



Mark Speakman
Attorney General
Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 7 December 2021

PUPULAR MANLY COURT VISITORS BARK IN ACTION

Manly Courthouse is the first location in NSW to bring back pats, cuddles and wagging tails with the Canine Court Companion Program (CCCP) resuming as the state recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attorney General Mark Speakman today announced that after a paws of nearly six-months due to COVID-19, therapy dogs have returned to Manly Courthouse one day per week.

"I'm doggone delighted to see these loveable Labradors bringing joy to Manly court users once again," Mr Speakman said.

"We can't wait to welcome more therapy dogs and their volunteer handlers back to courthouses across the state in the new year."

Member for Manly James Griffin said the pawpose of these gentle therapy dogs is to provide emotional support to children, vulnerable witnesses and victims of crime.

"Coming to court can be an overwhelming experience, but each friendly pooch has been expertly trained to pick up on signs of distress to provide a sense of calm and make people smile," Mr Griffin said.

"A 2017 trial of therapy dogs at Manly Courthouse was so successful the program was rolled out across the state."

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT CEO Dale Cleaver said there is [evidence](#) to support the use of therapy dogs to alleviate symptoms associated with trauma, including stress and anxiety.

"Our Court Companion Dogs have been wonderful lockdown partners for their volunteer handlers, but we know they are pulling at the leash to get back out in the community," Mr Cleaver said.

"We're so excited they're ready to spread the love and make a real difference, providing comfort and companionship once again."

The CCCP is an initiative from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, with each helpful hound receiving up to two years of intensive training with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.