

Ms Niki McCarthy
Director of People and Culture
Nuriootpa High School
Nuriootpa SA 5355

27th March 2026

Dear Niki,

Re a support letter for a Therapy Dog in Nuriootpa High School

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed initiative at Nuriootpa High School to introduce a therapy dog as part of the Wellbeing Team's approach to supporting students.

Across school communities, there is growing recognition of the complex mental health and wellbeing challenges young people face. A therapy dog offers a gentle, evidence-informed way to assist students who are distressed or experiencing psychosocial difficulties. Interaction with a calm, trained dog can help students regulate their emotions, reduce anxiety, and feel safe enough to engage in meaningful conversations with wellbeing staff.

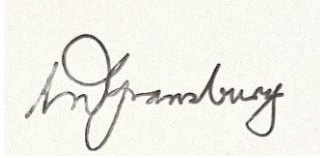
Importantly, the presence of a therapy dog can act as a bridge for those who may otherwise struggle to seek help. For many students, talking about their feelings can be overwhelming; however, the companionship of a dog often creates a non-judgmental and comforting environment that supports emotional expression and trust-building.

Beyond immediate wellbeing benefits, this initiative also provides valuable educational opportunities. Students can learn about responsible pet care, empathy, and respectful interactions with animals—skills that contribute positively to their social and emotional development.

The success of therapy dog programs in 77 schools across South Australia demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach. Reports consistently highlight improved student engagement, emotional regulation, and overall wellbeing outcomes.

Introducing a therapy dog at Nuriootpa High School is a proactive and compassionate step toward enhancing student support services. I fully endorse this initiative and believe it will make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of students.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, textured background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Bill Gransbury'.

Dr Bill Gransbury OAM

Chair

Enhance Barossa Mental Health Inc.

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