

ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

Summary	All staff will be aware of the policies and procedures related to an assistance animal onsite at Royal Rehab Private Petersham. This policy identifies onsite arrangements for the housing of an assistance animal.
Approved By	General Manager, Royal Rehab Private Petersham
Date Approved	June 2023
Comprehensive Review	June 2026
Related Documents	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Status	Active
Version	2019 – 03
Document History	2019-03 reflects changes to policy location

Title: Assistance Animals

1. Scope of Practice

This policy is relevant to all staff and volunteers who work at Royal Rehab Private Petersham. The policy also pertains to all participants, clients and visitors of Royal Rehab Private Petersham.

2. Expected Outcome

All staff, participants and visitors will be aware of the policies related to an assistance animal onsite at Royal Rehab Private Petersham.

3. Definitions

Assistance animal

An assistance animal in NSW is a dog or other animal that is either:

1. accredited under a law of a State or Territory that provides for the accreditation of animals trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of that disability; OR
2. accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed by the Commonwealth; OR
3. trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of that disability, and, to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place.

This is based on how assistance animals are defined in Commonwealth law (*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*). Currently neither the Commonwealth nor NSW laws provide for the accreditation of assistance animals. A working dog cannot also be an assistance animal.

4. Policy

All Royal Rehab Private Petersham staff, volunteers, clients and participants need to comply with the policy related to an assistance animal onsite at Royal Rehab Private Petersham. Failure of staff to comply with any part of this policy is a performance management issue, which may lead to disciplinary action. Failure of participants, clients and visitors to comply with any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Royal Rehab Private Petersham will accommodate participants travelling with an assistance animal. Participants with an assistance animal visiting from another state will need to follow the Royal Rehab Private Petersham policy, which adheres to NSW law as stated by the Office of Local Government.

Royal Rehab Private Petersham requires proof of accreditation before allowing an animal to accompany a participant. Any participant bringing an animal without the proper accreditation, will be required to arrange alternate housing for the animal during their stay at Royal Rehab Private Petersham.

A requirement of councils before issuing an accreditation for an assistance animal, is: "(the animal is trained to meet standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place." As Royal Rehab Private Petersham is a hospital that accommodates other paying

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participants, including those that may also have Assistance Animals, it is important this council requirement is adhered to at Royal Rehab Private Petersham. This means:

- assistance animals must not urinate or defecate anywhere inside the building. They must be taken outside, and all faeces removed and placed in a rubbish bin after being sealed in a plastic bag.
- only animal water and food bowls are to be used for the assistance animal. Any participants with assistant animals coming to Royal Rehab Private Petersham need to provide animal water and food bowls.
- the assistance animal must not cause harm to another person, animal or property.
- the assistance animal must not disturb other participants by causing noise such as barking or scratching.
- the assistance animal must not sleep on beds, or furniture in the participants room or common areas. Participants may bring a clean animal bed. This is important for the sake of other participants that will use the property and may have allergies.

It is unlawful to impose a charge on a person to enter a place open to, or used by the public, only because the person is accompanied by an assistance animal unless:

- it is reasonably necessary to supply additional accommodation for the animal and a reasonable charge is applied for that accommodation; OR
- the owner, or person in charge, of the place reasonably incurs additional expense because the animal is present, the charge is reasonable in the circumstances and is charged to compensate for the expense.

This means any cost incurred by Royal Rehab Private Petersham as a result of additional cleaning, property replacement or any other damages caused physically or to reputation, due to this policy not being adhered to, will be passed onto the participant with the accompanying assistance animal.

5. References and Acknowledgements

Information used in the creation of this policy was garnered from:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-and-cats/information-for-the-community/assistance-animals>

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