

## **PAWS (Parents Autism Workshops and Support)**

Assistance Dog Australia is hosting a program called PAWS (Parents Autism Workshops and Support).

In this program, Assistance Dogs Australia will explain how a four-pawed friend can be trained to help your child with Autism.

The workshop series aims to bring together parents of children with Autism with specialist dog instructors and occupational therapist experts to share experiences and explore the benefits that a trained pet dog might have within the family. Based on the PAWS program in the UK and the Netherlands, it has been successfully running in Australia for the last two years, further information on the program can be found at

[www.assistedogs.org.au/pages/paws-program.html](http://www.assistedogs.org.au/pages/paws-program.html)

### **Workshops**

The workshops cover pros and cons of getting a dog to help your child and your family. They are designed to provide parents with the information and long term support for sourcing, choosing, handling and training a pet dog specifically to benefit a child with Autism and the family as a whole. At the end of the series you may feel that you are prepared to bring a pet dog into your home or you may wish to explore the option of applying to Assistance Dogs Australia for an Autism Assistance Dog with Public Access Rights, meaning this dog can be of support to your child in areas of the community where pet dogs are unable to access.

### **Topics include:**

- Question you might have about owning a pet dog
- How dogs can help a child with autism
- Selecting the right dog to live with a child with autism
- Options for finding a suitable pet dog
- Things to think about when training a dog
- Selecting an appropriate training club/trainer
- Dog welfare and equipment ne
- Options- should you have a well -trained family pet or apply for a Autism Assistance Dog

Parents will attend a series of three, one day workshops .



### **Application Process**

Applications can apply via our website or by contacting the PAWS Coordinator or phone

1800 688 364 or email: [paws@assistedogs.org.au](mailto:paws@assistedogs.org.au)

Please get in touch as soon as possible to secure your place.

### **Application Criteria**

These workshops are open to the parents of children aged 3-16 years with a clinical diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Parents are welcome whether they have a dog or not.



### **Cost**

A \$70.00 one off payment to cover the cost of handouts and light refreshments at the workshops.

Following the workshops, Assistance Dogs Australia can offer long-term support to participating families through a variety of media from online and telephone support to a family support network.

### **Dates**

Queensland May 2015, Melbourne June 2015