

# FND CLINIC PTY LTD

ABN: 15 666 642 842

## Assistance Dogs, FND & NDIS Reasonable & Necessary Support

Assistance Dogs (ADs) provide essential, disability-specific support for people with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) and functional seizures. Participant evidence consistently shows that ADs deliver unique, real-time safety, regulation, and functional assistance that cannot be replicated by human supports, informal care, or assistive technology. Across the consultation, ADs were described as “life-saving,” “life-changing,” and critical to maintaining independence, community access, and economic participation. Assistance Dogs deliver unique, essential support that enables independence, safety, wellbeing, and participation for people with FND, making them a reasonable and necessary NDIS support.

### 1. How Assistance Dogs Support People With FND

People with FND experience unpredictable episodes including seizures, collapse, dissociation, gait disturbances, paralysis, sensory overload, and autonomic instability. ADs mitigate these risks through specialised tasks that directly prevent harm and support daily functioning.

**Early warning and prevention:** ADs detect subtle physiological and behavioural changes—such as shifts in heart rate, scent, dissociation cues, or neurological fluctuations—alerting the handler before they are aware of an episode. This allows the person to sit, rest, or move to safety, preventing injuries and reducing episode severity.

**Support during episodes:** ADs provide grounding, deep pressure therapy, tactile stimulation, and sustained presence to reduce shock, confusion, and overstimulation. They can alert carers, stay alongside the handler until recovery, and reduce the need for ambulance or hospital intervention.

**Mobility and physical stability:** ADs assist with balance, gait, bracing, proprioception, and falls prevention, reducing hospital presentations and improving confidence in the community.

0412 363 287 02 8072 6278



info@fndaus.org.au www.fndaus.org.au



FND Australia  
Support Services Inc

# FND CLINIC PTY LTD

ABN: 15 666 642 842

**Environmental safety and daily living:** They create safe physical space in public, guide to quiet areas, manage overstimulation, fetch medication or items, and facilitate safe transitions during fatigue or neurological flares.

**Emotional regulation and wellbeing:** ADs provide instant co-regulation, reducing PTSD triggers, shutdowns, meltdowns, and autonomic dysregulation. Their presence reduces isolation for people who are housebound.

**Independence and participation:** ADs enable work, study, volunteering, school drop-offs, appointments, and community access that would otherwise be unsafe or impossible.

#### **Reduced caregiver burden:**

Families experience relief from constant monitoring responsibilities, improved sleep, reduced anxiety, and more sustainable support arrangements.

## **2. Why Assistance Dogs Are unique and not comparable to alternative supports**

Participants emphasised that ADs offer unique capabilities unmatched by any other support:

- Early physiological detection cannot be replicated by humans or technology.
- ADs provide continuous 24/7 monitoring, including overnight support.
- Emotional co-regulation is immediate, non-verbal, and free of guilt or burden.
- ADs enhance—not replace—therapy and support worker effectiveness.
- No assistive technology can predict seizures, apply DPT, or provide relational stabilisation.

ADs enable safe, independent living without requiring constant human supervision.

# FND CLINIC PTY LTD

ABN: 15 666 642 842

### 3. Barriers and Challenges

Despite their benefits, handlers face significant barriers:

- **Public interference**, intrusive questions, and stigma around non-traditional AD breeds.
- **Safety risks**, including attacks from uncontrolled dogs.
- **Access barriers** across transport, airlines, accommodation, hospitals, and public facilities.
- **Financial strain**, with many self-funding AD costs and experiencing hardship.
- **NDIS barriers**, including rejected applications despite strong evidence, inconsistent decision-making, and emotionally taxing processes.

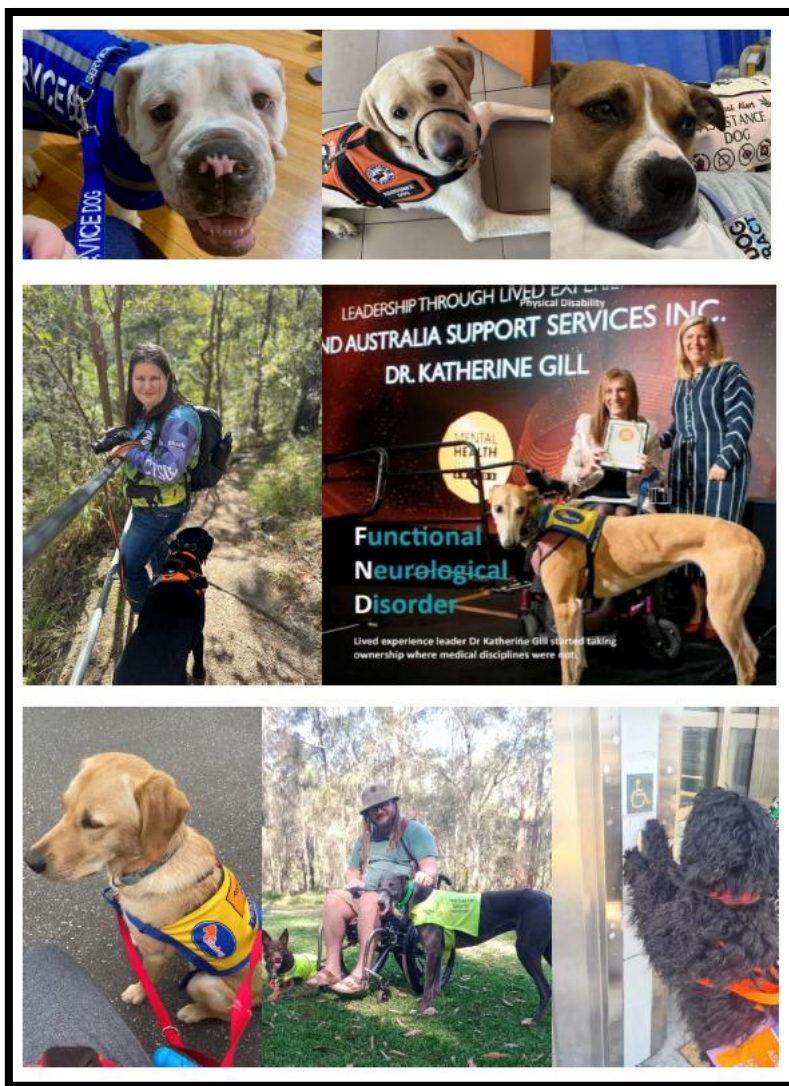
### 4. Alignment With NDIS Reasonable & Necessary Criteria (s34)

The evidence strongly supports ADs as a Reasonable & Necessary support:

- **(s34(1)(a))** ADs directly support goals relating to independence, capacity building, community access, work/study, and safety.
- **(s34(1)(b))** ADs enable social and economic participation that would otherwise be restricted.
- **(s34(1)(c))** ADs provide significant value for money, reducing support worker hours and crisis healthcare costs. The constant calming presence of an AD allows for more effective therapy.
- **(s34(1)(d))** ADs deliver effective, evidence-based functional and safety benefits for FND.
- **(s34(1)(e))** No informal support can provide continuous early detection or real-time intervention.
- **(s34(1)(f))** ADs are most appropriately funded by the NDIS, as no mainstream system offers equivalent support.
- **(s34(2))** All participating dogs were safe, passed Public Access Tests, and caused no harm.

# FND CLINIC PTY LTD

ABN: 15 666 642 842



**Cite As:** Gill, K., Heng, E., Chee, J. (2025) Assistance Dogs are Effective and Beneficial in Supporting people with FND safely manage daily life: A study and review of the evidence. FND Australia Support Services

0412 363 287 02 8072 6278



info@fndaus.org.au www.fndaus.org.au



FND Australia  
Support Services Inc