



MEDIA RELEASE: Monday 17th June 2024

Mallee Family Care celebrates Wellbeing Dog, Winnie's 1st Birthday

A paw-fect party, complete with doggy treats and cupcakes for everyone was in order at Mallee Family Care (MFC) last week, to mark the first birthday of the agency's Wellbeing Dog.

Staff came together to celebrate the occasion with Winnie, the Australian CobberDog, on Friday 14 June.

MFC CEO Teresa Jayet wished Winnie a very happy birthday and acknowledged the joy, comfort and support she brings to the Mallee Family Care team.

"Since joining us in 2023, Winnie has become an indispensable part of our workplace culture," Ms Jayet said.

"Whether she is wagging her tail as she visits staff at their desks, stopping for a pat or brightening everyone's day with her infectious energy, Winnie's presence has not only boosted morale but has also contributed to a more positive and inclusive work environment."

Mallee Family Care is one of the first community and family service agencies of its type to introduce a Wellbeing Dog program, which Ms Jayet said was driven by evidence-based research.

"Science tells us that when people are feeling stressed or experiencing anxiety, even the act of patting and sitting with a dog they know causes a reduction in anxiety, a reduction in heart rate, and a feeling of calm.

"Settings like schools, hospitals, justice centres and aged care facilities have reported improved wellbeing, emotional regulation, resilience and connection since introducing Wellbeing Dog programs.

"We're very optimistic about the potential impacts this program has at Mallee Family Care and the people we support."

Guided by the team at Dogs Connect, Winnie, her carers and handlers are continually learning to ensure she succeeds in her role as a Wellbeing Dog.

"We're so proud of how far Winnie has already come along with her training and adjusting to life in the office," Ms Jayet said.

Winnie currently works part time hours and these will gradually increase as she develops further.



Media enquiries

Mieka Symes | Communications Manager

T: 03 5023 5966 M: 0439 850 638

E: misymes@malleefamilycare.com.au



“Eventually we hope to expand Winnie’s workload to where she can interact with our visitors, children, individuals and families that we work alongside,” Ms Jayet said.

“We're incredibly grateful for the love and companionship she brings to our workplace.”

ENDS



Media enquiries

Mieka Symes | Communications Manager

T: 03 5023 5966 M: 0439 850 638

E: misymes@malleefamilycare.com.au