

Every dog has his (or her) day

After the incredibly successful Canine Court Companion Program pilot using therapy dogs in NSW courts to assist people feeling anxious or stressed due to court proceedings, the initiative has been further expanded to include additional courthouses throughout NSW.

NSW Attorney-General Mark Speakman says that:

"Hundreds of people took part in the trial and every one of them gave therapy dogs the tick of approval. Having a floppy ear to talk to and a friendly paw to hold helps victims and witnesses feel relaxed and more focused. The scientists call it 'the pet effect'.

One of the unexpected bonuses has been the positive impact the dogs have had on court staff, police and lawyers, who also reported feeling a reduction in stress levels after spending time with the happy hounds.

Visiting a courthouse is a stressful experience, but having a comforting canine around reinforces to victims and witnesses that they're in a safe place."

All of the canines are 'qualified' therapy dogs which means that they have training just like Guide Dogs and know how to behave around distressed people reliving traumatic events.

The popular pooches will be found waiting throughout courthouse foyers and waiting rooms and are expected to further provide much needed comfort to children and victims of crime.

What do you think? Is this something that would benefit the NT?

