



Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation

POLICE ASSISTANCE DOGS

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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PACKAGE

PTSD ASSISTANCE DOG APPLICATION OVERVIEW



Definition: A PTSD Assistance Dog is trained over a two-year period to assist individuals who have a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder by providing physical and emotional support to an individual. These dogs increase the independence and self-esteem of the person and are trained to provide home support, community support and community access support.

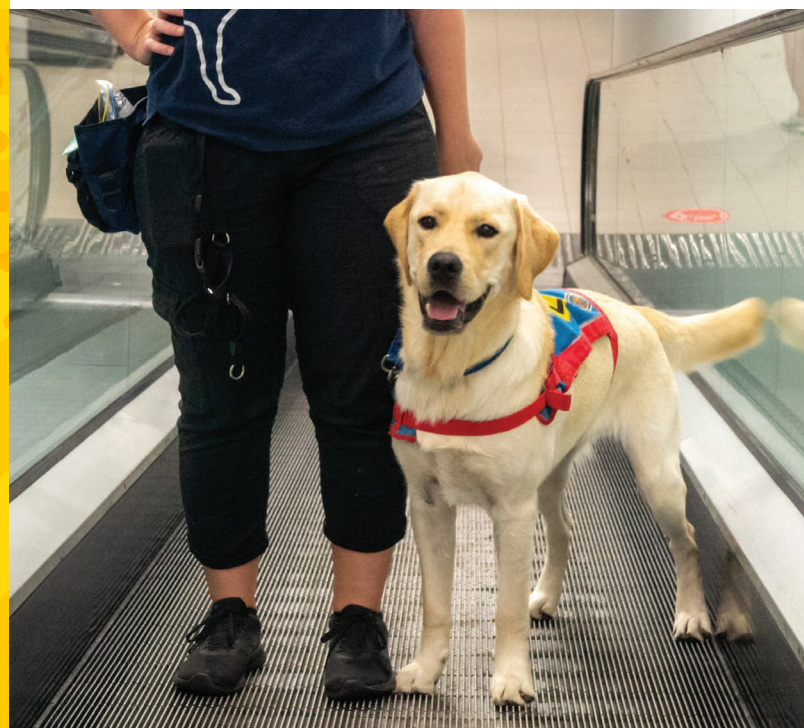
Intended for: These dogs are trained to support their recipient in their home and community environments. They are trained to travel on public transport and support the recipient in public settings.

Expectations: Each PTSD Assistance Dog will require re-testing each year in order to maintain its ability to function and be licensed as a *PTSD Assistance Dog. Assistance Dogs Australia will support you and your dog in this process. However, we also require commitment from the recipient to follow specific guidelines to ensure the dog's ongoing wellbeing is provided and training is maintained.

**As per the required criteria of Assistance Dogs International – Governing Body for all Assistance Animals World-wide.*

Assistance Dogs Australia (ADA) trains Labradors and Golden Retrievers to enhance the quality of life of people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). People are always astounded with the skills of a specially trained dog but, as with all dog training, it takes patience, persistence, dedication and consistency on the part of the handler.

A dog is not the answer for everyone, so please consider the following carefully before completing this expression of interest form for a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Assistance Dog. It is important that the whole family is in agreement and is fully aware of the implications of owning a dog. It may help you to think about the following:





Do you have the time and energy?

The dog is well trained and well socialised, however you need to practice skills and reinforce behaviours with a dog every day. It will be your responsibility to continue the training that we started, to maintain the high standards of your dog being able to assist you.

- Can you contribute the physical and mental energy required, particularly in the first 6-12 months?
- All dogs, in order to stay fit and healthy, must be walked a minimum of twice daily for at least 30-40 minutes on each occasion. Is someone willing to exercise the dog?

Is this the right time for you?

The first year requires a great deal of effort and you will need to make sure you have time to dedicate to the development of your skills, the dog's skills and the bond and communication between you.

- What demands do you have on your time over the next 12-18 months?
- Do you have the time to commit to working with a new dog?

Are your expectations realistic?

Living with a PTSD Assistance Dog can be a life changing experience with many advantages however, as with any partnership, it does not happen overnight. To reap the rewards there will be some challenges and frustrations to overcome. You will have to make some changes to accommodate your new dog, so please consider:

- Can you plan and think ahead in order to avoid problems?
- Are you prepared to take on the role of "leader" with all the responsibilities that this entails?

How will having a dog affect family and friends?

- How will other people in your life feel about having a dog around constantly?
- What areas of life may be affected positively or negatively?

Are my current living arrangements suitable?

Think about the possible modifications you may need to make.

- Is your current housing suitable and safe for a dog?
- Will the dog have enough room to exercise and toilet safely?
- Are you, or someone else, prepared to exercise the dog in wet weather?
- Are there others who can be relied upon to help with the dog if needed?

Can I live with a dog?

Living with a dog involves some not so pleasant tasks. If you are fanatical about cleanliness then think about:

- Who is going to pick up poo, both at home and out on walks?
- How will you deal with wounds and accidents?
- Dogs lose hair and require regular grooming...Who will do this?
- Slobber on your clothes - can you deal with this?
- Dogs can be attracted to things and potentially pull.



We do not intend this to discourage you from expressing your interest but we do strongly suggest that you consider these issues and how they would affect you. If you honestly decide that the benefits of having a dog outweigh the challenges then we welcome your expression of interest.

You may choose to have a family member, friend or other trusted advocate assist you through the various stages of applying for a Police Assistance Dog.

Expectations: To provide the dog with a secure, loving home, with a commitment to maintain the quality of training throughout the dog's life. Requirements of health and wellbeing are maintained including exercise and mental stimulation to support the benefits that accompany a well-trained Assistance Dog.

Average cost of keeping an Assistance Dog

Please consider very seriously your ability to cover the below costs and discuss any concerns with our staff. It is important to Assistance Dogs Australia that our Assistance Dogs' health and wellbeing is maintained at a high standard throughout their entire lives.



Recipient yearly ongoing cost for an Assistance Dog

All costs are estimates only. Your personal ongoing cost may vary from the estimates below.

ITEM	COST	NOTES
Feeding	\$780.00	Premium quality dry food plus enrichments
Annual Health check and C5 vaccination	\$350.00*	Minimum veterinary expenses
3 monthly Intestinal worming	\$100.00	
Heartworm, tick and flea control	\$350.00	
Grooming and care Equipment	\$150.00	Wet wipes, brush, poo bags, epiotic, bowls
Toys and treats	\$150.00	
Grooming/Baths	\$500.00	
TOTAL	\$2,380.00	

**Veterinary expenses may be well above this annual estimate due to unforeseen illness and/or injury.*





PTSD client criteria

The applicant must:

- be an adult over the age of 18.
- Must have served as a sworn member of Victoria Police
- have a place of permanent residence.
- be able to provide care and all requirements of an active large dog. This includes physically supporting the animal, either directly or with help from a support person.
- have full support from other family members, or people living in the same household. This involves facilitating the relationship between the dog and client and, in many cases, having limited direct interaction with the dog themselves.
- not have any allergies to animals or, if an allergy is identified, it needs to be manageable to have the dog in the home. This includes family members having direct access to the dog.
- be in a position to adapt their lifestyle to the needs of the dog and must be able to allot time and commit to necessary care.
- be in a position to accommodate owning a dog – including a clean and safe home environment, having a place for the dog to sleep, exercise, and a suitably fenced/containment area.
- be active enough to utilise a dog. This includes regularly taking a dog into public places.
- have the financial resources to care for the dog (meet vet bills, provide food and equipment).
- have adequate verbal communication to command a dog.
- be physically able to control a dog.
- be able to see well enough to observe the actions of the dog eg. be able to pick up subtle changes in the dog's body language when it is travelling by your side.
- must be committed to 10 days (approximately) of consecutive training on receipt of the dog and further follow-up training following the dog entering the home.

Program specific criteria

The applicant must:

- have a current diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from a Psychiatrist or Psychologist, and have had this diagnosis for at least six (6) months.
- have had their primary experience of trauma by working in the Police force.
- be under the active care of a psychologist and/or psychiatrist.
- have stable and suitable treatments in place for any co-occurring physically debilitating conditions (eg back injury, knee injury, other existing medical difficulties).
- not be involved with self-harm, harm to others or dealings with the police for the last 12 months. This must be verified by a psychologist/psychiatrist.
- have two individuals who have agreed to provide them support.

Additional considerations

- It is recommended that you do not take on the responsibility of an Assistance Dog if you have an infant or toddler in the household (this will be assessed on a case by case basis).
- The carrying of weapons will not be tolerated at any point of engagement with Assistance Dogs Australia (workshops, interviews, training courses, follow-ups etc).

PTSD ASSISTANCE DOG APPLICATION PROCESS FLOW CHART

STAGE 1

Expression of interest

STAGE 2

2 Zoom Meetings

Interested applicants are invited to attend two one-on-one zoom meetings with Assistance Dogs Australia to gain further insight into the program

Completion of this workshop is mandatory for progression

STAGE 3

Application form & mental health professional form

Comprehensive application form is sent out
Full application is reviewed to see if applicant meets basic functional requirements

Potential candidates are also required to complete a form with their key Mental Health Professional

STAGE 4

Interview/home environment

Suitable candidates are interviewed
Home environment is observed

STAGE 5

Waitlist

Suitable candidates are accepted into the program

Some candidates may require further follow up depending on their circumstances

STAGE 6

10 day training

Once a dog match is made, candidates are required to attend a comprehensive 10 day training program at the National Training School

STAGE 7

Follow up

Up to 6 follow ups in the first year (in the first two weeks, at 3 months, 6 months and 12 months)

Phone support is always available

Ongoing support for Public Access Tests



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Expression of Interest (EOI) Form to attend our Information Workshop

Founded in 1996, Assistance Dogs Australia (ADA) trains and places Assistance and Facility dogs. Our mission is to enhance connection and independence for people with disabilities.

The Blue Ribbon Foundation in partnership with Assistance Dogs Australia, have commenced this new initiative to provide assistance dogs to retired members of Victoria Police who have been diagnosed with PTSD resulting from their service and after being formally assessed by ADA as suitable candidates.

ADA currently trains **Assistance Dogs** for people with physical disability, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder. We also train **Facility Dogs** to work in settings such as schools, clinics, or custodial centres to support people with disabilities to reach learning and/or therapy goals.

The purpose of our Information Workshop (which is held over two sessions) is to inform you of the processes, commitments and benefits of working with an Assistance Dog and answer any questions.

This EOI has three sections.

Part One – ADA Assistance Dog Overview and Criteria

Please **review** the information regarding Assistance Dogs trained by ADA.

Part Two – Applicant Information

Please **complete** this section in full and provide the required supporting documentation.

Part Three – Agreement & Consent

Please **sign** the privacy, consent, and agreement sections and **complete** the EOI checklist.

Please send completed Expression of Interest form and all attachments to:

neil@remember.org.au

or

CONFIDENTIAL
CEO – Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation
PO Box 2012
Moorabbin VIC 3189



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Part One – ADA Assistance Dog Overview

Definition: Assistance Dogs are trained to reliably perform a minimum of 3 assistive tasks that directly mitigate the symptoms of a person's disability in accordance with the client's individual needs. At least one task must be utilised by the client in public.

Assistance Dogs can legally support the recipient in public and community settings under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Expectations: Each ADA Assistance Dog is bred and trained to a high standard. The dog and recipient form a 'team'. Becoming a working team will require commitment to ensure the dog's ongoing wellbeing and training is maintained, as well as re-testing each year to maintain the license of the Assistance Dog (as per the required criteria of Assistance Dogs International). Assistance Dogs Australia will support the recipient and the dog throughout these processes for the working life of the dog.

Is an Assistance Dog right for you?

The following questions are not intended to discourage you however please consider and discuss the following with your support network prior to submission:

- Do I have the time and energy?
- Are my expectations realistic?
- Are my current living arrangements suitable?
- Can I take care of my dogs welfare needs?
- How will I feel walking through a public area with a dog in a jacket?
- Can I afford an ADA dog?

Can I afford an ADA dog?

Please consider very seriously your ability to cover the costs below and discuss any concerns with our staff. It is important to ADA that our Assistance Dogs' health and wellbeing is maintained at a high standard throughout their entire lives.

Recipient annual, ongoing, cost for an ADA Assistance Dog*

Item	Cost	Notes
Feeding	\$780.00	Premium quality dry food plus enrichments
Annual Health check and C5 vaccination	**\$350.00	Minimum veterinary expenses
3 monthly intestinal worming	\$100.00	
Heartworm, tick & flea control	\$350.00	
Grooming and care equipment	\$150.00	Wet wipes, brush, poo bags, bowls
Toys and treats	\$150.00	
Grooming/baths	\$500.00	
Total per annum	\$2,380.00	

* All costs are estimates only. Your personal ongoing cost may vary from the estimates above.

** Veterinary expenses may be well above this annual estimate due to unforeseen illness and/or injury.



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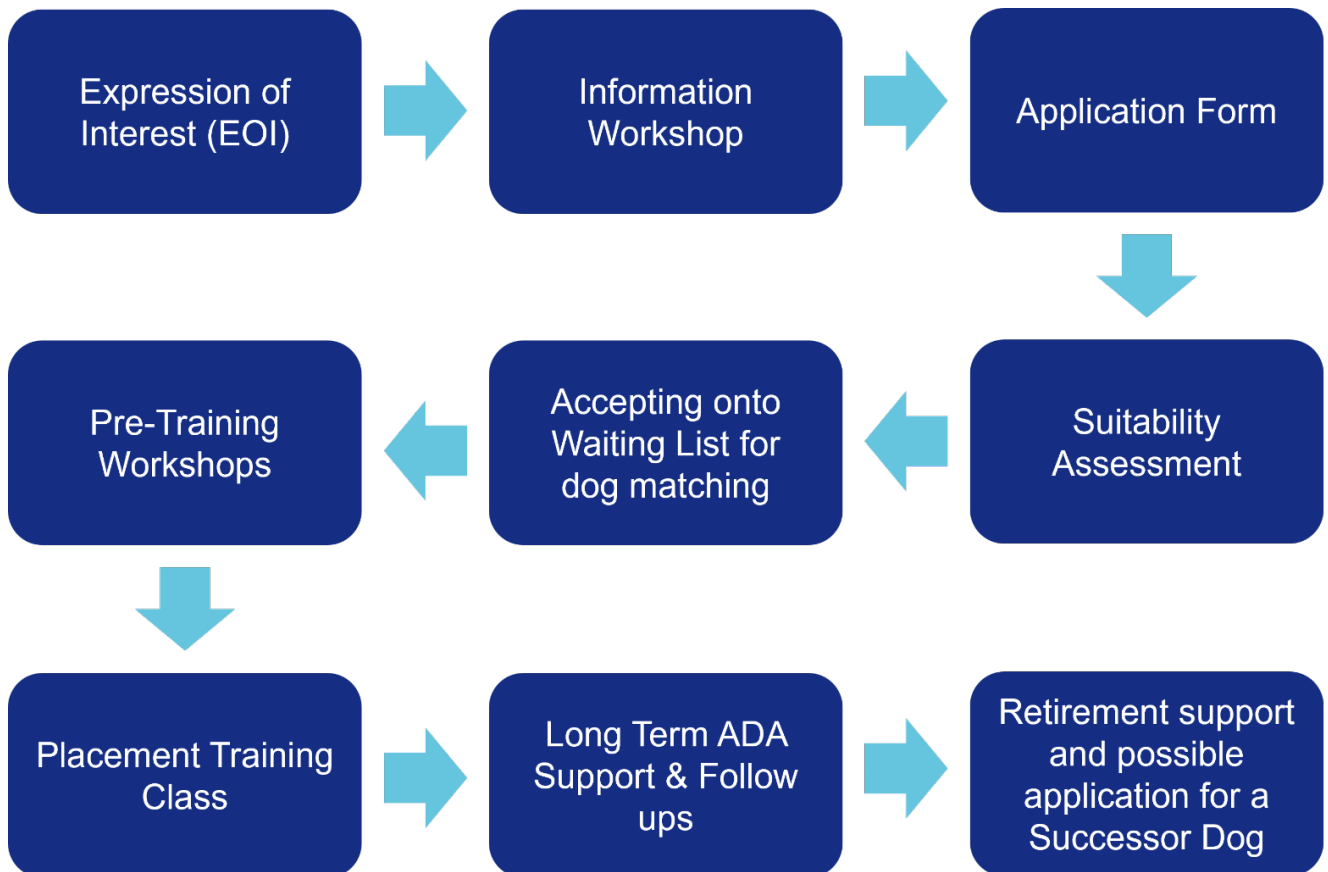
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The ADA Journey





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Part Two – Applicant Criteria

All applicants and/or primary dog handlers must meet the following general criteria:

- Be aged 18 years or older.
- Have adequate cognitive, emotional, and communication skills to manage the dog. Including physical abilities to observe, train, care for and handle an ADA dog.
- Be able to adapt their lifestyle to the needs of the dog and commit to the necessary long-term care and training of the dog.
- Have the financial resources to care for the dog (ie. meet vet bills, premium food and equipment) throughout the dog's life.
- Provide the dog with a secure, loving home, with a commitment to maintain the quality of the dog's training, health, wellbeing, exercise and mental stimulation through the dog's life.
- Have current stable and appropriate living arrangements to house an ADA dog – including a clean and safe home environment. Please note that stable housing includes residing at the same property for at least the past six months.
- Have a safe outdoor area for toileting and exercise. In properties with a yard, this includes 1.8m high fence, shaded areas, and no hazardous materials such as snail bait or broken objects.
- Have additional support people (at least two suitable adults) who can assist, if necessary, in providing immediate care of the dog in case of an emergency or unforeseen circumstances (eg. hospital stays).
- Have full support from family, and/or your support network and/or all people living in the household. This involves household members (including support workers who work with you for significant periods) agreeing to promote the relationship between the dog and applicant by possible limited their own direct interactions with the dog.
- All members of the household have no history of, or current behaviours, related to carrying illegal weapons (please not sanctioned behaviours within a service context can be discussed with ADA and are excluded).
- All members of the household have no history of, nor current behaviours relating to, perpetrating violence, abuse, or neglect towards humans or animals. Please note, sanctioned actions within a service context can be discussed with ADA during any assessments.
- All members of the household must not have any allergies to animals or, if an allergy is identified, it needs to be manageable to have the dog in the home.
- All members of the household must have not misused drugs or alcohol in the past 12 months.
- Applicant and/or primary handler has not been admitted to hospital or similar for suicide or self-harm behaviours in the past 12 months.
- Meet at least one program-specific criteria set (see below).
- All existing pets in the home must be on correct preventative medications (heartworm, flea, tick and intestinal worms) and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for temperament. Pet dogs must be desexed and over the age of one year.
- It is recommended that you do not take on the responsibility of an assistance dog if you have an infant or toddler in the household, however this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.



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Applicants must also meet the relevant set of program specific criteria:

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

- The applicant must have an accepted diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Please provide a copy of this diagnosis with the completed EOI.
- The applicant must be aged 18 years or older.
- The applicant must be currently engaged in treatment with an appropriate mental health clinician, and have been doing so for at least three months.

Please note that ADA will consider all applications regardless of race, gender, religion and/or sexual orientation.



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Part Three – Applicant Information

I am completing this EOI:

For myself as an applicant.

On behalf of someone else.

Name of person completing the form _____

Please indicate the **one** type of ADA Assistance Dog that the applicant is interested in:

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Physical Disability

Applicant Contact Information			
Full Name of the applicant (that the ADA dog will support)			
Preferred name			
Street Address			
Suburb	State	Postcode	
Postal Address (if different to street address)			
Email			
Phone (m)	Phone (h)	Phone (w)	
Preferred pronouns	<input type="checkbox"/> He/Him	<input type="checkbox"/> She/Her	Date of Birth
<input type="checkbox"/> They/Them	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Primary language used at home			
Does the applicant:			
- require an interpreter?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	
- use sign language?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	
- use alternative or augmentative communication	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	
- have other communication needs	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	
Does the applicant identify as:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Culturally or linguistically diverse		
<input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
Please list any physical, medical, emergency or mobility needs (eg. wheelchair, anaphylaxis)			



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Legal Guardian/Primary Handler Contact Information

(only required if the Applicant is under age 18 or requires an alternate primary dog handler for other reasons)

Full Name of the Legal Guardian

Preferred name

Street Address

Suburb

State

Postcode

Postal Address
(if different to street address)

Email

Phone (m)

Phone (h)

Phone (w)

Preferred pronouns

He/Him

She/Her

They/Them

Other

Date of Birth

Primary language used at home

Does the Legal Guardian:

- require an interpreter?

 Yes No

- use sign language?

 Yes No

- use alternative or augmentative communication

 Yes No

- have other communication needs

 Yes No

Does the Legal Guardian identify as:

Aboriginal

Culturally or linguistically diverse

Torres Strait Islander

Other

Please list any physical, medical, emergency or mobility needs (eg. wheelchair, anaphylaxis)

Our Information Workshop is delivered, by default, as a live webinar either individually or as a group. Please indicate your preference for workshop delivery.

Live webinar (default)

Phone call

Recorded webinar



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Part Four – Agreement & Consent

- The Applicant/Legal Guardian have reviewed the EOI information on ADA Assistance Dogs.
- The Applicant meets the criteria for an Assistance Dog (set out in Part Two).
- The Applicant’s family, any people they reside with, and the Applicant’s treatment team are supportive of the current interest in an ADA Assistance Dog (please note these people are also welcome to attend the Information Workshop).
- The Applicant has two suitable adults willing to support them who can provide immediate care for the dog in the case of an emergency and/or unforeseen events.
- Acknowledge that Assistance Dogs Australia assesses expression of interest on suitability and merit. After completing any application documentation there is no guarantee of acceptance. Assistance Dogs Australia reserves the right to advise that an Applicant is not suitable for an ADA Assistance Dog at any time.
- Understands that providing false or misleading information to Assistance Dogs Australia may result in the Applicant’s removal from the program.
- The Applicant/Legal Guardian is willing for information to be shared with ADA to proceed with any future application.
- A report or letter from the Applicant’s qualified medical/health professional confirming the disability and/or diagnoses.
- The Applicant/Legal Guardian is willing to have the diagnosis verified by ADA with the Applicant’s diagnosing medical professional.
- Understands that ADA will only accept EOIs that are completed in full and returned within three (3) months of the date of issue.
- The Applicant/Legal Guardian acknowledges that the Information Workshop may be recorded and/or have additional ADA staff in attendance, for quality and internal training purposes.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above.

Applicant Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____



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Information Gathering, Confidentiality and Consent

Confidentiality and consent conditions detailed below also apply to the Victorian Police Blue Ribbon Foundation who have formal restrictions in place to safeguard every applicants privacy.

I understand:

Information Gathering

- That providing and recording information about you, your family, and/or your support people is voluntary, and you are deciding to share your personal information with ADA.
- Personal information if gathered as part of your ADA expression of interest, assessment, dog matching, contracts, training, program reviews, and general ADA program development and quality improvement.
- Personal information is kept securely, and all applicants are protected by the ADA Privacy Policy.
- Assistance Dogs Australia is committed to and complies with the appropriate legislation to keep your information private and confidential, including the Australian Privacy Act 1988 (amended 2014).
- At any stage you are entitled to apply to access your personal information retained by ADA, subject to exceptions in the relevant legislation or by ADA management.
- That quality improvement or evaluation findings undertaken by ADA may be made public (e.g., as a report or journal article). However, if findings are made public, you, your family, and/or your support persons will not be personally identified in any way.
- That ADA may store personal information from you, your family, and/or your support persons in secure databases to support service delivery.
- That ADA is subject to audits from governing bodies such as National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA/NDIS) and Assistance Dogs International (ADI), and my information may be reviewed for these purposes.
- The Applicant/Legal Guardian gives consent for ADA to release personal information to Family Services Australia for review by their consulting Mental Health Clinician.
- That ADA works with secondary bodies including Military and Emergency Services Health Australia (MESHHA) and Monash University for ongoing research and quality improvement projects. However, if any targeted research programs are being undertaken that may require personal information, you will be advised so that you can choose if you participate or not.

Confidentiality and its limits

All personal information gathered by ADA will remain confidential except when:

- It is subpoenaed by a Court, or disclosure is otherwise authorised by law; or
- Failure to disclose the information would, in the reasonable belief of an ADA staff member, place you, an animal, or another person at serious risk to their life, health, or safety; or
- Your prior approval has been obtained to disclose the information (e.g., in a report or discussion with a support person).

I have read, understood, and agree to the above.

Applicant Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____



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Expression of Interest Checklist

I have completed Part Three – Applicant Information, in full	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have attached the required report or letter confirming disability/diagnosis from a qualified medical/health professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have signed Part Four – Agreement & Consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have signed Part Four – Information Gathering, Confidentiality & Consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am submitting my completed EOI within three (3) months of the date of issue	<input type="checkbox"/>