited mobility. These dogs have played an important role in permitting many individuals to live as independently as possible. More recently, assistance dogs provide assistance to people with chronic mental illnesses or developmental disorders, such as autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder. Some assistance dogs may even help inform their diabetic owner of a potentially fatal change in their handler's blood sugar levels or warn epileptic handlers that a seizure is forthcoming.

Growing evidence and awareness for how assistance dogs can improve the quality of life for people with disabilities is driving demand for more assistance dog trainers. It is a job role with one of the highest projected growth rates to 2024 which, at 10.5%, means there will be over 2,000 new entrants to the industry. Assistance dog trainers need to be skilled at working with both the dog and handlers with disabilities. It takes considerable investment to train an assistance dog, and not for profit organisations such as Assistance Dogs Australia and Guide Dogs Australia have waiting lists of over two years. For this reason, many people are turning to independent dog trainers. It is important that people undertaking this work are adequately skilled, to support higher success rates, a better return on investment and wellbeing outcomes for the dog and the handler.

The expansion of assistance dogs into fields covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other health streams has brought an increasing demand for greater regulation and skilled delivery of assistance dog training. There are also widespread calls by industry for nationally recognised training to ensure workers possess the core skills to prepare dogs and handlers for a variety of lifestyle and assistive purposes.

Trainers need to be skilled at training the dog/handler team to be ready for different tasks and environments (particularly but not exclusively in public access environments) and providing advice to handlers on how to form a long-term reciprocal relationship with a dog beyond the assistive tasks it can provide. This includes:

- Advising handlers on lifelong bonding activities and suitable training or enrichment activities for their dog.
- Identifying suitable dog behaviour training techniques that are positive rewards-based, force-free and fear-free, while incorporating negative punishment and the underpinning theoretical principles of dog training and tasks, as well as advising handlers how to care for their dog.
- Relaying the importance of the monitoring and maintenance of dogs' work/life balance, condition and physical, emotional, mental health needs to handlers.

Trainers need knowledge in canine behaviour, breed and breed type characteristics, dog and handler health and welfare, as well as the impacts of various human disabilities. They must also understand applicable legislation, risk management strategies, and public and workplace health and safety guidelines.

Human bond with dogs

It is not known when the relationship between humans and dogs began but the estimates range from 10,000 to 30,000 years ago. The earliest remains of humans and dogs interred together date to 14,000 years ago.¹

It was only by the tiniest bit of genetic chance that our cross-species union was forged at all. Dogs and wolves share 99.9% of their mitochondrial DNA—the DNA that’s passed down by the mother alone—which makes the two species nearly indistinguishable. But elsewhere in the genome, there are a few genetic scraps that make a powerful difference. On chromosome six in particular, investigators have found three genes that code for hyper-sociability—and they are in the same spot as similar genes linked to similar sweetness in humans.²

Our ancestors didn’t know what genes were many millennia ago, but they did know that every now and then, one or two of the midsize scavengers with the long muzzles that came nosing around their campfires would gaze at them with a certain attentiveness, a certain loving neediness, and that it was awfully hard to resist them. So they welcomed those few in from the cold and eventually came to call them dogs, while the animals’ close kin that didn’t pull the good genes—the ones we would come to call wolves or jackals or coyotes or dingoes—would be left to make their way in the state of nature in which they were born.³ While it was once believed that all dogs descended from the gray wolf, newer research indicates that canines can trace their ancestry to prehistoric wolves that roamed Eurasia between 9,000 and 34,000 years ago.⁴

Dr. James Serpell, director of the Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, stated:

*"We don't actually know why humans and wolves got together in the first place, but once that relationship was established, humans were selecting, very rapidly, for the most sociable wolves— the ones who responded to humans in this characteristically dog-like way," This was obviously something that humans valued from the get go."*⁵

Today, at least in areas populated by humans, dogs are the planet’s most abundant terrestrial carnivore. The single species that is the domestic dog—*Canis lupus familiaris*—has been subdivided into hundreds of breeds, selected for size or temperament or colour or cuteness. What began as a mutual-services contract between two very different species became something much more like love. None of that makes a lick of sense, but it doesn’t have to. Love rarely touches the reasoning parts of the brain. It touches the dreamy parts, the devoted parts—it touches the parts we sometimes call the heart. For many thousands of years, it’s there that our dogs have lived.⁶

¹ Scientific Reasons Dogs Are Humans' Best Friends (insider.com)

² Ibid

³ Why Dogs and Humans Love Each Other So Much | Time

⁴ Scientific Reasons Dogs Are Humans' Best Friends (insider.com)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Why Dogs and Humans Love Each Other So Much | Time

Animal welfare – 5 domains - the types of enrichment

Sensory enrichment focuses on the stimulation of the animals' senses. You can divide it into four subcategories: visual enrichment, olfactory (smell & taste) enrichment, auditory (sound) enrichment, and tactile (touch) enrichment. These senses are all important means of communication and are routes of gathering information about its surrounding environment. As an essential form of enrichment, care needs to be taken when providing sensory enrichment. You are not always aware of what information you are communicating towards your animals. Most types of sensory enrichment are a passive form of enrichment.

Food-based enrichment can be defined as “the manipulation of food or method of providing food”. This type of enrichment focuses on the food presentation to make feeding more challenging for the animal. A variety of feeding methods and food presentation encourage animals to work for their food. It can also be enriching providing a novel food item. The ultimate goal is to stimulate and extend the appetitive and consummatory behaviours of an animal. Often zookeepers provide puzzle feeders, which is discussed in cognitive enrichment.

Structural enrichment, also called ‘physical habitat enrichment’, is defined as “alteration of the physical elements of the enclosure”. Its main goal is to stimulate exploratory behaviours and collecting information. This enrichment is mainly provided to prevent boredom and keeps the animal physically healthy by encouraging it to become more active. This kind of enrichment, which is different from tactile enrichment, is ranked as important but is not often provided. The physical environment should be frequently altered and switched so animals do not become too familiar with their environment, which causes boredom and can eventually cause stereotyped behaviours.

Manipulative/Cognitive/Tactile enrichment is described as “cognitive and mental stimulation that requires problem-solving of different levels of complexity”. Zookeepers spend a lot of time developing the most creative enrichment ideas, to keep animals mentally engaged. It focuses mainly on the mental health of animals. Most used devices are puzzle feeders, where animals are cognitively challenged to be rewarded with food. With different objects, animals are stimulated for investigation and exploratory behaviours. Animals with a higher form of intelligence need to be more mentally stimulated to excite their cognitive abilities.

Social enrichment is focussed on organized interactions between conspecifics, interspecific or human-animal. Sometimes it is also possible to use a substitute as social enrichment (i.e., plush toy). A well-known and most common form of social enrichment is **animal training**. Training can be very beneficial for animal welfare by providing cognitive stimulation, increasing social play, decreasing inactivity, and mitigating social aggression during feeding.⁷

⁷ What Are The Different Types Of Enrichment | ZOOSnippets

Types of Assistance from dogs

Guide dogs

Guide dogs can be trained to take directional instructions and find a suitable travel path. They also alert you to changes in ground levels. Guide dogs help you to avoid obstacles at head height, avoid oncoming traffic, and go around obstacles and they can assist finding objects.

Hearing dogs

Hearing dogs are trained to alert to specific sounds in the home, such as a phone ringing, an alarm sounding, or a baby crying. Some hearing dogs also work outside the home, alerting handlers to specific sounds in public settings and vehicles. Instead of barking, hearing dogs get your attention by touch (such as a nose-nudge or pawing) and then they lead you to the source of the sound.

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are trained to perform a range of tasks and behaviours for people with a disability. Assistance dogs can also be trained to help people with post-traumatic stress disorder, to access and participate in the community. Some assistance dogs know more than 50 assistive tasks.

Guide, hearing or assistance dogs and legislation

Guide, hearing or assistance dogs are not to be confused with a therapy/emotional support/companion dogs. Such dogs are not considered an assistance or service dog, as the owner may not have a disability and/or the dog has not been trained to undertake specific, identifiable tasks and behaviours to reduce the person's need for support. The dog is therefore not recognised under legislation.⁸ *PTO for more information about legislation relating to assistance dogs.*

⁸ Choosing a guide, hearing or assistance dog | People with disability | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)

Legislation relevant to Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs - the Commonwealth Definition

Assistance dogs in Australia and members who utilise them are protected under the Federal (Commonwealth) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA, 1992). An Assistance dog is defined under this act as:

9 (2) For the purposes of this Act, an assistance animal is a dog or other animal:

– accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or

– accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph; or

trained: to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; and to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

According to the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, there is no distinction made between a Guide Dog, Hearing Dog or Service Dog – they are all considered to be Assistance dogs. As such, from this point forward, the terminology “Assistance dog” will be used instead of distinguishing between the different types of Assistance dogs. The Human Rights Commission oversees discriminatory matters which includes discrimination assistance dogs and their handlers may encounter while out in public.⁹

Commonwealth Legislation

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA) in Section 9, sets out the legal definition of an assistance animal as a dog or other animal that:

(a) is accredited under a State or Territory law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of disability; or

(b) is accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed in the regulations; or

(c) is trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.¹⁰

⁹ Laws in Australia - Canine Essentials

¹⁰ Assistance animals and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) | Australian Human Rights Commission

State and Territory Assistance Animal Regulation/Certification

Overview

Variation among states and territories regarding accreditation and regulation of assistance animals continue to present a range of issues for people with disability who use assistance animals to access the community. Examples of the situation in each jurisdiction is set out below.

- **Victoria** – an Assistance Animal Pass is required and issued by Public Transport Victoria permitting assistance animals to travel on public transport. The pass is valid for 3 years.
- **Western Australia** – The Public Transport Authority doesn't require permits for assistance animals to travel on public transport. There is local government legislation providing for animals to have an ID card and a dog coat/harness.
- **Queensland** – A Handler's Identity Card is valid for 5 years allowing travel on public transport. Also, Translink (South East Queensland Transport Authority) issues an Animal Pass provided the dog meets certain standards of behaviour in public.
- **South Australia** – The Dog and Cat Management Board issues a Disability Dog Pass that is valid indefinitely.
- **New South Wales** – An Assistance Animal Permit is required for access to public transport, however Guide dogs and Hearing dogs do not require a permit. The permit must be renewed annually.
- **Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory and Tasmania** – no system of accreditation exists and no specific passes issued.¹¹

Relevant State and Territory legislation and weblinks

New South Wales

Weblink: [Assistance Animals - Office of Local Government NSW](#)

Some companion animals are trained to provide assistance to people with a disability to help alleviate the effect of that disability. These assistance animals are not pets. They provide an important service that helps people to more fully participate in personal and public life activities with more confidence and independence. This website provides information on laws for assistance animals under the [Companion Animals Act 1998](#) in NSW only. Other Government agencies can provide you with advice about how assistance animals are treated under other NSW laws.

¹¹ Assistance animals and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) | Australian Human Rights Commission

Queensland

In Queensland, the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs Act 2009* protects the public access rights of dogs and their handlers that have been through a certification process.

To gain certification, you must work with one of the following approved trainers or training institutions to train your dog and complete the [public access test and certification process](#). You may then request the trainer to obtain a handler identity card for you, and a blue and white cloth badge for your guide, hearing or assistance dog to display on its coat or harness.¹²

Weblink: [Completing the public access test and certifying your dog | People with disability | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

In Queensland the Public Access Test (PAT) establishes a minimum standard for guide, hearing and Assistance dogs to be certified under the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs Act 2009* (the Act).

“You must use an [approved trainer or training institution](#) to work with you to train your guide, hearing or assistance dog, take you and the dog through the PAT, and certify your dog.

A trained dog must be certified within 7 days after successfully completing the PAT. This will confirm your dog is safe and effective in a public place, public passenger vehicle, or place of accommodation, and is able to be physically controlled by you, as primary handler of the dog, or as a primary handler with the support of an alternative handler.

Trained dogs become certified when they:

- perform identifiable physical tasks or behaviours to assist a person with a disability to reduce their need for support
- have passed a PAT conducted by an approved trainer or training institution within 7 days of certification and prior to requesting a handler identity card
- are not a restricted breed under the [Animal Management \(Cats and Dogs\) Act 2008 \(PDF\)](#)
- are de-sexed and vaccinated
- have not been declared a dangerous dog under a local law.

Dogs must also undergo regular skill updating and testing to make sure they stay safe and effective in public places and public passenger vehicles.

To be eligible you need to:

- have a disability as defined by the [Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs Act 2009 \(PDF\)](#)
- rely on a guide, hearing or assistance dog to reduce your need for support
- be able to physically control your dog, or identify an alternative handler to support you to control the dog
- have your dog pass the PAT and be certified by an approved trainer or training institution.”¹³

¹² Choosing a guide, hearing or assistance dog | People with disability | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)

¹³ Completing the public access test and certifying your dog | People with disability | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)

Western Australia

Weblink: [Assistance dog Approvals Policy \(dlgsc.wa.gov.au\)](http://dlgsc.wa.gov.au)

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA 1992) makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability who has an assistance animal, subject to certain exemptions.

Section 9(2) of the DDA 1992 identifies an assistance animal as:

For the purposes of this Act, an **assistance animal** is a dog or other animal:

- a. accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; or
- b. accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph; or trained:
 - i. (i) to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability; and
 - ii. (ii) to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

Section 54A of that Act sets out the exemptions to that right of access.

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries provides an accreditation system for assistance animals in Western Australia under the provisions of the Dog Act 1976, with the authorisation card that is issued providing evidence that the dog is “accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a persons with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability”.

This policy outlines the requirements and process for gaining such an accreditation.

The application process for applying for assistance dog approval in WA: [Applying for assistance dog approval | DLGSC](#)

Australian Capital Territory

Weblink: [Assistance animals - City Services \(act.gov.au\)](http://act.gov.au)

Under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, persons with a disability may choose to use an assistance animal to help alleviate the effects of their disability provided the animal has been trained to meet the standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

To support and clarify this overarching legislation, the ACT Government has developed a legislative framework within Part 5 of the Domestic Animals Act 2000 that allows for assistance animals to be accredited as meeting the ACT’s public access standards. Once accredited, the Registrar of Domestic Animals may register the assistance animal and issue the handler with an ID card for up to two years. The standards of behaviour and hygiene for assistance animals in public places is listed within the regulations for the Domestic Animals Act 2000.

The ACT assistance animals’ framework does not create new access rights. Under existing Commonwealth law people who rely on an assistance animal have the same rights of access as anyone else. The ACT framework clarifies the rights of access so that you have less risk of being turned away by businesses as they have assurance your animal meets standards of behaviour and hygiene for public places.

The rights of access for assistance animals which are accredited and registered under the ACT framework are further protected and promoted by a suite of penalties for businesses or individuals who refuse access. A business or individual who refuses a non-accredited assistance animal access to a public place may still be subject to repercussions under ACT and Commonwealth law.

Victoria

Weblink: [Guide dogs, seeing eye dogs and Assistance dogs | Dogs | Animal Welfare Victoria | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria](#)

The [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) (the Act) protects people with disabilities from discrimination. This includes protection from discrimination because a person has an assistance dog.

An 'assistance dog' is any dog that is trained to perform tasks or functions that help a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of the disability. This includes dogs trained to:

- pick things up for people with mobility disabilities
- assist people who have seizures.

Assistance dogs can play a significant role increasing the independence of people with a range of disabilities.

Employers, goods and service providers and others, must not discriminate against someone because they have an assistance dog. This means that a person with an assistance dog must generally be allowed:

- onto transport
- into cafes
- into restaurants.

The Act specifically says that it is unlawful to refuse to provide accommodation to a person with a disability because they have an assistance dog. You also can't charge the person extra or ask them to keep the assistance dog somewhere else.

The Act doesn't apply this protection to other types of companion animals.

Guide dogs (and seeing eye dogs) are legally able to go to any event, business or premises in Victoria (except operating theatres).

This includes travelling on:

- planes
- any form of public transport (taxis, buses, trams and trains).

It includes entering:

- theatres
- restaurants
- supermarkets
- hotels
- retail stores.

These access rights apply to:

- guide dogs
- guide dogs in training
- guide dog puppies.

The rights of guide dog users are covered under the [Domestic Animals Act 1994](#) and the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) — both of which override the Health Act, which prohibits dogs from entering food premises.

Tasmania

Weblink: [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#)

Dog users and trainers' rights under the Tasmanian Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs Act 1967 include:

- 1) A person who is blind or vision impaired, deaf or hearing impaired or a trainer –
 - (a) is entitled to be accompanied by a guide dog into any public place or onto any public passenger vehicle; and
 - (b) does not commit an offence by taking a guide dog into or onto, or permitting a guide dog to remain in or on, a public place or public passenger vehicle.
- (2) A person who is in charge of a public place or public passenger vehicle, or the servant or agent of a person in charge of a public place or public passenger vehicle, must not –
 - (a) refuse to allow a person accompanied by a guide dog into that place or onto that vehicle; or
 - (b) direct a person accompanied by a guide dog to leave that place or vehicle; or
 - (c) deny accommodation or service to a person accompanied by a guide dog.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 20 penalty units.

- (3) For the purposes of [subsection \(2\)](#), a person may be taken to have refused or denied another person entry, access, accommodation or service by means of an omission as well as by an act.
- (4) It is a defence in any proceedings under [subsection \(2\)](#) for the defendant to show –
 - (a) that he or she had reasonable cause, unrelated to the presence of the guide dog, for the act or omission constituting the alleged offence; or
 - (b) that –
 - (i) the person who was refused admission, directed to leave or denied accommodation or service was unable, on request made by or on behalf of the defendant before the time of refusal, direction or denial, to produce an identity card for inspection; and
 - (ii) it was reasonable in the circumstances for that request to be made.
- (5) An identity card is a card that –
 - (a) an approved guide dogs or hearing dogs institution issues to –
 - (i) a person who is a trainer for or on behalf of the institution; or
 - (ii) a person who has been assigned a guide dog trained, or being trained, by the institution; and
 - (b) is in a form determined by the institution; and
 - (c) bears the name of the institution, and the name and address of the cardholder.
- (6) A person must, as soon as practicable after ceasing to be a trainer or a person to whom a guide dog is assigned, return his or her identity card to the institution that issued it.
Penalty: Fine not exceeding 0.5 penalty units.
- (7) In the event of any inconsistency arising between this section and another law of the State, other than the [Anti-Discrimination Act 1998](#), this section prevails over the other law.

South Australia

Weblink: [Assistance dogs | Dog and Cat Management Board \(dogandcatboard.com.au\)](http://dogandcatboard.com.au)

The South Australian Dog and Cat Management Board is responsible for the issue of a Disability Dog Pass that is valid indefinitely.

Assistance animals are specifically trained to provide support to people with a wide range of disabilities including those who have vision or hearing impairment, need physical support for functional tasks, experience medical episodes or psychiatric disorders.

Assistance dogs, when accompanied by a disabled person, are entitled to access areas that a dog would not normally be allowed e.g. public transport, supermarkets, restaurants, national parks etc. Assistance dogs may be refused entry to hospital intensive care units and food preparation areas.

There is no definition or recognition of 'companion dog', 'therapy dog' and 'emotional support dog' in either Commonwealth or South Australian legislation.

In South Australia Assistance dogs can **only** be accredited under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* by either the Dog and Cat Management Board or the following prescribed accreditation bodies:

Royal Society for the Blind, Guide Dogs Australia, Lions Hearing Dogs, Assistance dogs Australia, Righteous Pups Australia, Vision Australia, Australian Veterinary Behaviour Services and Integra Service Dogs Australia.

Northern Territory

Weblink: [Northern Territory - Assistance animals | Disability Gateway](#)

Northern Territory government information about assistance animals can be found here. The Northern Territory Government information about assistance animals is currently under development.

Regulations in relation to airline travel with assistance animals:

- The carriage of animals on aircraft is covered under regulation 256A of the *Civil Aviation Regulations 1988* (CAR).
- Only Assistance dogs that are accompanying a visually impaired or hearing impaired person as a guide or an assistant are covered under CAR 256A.
- Carriage of Assistance dogs other than guide dogs and hearing dogs are not specifically mentioned in CAR 256A. The carriage is regulated through permissions issued to some airlines enabling them to accept Assistance dogs in the cabin of an aircraft. For information CASA provides to the operators (airlines) view the [example of permission](#) document.

NDIS Assistance Animal funding

Weblink: [Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans Operational Guideline - Assistance Animals | NDIS](#)

When funding supports in a participant's plan, such as assistance animals, the NDIA has to consider whether the support meets all of the general criteria for supports and reasonable and necessary criteria (see Section 34 of the NDIS Act and Section 10 of the [Planning Operational Guideline](#)).

What supports will the NDIS fund?

When funding an assistance animal, funded supports include the following:

- a suitable and qualified animal, inclusive of associated participant assessment and provider incurred animal training costs; and
- costs associated with maintenance of the animal for the working life of the animal.

The NDIA needs evidence in writing with input from all of the following:

- an NDIS Participant assistance animal provider;
- allied health professionals; and
- the participant.

Information from other professionals, such as a doctor, may also be provided where relevant to the assistance animal request.

Dog Training Establishments Code of Practice

1. Introduction

The dog training establishment Codes of Practice is made under the provisions of Section 59 of Division 4 of the [Domestic Animals Act 1994 \(legislation.vic.gov.au\)](http://legislation.vic.gov.au).

The purpose of the Code is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of dogs being trained in dog training establishments.

The Code and its provisions are to be observed by all proprietors of dog training establishments, including those establishments that conduct training at the residence of a client, and by people who work in them. All dog training establishments must comply with State and Local Government legislation and permits.

Protection training is defined as training a dog to attack people or animals and includes the training of a dog to attack a human wearing padded protective clothing for any purpose including sport.

All dogs entering dog training establishments must be identified and dogs that are undergoing protection training must be permanently identified by means of a microchip issued by the municipality in which the dog normally resides. The Act requires an owner to notify the appropriate municipality immediately attack training has commenced.

If, in the trainer's opinion, a dog is suffering from any ailment, the trainer may refuse to train that dog.

Reasonable care must be exercised by the trainer or training establishment, to ensure the safety and well-being of the client and dog at all times e.g.:

- In circumstances where a dog is aggressive, and displays a clear danger to other dogs or people it must be muzzled.
- Slip collars (choker chains), must not be used on puppies under 12 weeks of age.
- Undue force must not be used when training any dog.
- All proprietors of dog training establishments must carry a minimum of \$5,000,000 Public Liability insurance cover.¹⁴

2. Staff

2.1 Manager

The proprietor of a dog training establishment is responsible for the overall management and conduct of the facility and for the welfare of the animals held therein. In particular, the proprietor responsible for:

- the well-being of all animals in the establishment
- the supervision of staff
- the maintenance and collation of records and statistics
- supervision of daily feeding, watering, inspection and training of all animals
- supervision and examination of animals upon entry
- the overall level of hygiene in the establishment, including the disposal of waste materials

¹⁴ Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog Training Establishments | Codes of Practice | Domestic Animals Act | Animal Welfare Victoria | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria

- provision of prompt veterinary attention for animals when required
- ensuring adequate shade is available at each training venue
- provision of cleaning utensils for the disposal of dog's faeces and ensuring that they are available at all times whilst training is being conducted
- notifying owners (or their contacts) as soon as possible when an animal is observed to be ailing or injured or promptly after a veterinarian has examined the animal
- developing a plan for an emergency situation
- provision of suitable padded training attire for use in protection training.¹⁵

2.2 Veterinarian

The proprietor of an establishment must have a written agreement sufficient veterinarians to be on call for the treatment of animals other than first aid.¹⁶

2.3 Animal attendants

Animal attendants employed by the proprietor of the training establishment must be trained and experienced to properly manage the dogs being trained. They are responsible to the proprietor for:

- daily feeding, watering and inspection of all animals
- daily cleaning of facilities, i.e., hose out, replace bedding, feeding and watering utensils
- reporting of sick or injured animals
- exercising dogs as required by the manager.

The proprietor of the training establishment must ensure that staff health is protected by the provision of appropriate work clothing, adequate hand washing facilities and tetanus immunisation.

Information must be supplied on disease-causing organisms which can be transmitted to humans (zoonoses) and personal hygiene procedures must be such that transmission could not occur.

A First Aid Kit must be available at all times at all training venues and at least one staff member, whether a trainer or not, must be qualified in First Aid, and available at all times at each training venue whilst training is being conducted.

The proprietor of a training establishment must ensure that at each training venue, telephone access is provided for, in case of emergencies.¹⁷

3. Husbandry

3.1 Nutrition

All dogs housed in the training establishment must be fed at least once a day. The food provided must contain acceptable nutritive values in sufficient quantity to meet appropriate daily requirements for the condition and size of the animal.

All animals must have a permanent supply of fresh, clean water.

Food and water containers must be non spillable and of a design that can be easily cleaned and does not cause injury to the animals.

3.2 Vaccination and health care

For dogs, pre-vaccination against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus is required. A current vaccination certificate (certifying that vaccination was done within the preceding 12 months and that the 'due date' for the next vaccination has not passed) must be produced for each dog before

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

admission. Vaccination against canine cough and checking for heartworm infection should be recommended prior to admission.

Animals known or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease must not be admitted for training.¹⁸

3.3 Hygiene

The training establishment is to be clean and hygienic at all times. All pens must be cleaned out at least once per day (twice daily if inspection shows it is required) by hosing or other appropriate means, after removing all uneaten food by hand before hosing, to ensure the pen is fresh and clean. Used litter and uneaten food must be placed in sealed plastic bags for disposal.

Animal training establishment sites must have an adequate water supply and must be sewerred or on a septic system, or have some other adequate method of disposing of faeces.

Waste disposal must be in accordance with the requirements of the local government authority. Use of a trade waste service for collection and disposal of wastes is preferable. Wastes must not be incinerated.

After cleaning, sleeping areas must not be allowed to remain wet.

Disinfection of pens must be done whenever the pen is vacated or every seventh day with hospital grade disinfectants. Utensils must be rinsed after disinfecting to avoid poisoning. Manufacturers' instructions for the use of these agents must be followed.

All watering and feeding utensils must be cleaned daily.

Pests including fleas, ticks, flies, mosquitoes and rodents must be effectively controlled. Chemicals used for pest control must be either prescribed by a registered veterinarian or registered by the National Registration Authority (NRA) under the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code (Commonwealth) and should be used only in accordance with label instructions.¹⁹

3.4 Security

Kennel buildings must be able to be securely locked. Design and materials used must ensure the security of the facility.

Each individual kennel must be fitted with a secure closing device that cannot be opened by the animals.

Any security methods used must allow for ready access to animals and ready exit for staff and animals from the premises in the event of an emergency.

All training establishments where dogs are boarded or protection training occurs must have an external perimeter fence at least 1.8 metres high surrounding the establishment to prevent the escape of animals.

The external walls of the facility may serve as the perimeter fence if an animal escaping from its pen or cage is restrained by these walls.

Dogs in training establishments must be safe from attack, stress or injury and their behavioural needs should be met.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

3.5 Housing

Each dog training establishment must provide an area for reception, records storage, and display of information for clients. Premises must include washing and toilet facilities for staff.

Kennels must be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that ensures the good health and well-being of the animals, whilst preventing escape or injury to humans.

Housing must provide protection from the weather (wind, rain sun and extremes of climate), vermin and harassment from other animals.

Materials should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. Floors of animal housing areas of kennels must be made of an impervious material to assist cleaning and drainage. Wood, brick, dirt or grass floors are not acceptable.

The internal surfaces of the external walls of kennels must be constructed of impervious, solid, washable materials optimally curved at the wall/floor junctions to facilitate cleaning and disinfection.

Kennel floors must be sloped to enable wastes and water to run off. A collection drain must be provided to take away water after cleaning.

Pens may be separated by either solid partitions, galvanised chain wire or weld mesh wire dividers. Pens must be completely enclosed having either a solid or wire roof.

All kennels must be provided with a weatherproof sleeping area containing raised beds.

Where dog kennels are constructed indoors, temperature, humidity and ventilation must be considered. Ventilation must be adequate to keep animal housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours and draughts. Cage or pen areas must have an ample supply of fresh air.²¹

4. Protection training establishments

The minimum age of dog before protection training is allowed is 12 months.

4.1 Protection training venues

Due to the noise factor and the potential danger to the public that protection training generates, certain venues such as public reserves and schools are not allowed to be used for this purpose.²²

4.2 Security requirements

A 1.8 metre high chain mesh fence must enclose the immediate training area fence to protect the public from dogs being agitated. This fence is in addition to the external security fence. These measures will ensure the secure containment of the dogs whilst being agitated and to ensure the public's safety.²³

4.3 Temperament and training assessment of dogs prior to commencement of protection training

All dogs must be assessed individually to ascertain their suitability for protection training. Only dogs with a stable temperament are to be accepted. The following character traits are unacceptable in a dog for protection training:

- fear
- nervousness
- fear aggression or fear biter
- nervous aggression.

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

It is the responsibility of the training establishment to ensure that a high standard of obedience training exists prior to the commencement of protection training. A handler must be able to demonstrate that the dog can be controlled reliably off-lead.

Only recognised guarding breeds of the large variety & cross of these breeds, are allowed to be trained in protection training. These Breeds are:

- German shepherd
- Rottweiler
- Doberman
- other breeds recognised by the Victorian Canine Association as large guarding breeds.

All other breeds are excluded including the fighting breeds.²⁴

4.4 Pre-requisites for people wishing to train their dog in protection training

Only licensed security guards registered under the Private Agents Act 1966, are eligible to have their dog's trained as protection dogs, or to be trained in protection training.

Proof of a security licence must be shown to the training establishment prior to commencement of protection training.

No member of the general public may be trained in protection training unless the above pre-requisites are complied with.²⁵

4.5 Categories for protection training

Professional security dogs and commercial yard dogs. These levels of training are only open to bona-fide security personnel including those supplying yard dogs to protect commercial premises.

Yard dogs and professional security dogs are allowed full suit and leg bites in their training.²⁶

4.6 Legal requirements of client

Protection training clients must be given an information pamphlet on their responsibility of owning a dog that has undergone protection training under Section 37, Division 3, Part 3 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

The proprietor of a training establishment must also display this information at each of its venues.²⁷

4.7 Registration of clients on commencement of protection training

The proprietor of a protection training establishments must furnish relevant councils with details of all protection training clients including name, address, telephone and security licence number.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

Public access examination checklist

The DDA allows qualified assistance dogs to accompany their handler into all public spaces. The only exceptions to this may be spaces in which a person's disability is being addressed by other means, or areas with stringent sterility requirements for example:

- Specific clinical settings
- Surgically sterilised areas
- Industrial food preparation areas (kitchens)
- Quarantined areas.²⁹

Note: It is not essential for dogs to pass a public access examination to become an assistance dog, given that an assistance dog owner/handler may not require their dog's assistance for public access purposes.

The Service Dog International Training School have provided the following information on what may be included in dogs' public access examinations.³⁰

A task is a certain desired behaviour or set of behaviours the dog is trained to habitually perform in response to a command or a particular change in the handler's emotional state, mobility, and mental state which prompts the dog to perform a task. The modules of the public access test are meant to encompass the most important aspects of the public manners that a service dog needs to exhibit and ensure safe conduct among other animals and humans. The examination will include the following participants — the Service Dog Handler; an Examiner; Assistant/s as necessary; and the Service Dog Candidate.

The examiner is likely to follow this order of modules:

1. Leaving a motor vehicle — the dog must leave the passenger cabin in calm manner as well as bring out any bags/items the service dog user may need. The dog is expected to wait calmly outside if the dog handler/caretaker needs to bring out a wheelchair or other mobility assistance items. It is imperative that the dog remains focused and not run off or ignore cues. This test may include walking by another dog in order to test if the service dog candidate would pull on the leash and try to go to another dog.

2. Approaching buildings — the service dog candidate and its handler must move through a parking lot in order to access a building. The dog has to move with the pace of the handler and must not be afraid of cars. If the handler stops for any reason, the dog must do the same without pulling on the leash or pushing the handler.

3. Building entry — the handler and service dog candidate need to enter a building in a calm fashion. The dog needs to remain close to the handler, avoid distractions and may need to wait at a reception desk for a few minutes until the handler proceeds further in the building with the dog.

4. Navigating a building — the service dog candidate and its handler need to move confidently through the building and remain within a touching distance. The dog must not wander and pull on the leash. The dog must not attempt to solicit attention from people and try to approach other dogs while inside.

²⁹ Public Access Rights - Assistance dogs Australia

³⁰ Service Dog Public Access Test Standard (Task List Attached) (servicedogtrainingschool.org). An assistance dog called a 'service dog' in this documentation

5. Recall from a distance — usually, the handler and the dog will need a wide-open space for this test. A parking lot or a park can serve for this. The dog will be left by itself and commanded to wait. The handler has to move about 5 meters away, call the dog to him/her and the dog must approach in a calm manner without being distracted.

6. Sit on command — the dog will be commanded to sit three times in different settings and it must respond promptly with no more than two commands issued per sitting:

a) The first sitting will be next to a bowl with food, the dog must not try to eat the food or sniff it. The dog should not be taunted with the food and it should ignore it.

b) The second sitting will be performed with a shopping cart. The handler needs to move past the dog while it is sitting and the dog needs to remain in a sitting position without attempting to approach the handler.

c) The third sitting will require the dog to remain in a sitting position while the handler initiates a conversation with another person. The second party will pet the dog on the head after the conversation has ended. The dog needs to remain calm, avoid seeking extra attention and continue sitting unless given another command.

7. Downs on command — this exercise is the same as the sitting test and the dog needs to lie down within the same context as listed above. The participating parties need to act casually and not taunt the dog or attempt to interact with the dog for long periods. If the dog attempts to break the laying position the handler is permitted to command the dog to remain down.

8. Response to Noise — the examiner will walk next to the handler and the service dog, and suddenly drop an item behind (like a note or a clipboard). The dog may react to the sound and turn back. However, the dog must continue with the pace of its handler and it must not react with aggression or fear. No barking is allowed unless that is a part of the dog's work.

9. Restaurant manners — the handler, the dog, and the examiner will be seated at a table. The dog will have to move under the table its size permits or stay close to the handler. The dog is expected to lie down and move a little for comfort while the handler and examiner enjoy a meal. The dog will fail this part if it moves a lot or attempts to beg for food.

10. Leash recovery — the handler will move with the dog for some time and then drop the leash. The dog must see the leash dropping and the handler will have to call on the dog and demonstrate control from a distance. The dog must approach the handler in a calm manner and both should continue walking together.

11. Transfer of control — the handler will give the leash to the examiner or assistant and move away at about 20 meters. The dog must remain with the person holding the leash, it must not be aggressive and it must not show excessive stress and whining.

12. Building egress — the dog and its handler will have to leave the building in a controlled and confident fashion. The dog must not be distracted and it must not show fear of vehicles passing by the exit/entry of the building.

13. Entry of vehicle — the dog must wait for the handler to open the vehicle door and enter calmly. The dog must respond to "wait", "go in" and "sit" promptly.

14. Team bond — the handler and the dog must be confident, calm, and easy-going. The dog must demonstrate a positive attitude and remain undistracted. The pair should be good ambassadors for service dog work.

Evaluation Most examiners will use the following grading for the public access test along with clear

Yes/No statements:

A = Always

M = Most of the time (more than half the time)

S = Some of the time (half or less of the time)

N = Never.

Most certification programs will require that the service dog candidate and its handler receive a score of 80% in regard to the Yes/No part of the test and attain "Always" or "Most of the time" qualification on the rest of the examination.³¹ This allows for distractors such as weather, other people, other animals, stimulants, odours, dog wellbeing etc.

mindDog resources provide a more thorough guide for Public Access Test (PAT) requirements: public-access-test.pdf (minddog.org.au).

³¹ Ibid

Associative and non-associative learning

Associative and Non-Associative learning are two types of learning between which a key difference can be identified. Associative learning refers to a variety of learning in which ideas and experiences are connected. On the other hand, non-associative learning is another variety of learning in which an association between stimuli does not take place. The key difference is while stimuli are linked in associative learning; in non-associative learning this does not take place.

Associative Learning

Associative learning refers to a variety of learning in which ideas and experiences are connected. The human brain is organized in such a way that recalling a single piece of information in isolation is often difficult. This is because it is connected to other types of information. The theory of associative learning highlights this connection or link between ideas.

According to psychologists, associative learning takes place when we learn something with the assistance of a new stimulus. Here the theory of conditioning comes into play. Through conditioning, psychologists emphasize how human behaviour can be altered or how new patterns of behaviour can be created in the individual. The process of associative learning takes place through two types of conditioning. They are:

Classical conditioning - a technique introduced by Ivan Pavlov where he conducts an experiment using a dog. In the first phase of the experiment, he presents the dog with food and notices how it salivates. Then he introduces a bell just as the food is being presented and notices how the dog salivates. Thirdly he rings the bell without presenting the food but notices that the dog salivates. Through this, he explains how a natural response to a stimulus can be conditioned where a conditioned response can be created from a conditioned stimulus.³²

Operant conditioning - developed by B. F Skinner, an American psychologist. He believed that behaviour is sustained by reinforcement and rewards and not by free will. He was famous for Skinner box and the teaching machine. This involved conditioning the voluntary, controllable behaviour and not the automatic physiological responses as in the case of classical conditioning. In operant conditioning, actions are associated with consequences by the organism. Actions that are reinforced become strengthened whereas actions that are punished are being weakened. He introduced two types of reinforcements: Positive reinforcement and Negative reinforcement. For instance, imagine a child is given a bar of chocolate after getting good marks at an exam. This is an example of a reward. Or else imagine a child is grounded for misbehaving. This is an example of punishment. Through associative learning, a new behaviour is promoted based on a new stimulus.³³

³² Difference Between Classical and Operant Conditioning | Compare the Difference Between Similar Terms

³³ Difference Between Classical and Operant Conditioning | Compare the Difference Between Similar Terms

Non-Associative Learning in Dogs

Both humans and dogs have the ability to learn in non-associative ways. Non-associative learning consists of responding automatically or reflexively to a stimulus, without having to actively try. While we do proactively train our dogs to perform behaviours, a puppy or new dog develops their own non-associative responses to their new environment as well.

Two Types of Non-Associative Learning

There are two forms of non-associative learning: habituation, and sensitization. They are essentially two sides of the same coin.

1/ Habituation: Habituation is when a dog has learned to tune out a certain stimulus because of the frequency with which they're exposed to it, for example, the sounds of traffic and horns honking eventually fade into the background to the point that dogs in cities, constantly exposed to them barely notice them. While at first the stimulus may be jarring, through habituation every exposure causes the response to lessen until the dog no longer regards it.

Each dog will habituate to individual stimuli at different rates. Horns that honk multiple times every hour will become background noise much more quickly than, say, the sound of an ambulance siren that only passes by once each week. The nature of the stimulus itself also affects how quickly a dog will habituate. Unexciting stimuli are much easier to become accustomed to and ignore than a possum on a fence or a blowing paper bag, for example.

Habituation can be used as a part of dogs' training. It helps reduce reactivity and fear. If a dog that barks at a doorbell, for example, playing the sound of a bell on YouTube at the lowest volume possible gets the dog used to the sound. Once the dog seems calm and ignorant of the noise, it is turned up a notch. Over time, the dog will likely be less reactive.

2/ Sensitisation: On the other hand, sensitisation is a form of non-associative learning where a dog becomes more reactive over time to a stimulus. This is similar to how many people react to watching or reading horror stories - while normally they may have no problem turning the lights off before bed, they might find themselves jumping at every shadow after watching a horror film. The movie sensitises people to dark shapes and unfamiliar noises, increasing fear over stimuli that hadn't bothered them before. The same can happen with dogs when they are exposed to particularly startling stimuli. Thunderstorms and fireworks are the major issues with sensitisation in dogs, causing them to become more and more fearful of any startling sound with repeated exposure. Habituation can still occur, but it may take a lot more active work and time for them to stop reacting to the scary stimuli.³⁴

Training a dog to adapt to stimuli is a great way to help them remain calm, happy and unafraid. A well-adjusted dog is a secure and happy dog.³⁵

³⁴ Difference Between Associative and Non-Associative Learning | Compare the Difference Between Similar Terms

³⁵ Non-Associative Learning in Dogs | Gulf Coast K9 Dog Training (gcdogtraining.com)

The four quadrants of dog training build on B. F Skinner behavioural studies

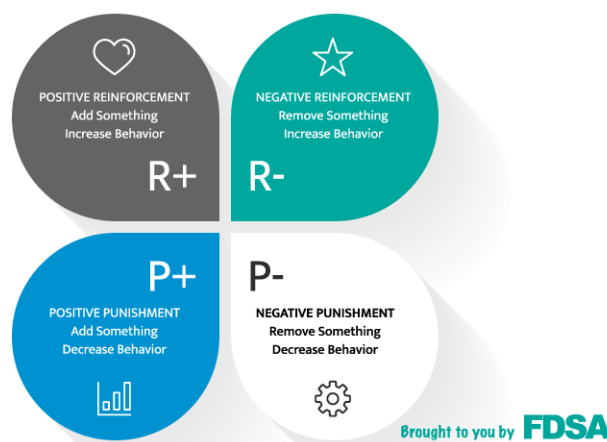
The four quadrants are:

One – Positive Reinforcement: something rewarding is ADDED to a dog's world, and it's something that's more likely to make the dog repeat the behaviour. An example of this in action could be that you ask the dog to sit, they perform the desired behaviour, and so you give them a food treat. The consequence of sitting, was the treat so they are more likely to sit again the next time they're asked.

Two – Negative Reinforcement: something aversive is REMOVED from the dog's world, and as a consequence, the dog is more likely to repeat the behaviour. For this to work, there would need to be something unpleasant in the dog's world already, so that the removal of it would be considered an improvement on the situation for the dog. An example could be that the dog is wearing a choke chain which is pulled tight until the dog sits, and then the chain is loosened. The loosening of the chain is reinforcing because it removes the dog's discomfort, and therefore increases the likelihood they'll sit next time. They learn that sitting removes the pain. **Assistance dog trainers generally do not recommend the use of negative reinforcement.**

Three – Positive Punishment: something aversive is ADDED to the dog's world... but this time it's something that will make the dog less likely to repeat the behaviour. Positive punishment is therefore used to deter unwanted behaviours and was the go-to approach only a couple of decades ago. An example of positive punishment in action could be catching the dog chewing up the sofa and reprimanding the dog with a harsh tone of voice (in previous decades it was by hitting the dog). By introducing reprimanding as a consequence of chewing; it is less likely to occur again. These days, most dog trainers do not believe in using positive punishment.

Four – Negative Punishment: something rewarding is REMOVED from the dog's world, and the removal of that thing will make the dog less likely to repeat the behaviour that caused this consequence. An example could be that the dog/handler team are playing together, but the dog bites down too hard on the handler's skin – to apply negative punishment, the handler gets up and leaves the room. When the handler returns, the dog is less likely to bite hard, because this behaviour caused the removal of his playmate! They learn that biting makes the fun stop.³⁶



Source: Fenzi Dog Sports Academy (FDSA)

³⁶ The 4 Quadrants of Dog Training: And How They're Wreaking Havoc With Your Progress! - Listen Dog Blog (listendogtraining.com), B.F Skinner

Operant and classical conditioning technique terms, include:

- **extinction options** – aiming for the extinction of a certain behaviour by ignoring the dog when it behaves in a particular undesirable manner (jumping on the handler for example). The dog will stop behaving in that manner if this behaviour does not warrant results and leads to reprimands in the form of loss of owner attention.
- **shaping behaviours** – training the dog using various methods, including clicker training, using praise words and food rewards.
- **fading techniques** – fading prompts used for initial training that are no longer required because the dog does not need prompting to perform the task.
- **stretching the ratio** – if continuing to dole out treats for **every** single correct dog response to cues (following initial training) opportunities for improvement are removed and the quality of the behaviour is affected. On top of that, the longer the dog is rewarded for **every** correct response, the harder it becomes to start phasing out all those rewards when a dog has relied on them for so long. This results in a dog who expects a reward **every** single time and risks getting frustrated when he doesn't get it. Deciding when to reinforce a behaviour can depend on a number of factors. In cases where the handler is specifically trying to teach a new behaviour, a continuous reinforcement schedule is required. Once the behaviour has been learned, switching to a partial reinforcement is recommended to reduce the risk of satiation.

Choosing an Assistance dog

Considerations to determine if a dog can be an assistance dog:

- How old is the dog? It should be over 6 months old and neutered/spayed so it is not distracted by other dogs while training. Older dogs with health conditions such as arthritis and diabetes may not be receptive to teaching.
- Is the dog's temperament suitable for a handler's personal needs?
- How is the dog's attention span? The dog should have an attention span long enough to handle training sessions.
- What are the handler's needs? For instance, if a handler needs a dog to help with balance, a larger breed would be better than a smaller one.

These are important questions to answer before deciding to train a pet as an assistance dog. In general, desirable characteristics of assistance dogs are dogs that are calm and confident, intelligent, young and in good health, and dogs that respond well to human verbal and/or visual cues. This doesn't always depend on the dog's breed; almost any breed can be trained for the job if they meet the appropriate criteria.³⁷

Training an assistance dog depends on the disability you need them to accommodate, the temperament of the dog, and other factors. Most of the time, it can be done but it is important to note that some cases are unsuccessful.

Advice from mindDog on choosing the right dog is to pick the dog that will help you.

'Your focus when choosing a potential assistance dog should be on picking the dog that is mostly likely to make it to full certified status. If you choose carefully, the time and money you invest in a dog will pay off with a well-adjusted assistance dog who may change your life. What sort of dog is best for me? Technically, any breed can be a service dog, though some are more suited for it than others. There is no one best breed for everyone. When trying to select a dog, make a list of the things you want him to do for you.

Think about the ways your disability affects your life and how a dog could help. One way to do this is to list your symptoms, and ask yourself about each one. Do you want your dog to react to what you react to? Or, do you want your dog to be calm when you are not? Do you have a problem with a specific maladaptive behaviour? Do you want your dog to stop you from doing the behaviour, or to redirect you to alternative behaviours? Do you want interaction with your dog to evoke a change in your physiology? Is there any other way a dog might assist with specific symptoms? You may want to talk with the people close to you about how your disability affects your life, and how a dog might assist you.

Write a list of the things you want your dog to do. Your list may naturally lead you to your dog's ideal size. Large breeds are traditionally used by assistance dog associations, so they may be recognized by the public and produce fewer public access challenges. Smaller dogs take up less room, are less expensive to feed, live longer, and can work just as well as their larger cousins. Breeds which are short haired are easy to keep clean and groomed. Long coated dogs may shed, or have problems with the Australian heat especially in areas with a lot of paving like town centres. Some thick coated dogs need regular haircuts. Grooming a dog may be therapeutic for

³⁷ How To Train Your Own Service Dog? A Complete Guide (servicedogregistration.org)

some people. People with lethargy from a depressive disorder may be unable to brush a dog regularly. Some individuals with anxiety disorders like OCD may find the thought of dog hair around the house overwhelming. It is important to get a dog you enjoy working with. Hounds and terriers, bred to chase game or rodents, are independently-minded.

Dogs bred to retrieve game tend to enjoy working for people. Dogs bred for guard work require confident handling. Toy breed dogs bred for companionship are focused on their humans. Good Positive Only trainers have had experience with many breeds and can give you insight on how you would interact with dogs of different types. Additionally, other people who have trained their own assistance dogs can advise you on what breeds might work for you. mindDog has a private training forum on Facebook which you will be invited to join. There you can seek advice from other mindDoggers and trainers.”³⁸

³⁸ choosing-the-right-dog.pdf (minddog.org.au)

Owner/handler expectations about the assistive support of a dog and contingency planning

Assistance dogs are expected to perform certain assistive tasks for their owners/handlers and there are a few traits expected from all assistance dogs, regardless of the specific conditions of their owner. These include:

- Heeling – this means that the dog will stop and stay in a specific location when directed to do so by its owner.
- Proofing – refers to a dog's ability to ignore all irrelevant distractions.
- Tasking – how to carry out specific tasks to mitigate a disability. See the section on '*Human disability or disorder that may benefit from dog assistive intervention*' on what can be expected from an assistance dog.

It is important to note, however **that each human/Assistance dog team is different** and because the attachment becomes emotional, support needs cannot always be assessed by listing tasking requirements. Often, following time spent with an assistance dog, owner expectations are re-visited because the assistance dog is found provide great emotional support.

Despite emotional attachment, if an assistance dog and handler/owner team do not meet each other's needs, following training, dogs still need loving homes. If things do not work out, places like [Seeing Eye Dogs Australia](#) and [Pet Rescue](#) also have ex-assistance dogs up for adoption on their respective sites.

Mental welfare of Assistance dogs during their working life and retirement

During the working life of an assistance dog, the animal's welfare is of paramount importance.

Mental welfare of Assistance dogs

Caring for an assistance dog basically entails treating them as part of the family and recognising that the dog is not just there for human assistive activity. The dog needs time to play, relax and be cared for. Caring for a dog includes the following:

Feeding:

- Feed dogs high quality dog food
- Feed dogs on a regular schedule (the recommendation is for twice a day)
- Avoid giving dogs an excessive amount of treats or human food (there are many foods such as chocolate, avocados, onions and grapes that are hazardous to a dog's health)
- Give dogs access to water at all times

Health

- Care for dogs' health and have a good, reliable veterinarian
- Get dogs vaccinated
- Get pet insurance
- Fit dogs with ID chips
- Use regular parasite preventative treatments
- Consider desexing dogs

Grooming

- Groom/brush dogs
- Keep dogs' coat clean
- Keep dogs' nails trimmed

Exercising/Socialising and Playing

- Provide dogs with plenty of exercise
- Stimulate dogs' mind with reward-based training
- Socialise dogs
- Allow dogs to play and display behaviours that are normal for the breed

Love and Respect:

- Register dogs and put tags on collars
- Treat dogs with respect and never punish with physical force or demean dogs in any way
- Be aware that dogs have basic needs - toileting, relaxation, shelter (do not keep a dog cooped up in a kennel for hours)
- Make sure dogs have access to a comfortable place to sleep and is not left out in extreme temperatures
- Build a bond of mutual love and respect with your dog(s).³⁹

Signs That the Dog Is Distressed

An anxious dog will first use subtle body language to diffuse the situation. For example:

- Lowered head carriage
- Turned the head aside to avoid staring directly at the approaching dog
- Whale eyes, where the white cornea shows around the iris
- [Lowered ears](#)
- Tail tucked between the back legs
- Raised hackles over the shoulders (a sign of severe anxiety or fear)
- Displaying the belly (a sign of submission — can be a desperate attempt to appease another dog).⁴⁰

There are many guides on how to care for a dog. **Links include:** [How to Take Care of a Dog \(with Pictures\) - wikiHow Pet](#)

For further information about the monitoring and maintenance of dogs' work/life balance, condition and physical, emotional, mental health needs see the sections on '*Animal welfare – 5 domains - the types of enrichment*' and *Dog Training Establishments Code of Practice*.

³⁹ How to Take Care of a Dog (with Pictures) - wikiHow Pet

⁴⁰ 7 Keys to Reading Your Dog's Body Language - Petful

Retirement

It can be hard to pinpoint when the right time for the retirement of an assistance dog. Many assistance dogs work until around age 10, with some retiring before and a few retiring after. It will really depend on the dog's health, personality, their working role and the owner/handler's ability to care for an older dog.

The best advice is to gradually wind down the Assistance dog's working life rather than going from all to nothing overnight (unless a veterinarian recommends an immediate stop due to health issues).

The following signs often show that an Assistance dog is nearing retirement:

- They don't seem as happy or enthusiastic about working or going out
- Their mobility isn't what it once was – they seem slower or more accident prone
- The dog is having behavioural or memory issues
- They're missing cues for familiar tasks
- They become less flexible about changes to routine or lose confidence doing things they once took in their stride
- They want to sleep more than in the past
- They lack energy after a full night's sleep
- They have been diagnosed with a long-term health condition.⁴¹

Retiring an assistance dog can be an emotional experience, even if they don't have to be rehomed. The human/assistance dog team have spent years together learning each other's needs and cues in a way that few people will ever experience. Ideally assistance dogs can retire by continuing to live in their usual/familiar habitat and continue to receive love and support.

If a retired assistance dog needs rehoming the following sites may be of help: Seeing Eye Dogs Australia and Pet Rescue Rehome a Dog | Adopt A Dog | Alternative to Surrender | Australia Wide (dogadoption.org.au).

⁴¹ Retiring Your Assistance dog | The Ralph Site Blog (theralphsishop.com)

Assistance dog training

Basic training

The foundational skills for an assistance dog or service animal aren't too difficult to begin with. Assistance dogs need socialisation with humans and other dogs, they need to be well-behaved off a leash, and they should be confident in any environment.

Socialisation is the best way to ensure that a dog becomes a friendly and confident adult. Socialisation should occur ideally between 3-20 weeks of age. Puppies should be handled often by several different people, acclimated to different sounds, and taught to be alone (to prevent separation anxiety). Any interactions with the puppy should be gentle and friendly, not confrontational.

Potty-training a dog is essential to prevent messes indoors. Getting them a crate helps them have a safe place that they want to keep clean. Keeping them in the crate and letting them out to immediately go relieve themselves teaches them that "going" outside is good. Leash training is also essential for a dog to know their limits. A dog should learn to be focused on you when appropriate, not on the things around them. These three skills are the most important basics needed in a training program before training a dog to become an assistance dog. It is also beneficial to teach them basic obedience cues such as "sit," "heel," and "down".⁴²

Eye contact

To test a dog's attentiveness and ensure that they will be focused on you, as the handler (and only you) while working, they need to be trained on eye contact. This can be accomplished by applying positive reinforcement using treats when eye contact (ignoring distractions) is established.⁴³

Off-leash training

The next step in assistance dog training is to make sure that the dog is as confident off the leash as they are on it. The dog must be responsive to the handler (and only the handler) while conducting training sessions. For this step, the dog's leash should be taken off (in a controlled environment) and the animal should be encouraged to respond to simple cues. This process should be repeated several times to ensure that the dog understands what to do. When the handler is confident that the dog responds to the cues, the handler/dog team can slowly move outdoors into public spaces.⁴⁴

Specialise/conduct complex tasks

This step entails encouraging the natural drives and instincts of dogs and how these can assist humans with disability, and it depends on what the handler needs from the assistance dog. At this point, dogs should be well-socialised and trained. They respond to basic verbal cues like "sit" and "stay," are calm and responsive on- and off-leash and can maintain eye contact with the handler. From here, the handler can train them for specific tasks based on what is needed. *PTO for examples of human disability that may benefit from dog assistive intervention and how Assistance dogs can help.*

⁴² How To Train Your Own Service Dog? A Complete Guide (servicedogregistration.org)

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

Human disability or disorder that may benefit from dog assistive intervention

Human disability or disorder that may benefit from dog assistive intervention, include:

- **Physical:** paralysis, loss of any bodily function, spinal cord injuries, chronic pain etc.
- **Sensory:** hearing impairment, low vision etc.
- **Mental health:** anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic attacks, depression, suicidal ideation, hallucinations etc.
- **Neurological, and neurodegenerative:** Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease as well as spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis (MS), hypoxic ischemia injury, epilepsy, depression, stroke affected etc.
- **Developmental:** autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, down syndrome, traumatic brain injuries (TBI), behaviour disorders etc.

Assistance dogs employed for hearing assistance will need to be taught to respond to ringing phones, doorbells, or fire alarms. This can be accomplished by training a dog to sit in front of its owner/ handler and perform a specific action when the sound trigger happens.⁴⁵ Examples of support provided by assistance dogs includes alerting the owner/handler of the following:

- For specific sounds, such as alarms, ringtones, sirens, or vehicles backing up
- That people are approaching or trying to get your attention.

Assistance dogs employed for mental/developmental/neurological health

assistance for a disorder such as post-traumatic stress (PTSD) alert their owners/handlers when they recognize signs of a panic attack, disorientation, hypervigilance, hyperventilation, or other distress. Dogs can be trained by simulating a panic or anxiety attack; dogs, by nature, will often come over and try to help. The owner/handler gives them treats when they try to help. This encourages them to develop their natural instinct and respond to the individual owner/handler triggers. Note that some types of alerting behaviour or tactile stimulation looks like the dog is misbehaving because it may entail licking the owners face or nudging the owner.

Examples of support provided by Assistance dogs includes the following:

- Cuddling on cue
- Interrupting repetitive movements or compulsive behaviours
- Leading the owner/handler to an uncrowded area or place to sit down
- Responding to an anxiety or panic attack
- Interrupting nightmares or night terrors.

Assistance dogs employed for mobility assistance help those who are physically disabled. These dogs can simply be taught by rewarding them when they fetch an item by word. For instance, by stating the name of the object then pointing at it so they retrieve it. They will learn the cues through practice.⁴⁶ Examples of support provided by assistance dogs includes the following:

- Seeking help from someone else when the owner/handler is having a medical emergency
- Pressing a medical alert button for designated emergency contact
- Retrieving personal items, such as keys or cell phones
- Carrying items
- Opening, holding, and closing doors
- Bringing medication to the owner/handler at a designated time

⁴⁵ How To Train Your Own Service Dog? A Complete Guide (servicedogregistration.org)

⁴⁶ How To Train Your Own Service Dog? A Complete Guide (servicedogregistration.org)

- Turning on and off lights
- Providing a foundation to steady the owner/handler or helping them stand up
- Tugging or holding clothing, socks and shoes to assist with dressing and undressing
- Pulling to assist manual wheelchair propulsion.

More examples ? should we include case studies from websites such [Case Studies - Australian Lions Hearing Dogs ?](#)

Appealing to dogs' olfactory perception/ target odours

In some cases, dog training may entail appealing to dog's olfactory perception/target odours. For example, Assistance dogs can alert owner/handlers about specific smells, such as smoke or gas.

They can also be trained to detect:

- Allergens, such as specific foods or triggering odours
- Low blood sugar levels
- The presence or absence of people in a designated area or location
- Changes in cortisol levels.

Suitable methodologies and practices related to odour detection, include the following:

- items/human conditions and their associated odours that a dog could be required to detect in its working role as a mental health assistant
- methods of assessing when dogs are ready to extend the range of odours, they are able to detect
- positive and negative indicators shown by dogs when detecting (or not detecting) specific odours
- odour imprint - training dogs to memorise odours and respond appropriately.
- Assistance dogs can alert owner/handlers about specific smells, such as smoke or gas.

Feeding dogs

Good Basic Feeding Tips from the Dog Breed Info Center:

- *'Dogs should be fed at the same time every day. Feeding at the same time will keep a dog on a bathroom schedule. Ask your vet how many times a day you should feed your dog.*
- *Feed your dog the same type and brand of food every day. Unlike humans, a dog's digestive system cannot handle changes in food. It can cause upset stomach and diarrhea.*
- *When switching to a new food gradually transition him to the new food by mixing portions of both foods until you slowly phase out the old food. Your dog may experience diarrhea if his food is suddenly changed.*
- *If you are mixing water into dry food you should mix 4 parts dry food to 1 part water.*
- *Keep fresh drinking water available at all times. Change the water at least once a day, more for dogs who drool.*
- *Keep food and water bowls clean.*
- *Don't overfeed dogs.*
- *Follow the guidelines on the dog food package for recommended feeding amounts.*
- *Monitor dogs' weight and activity level, and make feeding adjustments as necessary.*
- *If a dog has loose stool feeding sweet potatoes is a natural stool hardener. Unlike some medicines, giving too many will not make them constipated. They sell sweet potato chips for dogs in a lot of pet supply stores.⁴⁷*

The following website: Basic Feeding Guide for Dogs (dogbreedinfo.com) provides helpful information on dogs' nutritional needs.

⁴⁷ Basic Feeding Guide for Dogs (dogbreedinfo.com)

Dog Training Equipment: The Right Tools for the Job

Basic pieces of training equipment are the bare essentials needed for most types of dog training.

General Equipment

- No pull harness
- Chest plate
- Collar
- Haltis/martingales
- Control obedience – walking/guiding harnesses
- Grooming equipment

Training kit:

- Harness with padded buddies
- Markers/Clickers
- Working jackets/coats/ identification vests
- Night glow
- Training treat pouch
- Tug toy
- Treat pouches
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), *if required*
- **Utility articles** - an assortment of dumbbell-like objects used in the scent discrimination exercise. **A utility mat** is used as the base under the utility articles. For early training, the decoy articles may be tied to the mat to discourage the dog from selecting them, helping him to focus on detecting the correct item by scent.
- **Gloves** used to keep other scents from being transferred to the utility articles.
- **An article bag** - used to transport and store utility articles.
- **Standard leashes** may be used for any training but are not ideal for all. Materials include nylon, and leather, and some styles are also available in a retractable unit.
- **Nylon show leads** such as Martingales come with a slim collar attached that can be adjusted for a customized fit.

Methods of desensitising and socialising equipment used for Assistance dogs. [Need information on this.](#)

Organisational links

Link: Assistance dogs Australia

Organisations such as Assistance dogs Australia trains and places unique dogs with Australians in unique situations. They currently train dogs that specialise in support for people with a physical disability, autism or PTSD. As well as providing a range of services to these individuals and their families.

Re PTSD: *'Assistance dogs can help guide those living with trauma back to a sense of safety, helping to improve interpersonal connections, encourage engagement in the community, and regain areas of functioning that may have been diminished by their trauma.'*

All ADA trained and qualified dogs have full Public Access Rights, allowing them to accompany their handlers on all public transport and into almost all public areas. These rights are protected under Federal law.*

Our dogs are trained to the highest standards, and are accredited by Assistance dogs International.⁴⁸ Programs include PAWS (Parents Autism Workshops and Support) which bring together parents of children with autism.⁴⁹

Australian Support Dogs Link: Apply for a Dog | ASDOG

'Being partnered with an assistance dog can be a tremendous asset to a person's life and quest for enhanced independence. Assistance dogs complete advanced skills training and are trained to travel on public transport. They are happy and willing to help at home and in community environments by retrieving dropped items, assisting with household tasks, opening and closing doors and drawers, removing clothing and much more.'

It is important to remember that having an assistance dog is also a serious and long term commitment. You must be prepared to have your dog accompany you 24 hours per day and be responsible for maintaining its skills, health and general well being.

If you would like to talk to ASDOG about how an assistance dog could benefit you please call 1300 788 721.⁵⁰

Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)

Policy and advocacy

'The AVA maintains relationships with national, state and local levels of government, and provides advice on all aspects of animal health and welfare policy.'

Members feel strongly about issues being debated in public forums, and the association actively campaigns for change on a range of animal health and welfare issues. We comment publicly on topics being discussed in the media or being considered by parliaments and regulators.

The AVA also helps members to communicate association policies to their local governments, members of parliament, and the media.

The AVA Policy Advisory Council includes a representative from every AVA division and special interest group. It develops a range of national policies and position statements after

⁴⁸ People living with PTSD - Assistance dogs Australia

⁴⁹ PAWS - Assistance dogs Australia

⁵⁰ Apply for a Dog | ASDOG

*extensive consultation with members. These are approved by the Board before becoming official policies or positions of the association.*⁵¹

Link: Canine Helpers for the disabled

'Service Dogs provide valuable physical assistance to a person with a physical disability. They allow that person to take part in activities that they otherwise might not be able to do and help them with activities of daily living so that they may be able to live more independently. Service Dogs can perform tasks such as opening doors,

By assisting their owner with certain tasks such as pulling the wheelchair, Service Dogs can help their owner to save their strength for other activities. Because of this, and their increased independence, some Service Dog users have found employment or moved out of care facilities with the help of their dog. Service Dogs can also save the owner money by reducing their need for paid care.

Service Dogs are very highly trained animals that take a long time, and a lot of money to train. The amount of time required to train a Service Dog is the same as that of a Guide Dog. If you encounter a Service Dog (or any type of Assistance dog) when wearing its identification coat, please remember that it deserves the same respect that you would afford a Guide Dog. Please do not try to touch or talk to the Service Dog without first asking its handler.

Service Dogs Can

- *Lift and carry items*
- *Retrieve dropped or lost items*
- *Be used as a brace for people with walking difficulty*
- *Open and close doors*
- *Activate light switches*
- *Pull a manual wheelchair*
- *Accompany their owner in public*
- *Bark an alert for help*
- *Assist with daily tasks such as making the bed, doing the laundry etc*
- *Move limbs for people with paralysis*
- *And many more.....*

*Service dogs are also a wonderful companion and friend to their owner. Often people comment that the emotional and social benefits of having a service dog are of equal importance to the physical benefits. Service dogs help people to make friends, encourage an initial talking point for first time meetings and also give people the opportunity to gain self-esteem by doing things for themselves.*⁵²

Empower Assistance dogs

Link: Welcome to Empower Assistance dogs Queensland, Australia

Empower Assistance dogs enhance quality of life and independence for people with disabilities by providing professionally trained and government certified guide, hearing and assistance dogs. They were the first organisation that was government certified to train all three types of service dogs – guide, hearing and assistance dogs. The organisation achieves this through a program of selecting, raising and training dogs to assist disabled people with everyday tasks.

⁵¹ Australian Veterinary Association | Policy & Advocacy (ava.com.au)

⁵² Canine Helpers for the disabled

Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs are trained to enhance the quality of life of vision or hearing impaired, and/or physically or mentally challenged persons whilst still maintaining as much independence for the handler. This means that the dog will be a permanent working companion for the disabled handler and will assist with a myriad of guide, noise alert or task work but whilst still having the handler work and interact as much as physically or mentally possible. In many cases, a secondary handler will be necessary to help with health, hygiene and exercise and to give play and environmental enrichment to the dog.⁵³

Graceful Dog Training

Link: [Dog Training - Graceful Dog Training](#)

"At Graceful Dog Training I believe all animals should be trained in a force free method." - Grace

'Assistance dogs are no exception to this and should be happy, confident, and relaxed to train and work with their handler.

The situations Assistance dogs are presented with in their daily role means the handler is required to completely trust in their dogs ability to help them achieve a better quality of life.

Grace is the Owner and Trainer Graceful Dog Training.

Grace has never lived without a dog of her own and has many years of experience as a Dog Trainer.

Due to her own experience of requiring an Assistance dog, Grace decided to specialise in Assistance dog Training.

The desire Grace holds close to her heart is to help other people that require an Assistance dog on their journey towards a special relationship with their own dog.⁵⁴

Good Dog AAI

Link: [Good Dog . Animal Assisted . Therapy Dog Services \(gooddogai.com\)](#)

'We provide Therapy Dog visits and animal-assisted interventions in Darwin, Palmerston and surrounds. We happily provide consulting and input into animal-assisted therapies and visits, should you need expert advice or require appropriate planning and design for a desired animal-assisted program.

Our visiting and intervention service comes with professional indemnity insurance, public liability insurance, Therapy Dog certification, Working With Children Check (NT Ochre Card), and National Police Check. Therapy Animals serve as non-judgemental companions in the processes of learning, development, socialisation and positive wellbeing. Therapy Dogs are particularly helpful in the community as they already perform in fields of disability assistance, emotional regulation, and assisting those living with a chronic illness. Dogs are the single most commonly used animals in Animal Assisted Interventions (Nimer & Lundahl, 2007).*

⁵³ Welcome to Empower Assistance dogs Queensland, Australia

⁵⁴ Dog Training - Graceful Dog Training

Therapy Dogs are particularly useful in having positive impacts on a range of human issues and medical conditions. Studies have shown that there are four main areas of the human condition that have demonstrated consistent improvements: those on the Autism Spectrum, people living with chronic medical conditions, children or adults with behavioural issues, and humans in need of immediate emotional wellbeing (Fontana & Jones, 2017).

Trained Therapy Dogs are well suited to assisting humans as they are socially motivated, and will often seek human attention or human interaction. Increasing research on canine cognition show the dog's ability to understand human social cues, like body language, and even emotion. ⁵⁵

Guide Dogs Australia

Links: [Guide Dogs NSW/ACT](#), [Guide Dogs Victoria](#), [Guide Dogs SA/NT](#), <https://www.guidedogswa.com.au>, [Providing Guide & Assistance dogs in Tasmania - Guide Dogs Tasmania](#), [Homepage - Guide Dogs Queensland](#)

'Help to support your patient's independence and mobility by referring them to Guide Dogs.... While our beloved Guide Dogs play a crucial role in the work we do, we have a versatile range of additional supports to meet your patient's unique needs.

Whether your patient is young or young-at-heart; if they have recently experienced a change in vision or had long-term low vision, we will always provide support. ⁵⁶

Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs (Qld Government)

Link: [Choosing a guide, hearing or assistance dog | People with disability | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

'You may need a guide, hearing or assistance dog if you have a disability and need support to live more independently and access public places, public passenger vehicles, or rental or holiday accommodation in Queensland.

Most people are familiar with the guide dogs used by a person with vision impairment. However, there are many other ways that dogs can be specifically trained to assist people in their everyday lives, including:

- *alerting people with a hearing impairment to specific sounds*
- *pulling wheelchairs or carrying and picking up items, or helping with balance for people with mobility impairments*
- *alerting an oncoming medical episode, for example, diabetic attack or epileptic seizure*
- *alerting a person with psychiatric illness to move away from a situation that increases symptoms. ⁵⁷*

Helping Paws Service Dog Training (HPSDT)

⁵⁵ [Good Dog . Animal Assisted . Therapy Dog Services \(gooddogai.com\)](#)

⁵⁶ Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

⁵⁷ [Choosing a guide, hearing or assistance dog | People with disability | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

Link: <https://helpingpawsservicedogtraining.com.au>

Assistance dog/Animal Assisted Therapy/Therapy Dog

“Empowering people with a disability to train their own Assistance dog”

“Dogs provide comfort, affection, and love without judgement to children and adults; especially through the most challenging time of a persons life”

‘HPSDT will provide you with the necessary information and training, encouragement and support at every step through your training journey to certification in one of the following areas:

Assistance dogs are trained to alleviate the effects of a person’s disabilities through performing tasks that directly relate to the person’s needs, this results in the person achieving more independence and confidence. You and your mate will work together as a team and developed an everlasting bond through this training journey.

Animal Assisted Therapy is carried out by Counsellors, Allied Health Practitioners and Psychiatrists who use animal interactions with clients to assist in their recovery. The options of incorporating dogs in the goal setting process are extensive.

Therapy Dog, provide opportunities to enhance people’s quality of life in a variety of settings.⁵⁸

In the Paws of Angels

Link: [Dog Training, Agility Beachmere, Sunshine Coast. Golden Retrievers \(inthepawsofangers.com\)](http://Dog Training, Agility Beachmere, Sunshine Coast. Golden Retrievers (inthepawsofangers.com))

‘A Therapy Dog is completely different from a Service Dog (U.S.A.), or an Assistance dog (Australia). Therapy dogs provide an incredible service to hospitals, respite centres and schools, and their work should never be diminished. However, they do not have the same extensive training as Assistance dogs, nor do they hold legally protected access to areas pet dogs cannot go. They may only attend the facility for which they have written authorisation.

*There is currently **no regulation** for therapy dogs in Australia, in spite of many companies training and "certifying" them. You can, in fact ,train your own therapy dog. This is not an ideal situation, as no rigorous standards are in place.*

Assistance dogs are trained to an exceptional standard to serve one disabled handler, and must pass rigorous tests, as with guide and hearing dogs. This training takes time, and is expensive, requiring highly skilled trainers across many months of work with and without the handler. Many people assume a PAT test qualifies their dog. They are truly misinformed. the PAT test is the simplest part of assistance accreditation.

Generally, Assistance dogs were never pets (although some exceptions can be made for soldiers with P.T.S.D. and their dogs), but bred for a specific need and matched to a specific person with a disability. These pups go to puppy raisers for the first year and then are carefully matched to a handler.

People who pretend to have service dogs are a very real threat to people with disabilities and their Assistance dogs. Assistance dogs and their disabled handlers are protected by both state and commonwealth law. Individuals and organisations can be heavily fined for denying access to these

⁵⁸ <https://helpingpawsservicedogtraining.com.au>

teams. If you see an assistance dog behaving badly in public please report it to Guide, Hearing and Assistance dogs Qld.

We are a Qld. Government Approved Assistance dog Training Institution. It is not an easy process to obtain this approval. Many unapproved organisations are making promises of accreditation that they are unable to keep. There is a list of all Qld. Government approved trainers at this [link](https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/ghad/choosing-ghad):
<https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/ghad/choosing-ghad>⁵⁹

Integra Service Dogs Australia

Link: [Integra Service Dogs Australia - Integra Service Dogs Australia \(isda.com.au\)](https://www.isda.com.au)

'Integra is a Not-for-Profit Organisation, founded by Veterans for supporting Veterans and First Responders suffering from PTSD. Integra specialises in the sourcing, matching, placement, ongoing training and development of high quality Labrador trainee Service Dogs with Veterans and First Responders suffering from PTSD. We are a national provider, delivering Assistance dog services in most states and territories, and have efficiently matched and placed more than one hundred (100) high quality Labrador dogs with Veterans and First Responders.

Our mission is to support people suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health-related illnesses, as a result of trauma during service.

Integra was founded in 2016 to deliver the vision established by Mr Ken Lloyd, OAM MSs JP (NSW), which is to provide excellent Service Dogs to Veterans and First Responders who have served our country.⁶⁰

K9 Assistance Australia

Link: [K9 Support - Therapy Dog Training](#)

'K9 Support only train a small number of Assistance dogs each year. This is a practical training with no online component and can only be carried out at our facility in Benalla, Victoria.

Please get in touch with us using information from our [contact page](#) if you would like to discuss service dog training.⁶¹

Leader Dogs for the Blind

Link: [Welcome to Leader Dogs for the Blind](#)

'Since 1939, Leader Dogs for the Blind has operated one of the world's most respected and innovative guide dog programs. Our free training program welcomes clients who are legally blind, at least 16 years old, have good orientation and mobility skills and are able to care for a dog.

Training is personalized for each client. Thanks to sophisticated breeding, puppy raising and dog training programs, we are able to match clients with a dog that best fits their lifestyle, travel pace, physical size, stamina and other considerations. Clients have the opportunity to train with their guide dog in a wide variety of situations to fit current and future needs, including urban, suburban and rural locations; college campuses; busy stores and malls; public transit and other environments. Guide Dog Training at Leader Dog is available for people who are:

⁵⁹ Assistance dog or Therapy Dog? | paws-of-angels (inthepawsofangers.com)

⁶⁰ About Us - Integra Service Dogs Australia (isda.com.au)

⁶¹ K9 Support - Therapy Dog Training

- Legally blind
- At least 16 years old
- Able to care for a dog
- Efficient with orientation and mobility skills

We offer our Guide Dog Training program in a variety of formats: on-campus training (our most popular option), in-home delivery, flex training, urban training, warm weather training, and training specifically for individuals who are Deaf-Blind.⁶²

MindDog

Link: [Home - mindDog Australia](#)

'A mindDog is a psychiatric assistance dog. An assistance dog (also known as a service dog) is covered by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. An assistance dog is trained to assist their handler in public and is guaranteed access to all public places including shopping centres, hospitals, public transport and restaurants. According to this Act, an assistance dog is trained to alleviate the effect of a disability and must meet standards of hygiene and behaviour.

For individuals with a mental health disorder and a dog, mindDog will test that dog for suitability, oversee the training, test, and certify that dog as an assistance dog.

mindDogs assist people with mental health disorders whose lives are often severely compromised by anxiety and fear. With their mindDog they are able to travel on public transport, access public places and take part in social activities which have been closed off to them.⁶³

Personal Assistance dog Solutions (PADS)

Link: [About us | Pads Australia \(pads-australia.org\)](#)

'Based in Mudgee, NSW, Adele Lindley is the proprietor of PADS and is a passionate and dedicated trainer with over 30 years' experience in the animal industry. Her aim with PADS is to help you train your dogs with scientifically proven positive reinforcement training. This has been proven to be the most effective way to train any animal. This approach to training is also very widely used around the world in zoos, farming etc to train animals for animal husbandry requirements as well as for medical intervention and treatments.

Over the past 15 years there has been a major shift in dog training and the way we train our dogs, or in fact any animal. Training has changed dramatically as more scientifically proven research becomes available. Adele has spent many years researching and learning these new skills to be able to bring them to her clients. Adele has a wealth of experience not just in training but running a multi dog household, breeding, rearing and training her own dogs and pups and she is aware of the positive outcomes and the pitfalls of having dogs and can help you to manage your dog/s with a more positive approach.

Adele's major passion and experience is working with other organisations within the assistance dog sector and also from time to time trains dog for her clients or helps them to train their own. Having her own disabilities she is well aware of the difficulties many disabled people have and will do her best to accommodate her clients and provide a program suitable for their dog's needs.

⁶² Guide Dog Training - Leader Dogs for the Blind

⁶³ About Us - mindDog Australia

Her pet dog training programs are all about manners, animal welfare, care, animal husbandry, enrichment programs, grooming and maintenance. Having a multi dog household Adele is very aware of how much is involved in the care, welfare and training of dogs.’⁶⁴

Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA)

Link: [PIAA](#)

‘Established in 1979, the Pet Industry Association remains the ONLY trade-only Association within Australia, dedicated to the protection of the pet industry, and promoting responsible pet ownership.

The pet industry is very heavily regulated by Government Agencies at federal, state and local levels. There are also many animal welfare and animal rights groups within the community that want to influence or prevent us doing legitimate business. It is becoming more important that the operators within the Australian Pet Industry take greater control of their own destiny. As such, the Pet Industry Association regularly makes formal submissions on pet industry issues at the request of Government agencies and industry regulators.’⁶⁵

Pets Australia

Link: [Pets Australia - Australian Pet Site \(mypets.net.au\)](#)

‘My Pets is a Pet information site with information about a great many different types of pets..... Pets that can be a friend, a companion, a hobby and more.’⁶⁶

Righteous Pups Australia

Link: [Home - Righteous Pups Australia](#)[Righteous Pups Australia](#)

‘Righteous Pups exists to BRING PROMISE TO LIFE and we do that by raising Champions and launching Heroes!

Our Champions are our Assistance, Type 1 Diabetes medical alert and Therapy Dogs who have that incredible ability to connect, bond and assist children with disability or disease, at risk teens and young people with disabilities to heal and thrive in life. Our Champions bring out the best in us and time and again we have seen lives transformed through canine intervention.

Our Heroes are the people we have the privilege to serve, our children and families living with Type 1-Diabetes and/or Autism Spectrum Disorders, our at risk teens deemed to be at significant educational risk, our young people with disabilities who allow us to assist them to bring their promise to life. We launch our Heroes into a new day, a new normal and a better tomorrow with quality, dignity and hope.

We do all this because we believe that we are supposed to be the people who turn to the person on our left and the person on our right and care about them and help them in their moment of great

⁶⁴ About us | Pads Australia (pads-australia.org)

⁶⁵ About Us — PIAA

⁶⁶ Pets Australia - Australian Pet Site (mypets.net.au)

*need. This makes us better human beings and gives us the opportunity to make a difference in this world and our communities.*⁶⁷

The Royal Society for the Blind, Guide & Assistance dog Service SA

Link: Royal Society for the Blind of SA Inc | healthdirect

*'The RSB Assistance dog program **assists** blind and vision impaired clients, children with Autism and Veterans experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). Find out more about the RSB Guide and Assistance dog services Organisations for training and support.'*⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Home - Righteous Pups Australia Righteous Pups Australia

⁶⁸ Royal Society for the Blind of SA Inc | healthdirect