

Media Release

SA Health

31 January 2017

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL WELCOMES NEW DOG-FRIENDLY REST STOP

The Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) has created a dog-friendly rest stop for guide dogs and therapy dogs who attend appointments at the hospital with their owners.

The new dog comfort zone was developed in response to feedback from consumers who asked the hospital to create a special place for guide dogs and therapy dogs to rest, go to the toilet and have a drink.

Director of Consumer and Community Engagement at the Women's and Children's Health Network, Allan Ball, said the WCH is one of the first public hospitals to have a dog comfort zone.

"We consulted with Guides Dog Australia and our Youth Advisory Group to map-out the best design and location for the dog comfort stop," said Mr Ball.

The dog comfort spot is split into two zones. One zone has a bed of bark chips and a small hedge to block noise for "number ones". The second zone has artificial turf boarded by bark chips for "number twos". There is also a dispenser for waste disposal bags, a water bowl and a bench for dog-handlers.

The rest stop is clearly signposted and is accessible to all people including those with wheelchairs.

"It was very important to us to remove any barriers that could contribute to a less-than-ideal consumer experience at the hospital," said Mr Ball.

"We would like to thank Bunnings Prospect for financing the project and helping us build the comfort zone, with assistance from our consumer representatives."

Twelve-year-old Kerry-Anne attends rehabilitation sessions at the Women's and Children's Hospital and also receives treatment for a respiratory condition. Her therapy dog, Charlie, was one of the first dogs to use the new rest stop.

"Our dog Charlie plays a key role in Kerry-Anne's medical care and now we can bring Charlie to the hospital knowing that he has a place to relieve himself and have some respite," said Kerry-Anne's Mum, Sheila.

"The hospital is sending a very positive message to the community that it takes social inclusion seriously, which we as a family greatly appreciate."

The dog comfort zone is now officially open and available to all consumers of the Women's and Children's Health Network who rely on the support of a registered service dog.

For more information

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