



## REGISTERED HANDLER CODE OF CONDUCT

*As a condition of Registration with PAD, all Handlers are required to agree to abide by, and commit to upholding the standards, of the PAD Handler Code of Conduct.*

The Code of Conduct is described in 5 Standards: -

**Standard 1: The Purposes and not-for-profit nature of PAD**

**Standard 2: Accountability to Association**

**Standard 3: Compliance with Australian laws**

**Standard 4: Suitability of the Handler Team to PAD**

**Standard 5: Duties of the Handler**

NOTE:

The term Handler, in this document refers to Affiliated Associate, and Affiliated Registered Self Training Handlers - Adult, Alternate and Secondary.

PAD refers to PAWsome ASSISTANCE DOGS

### IN BRIEF

#### **Standard 1: The Purposes and not-for-profit nature of PAD**

For PAD Handlers, the Purpose is clearly defined in the Mission Statement of PAWSOME ASSISTANCE DOGS.

#### **The Mission is Primarily**

To provide the Handler Team with organisational registration and support, including training assessment and advice; and public access assessment and standards verification, to comply

with Federal Guidelines and Laws in relation to the use of Assistance Dogs, and Assistance Dogs in Training.

Any individual, with verified disabilities, that would benefit from the support of an Assistance Dog, in order to alleviate the effects of their disability, may apply for Registration.

PAWsome Assistance Dogs Inc is an advisory and support hub for the Handler. Its aim is to do all such things as are ancillary or conducive to the attainment of all or any of the Objects of the Association.

**Handlers are expected to comply with, and contribute to, the aims of the Association. Applying to become Registered with the Association confirms acceptance of this Standard.**

## **Standard 2: Accountability to the Association, and other Handlers**

**(a)** PAD takes all reasonable steps to provide Handlers with adequate opportunity to raise concerns in relation to their Application, Registration or De-registration, and Assessments for Public Access. This is done through clearly defined Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, to ensure Handlers are aware of their responsibilities, and the standards by which application, registration and public access are assessed.

**(b)** Whilst Handlers are not Members of the Association, nor do they have voting rights, they are afforded openness and accountability by the Association, in all matters related to their Affiliated Registration, provided it does not contravene the Privacy and Confidentiality of the Association structure and functioning. Handlers, as non-Members, are not provided with the financial statements, or confidential records of the Association.

**(c)** All Members of the Public may access the published Annual Report documents provided to the ACNC and OFT Qld.

**(d)** Handlers have a responsibility to treat Members and Representatives of the Association, as well as other Handler Teams, with respect. Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination, Breaches of Privacy or Confidentiality, or unauthorised contact or sharing of personal information outside the closed Handler Group environment, may be grounds for immediate de-registration, without appeal.

**(e)** Handlers are expected to comply with, and uphold, the Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Public Access Standards, as a condition on continued registration. Breaches to any of these may result in immediate de-registration without appeal.

**(f)** PAD identifying jackets for the Assistance Dogs, and the Digital ID Cards provided, remain the property of PAD. The Handler, in pursuing registration, agrees to maintain good presentation and condition of the jacket, whilst it is in their possession, and to return it immediately, should they leave affiliation with PAD, or are de-registered by PAD. Access to any Digital ID cards issued in relation to the registration will be cancelled.

**(g)** Handlers are not permitted to represent PAD in any official capacity, without prior written authority from the Executive. Under Special Circumstances, the Committee may provide authority, in writing, for a Handler to specifically represent PAD, but this is not a standard procedure. This includes, but is not limited to, newspaper interviews, radio interviews, fundraising and any form of public address or publicity that has not been sanctioned by the Executive Committee

**Handlers are expected to commit to the achievement of this Standard, as a condition of initial and ongoing registration.**

### **Standard 3: Compliance with Australian laws**

#### **(1) HANDLERS**

**(a)** All PAD Handlers are required to meet the standards of both PAD and the legal requirements under the Disability and Discrimination Act 1992. In terms of PAD, this is evidenced by regular re-assessment and updating of compliance by both Dog and Handler, and monitoring the care, grooming and health of the registered dog. The Handler must also have a level of mental, emotional, and physical health to continue with appropriate care, training, and control of the dog, and to engage in healthy and positive relationships with other Handlers and Association Members

**(b)** PAD Handlers are required to comply with all relevant Policies, Rules and Procedures of the Association, and meet and maintain the standards of the Public Access Assessment, in order to be deemed by PAD as verified as meeting the DDA requirements

**(c)** Assistance Dogs are not, and cannot be, dual Therapy or Emotional Support Dogs. They do not interact with the public to perform emotional or therapy dog type activities. The role of a Therapy or Emotional Support Dog is in contrast and contradiction to the purpose of an Assistance Dog. PAD does not register or certify Therapy or Emotional Support Dogs. Its purpose is the support, training, and assessment of Assistance Dog Handler Teams. The Handler acknowledges this differentiation has been explained and accepts this Standard.

**(d)** An Assistance Dog is defined as a Medical Aid, specific to, and for the sole use of, the Handler. The purpose of the Assistance Dog in part, is to be a buffer between the Handler, and the public. Handlers are not permitted to use their Assistance Dog as a Therapy or Emotional Support Dog, or for any other purpose that contradicts the legal and PAD definition of the purpose of an Assistance Dog. Doing so results in de-registration of the Handler due to conflict of interest and Public Access training/ expectations, as a breach of the Constitution, By Laws and this Code of Conduct.

**(e)** A Handler, wishing to engage in extra activities, such as trick training, dog shows, agility or other similar activities must apply in writing to the Executive, with detailed explanation as to why they wish to use an Assistance Dog in this manner, and how the dog's ability to work will be facilitated or affected. There must be substantiated proof that the dog, or the Team, will benefit from this activity. In general, PAD does not support activities which are outside of the parameters of an Assistance Dog being a medical aid, both in training and public perception.

(g) Handlers may be requested to apply for a Blue Card, if the Executive Committee deems it appropriate to their ongoing Registration. Handlers must confirm that they are not disqualified from eligibility to apply for a card if requested.

**Handlers are expected to commit to the achievement of this Standard, as a condition of initial and ongoing registration**

#### **Standard 4: Suitability of Handler Teams**

- (a) PAD has guidelines and processes, to ensure Handlers are effectively vetted. The Handler, the Dog, and the environment of the Team is taken into consideration by the Committee before approving Registration. Registration is a process involving interviews and assessments, as well as verification of the medical need for a dog. Applying to become a Handler, acknowledges this process.
- (b) PAD is a volunteer administered Association, which considers the personal life and responsibilities of committee members. This means that the registration process is not speedy or immediate. By proceeding with the application, the Handler is acknowledging awareness of this, and the potential for delays in administrative processes. The applicant confirms he/she still wishes to apply to be registered with PAD knowing these circumstances.
- (c) **PAD is not suited to everyone qualifying for an Assistance Dog. PAD prides itself on being a family of Handlers, supporting each other.** However, the Handlers are required to commit to consistent training and maintaining of standards, and not everyone can make this commitment. This may mean PAD is not suited to an applicant, or the applicant is not suitable to PAD. PAD undertakes to make fair and considered assessment of each application, both for the good of PAD, and the individual pursuing the application. The Handler acknowledges they may not be suited to registration with PAD, or that PAD may not be suited to their needs.
- (d) Where there is an Alternate Handler assigned for an under aged child, or person unable to be responsible for themselves, or a Second Handler is nominated to assist the Handler Team, said Handlers are responsible for compliance, as if they are the nominated individual applicant. These Handlers are required to maintain all standards and requirements, as per the Handler Agreement, on behalf of the designated recipient of the Assistance Dog support. Second Handlers are required to sign declaration forms.
- (e) Handlers not upholding the good name of PAD, or behaving without Integrity and Ethics, found to be Bullying, Harassing or Discriminating against Handlers or Association Members, or undermining the Association, individual Members, or other Handlers, for personal issues or gain are subject to immediate deregistration as a Handler, without appeal.
- (f) Association Members and Handlers are informed in writing, through the Code of Conduct and other By Laws and Policies that such breaches will not be tolerated.

- (g) Handlers are required to sign acknowledgement of the standards of behaviour and relationship with PAD, in the application process.

**Handlers are expected to commit to the achievement of this Standard, as a condition of initial and ongoing registration.**

#### **Standard 5: Responsibilities of Handlers**

(a) PAD provides all Handlers with all relevant HR and governance documents, to ensure they are fully informed, know what they are subject to, and understand and comply with all policies and procedures set out in these Standards.

(b) It is the responsibility of the Handler to know the requirements of continued Registration and maintenance of their public access certification standards.

(c) It is the responsibility of the Handler, to maintain training standards and ethical behaviour, in order to maintain registration.

(d) It is the responsibility of the Handler to maintain good repair of the provided identifying jacket and to use it appropriately. To return it if required of them by the association, and to pay for replacement if it damaged. The Handler must comply with the specified use of the jacket, and not add to or adorn it in any unauthorised manner.

(e) The Handler is responsible for ethical and humane training methods and tools. Positive Training and Discipline only is permitted. **No aversive tools or training methods are permitted as a source of training or controlling the dog, unless there is a specific reason and time frame designated by a professional trainer who is supervising this use. It is the responsibility of the Handler to verify the use of non-PAD standard equipment, or any equipment or methods they may not be sure about.** PAD considers standard Leads, Tether or Traffic Leads, Training or Standard collars, Canny Collars or similar halter type guides, Harnesses that do not cause pressure or injury to the limbs and joints, or mobility/support type frames as suitable tools. Under special circumstances, e.g., small breed dogs, PAD supports the use of Pet Strollers or similar for safety and access to the dog. Handlers with small breed dogs need to refer to the separate guidelines document in relation to acceptable standards of use of public property and public access.

(f) **ALL DOGS are to be on a buckle or slip collar at all times, which is to be attached to the primary lead. The collar must be metal (slip collar) or Leather (buckle collar). Quick release collars are not acceptable as working collars unless there is a special need due to a Handler's disability requiring this type of collar. The Committee must be advised of this exemption. Small dogs must be lead on collars. They may be tethered in a pram/trolley etc by a harness, but when on the ground, a collar and lead must be used at all times. Leads are to be of suitable material to maintain safety and professionalism.**

**Handlers are expected to commit to the achievement of this Standard, as a condition of initial and ongoing registration.**

## THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN SUMMARY

### The Handler: -

- Will function to uphold, implement, and respect the objects of the Association, and the Association will provide approved Handler Teams with organisational registration and support, including training assessment and advice; and public access assessment and standards verification, to comply with Federal Guidelines and Laws in relation to the use of Assistance Dogs, and Assistance Dogs in Training.
- Undertakes to participate in the PAD community of Handler Teams and maintain regular and quality contact with the Association and its representatives. PAWSOME Assistance Dogs Inc is an advisory and support hub for Handlers. The Association undertakes to provide this assistance to the highest standard within the constraints of the Federal legislation, NFPO Laws, the PAD Constitution, and of being a volunteer organisation.
- Agrees to respect, comply with, contribute to, and support the Association's endeavours to provide a physical and virtual based community, with the aim to help emotional and mental health, as well as social isolation and loneliness issues, encountered by those who are physically and/or mentally disabled, with due respect and compliance with the Constitution, and all relevant laws relating to a NFPO (Not for Profit Organization).
- Is required to actively promote the welfare of both Handler Teams, and the General Public with disabilities. Such actions and provisions may be made through the Association's own activities, or by participating in social interactions with other Handler Teams.
- Agrees to maintain an active and professional relationship with the Association, its Members, and other Handlers, that is Ethical, Responsible, Accountable, and in Compliance with the Association Handler Governance, and relevant Laws.
- Will uphold the Standards and Reputation of PAD, through ethical behaviour, providing safe environments within the PAD parameters, preventing, and addressing Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination both in relation to the Association Members, and other Handlers, and where possible, in the Assistance Dog Community and General Public.
- Will maintain Open, Inclusive, Positive and Adaptable contribution to the Assistance Dog Community, Handlers, other Organisations/Associations, where appropriate, and the General Public, for the better understanding and co-operation of all involved, in relation to Assistance Dogs Teams.
- Will respect the needs of the Association Members and other Handlers, with due consideration to addressing Complaints, Issues, and Inquiries in a timely and professional manner, that also accounts for, and allows, that Members are volunteers, many with their own medical issues, as do other Handlers. Therefore, "timely" will not always equate to "immediate".

- Ethically maintain a financial relationship with the Association in regard to fees and other payments which may be owing.
- Take all reasonable steps, to ensure the longevity of the Association, and therefore guarantee stability for Handlers, by complying with governance, being professional in all dealings with the Association Members, other Handlers, and the general public in a manner that respects and supports PAD as a viable incorporated association and does not misuse of personal and confidential data for the purpose of bringing the Association, a Member or other Handler, into disrepute.

**HANDLER NAME**

I,

**agree to abide by, and uphold the Code of Conduct Standards, and all By Laws and Governance Policies of PAWSome ASSISTANCE DOGS INC. I acknowledge that failure to maintain compliance may result in immediate de-registration, without appeal, or refund.**

**HANDLER SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

**PHONE NUMBER**

**EMAIL**

**ADDRESS**