# Safe Animal Friendly Environments (SAFE)

Prepared by UniSA

University of South Australia

Funded by the Society for Companion Animal Studies

Society for Companion Animal Studies

# Acknowledgements


## Expert Consultants

Dr. Chalette Brown BSc DVM MANZCVS (Veterinary Behaviour) – Dogs
Dr. Kim Kendall BVSc, MACVSc (Cat Medicine) MACVSc (Animal Behaviour) – Cats
Dr Tijana Simic BVSc (Hons) – Small Mammals
Dr Lauren Williams BSc DVM – Birds
Dr Stephen Pyecroft BVSc (Hons) PhD MANZCVS (Pathology and Aquatic Animal Health) – Fish
Mrs Pauline Acott – Consumer consultant (carer)

## Project Team

Dr Janette Young PhD – Project Lead University of South Australia
Dr Torben Nielsen PhD – Public Health Veterinarian, University of Adelaide
Ms Deborah Burton BNg PGDip (AgedServsMgt) – Aged Care Consultant
Mr Joshua Zoanetti B.Sc (AnimalSc) – Research Assoc
Ms Emma Milanese BHlthSc (Hons) – Research Assistant

Society for Companion Animal Studies

This project was supported by: The Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS), UK.

Graphic Design by Beanstalk.

Cover photos courtesy of (left to right); Marliese Streefland (dog), Manja Vitolic (cat), Andriyko Podilnyk (rabbits), Sharon McCutcheon (bird), Linh Nguyen (fish - Pearl Gourami. Hiding from the other one via Flickr available under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, https://www.flickr.com/photos/lng0004/5855464616/ )

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which we work and live across Australia. We pay our respects to elders of the past, present and into the future.

# Contents


Introduction 4

Aim of the Tool 5

Application 7

SAFE – Risk Management Tool 9

- Overarching Considerations 10
- Dogs 13
- Cats 16
- Small Mammals 19
- Birds 22
- Fish 24

Suggested Tools 26

Useful Resources 27

Key Organisations 28

Evidence Sources 29

Appendix 2024 31

- Physiotherapy Specific Risks and Mitigations

# Introduction

SAFE is a companion-animal, multi-species risk management tool developed in 2021 by an Australian team of expert academics, veterinarians, (human) health and consumer representatives with funding support from the Society for Companion Animal Studies (UK). The project was undertaken as a Delphi study in 2020/21 whereby people with specialist knowledge relevant to our focus (species expert veterinarians, aged care and consumers of aged care) were recruited to create, review and moderate the risk management framework that is core to this document.

We are indebted to this team of experts and to the Society for Companion Animal Studies (http://www.scas.org.uk/) who funded the project.

The core of the SAFE tool is the tables, which are each preceded by a best practice case study showing the tool in use.

The front section provides guidance for using the tool and the document is rounded off with lists of resources, links and other suggested tools and evidence sources to use with SAFE.

Photo courtesy of Matthias Zomer

# Aim of the Tool

The intended aim in developing this resource was to create a framework that could assist in the process of assessing how companion animals across the key species that live in close human contact could safely be included in communal aged care settings.

Our intention is to support maximising the potential for people entering aged care to keep their pets, enhancing the wellbeing of people at an extremely stressful life stage in combination with seeking to reduce the number of pets who become homeless or may even be euthanised when their human guardian and companion is no longer able to live independently.

The aim of the framework is to facilitate and extend the likelihood of long term pets continuing to live with their human guardians/owners even in high level care communal settings through providing a framework for assessing the risks that both humans and animals may encounter in these settings, the level and impact of these risks, and methods to reduce these risks to acceptable levels. Very few risks are unmanageable.

This noted, proper and caring risk assessment may at times identify that a pet animal will be best served by not joining their guardian. However this tool offers the opportunity to carefully explore the potential for co-residence when desired.

Where not possible for a loved pet to join their owner, discussions as to how ongoing contact can be maintained, as desired/appropriate, with the animal's new guardians (eg; visits, photographs) should occur. Access to grief counselling should be communicated, and facilitated as needed.

Photo courtesy of Lucie Hošová

It is assumed that SAFE will be used in conjunction with:

- ✓ Human health histories of both animal guardians and co-residents
- ✓ Robust infection control policies and procedures
- ✓ Animal health care histories and established care practices

(eg desexing, vaccination, parasite control, registration, micro-chipping etc appropriate to the species and location)

*See pages 26-29 for a list of suggested tools, resources and references to support the risk management assessment process.

# Application

The SAFE tool has been developed with a specific focus on communal aged care settings, particularly informed by the Australian context. However we believe that most of the risks outlined are recognisable internationally in other communal care settings and we welcome the possibility of the tool being adopted or adapted to these.

The tool encompasses the following risks in communal aged care settings:

- Risks from humans to animals
- Risks from animal to animals
- Risks from animals to humans

The detailed risk management tables included in this document move from a summative table of overarching risks from humans to animals; animals to animals; all species to humans; followed by tables on risks specific to the main species/kinds of animals kept as pets – Dogs, Cats, Small Mammals, Birds and Fish.

Each risk has been identified against:

1. Likelihood of occurrence
2. Potential level of impact
3. Moderating or remediating steps
4. Consequent likelihoods and levels of impact

Photo courtesy of Pixabay

# Most Risks Can Be Managed Within Required Hygiene Practices In Aged Care Settings

The major documented risks are identified across dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, birds and fish. **Additional risks may need to be considered on the basis of local scenarios, and both human and animal care regulations.** For example rabies is not present in Australia – although this has been included in the list for international information; and new diseases (COVID-19 being the obvious) can emerge. **No list can be exhaustive.**

While this research has a focus on companion animals/personal pets of older people residing in their owner's room, the understandings developed could also be of use more broadly and could encompass communal pets, visiting and other companion animals in residential aged care.

For each risk identified the pre-mitigation level of risk (Severity X likelihood of occurrence) is noted; then the mitigation actions, followed by the post mitigation level of assessed risk.

It should be noted that most risks can be managed within standard required hygiene practices in Aged care settings.

# SAFE – Companion Animal Multi-Species Risk Management Tool

Cover photos courtesy of (left to right); Marliese Streefland (dog), Manja Vitolic (cat), Andriyko Podilnyk (rabbits), Sharon McCutcheon (bird),
Linh Nguyen (fish – Pearl Gourami. Hiding from the other one via Flickr available under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0, https://www.flickr.com/photos/lng0004/5855464616/ )

# Overarching Considerations

## From humans to animals; animals to animals; all species to humans.

There are a range of generic risks that pertain to the inclusion of pets in communal residential settings even when predominately kept in their owner's room. These include risks from humans to animals and animals to humans in general, management of human relations with regard to animals, potential animal: animal risks and risks should pets “escape” their owner's room. This first section of the SAFE tool seeks to encompass these more general concerns.

Photo courtesy of Marliese Streefland

# Overarching risks from humans to animals; animals to animals; all species to humans.



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Co-residents with a history of mistreating an animal | Medium | Resp: Facility pre assessment. Objective: Keep animals safe | Preadmission assessment of all residents includes question re animal abuse history. Co-residents near pet owners' residence needs to be assessed and managed. Care Plans identify concerns & actions | Medium (needs monitoring) | Yes |
| Resident scared of animals in general (or particular species) | Medium | Resp: Facility pre assessment. Objective: Keep residents safe/happy (its their home) | Preadmission assessment of individual. Care Plan identifies concerns & actions. Pet alert signs for visitors | Low | Yes |
| Human allergies to different species | High | Resp: Facility pre assessment of resident and staff. Objective: keep residents/visitors/staff safe | Preadmission assessment of individual. Care Plan identifies allergies. Staff pre employment information, rostering processes. Pet alert signs for visitors. Staff species allergies noted. Allergic people to avoid animal areas, not touch animal(s), antihistamine use if exposed | Low | Yes |
| Lack of understanding of species' body language | Medium | Resp: facility. Objective: Keep people and animals safe | Facility offers in-house training and information on species' behaviour | Low | Yes |
| Other residents who don't like animals (intolerant animals/don't like particular species) | Medium | Resp: Facility pre assessment. Objective: Keep residents safe/happy (its their home) | Preadmission assessment of individual. Care Plan identifies animals of concern & actions. Pet alert Signs for visitors | Low | Yes |
| People becoming possessive of animals (causing conflict between residents) | Medium | Resp: Facility ongoing assessment. Objective: Keep animals and humans safe | Ongoing assessments, care planning & reviews. Care Plan identifies actions | Low | Yes |
| Tripping over pets (falling) | Medium | Resp: Facility ongoing assessment. Objective: Keep animals and humans safe | Location of pets and the appropriateness of when and where they can be moved eg on lead, in pet box. Pet care plan and regularly review | Low | Yes |
| Animal scratches/bites | High | Resp: facility staff, owner, veterinarian. Objective: keep humans safe | Veterinarian preadmission health and behaviour assessment of the pet, Pet care plan including claw clipping, Trial period to assess animal behaviour, Care Protocol for bites & scratches | Medium | Yes |
| Reverse zoonoses diseases and infections spread from human to animal (e.g. salmonella, MRSA). | Low | Resp: Facility ongoing assessment. Objective: Keep animals and humans healthy | Vet and behavioural assessment prior to entering facility. Pet care plan and regularly review. Care Plan & review personal hygiene of the resident. Maintenance of infection control program. Handlers to wash/disinfect hands prior to animal contact. If owner unwell alternate carer needed | Low | Yes |
| Animals spreading human diseases/infections to other humans | Low | Resp: Facility ongoing assessment. Objective: Keep animals and humans healthy | Vet and behavioural assessment prior to entering facility. Veterinary re assessment as required. Pet care plan with regular review. Maintenance of infection control program | Low | Yes |

# Overarching risks from humans to animals; animals to animals; all species to humans. Continued

| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Nutrition (residents feeding pets - over feeding and/or inappropriate feeding) | Medium | Resp: Facility staff/ owner/ family/ vet. Objective: maintain pet health | Pet care plan identifying suitable areas for pet, eg: Keeping pets out of dining areas. Routine veterinary health assessment | Low | Yes |
| Inadvertent access to resident's medication | Medium | Resp: Facility ongoing assessment. Objective: Keep animals safe | Facility processes for managing medication. Assessment of resident's ability to safely manage medications - care plan for residents | Low | Yes |
| Noise of animals disturbs other residents | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective keep other residents happy | Trial admission period. Keep door closed | Low | Yes |
| Smell of animal disturbs other residents | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: effective odour management | Keep door to room closed. Regular cleaning of litter/cage. Automatic air freshener device | Low | Yes |
| General cleaning up of animal material eg feathers on floor, cat fur, dog hair | Medium | Resp: Facility staff/owner/ family. Objective: keep humans safe | Cleaning process and infection control process | Low | Yes |
| Animal injury from another resident animal | Medium | Resp: owner/Vet/facility. Objective: Keep pet safe | Pre admission behaviour assessment. Pet remains in resident room. Door kept closed. Pet alert sign on door. Pet leaves room only on leash at designated times or in pet safe carrier | Low | Yes |
| Animal/bird escape | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: keep pet safe | Pet remains in resident room. Resident able to keep door locked. Pet only leaves on leash or in pet safe carrier. Door kept closed. Pet alert sign on resident door and all outside doors. All pets micro-chipped or otherwise wear identification | Low | Yes |

# Dogs

## Best practice case study.

Photo courtesy of pxhere.com

12 year old mixed-breed Bob was admitted with his owner John. Bob lives in John's room with a doggie door to a small enclosed outdoor area for toileting. John walks him on his lead in outside communal areas and Bob accompanies John to some group activities such as Happy Hour. Other residents look forward to seeing Bob and his non-attendance is a cause of concern regarding his (Bob's!) health.

As John is frail and his family are unable to visit regularly, John pays an additional sum to the facility for Bob's care. Bob's Care Plan identifies staff responsibilities including feeding, monthly worming medicine, weekly bedding wash and daily cleaning up of toileting area, and additional walks with one of the volunteers to keep him trim.

Bob stays in his outdoor area when staff provide John with personal care or room cleaning, he is bathed monthly by a visiting dog washing service. A mobile vet is available if required. Bob may only leave John's room on a lead and is not permitted in dining or food preparation areas. A large sign on the door alerts staff and visitors that Bob lives with John and not to leave the door open.

# Species: Dog



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Rabies | Low | Resp: Facility/owner/vet. Objective: keep humans healthy | Pre admission vet health assessment and vaccination history. NOT RELEVANT TO AUSTRALIA (CHECK LOCAL SITUATION) | Low | Yes |
| Bacteremic community-acquired pneumonia due to Pasteurella multocida | Medium | Resp: doctor/veterinarian/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | Residents at risk identified, treating Dr informed. Pre-admission pet veterinary health check. Discourage licking of human faces or mouth. Wash hands after interacting with dogs | Med-Low (depending on proximity to person with COPD) | Yes |
| Intestinal worms: Trichuris vulpis, Toxocara canis, Ancylostomidae, Echinococcus | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | Pet Care Plan identifies Intermittent wormers for intestinal worms (monthly antiparasiticide can be used to cover for mites and worms); discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with dogs, pick up faeces daily (wear gloves/use bags). Do not feed raw meat | Low | Yes |
| Giardia duodenalis | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | No raw meat. Feed commercial dog food only. Only use boiled or mains water, daily cleaning of faeces (use gloves or bags), discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with dogs | Low | Yes |
| Cryptosporidium | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | No raw meat. Feed commercial dog food only. Only use boiled or town water, pick up faeces daily (wear gloves/use bags), discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with dogs | Low | Yes |
| Campylobacter gastroenteritis | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | No raw meat, commercial pet food only. Pick up faeces daily (wear gloves/use bags), discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with dogs | Low | Yes |
| Salmonellosis | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans and pet healthy | No raw meat, commercial pet food only, pick up faeces daily (wear gloves/use bags), discourage licking of faeces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with dogs | Low | Yes |
| Leptospirosis | Low | Resp: resident/family/staff. Objective: keep humans safe and pet healthy | Lepto vaccination if in endemic area. Avoid contact with urine. Clean urine with gloves. Wash hands after interacting with dogs. Prevent dogs from drinking from open water bodies or getting in contact with rodents or feeding on carcasses.. Rodent control in facility | Low | Yes |
| Bordetella bronchiseptica (part of Kennel Cough) | Low | Resp: owner/Vet. Objective: Keep residents and pet healthy | Pet Care Plan identifies maintenance of routine pet vaccination against canine acute tracheobronchitis (kennel cough) | Low | Yes |
| Q- fever (Coxiella burnetti) | Low | Resp: owner. Objective: resident and pet health | De-sexing prior to admission, no raw meat feeding | Low | Yes |
| Ringworm | Low | Resp: owner. Objective: resident and pet health | Wash hands after touching dog | Low | Yes |

# Species: Dog Continued



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Harvest Mites | Low | Resp: owner. Objective: resident and pet health | Pet Care Plan identifies monthly antiparasiticide (to include mites) | Low | Yes |
| Sarcoptic mange (S. scabeii) | Low | Resp: owner. Objective: resident and pet health | Pet care plan identifies monthly antiparasiticide (to include mites), avoid interaction with wild foxes or stray dogs | Low | Yes |
| Fall Risk | High | Resp: facility/owner. Objective: keep humans and pet safe | Assess ability of resident to safely manage pet. Identify daily activities to assess when appropriate for pet to leave resident room. Pet to be always on harness and lead when moving to other areas in facility. Staff observation/assistance as appropriate | Low | Unknown |
| Jumping up, scratching | Medium | Resp: owner/Vet/facility. Objective: Keep residents safe | Pet pre-admission behavioural assessment, admission trial period. Regular grooming includes nail clipping | Low | Yes |
| Dog barking | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep pet healthy | Pre-admission behaviour assessment, trial admission period. Vet/ behaviour trainer assessment. Environmental/behaviour management, PLUS medical treatment if necessary depending on diagnosis and assessment by a behaviour veterinarian | Low | Yes |
| Dog bite | High-extreme | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: keep humans safe | Pre-admission behaviour assessment, trial admission period. Educate staff and residents on dog body language, positive reinforcement training, careful and safe handling of dogs, avoiding triggers, provide dog a safe zone to rest and retreat to (e.g. crate) Dog Bite Care Protocol | Medium | Yes |
| Dog hair everywhere | Low | Resp: owner, facility. Objective: reduce amount of dog hair. | Care plan identify routine brushing/cleaning of pet. Room cleaning schedule. Groom outdoors | Low | Yes |
| Dog sleeps on owner's bed | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: resident and pet happiness and safety | Resident decision. Trial admission period. Pet response to staff actions. Pet alert sign on door | Low | Yes |
| Death of animal leading to psychological distress | High | Resp: Facility/family. Objective: support grieving process | Documented bereavement support process | Medium | Yes |
| Dogs have inadequate exercise | Medium to High | Resp: owner. Objective: keep pet healthy | Care Plan identifies exercise requirements in relation to dog's age and health status. Family/volunteer assistance as required | Low | Yes |
| Dogs don’t settle well into facility | Medium | Resp: owner/vet/facility. Objective: keep pet healthy | Admission trial period. Vet advice on changes in environmental management, behaviour modification and medication (if necessary) | Low | Yes |
| Resident(s) become inappropriately possessive leading to inappropriate response to dog(s) and/or other residents | Medium | Resp: Facility staff. Objective: resident psychological health and safety, pet safety | Ongoing Resident assessment and care planning processes and reviews | Low | Yes |
| Resident/Staff allergy to dogs | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: keep humans healthy | Allergic person to avoid dog area, not touch dog, antihistamine use if exposure, regular vacuuming resident / dog home. Groom outdoors | Medium | Yes |

# Cats

## Best practice case study.

15 year old short haired rescue cat Bess lives with her owner Georgia. Bess' pre admission health assessment identified that she has been regularly vaccinated, wormed and is only fed commercial pre-cooked cat food which the Risk Framework identifies as reducing any risk to humans. She is however FIV positive. At first the manager is cautious, but she checks the SAFE companion animal, multi-species risk management tool and sees that FIV poses no risk to humans, but can be a risk to other non-vaccinated cats. But because Bess will only live in Georgia's room, and all cats on site must be vaccinated it is clear that Bess poses no threat to humans or any other resident animals at the facility.

Georgia's room has an out of the way area under a desk for a cat litter tray, a lovely window sill and a cat scratching and climbing tree so Bess can observe from up high when not sleeping on Georgia's knee or bed.

At this time Georgia is able to care for Bess. Georgia's family visit daily and they assist Georgia by providing all the resources required to care for Bess. They also take Bess to the vet if required. Bess' Care Plan identifies how Georgia cares for her and when her worming medication is due.

Photo courtesy of Azat Kılınç

Georgia puts Bess in her carry cage to keep her safe when staff enter to assist her with care needs or room cleaning. A large sign reminds keeping the door closed for Bess' safety.

# Species: Cat



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Rabies | Low | Resp: Facility/owner/vet. Objective: keep humans healthy | Pre admission Vet health assessment and vaccination in regions where endemic | Low | Yes |
| Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: keep pets healthy | Pre admission Vet health assessment, vaccination records, only a risk to other non vaccinated cats. NB vaccine not available in all countries | Low | Yes |
| Feline Infectious Peritonitis Virus | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: keep pets healthy | Pre admission Vet health assessment, vaccination records, only a risk to other non vaccinated cats. NB vaccine not available in all countries | Low | Yes |
| Q- fever | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | Pre-admission Vet health assessment. De-sexing prior to admission, no raw meat feeding | Low | Yes |
| Toxoplasmosis | Low | Resp: owner. Objective: keep humans safe | Pre-admission Vet health assessment. No raw meat, commercial pet food only. Daily cleaning of litter tray wearing gloves | Low | Yes |
| Giardia | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | No raw meat. Only use boiled or mains water, daily cleaning of litter tray (use gloves or bags), discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with cat | Low | Yes |
| Cryptosporidium | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | No raw meat. Only use boiled or mains water, daily cleaning of litter tray (use gloves or bags), discourage licking of faces or mouth, wash hands after interacting with cat | Low | Yes |
| Salmonella | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | No raw meat, commercial pet food only. Daily cleaning of litter tray, using gloves | Low | Yes |
| Campylobacter | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | No raw meat, commercial pet food only. Daily cleaning of litter tray, using gloves | Low | Yes |
| Hook worm, Round worm | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | Care Plan details regular worming treatment | Low | Yes |
| Ringworm | Low | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: resident and pet health | Wash hands after touching cats | Low | Yes |
| Resident/Staff allergy to cats | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: keep humans healthy | Feed cats allergen reducing diet when possible (transition to food slowly). Allergic person to avoid cat area, not touch cat, antihistamine use if exposure, regular vacuuming resident / cat home. Groom outdoors if possible | Medium | Yes |
| Cat Scratch/Bite | Medium | Resp: facility/owner/ vet. Objective: keep humans safe | Veterinary pre admission behaviour assessment of the pet, Pet care plan including claw clipping, Trial period to assess behaviour, Care Protocol for bites & scratches. Reduce cat stress provide safe space when staff cleaning or providing care. Provide staff with feline body language information | Medium | Yes |

# Species: Cat Continued



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Cats confined to enclosure too long | Medium | Resp: owner/ vet. Objective: keep pet healthy | Cat has freedom of resident room unless staff providing care. Door to remain closed, Alert sign on door | Low | Yes |
| Cats don't settle well into facility - possibly demonstrated by peeing or pooing outside the tray | Medium | Resp: owner/facility/vet. Objective keep pet healthy and happy | Pre admission health assessment. Trial admission period. Take notice at first sign - can nearly always be resolved if less than 3 weeks since first incident. May require medication and environmental adjustment | Medium | Yes |
| Resident(s) become inappropriately possessive of cat(s) leading to inappropriate response to cats and/or other residents | Medium | Resp: Facility staff. Objective: resident psychological health and safety, pet safety | Ongoing resident assessment and care planning processes and reviews | Low | Yes |
| Cat hair everywhere | Low | Resp: owner, facility. Objective: reduce amount of cat hair | Care plan identify routine brushing/cleaning of pet. Room cleaning schedule | Low | Yes |
| Cat litter disposed inappropriately eg down common rubbish chute | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: safe disposal of waste | Provision of clearly identified closed bins for litter disposal. Staff training of bin management | Low | Yes |
| Cat sleeps on owner's bed | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: resident and pet safety and happiness | Resident decision. Trial admission period. Pet response to staff actions. Pet alert sign on door | Low | Yes |
| Cat yowling in night / other times | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: pet health and happiness | Trial admission period. Behaviour can usually be reduced once inciting cause discovered | Low | Yes |
| Cat maintenance - claw clipping | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: pet health and resident safety | Care plan identifies claw clipping responsibilities and regularity | Medium | Yes |
| Walking cat on harness or trolley tripping up others / escaping | Medium | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: safety of humans and pet | Pre-admission assessment. Trial admission period. To remain in room unless in harness and at identified acceptable times. Room door to remain shut. Pet alert sign on door | Low | Yes |
| Falls risk | High | Resp: facility. Objective: keep humans safe | Trial admission period. Monitor cat behaviour especially around feeding for entwining in legs. Consider flexibility of resident regarding stepping over cat. Cat to remain in owner's room or on leash | Low | Yes |
| Fur-balls (vomiting) / diarrhoea | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective: keep pet healthy | Observation by owner/staff. Odour and litter tray management. Avoid abrupt dietary changes. Seek veterinary advice | Medium | Yes |
| Death of animal leading to psychological distress | High | Resp: Facility/family. Objective: support grieving process | Documented bereavement support process | Medium | Yes |

# Small Mammals

## Best practice case study.

Snowflake and Icecream are a bonded pair of neutered rabbits who have lived with Gwenda for the past five years, the latest pair of rabbits that have been precious pets for the past twenty years. Due to increasing frailty, and the death of her husband and carer, Gwenda agreed to moving into an aged care facility providing the rabbits could come with her.

A home that supported Gwenda's desire to have them with her was found and she moved into a large single room on the ground floor with an entrance into an enclosed courtyard. An area of the courtyard has been fenced to make an enclosure where Snowflake and Icecream can run and jump.

The bunnies have a hutch they can enter through a pet door when they want some fresh air, but they mainly choose to stay indoors in Gwenda's room where they have a safe crate for sleeping and their litter tray. Their food, leads and grooming tools are stored indoors as well. As the bunnies free ranged in Gwenda's home, they are litter trained and used to visitors and carers who provide regular care for Gwenda. Snowflake and Icecream spend lots of their time sitting on Gwenda's knees, being brushed and providing a great talking point with staff and visitors. They are moved to their crate or into the secure outdoor area when Gwenda receives care or cleaning is being provided, and a notice on Gwenda's door advises all who enter to 'look out' for them.

Between Gwenda's grandchildren and the facilities volunteers, the hutch, litter tray and food bowls are kept clean and food provided. Under the close supervision of Gwenda's grandchildren, the rabbits are regularly taken into the enclosed courtyard to frolic and sometimes, when the weather is not too hot or cold, the bunnies go further afield for walks on their leashed harnesses, delighting other residents, staff and visitors.

# Species: Small Mammals eg: Rabbit, Guinea Pig, Ferret



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Ringworm | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Implement good hygiene practices- washing hands before and after touching animal, using gloves when cleaning pen, cleaning food and water bowls and other animal husbandry procedures (staff and resident), wearing a face mask when cleaning pens and disposing of bedding materials. | Low | Yes |
| Salmonellosis (Salmonella spp.) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Wash hands before and after touching animal, using gloves when cleaning pen, cleaning food and water bowls, wearing a face mask when cleaning pens and disposing of bedding materials | Low | Yes |
| Campylobacteriosis (Campylobacter spp.) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Implement good hygiene practices- washing hands before and after touching animal, using gloves when cleaning pen, cleaning food and water bowls, wearing a face mask when cleaning pens and disposing of bedding materials good animal husbandry (clean litter trays/food bowls/pens regularly e.g. once every 5-7 days) | Low | Yes |
| Giardiasis (Giardia spp.) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Boil or use town water. Wash hands before and after touching animal, using gloves when cleaning pen, cleaning food and water bowls, wear a face mask when cleaning pens and disposing of bedding materials | Medium | Yes |
| Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus (LCMV) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Wash hands before and after touching animal, using gloves when cleaning pen, cleaning food and water bowls, wearing a face mask when cleaning pens and disposing of bedding materials | Low | Yes |
| Sarcoptic Mange (Trixacarus caviae) | Medium | Resp: owner/vet. Objective keep humans and pet healthy | Practice good hygiene, Care Plan identifies when to apply parasite treatment (Revolution) monthly to guinea pigs and rabbits | Low | Yes |
| Animal Bite/scratch | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: keep humans safe | Pre-admission assessment, trial admission period. Advise resident to use patting box where animal is less likely to be stressed and bite/ scratch (rather than loose on resident's lap), resident to wear long sleeves and pants when handling animal. Keep claws trimmed | Medium | Yes |
| Improper care of animal e.g. poor husbandry- incorrect nutrition, not cleaning enclosure not identifying animal is sick, neglect | High | Resp: owner/Vet/facility. Objective: Keep pet healthy | Pre-admission Vet health assessment. Care Plan identifies who is responsible for what part of the animal's care. If resident is responsible for food and water- staff may still need to check daily that this has been done. Daily litter changing. Routine vet check booked once or twice/year | Medium | Yes |
| Animal doesn't settle well into facility - may exhibit stress signs- poor appetite, hiding | Medium | Resp: owner/vet/facility. Objective: manage pet stress | Trial admission period. Minimise noise in room when the animal is settling in (e.g. take pen outside if staff are vacuuming room). Provide hides in cages for the animals | Medium | Yes |
| Resident(s) injure animal- e.g. drop/rough handling | Medium | Resp: owner/Vet/facility. Objective: Keep pet safe | Pet remains in resident room. Door kept closed. Access by other residents managed by staff | Medium | Yes |

# Species: Small Mammals eg: Rabbit, Guinea Pig, Ferret Continued



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Animal hair | Low | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: manage amount of pet hair | Regular brushing if pet appropriate. Regular cleaning of room/vacuuming. Groom outdoors in pet run if possible | Medium | Yes |
| Resident(s) trip on animal enclosure | High | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: keep humans safe | Identify safe location for enclosure. Alert sign on door | Medium | Yes |
| Death of animal leading to psychological distress | High | Resp: Facility/family. Objective: support grieving process | Documented bereavement support process | Medium | Yes |
| Resident(s) become inappropriately possessive of animal(s) leading to inappropriate response to pet(s) and/or other residents | Low | Resp: Facility staff. Objective: resident psychological health and safety, pet safety | Pet remains in owner's room. Ongoing Resident assessment and care planning processes and reviews | Low | Yes |

# Birds

## Best practice case study.

Sweetie Pie the Cockatiel has been Roma's companion and best friend for the past 10 years. Now Roma is unable to care for herself, Sweetie Pie's whistling and occasional talking as he free flies in her room keeps Roma company, and brings joy to her life in the aged care home. When Roma calls, Sweetie Pie heads back inside his cage.

Staff assist by managing his food, water and night-time cage cover. Family members visit weekly and clean his cage, dispose of waste in the designated waste area and provide bird food.

Sweetie Pie's whistling also brings joy to other residents and visitors who spend time with Roma talking to and about her feathered friend.

Photo courtesy of Clément Rémond

# Species: Birds



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Chlamydophila psittaci | Medium | Owner/Veterinarian | Pre admission Vet health assessment, trial period to observe no health deterioration | Low | Yes |
| Salmonella spp | Low | Owner/Veterinarian | Hand hygiene, enclosure hygiene | Low | Yes |
| Bird Bite/scratch | Medium | Resp: facility/owner. Objective: keep humans safe | Pre admission Veterinarian health & assessment, positive reinforcement based training. Remain in owner's room, alert sign on door | Low | Yes |
| Bird(s) have inadequate exercise/ or housing | Medium | Resp: Facility/owner/vet. Objective: appropriate enclosure for bird health | Pre-admission assessment to ensure housing appropriate, ensure maximum time for free ranging in owner's room | Low | Yes |
| Birds don't settle well into facility | Medium | Resp: owner/facility. Objective: keep pet safe | Pre-admission assessment. Trial admission period | Low | Yes |
| Death of animal leading to psychological distress | High | Resp: Facility/family. Objective: support grieving process | Documented bereavement support process | Medium | Yes |
| Resident(s) become inappropriately possessive of bird(s) leading to inappropriate response to bird(s) and/or other residents | Low | Resp: Facility staff. Objective: resident psychological health and safety, pet safety | Bird remains in owner's room. Ongoing Resident assessment and care planning processes and reviews | Low | Yes |

# Fish

## Best practice case study.

Barry has a lifelong passion for tropical fish and has an international profile in their care. However, with advancing dementia Barry has had to move into a secure setting. In consultation with the facility, family members move one of Barry's many aquariums into his room. Initially Barry is able to provide advice and helps to write a detailed information sheet about the aquarium and best tropical fish care practise that is posted above the tank. Sadly, in time, Barry loses his ability to communicate verbally, but staff frequently observe him watching as the fish swim around their tank,

Photo courtesy of Pixabay

weaving through the swaying plants and ornaments. Staff feed the fish as part of Barry's care plan, and a volunteer regularly checks the water quality and performs partial water changes ensuring the wellbeing of fish and plant life.

# Species: Fish



| Pre-Mitigation | | Responsibility & Objective | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies | Post-Mitigation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Risk | Risk Level | | | Risk Level | Proceed? |
| Possible zoonotic infections such as Mycobacteriosis, Aeromonas, Vibriosis | Low | Resp: owner/family. Objective keep humans and fish healthy | Fish tank to remain in owner's room to reduce inappropriate access | Low | Yes |
| Fish disease through poor tank maintenance, continuous introductions | Low | Resp: owner/family. Objective keep fish healthy | Fish Care Plan identifies responsibilities for tank maintenance use professional if owner/family unable to safely maintain tank | Low | Yes |
| Death of individual fish or whole tank causing distress to resident | Medium | Resp: owner/family. Objective keep fish healthy | Fish Care Plan identifies responsibilities for tank maintenance use professional if owner/family unable to safely maintain tank. Documented bereavement support process | Medium | Yes |
| Overfeeding of fish causing individual or whole tank problems | Medium | Resp: owner/family. Objective keep fish healthy | Fish Care Plan identifies responsibilities for feeding | Low | Yes |
| Risk of injury due to presence of glass fish tank | Medium | Resp: Facility/owner. Objective: keep humans safe | Pre admission assessment of room to identify safe position for fish tank | Low | Yes |
| Introduction of incompatible eg cannibalistic new fish | Medium | Resp: owner/family. Objective: keep fish safe | Fish Care Plan identifies responsibilities for fish care including safe replacement species | Low | Yes |
| Power outage | Medium | Resp: Facility. Objective: keep fish safe | Automatic emergency/back up sources of power identified when fish tank set up as appropriate to species | Low | Yes |

# Suggested Tools

## Suggested Tools to Support Risk Management Process

- Policy and guidelines for documenting pet admission decision making process.
- Pet Suitability Assessment: form completed by human resident and animal carer (eg Vet) to identify if pet is suitable for living in the facility.
- Veterinary Health Assessment.
- Pet care plan: identifying vaccination, worming and flea control schedules; ongoing medications/treatments and day to day care requirements including waste management and designated carer.
- Pet Accommodation & Care Agreement: documenting circumstances under which pet may live in facility; individuals responsible for daily care of pet; circumstances that may require a pet to leave.
- Staff & resident attitudes to pets assessment.
- Infection Control policies and practices specific to pets.
- Pet scratch/bite treatment protocol.
- Re-homing of Resident Pet Agreement: identifies persons responsible for the removal of the pet in the event of hospitalization or permanent departure of the resident.
- Bereavement support response model for when pets die in care (encompassing owner, other residents and staff as needed).

# Animal Care Resources

**Please note:** The links provided on this page were correct at the time of publication. Please use a search engine if the links stop working.


### Animal Therapies Ltd (2020) Australian Code of Conduct for the Animal-Assisted Services Sector

https://www.animaltherapies.org.au/download-documents/

### Animal Therapies Ltd (2021) Code of Ethics

https://www.animaltherapies.org.au/download-documents/

### International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) (2014/18)

The IAHAIO Definitions for Animal Assisted Intervention and Guidelines for Wellness of Animals involved in AAI.
https://iahaio.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/iahaio-white-paper-2018-english.pdf

### International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) (2021)

IAHAIO international guidelines on care, training and welfare requirements for small animals in animal-assisted interventions.
https://iahaio.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/for-publication-small-animal-care-and-welfare-in-aai-1.pdf

Murthy, R., Bearman, G., Brown, S., Bryant, K., Chinn, R., Hewlett, A., . . . Weber, D. (2015)

### Animals in Healthcare Facilities: Recommendations to Minimize Potential Risks

Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology, 36(5), 495-516. doi:10.1017/ice.2015.15
https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/7086725BAB2AAA4C1949DA5B90F06F3B/S0899823X1500015Xa.pdf/div-class-title-animals-in-healthcare-facilities-recommendations-to-minimize-potential-risks-div.pdf

### National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (2017)

Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, NASPHV Animal Contact Compendium Committee, available online.
http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiumAnimals.html

### NDIS & Feros care (n.d.) Emergency Pet Plan

Emergency pet plan, developed by NDIS and Feros care.
https://www.feroscare.com.au/ndis/projects/emergency-pet-plan

### SA Department of Health and Ageing (2015) Animal Contact Guidelines

Reducing the risk of illness associated with animal contact, South Australian Department for Health and Ageing (Health Protection Branch and Communicable Disease Control Branch), Adelaide, South Australia.
https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/animal+contact+-+reducing+the+risk+of+illness

### Society for Companion Animal Studies (2013/19)

Animal Assisted Interventions: SCAS Code of Practice for the UK.
http://www.scas.org.uk/animal-assisted-interventions/code-of-practice/

# Key Organisations

## International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO)

https://iahaio.org/

IAHAIO "is the global association of organizations that engage in practice, research and/or education in animal assisted activity, animal assisted therapy, and service animal training. These activities serve to promote pet ownership, the human-animal bond, and respectful approaches to engaging with animals."

IAHAIO has a number of guidelines, best practise and standards documents collaboratively developed by both human and animal experts. They are updated on a routine basis.

## Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS)

http://www.scas.org.uk/

Founded in 1979, SCAS is a One Health membership organisation that encourages best practice in human-animal interactions and influences policies. Its members include veterinary, health, education and social care professionals.

SCAS has developed a range of documents including a Code of Practice for Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) in the UK. These are guidelines specifically aimed at activities such as introducing visiting animals, resident animals, and therapeutic or educational engagement with animals.

## Animal Therapies Ltd

https://animaltherapies.org.au

Animal Therapies Ltd is the Australian organisation established in 2018 to create connections between recipients, the private, public, education and community sectors in the diverse animal assisted services sector in Australia.

Standards of practise to ensure the safety, ethical engagement and care of all involved in the sector (humans and animals) are being developed and established for the Australian context.

# Evidence Sources

Evidence based references to support the role of pets in aged care settings
(NB focus is on personal pets not animal assisted interventions, visiting etc).

## Pets as supports in Ageing

*Consistent findings: pets reduce loneliness (a mortality factor), provide meaning, motivation and purpose in life, and facilitate owners relationships with other people.*

Bolstad, C. Porter, B. Brown, C. Kennedy, R. & Nadorff, M. (2021) The Relation Between Pet Ownership, Anxiety, and Depressive Symptoms in Late Life: Propensity Score Matched Analyses. Anthrozoös, 34(5), 671–684.

Gee, N. & Mueller, M. (2019) A Systematic Review of Research on Pet Ownership and Animal Interactions among Older Adults. Anthrozoös, 32(2), 183–207.

Hawkins, R. Hawkins, E. & Tip, L. (2021) "I Can't Give Up When I Have Them to Care for": People's Experiences of Pets and Their Mental Health. Anthrozoös, 34(4), 543-562.

McConnell, A. Paige Lloyd, E. & Humphrey, B. (2019) We Are Family: Viewing Pets as Family Members Improves Wellbeing. Anthrozoös, 32(4), 459-470.

McNicholas J. Gilbey A. Rennie A. Ahmedzai S. Dono J. & Ormerod E. (2005) Pet ownership and human health: a brief review of evidence and issues. The British Medical Journal, 331(7527), 1252-1254.

Young, J. Bowen-Salter, H. O'Dwyer, L. Stevens, K. Nottle, C. & Baker, A. (2020) Pets as suicide protection in older people. Anthrozoös, 33, 191-205.

## Pets and physical health outcomes

*The most powerful pet-effects seem to be on mental and social health. However, impacts re physical health have also been documented.*

Friedmann, E. & Thomas, S. (1995) Pet ownership, social support, and one-year survival after acute myocardial infarction in the cardiac arrythmia suppression trial (CAST) American Journal of Cardiology, 76, 1213-1217.

Friedmann, E. Thomas, S. & Son, H. (2011) Pets, Depression and Long-term Survival in Community Living Patients Following Myocardial Infarction. Anthrozoös, 24(3), 273–285.

Qureshi, A. Memon, M. Vazquez, G. & Suri, F. (2009) Cat ownership and the Risk of Fatal Cardiovascular Diseases. Results from the Second National Health and Nutrition Examination Study Mortality Follow-up Study. Journal of Vascular and Interventional Neurology, 2(1): 132–135.

Raina, P. Waltner-Toews, D. Bonnett, B. Woodward, C. & Abernathy T. (1999) Influence of companion animals on the physical and psychological health of older people: An analysis of a one-year longitudinal study. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, Vol 47(3), 323-329.

## Pets as supports for vulnerable population groups

*Pet ownership may be a positive for most owners; however, when human: human engagements are difficult, the impact of relationships with pets is magnified.*

Brooks, H. Rushton, K. Lovell, K. Bee, P. Walker, L. Grant, L. & Rogers, A. (2018) The power of support from companion animals for people living with mental health problems: a systematic review and narrative synthesis of the evidence. BMC Psychiatry, 18(1), 31–31.

Brooks, H. Rogers, A. Kapadia, D. Pilgrim, J. Reeves, D. & Vassilev, I. (2013) Creature comforts: personal communities, pets and the work of managing a long-term condition. Chronic Illness, 9(2), 87–102.

Young, J. Pritchard, R. Nottle, C. & Banwell, H. (2020) Pets, touch, and COVID-19: health benefits from non-human touch through times of stress. Journal of Behavioural and Economic Policy, 14(s2), 25-33. https://sabeconomics.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/JBEP-4-S2-3.pdf

## Guidance to support older pet owners

*Useful knowledge for veterinarians, human health care workers, service system developers*

Enders-Slegers M. & Hediger, K. (2019) Pet Ownership and Human–Animal Interaction in an Aging Population: Rewards and Challenges. Anthrozoös, 32:2, 255-265.

International Federation on Ageing (2014) Measuring the Benefits: Companion Animals and the Health of Older Persons (Full Report) Access at https://ifa.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Companion-Animals-and-Older-Persons-Full-Report-Online.pdf

Newton, W. Signal, T. & Judd, J. (2021) The guidelines and policies that influence the conduct of Animal-Assisted Activities in Residential Aged-Care Facilities: A systematic integrative review. Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice, 44, 101395–101395.

Ormerod, E. (2012) Supporting older people with pets in sheltered housing. In Practice, 34(3), 170–173.

Siegel, J. (1990) Stressful Life Events and Use of Physician Services among the Elderly: The Moderating Role of Pet Ownership. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58, 1081-1086.

## Cautions re Pets

*Not everyone wants a pet; pet owning can have negatives – grief at pet deaths, financial costs, concerns re animal needs.*

Chur-Hansen, A. Winefield, H. & Beckwith, M. (2008) Reasons Given by Elderly Men and Women for Not Owning a Pet, and the Implications for Clinical Practice and Research. Journal of Health Psychology, 13(8), 988-995.

Obradović, N. Lagueux, E. Michaud, F. & Provencher, V. (2020) Pros and cons of pet ownership in sustaining independence in community-dwelling older adults: a scoping review. Ageing and Society, 40(9), 2061–2076.

# Physiotherapy-specific Risks and Mitigations



| Topic | Physiotherapy-Specific Factors | Mitigations, Warnings, Remedies |
|---|---|---|
| Feeding | Carrying heavy bulk dry food bags may increase the risk of back injuries. | • Heavy bags of bulk pet food should be kept on the floor to avoid back injuries when attempting to lift.<br>• Keeping a separate air-tight container at waist level for storing pet food. Avoid lifting above head height to prevent strain through lower back.<br>• If lifting is required, practice safe manual handling. Squat down, use legs and arms to lift when standing up, keeping the back straight throughout. |
| Grooming | Brushing / bathing pets in a sustained position. | • Movement is great; however, repetitive sustained awkward postures can lead to stiffness, cramps, joint pain and fatigue. Try and change positions frequently such as from standing to sitting.<br>• When possible, using a dog-wash station or a sink that is at waist-level is more ergonomic (better for backs) compared to a floor bath. But see note re lifting pets below.<br>• For small animals, use a table raised at a comfortable working height. Make sure the animal is tethered for their safety and to prevent them from jumping off. |
| Cleaning litter boxes/enclosures | Risks of improper lifting of a litter box or contents. | • To replace litter material, use a scoop to pour fresh material into the box rather than lifting the bag. Use a working bench where possible to work at a comfortable height rather than the floor. |
| | Sustained awkward postures when cleaning out animal enclosure. | • When unable to change working height such as cleaning out a hutch, try changing positions frequently to avoid sustained awkward positions. Knee pads can help to protect knees when kneeling for extended periods of time. |
| Exercise/Pet related movement | All movement (moving around to do pet related tasks, pet walking…) is valuable. | • Australian Physical Activity Guidelines suggest adults (18 – 64y) should be active most days to a weekly total of 2.5 – 5hrs of moderate activity, or 1.25 – 2.5hrs of vigorous activity. Or a combination of both.<br>• Regular aerobic exercise can reduce the risk of heart disease, help to manage blood pressure and cholesterol levels, improve mood and reduce stress. |
| | Pets pulling on leash increase chances of falls or soft tissue injury. | • Engage your core and arm muscles during a walk to reduce the stress through back muscles and increase stability in the case of sudden pulls. |
| | Lifting pets can cause injury with poor manual handling. | • Install ramps where possible to eliminate the load. If unable to avoid lifting, practice safe manual handling - squat down, use legs and arms to lift when standing up, keeping the back straight throughout. |
| Falls prevention | Risk due to pets being on a lead. | • Train animals to walk on a leash to keep both humans and animals safe on walks.<br>• Wear well fitting, supportive shoes with good traction and the laces tied, to reduce chances of tripping or ankle injuries.<br>• For smaller animals whose gait may be less predictable e.g. rabbits, take fewer, smaller steps at their pace or sit with them while they roam within a safe enclosed area. |
| | Unleashed pets ie in residents own rooms. | • Knowing where the pet is before getting up or walking from room to room can help to reduce accidental falls.<br>• Light coloured pets can be seen well on darker surfaces and vice versa. Consider using floor coverings that enable contrast to the pet and make them more visible. Make sure these covering are not a trip hazard of themselves e.g. edges under furniture, non-slip surfaces.<br>• Ensure animals are safely contained e.g. in a pen or crate when doing tasks that require a lot of moving around to decrease the risk of accidental falls. |

University of South Australia

**For more information:**

University of South Australia

Dr Janette Young
Allied Health & Human Performance

Convenor:
Pets & People Research (PePR)
National Community of Practice

+61 8 8302 2616
janette.young@unisa.edu.au