

28 October 2019

Animals provide comfort in a time of need

Pooches trot down the corridor and peek their wet, black noses into rooms to say “hello” across South Western Sydney Local Health District hospitals and services most days of the week.

Camden Hospital’s Meghan Debono has been witness to one of the times the astounding relationship between animals and humans has occurred.

“I have watched pet therapy dogs enter the ward, pass by all the rooms filled with patients, and go into a room just to put their paw on the arms of a dying person,” the Camden Hospital Palliative Care Nursing Unit Manager said.

“After witnessing this, I have no doubt that dogs have a real inkling into what’s going on in the human world.

“He gets up on the bed and is amazing; everyone appreciates him. They just have a way of connecting and being a sense of warmth and love for our patients.”

A wagging tail and lots of licks or snuggles is all it takes to win the affection and love from most patients.

“Even people who say they don’t like dogs are won over,” Ms Debono said.

Sebastian the toy poodle visits the palliative care ward every Tuesday at Camden Hospital with his human Patriciah, while Bunny the jack russell visits Liverpool Hospital’s palliative care with his human Jodie.

Toby the bulldog is a regular fixture at Liverpool Hospital’s mental health north unit, and the consumers love when his human Erin visits with him.

A groodle named Bung visits Bowral & District Hospital, a Belgian shepherd named Fancy visits Campbelltown Hospital and occasionally, Harry the macaw visits Campbelltown Hospital’s paediatric ward.

Heads turn as they pass by, wondering why or how a dog or blue and yellow exotic bird is allowed in a hospital.

“The staff loves having these special visitors in the ward,” Ms Debono said.

“The pooch enters with one mission – to spread love to people in our hospitals - and they do it well.”