

Gail Munro is closely bonded to her eleven year old elderly German Shepherd-x Timothy and they have a special relationship.

They know each other's moves and moods and are inseparable. Gail's commitment to Timothy saw him win Pet Slimmer of the Year award in his younger days. Timothy keeps watch over Gail and will give a friendly bark if visitors arrive.

"This dog means so much to me because he is my family. We have a really intuitive relationship, we understand each other", says Gail.

"He loves visitors and squeals with excitement when anyone arrives. When I was still living in my own home, Timothy particularly loved Mick the maintenance man who always gave him a meat pie," says Gail.

Gail is one of many older people across the country who found accommodation options were limited when pets were part of the equation. "A lot of retirement villages didn't want to know about pets and those who did seemed to have a concern about larger dogs", Gail explained.

After months of anxious phone calls, meetings and visits Gail found a village that understood the bond she shares with Timothy. In mid-December 2013, Gail and Timothy happily moved into AVEO Glynde Lodge in Adelaide.

In less than a week, Gail became friends with her immediate neighbour who has a poodle. Together they share morning tea while their dogs enjoy each other's canine company. Gail learned of a group of village residents who meet regularly at 5am to go walking with their dogs. This same group regularly go out together, socialising over lunch or dinner.

Moving with Timothy has made all the difference and moving without him just wasn't an option says Gail, who adds the world would be a happier, healthier and kinder place if no elderly pet owner had to be separated from



Gail & Timothy

Happier and healthier together

their pet upon entering an aged care facility or retirement village.

There are many villages and residential care homes now appreciating the benefits of keeping people and pets together. Gail's experience of village life is one of animal loving residents being united in purposeful activity around caring for their pets, keeping engaged, connected and healthier.

A national project is currently underway to identify and share successful pet policies and models for including pets in daily life in retirement villages and residential aged care settings. Animal Welfare League Australia's Positive Ageing with Animals Project is compiling

policies and resources to assist providers to manage pets.

"We know elderly pet owners are happier and healthier with their pets and we want to make it easier for villages and facilities to identify workable models", says AWLA spokesperson Anne Boxhall.

"We're finding there are facilities that are passionate about preserving the bond between older people and pets. There are some excellent pet-friendly models up and running in retirement villages and residential care facilities and we aim to highlight these".

For further information, visit awla.com.au or call (03) 624 87661



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DonateLife Week 2014 – Have the chat that saves live

Australians are being urged to Have the chat that saves lives – ask and know your loved ones’ donation decision with DonateLife Week taking place from Sunday 23 February until Sunday 02 March and the ongoing need for organs and tissue for transplant. All Australians are encouraged to take time to talk with their families about organ and tissue donation as the family of every potential donor is always asked to confirm the wishes of their loved one before donation can proceed. One donor can transform the lives of up to 10 people and significantly improve the lives of many more – at any one time there are around 1600 people awaiting an organ transplant.

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