

Operation K9



What is an assistance dog?

An assistance (or service) dog is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.

Examples of work or tasks include:

- Assist people who are blind or vision impaired with mobility
- Alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing to people or sounds
- Assist a person during a seizure
- Alert a person to the presence of allergens
- Retrieve items such as medication or a telephone
- Provide physical support and assistance with balance and stability to people with mobility issues
- Help people with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviours
- Pull a wheelchair.

What is Operation K9?

Operation K9 is a program provided by the Royal Society for the Blind (RSB).

Operation K9 dogs are provided to Veterans of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) who have a diagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

What is PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that is caused by a traumatic experience or experiences. The symptoms can be social isolation, poor emotional regulation, impaired cognitive functioning, emotional numbing and avoidance, hypervigilance, problems with sleep, flashbacks and physical aches and pains.

What does an Operation K9 Dog do?

Operation K9 Dogs are accredited assistance dogs that provide companionship, comfort, support, independence and social interaction, tailored to a Veteran's needs. Operation K9 Dogs can perform tasks such as retrieve

medication, seek help, interrupt episodes of stress and anxiety, and many other physical tasks that may be needed.

Is an Operation K9 Dog a companion dog?

No, a companion dog is a dog whose main goal is to provide comfort for the individual but does not have public access accreditation.

While an Operation K9 Dog does provide companionship, it is also an accredited assistance dog that has the same access rights as a guide dog. They have been trained to perform tasks that will assist a specific disability and help the person lead a more independent life.

Who is eligible for an Operation K9 Dog?

To be eligible to apply for an Operation K9 Dog, the applicant must have served in the ADF (or currently be in the process of retiring from the ADF) and have a diagnosed PTSD that has been acquired during the course of their operational military service.

All applicants must be 18 years of age and a resident in South Australia.

How much does an Operation K9 Dog cost?

Operation K9 Dogs are provided to eligible clients free of charge. All initial equipment and accessories are provided, and Operation K9 covers all veterinary and routine health costs for the dog.

How can I support Operation K9?

It costs in excess of \$30,000 to breed and train each Operation K9 Dog.

You can help in a number of ways:

- Become a RSB Puppy Sponsor.
Please contact the RSB on (08) 8417 5555 for more information.
- Become a volunteer - RSB Puppy Educator, Bed and Breakfast Border or Emergency Boarder (SA only).
Please contact the RSB Guide and Assistance Dog Service on (08) 8417 5656 for more information.
- Donate to Operation K9.
Please contact the RSB to make a donation on 1800 644 577 or visit www.rsb.org.au/operation-k9.



For more information about Operation K9, please contact the RSB Guide and Assistance Dog Service in South Australia on (08) 8417 5656.