

Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) for Human-Canine Teams

## Intensive Therapy-Dog Handlers Course

Revolutionise your career with this unique, industry leading training course.

Setting new standards for the industry, this training program will teach participants the skills to enhance existing careers in the human-services field, or to forge new career pathways.

In a truly unique 5-day intensive program, this course will train human-canine teams to conduct Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAIs).

In the only training program of its type, this course focuses not only on training dogs the obedience and behaviour required of a **visiting therapy dog**, but covers much of the theory and current research into Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) and explores how AAI programs can be developed and implemented.

### When

- Monday 2nd to Friday 6th March
- Monday 15th to Friday 19th June
- Monday 21st to Friday 25th September
- Monday 26th to Friday 30th October

### Where

#### Alpha Boarding Kennels

8 Kiernan Road, Macclesfield, Victoria

(1hr east of Melbourne in the Dandenong Ranges)

### Cost

\$1,350 per Handler and Dog team (incl. GST), includes all course materials and assessment.

A maximum of 10 participants per course applies.





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### Learning objectives

This course is designed to teach handler and dog teams the skills required to visit institutions such as nursing homes, hospitals, schools & residential facilities. Upon successful completion of the course, participants will receive a certificate and Therapy-Dog Identification Coat.

### The course will enable participants to;

1. Demonstrate effective, reward based dog handling skills in novel and highly distracting situations, including;
  - Communication, behaviour shaping, and problem solving (understanding how dogs learn and interact)
  - Obedience skills to reliable standards under distraction, including sit, drop, heel, recall and 'step away' (stay)
2. Identify and describe the strengths and weaknesses of the human-canine team, including stress and fatigue
3. Describe how leadership, trust and consistency impacts on the human-canine team, and the dog's ability to work as a Therapy-Dog
4. Describe and implement Good Behaviour Shaping (GBS) strategies to ensure the ongoing leadership and trust between dog and handler
5. Demonstrate at least two therapeutic commands with the dog, and describe how they could be used
6. Describe at least three benefits of human-animal interaction with your chosen population group (e.g. Youth, elderly, disabled, etc)
7. Identify the key components required to implement Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAIs) in varying settings, including OH&S
8. Develop and demonstrate a simple AAI with the assistance of other course participants





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## Intensive Therapy-Dog Handlers Course

### About the facilitators

#### Greg Fontana

Training Director and founder of The Alpha Canine Group, Greg is one of the most experienced and respected dog trainers in the industry. With over 20 years experience, his pioneering work on canine communication, lifestyle obedience training and Good Behaviour Shaping ensures he is sought after to provide education and instruction to dog trainers worldwide. Greg is the proprietor of the highly successful Boarding School For Dogs, which is renowned for training and rehabilitating the most difficult, 'last chance' dogs. In 1996 Greg founded Alpha Canine Professional, an umbrella group to oversee his many professional dog training courses, and in 2009 began rescuing and training 'canine companions' for families and therapy work.



#### Melanie Jones

A psychologist and professional dog trainer, Melanie has spent the past 15 years working with children, adolescents and families. Since early 2003 Melanie has been researching Animal-Assisted Interventions, developing partnerships with Monash University to measure the efficacy of her group programs for young people. Melanie provides consultancy and training to human services professionals wishing to establish Animal-Assisted Interventions, and provides Animal-Assisted Therapy to clients in her psychology clinic, local schools and agencies.



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### Course outline

This course focuses equally on the theories underpinning AATs, and the ability to practice and deliver interventions with your dog. Each day is divided into a combination of practice and theory. Lectures are designed to enhance participant's understanding of the skills gained each day, and the knowledge will build over the course of the week.

#### Day One

##### Practicum

- Dog Handling Essentials
- Leadership, Trust & Consistency
- Sit & 'Step Away'
- Heel & Auto Halt

##### Lectures

- Canine Leadership System
- Canine Learning Principles



#### Day Two

##### Practicum

- Drop & 'Step Away'
- Recall
- Extended 'Step Aways' under distraction

##### Lectures

- Canine Body Language
- Socialisation Principles

#### Day Three

##### Practicum

- Good Behaviour Shaping (GBS)
- Doorways & Boundary Setting
- Loose Lead Walking
- Canine Cognitive Tonal Conditioning

##### Lectures

- Quadrants of GBS
- AAT Principles & Theory



#### Day Four

##### Practicum

- Socialisation
- Scenario Applications
- Intervention Planning

##### Lectures

- AAT Applications
- Ethics, OH&S, Workplace Applications

#### Day Five

##### Practicum

- Scenario Applications

##### Assessment & Certification

- Obedience including sit, drop, 'step away', recall and heel
- Scenarios including comfort around people and other dogs



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## Intensive Therapy-Dog Handlers Course

### Enrolment information

**A maximum of 10 participants will be accepted into each course. Please enrol early to avoid disappointment. A 20% NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of \$270 is required to secure your place in the course. Fees must be paid in full 14 days prior to course commencement.**

### Humans

The course is designed to provide comprehensive training on how to incorporate a Therapy-Dog into a visiting or therapeutic/treatment program. The information will assist participants to develop confidence and skills to conduct visits and programs with their own dogs. It will suit any person working or studying in a human-services field already, including Teaching, Nursing, Psychology/Counselling/Social work, Aged Care, etc. The course is also appropriate for individuals who wish to conduct Therapy-Dog visits to nursing homes, hospitals, etc. Whilst there are no formal pre-requisites to attend the course, it is preferred that participants have a basic understanding of issues such as privacy legislation, professional conduct and occupational health and safety.

### Dogs

Any people-friendly and happy dog can become a therapy dog given the appropriate training! There are no breed or old-age restrictions to do this course, however puppies must be at least 5 months of age to participate and there may be some additional requirements or follow-up required. This course will teach handlers to manage their dog's behavior, such as jumping, excitability, distractibility, etc in addition to teaching a very high level of communication and obedience. No previous training is necessary. Dogs should, however, be healthy, love people and have the temperament to cope with being a 'working' dog. All dogs require a current C5 vaccination.

### Clothing and Equipment

Participants will be expected to bring their dogs to the centre each day of the course. During lectures, dogs will be learning to settle alongside their owners. When not with their owners, dogs will be provided with secure undercover pens or outdoor exercise yards. Please wear sensible clothing, including sturdy, closed-toe shoes and bring a coat, sunscreen and a hat. The centre is situated approximately 1 hours drive east of the city of Melbourne, in the hills of the Dandenong Ranges. Adequate undercover training areas and an indoor air-conditioned classroom are available.

Light refreshments will be supplied every day. Boiling water, fridge and microwave are also supplied for your convenience. To help keep costs to a minimum, please bring your lunch. You will be provided with comprehensive course and lecture notes and given ample time to ask questions relevant to your particular interests or profession. Please bring a pen and some additional paper to take notes if required. All teams passing the assessment on the final day will be supplied with a certificate and a Therapy-Dog Identification Coat. If teams are not ready to pass the assessment on the final day of the course, opportunities will be negotiated to re-sit the assessment at a later date.

### Interstate Participants

Being located in the picturesque tourist area of the Dandenong Ranges, there are many local accommodation options such as B&B's. An Internet search will provide you with many options. If you would like a personal recommendation, please contact us as we have relationships with a number of local B&B's. Accommodation for your dog can be provided at Alpha Boarding Kennels by negotiation.

### Enquiries

For more information please contact Melanie at Lead the Way on 03 9761 0973 or 0408 376 531, email [enquiries@ltw.com.au](mailto:enquiries@ltw.com.au) or go directly to our online enrolment form at [www.leadtheway.com.au/application](http://www.leadtheway.com.au/application)