



MEDIA RELEASE

CANA calls for Pet-Friendly Aged Care: Have your say in the 2025 Survey!

No one in aged care should face losing their cherished pet

AUSTRALIA, 3 MARCH 2025: With 95% of people believing that pets contribute to improved health outcomes for older people*, having access to pet-friendly aged care should be far more common, says national animal welfare charity Companion Animal Network Australia (CANA or Australia CAN).

Yet, as of 2023, only **18% of aged care facilities** allow residents to keep pets, and just **9% of older pet owners living at home** – who rely on government-funded Home Care Packages (HCPs) – receive any assistance with their pet's care, according to CANA's [2023 Aged Care Survey: Status of Pets in Aged Care](#).

As a result, pet surrenders due to life changes — such as moving into aged care or struggling to meet a pet's needs — continue to rise. Many older Australians lose not only a cherished companion but also the daily joy, comfort and sense of purpose that a pet provides.

CANA's [2025 Pet Friendly Aged Care Survey](#) is now live, and everyone is encouraged to participate to help shape policies that keep older adults and their beloved pets together.

"CANA is calling on all Australians to seriously consider what this means for their families and how it could personally affect them at some point in the future," says Trish Ennis, CEO of CANA, which represents companion animal welfare organisations across Australia.

"No one should have to say goodbye to a beloved pet simply because they're growing older or need extra care."

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, yet, for many older adults – whether living at home, in a retirement village or an aged care home – access to pet companionship remains a challenge.

"Through our **Pet Friendly Aged Care program**, we work to preserve this critical bond, keeping people and pets together for as long as it benefits their health and wellbeing," says Ms Ennis

"For many older adults, having a pet is life-changing. Numerous studies show that pets reduce loneliness, stress, pain and anxiety, while encouraging social engagement and physical activity.



“Yet, outdated policies and a lack of support mean too many older people are forced to part with their cherished animals, despite still being able to enjoy life with them. Formal support for pet care within aged care services would benefit many more older Australians.”

Take the survey and help make a difference

CANA is inviting aged care providers, policymakers, pet owners and community members to take part in **CANA’s 2025 Pet Friendly Aged Care Survey** to help shape policies that support pet companionship in aged care.

“We believe it’s time for a change and by participating in the survey, you are helping advocate for policies that allow older Australians to continue experiencing the companionship of their beloved pets and helping to keep pets at home,” says Ms Ennis.

The Survey is open to the General public, Residential Aged Care (staff or resident), Retirement Village (staff or resident), In Home Aged Care (carers or cared for) and Home Care Providers.

Take the survey: petfriendlyagedcare.com.au/surveys

Why Pets Matter: The Voices of Older Australians

Read real stories that highlight the profound impact of pets in the lives of older Australians: petfriendlyagedcare.com.au/share-your-story/all-stories

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About Pet Friendly Aged Care

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

About Companion Animal Network Australia

Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN or CANA) is a registered charity representing the companion animal welfare work of our member organisations across the country: Animal Welfare League QLD, Lort Smith (VIC), Sydney Dogs and Cats Home, Dogs’ Homes of Tasmania and Saving Animals From Euthanasia Inc (WA). Our members provide rescue, shelter, re-homing, fostering, health care and enrichment services to more than 50,000 animals every year.

Through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives, we advocate for the human-animal bond and promote responsible pet ownership. We use our national voice to lobby for the humane treatment of all companion animals and we rally support for our member programs that deliver high welfare standards. Australia CAN national campaigns include Pets in Aged Care, Rent with Pets and Pets in Business. To discover more, visit www.australiacan.org.au