Section 2 – Project details

1. **Project title:** ...Pet Support – Helping People to Keep their Pets

2. **Please provide a brief overview of your project:**
(Include purpose, outcomes, participant involvement in project structure, target groups, target demographic, etc)

Pet Support services include dog walking for people who are incapacitated, emergency boarding or foster care for people who are hospitalised, in crisis housing or otherwise in need of emergency assistance. The ultimate goal of the programme is to assist elderly members of the community to keep their pets and continue to benefit from the positive health and social impact which pets are known to bring. Target groups are elderly people who are socially isolated and have little or no family or support through friends. This may also include women and children fleeing domestic violence, people who have injured themselves or are otherwise incapacitated and people who would otherwise have to give up their pets.

3. Provide details of the location(s) where the project/ activity will be delivered:

This project will reach out to as many Canberrans as possible within the constraints of resources. The demand for this sort of support is high and RSPCA ACT does not currently have the capacity to assist as many people and pets as we would like to. Support will be limited to the Canberra region. Dog walking services will be targeted towards people recovering from hospitalisation while boarding and foster services will assist those people while they are in hospital or otherwise unable to care for their pets.

4. Provide details of your project against the Seniors Grants Program funding priorities:

*   encourage and support older Canberrans to participate in community activities;

Pets often provide people with the confidence and security to participate more in wider society, even if only to walk to the shops or seek involvement in community activities. By enabling elderly Canberrans to keep their pets, this programme is providing people with an incentive to retain a social presence. As the dog walking services will be done while the client is in their home, this will allow

the elderly client interaction with RSPCA staff which may also encourage wider community involvement.

- encourage and support older Canberrans to share their skills and knowledge with others

Through enhancing participants' social interaction and health experiences, elderly Canberrans will be encouraged to interact and share resources with other people who also love animals.

- encourage and support relevant community groups and organisations to build their capacity to provide services to older Canberrans and to include them in their decision making

RSPCA ACT will be working with community groups and organisations to ensure that the target group is aware of the service and comforted by the knowledge that they will not be forced to give up their pets. We already provide pets as therapy services to several organisations and would use this to leverage further opportunities to help elderly Canberrans.

5. How will you attract and recruit participants, particularly from the target group(s) you have identified:

RSPCA ACT will be working with community groups and organisations to ensure that the target group is aware of the service and comforted by the knowledge that they will not be forced to give up their pets. We already provide pets as therapy services to several organisations and would use this to leverage further opportunities to help elderly Canberrans.

6. Funding is available for 12 months only. Please provide a description of how the benefits of your project will be sustained after the end of the funding period.

This funding would enable the current 0.5 FTE staff member to increase her hours to a full time equivalent. If funding beyond 12 months is not available, the programme would revert to a half time capacity. However, we are hopeful that the programme will be a success to an extent which will allow us to seek further grant funding from a wider source group.