

## **Essential capabilities of RSPCA ACT animal-based volunteer roles**

**There are several essential capabilities required of volunteers working in animal-based roles at the RSPCA ACT. These physical, mental and emotional capabilities assist us to ensure the safety of our volunteers, animals, staff and customers.**

### **Physical capabilities**

- Quick reflexes and ability to use both hands simultaneously.
- High level of manual dexterity to leash/harness animals.
- Ability to walk unaided on unpaved, uneven, rugged and sometimes muddy and slippery exercise yard and lawn areas.
- Ability to bend and squat in order to leash/harness and pick up an animal or clean a cage.
- Ability to lift up to 10kgs.
- Ability to stand for significant periods of time (shifts up to two hours).
- Average vision to move safely around the building, to be able to observe animal body language without difficulty, and to be able to read notes on animals' paperwork.
- Average sense of smell and touch in order to assess body condition of animals and/or living areas, and to note signs of illness or injury.
- Ability to hear if animal is growling or making sounds indicating fear or pain.
- Ability to communicate effectively both written and verbally.
- Ability to manoeuvre well in tight spaces and react and move quickly in order to prevent dogs or cats from escaping.
- Ability to handle and restrain animals of small to large size with extreme caution and care. This requires average vision, hearing, steadiness of hands and body, quick reflexes, physical strength, and mental alertness.
- Must not have strong allergies to dogs, cats or other companion animals that can't be managed by medication, or to chemicals used in grooming or cleaning.
- Ability to deal with strong and unpleasant odours, fleas, faeces and possible wounds or injuries to animals in our care.
- Ability to cope with a very loud environment due to animal noises.
- Ability to reach cabinets and cages at least six feet in height, using a step stool as needed.
- Ability to push bins of laundry; load and unload washer and dryer; fold clean laundry and put away, reaching shelves from ground level up to six feet, using a step stool as needed.
- Sufficient strength to manage pulling of large dogs if in a walking role.

### **Mental Capabilities**

- Ability to understand, remember and follow instructions and procedures.
- High level reading, writing, spelling and communication skills (example: understand words such as quarantine, euthanise and other common industry-related terms).
- Possess problem-solving capability.
- Must be aware of potentially dangerous situations when working with the animals, must be able to remain calm with animals who are upset; behave sensitively and confidently; show good judgement and act appropriately in these situations.

**Emotional Capabilities**

- Ability to cope with unexpected animal behaviour without assistance.
- Ability to cope with a highly emotionally charged environment with some animals that are homeless, abandoned and/or abused, as well as the reality that some of the animals in our care may be euthanised.
- Ability to understand and comply with RSPCA ACT policies and positions regarding companion animals, animal control, and other key animal welfare issues and an ability and willingness to demonstrate a commitment to and support of these positions.

**Level of supervision**

- Once trained, must be able to work with minimal supervision, yet must recognise limitations in knowledge and abilities, and ask for help when needed.
- Should be able to work independently for long periods of time, as well as work within a team atmosphere with other volunteers or staff.

**Other**

- A fairly high level of experience and familiarity with cats and dogs and their behaviour is desirable.
- All animal-based roles involve some cleaning, and can involve the use of hazardous or toxic chemicals.

I \_\_\_\_\_

am able to meet all of these aforementioned essential capabilities, which are required of me to perform an animal-based volunteer role.

Signature	
Date	