# SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

**September 2020**

NeuRA
*Discover. Conquer. Cure.*

## What is animal-assisted therapy?

Animal-assisted interventions use trained animals to help improve physical, mental and social functions in people with schizophrenia. It is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process, which usually involves pharmaceutical and psychosocial treatment components. It has been shown to improve outcomes for people with autism-spectrum symptoms, medical difficulties, and behavioural problems. Here we present the evidence for animal-assisted therapies for people with schizophrenia.

## What is the evidence for animal-assisted therapy?

Moderate to low quality evidence finds animal-assisted therapy may improve social functioning, symptoms, treatment adherence, self-esteem, and self-determination.

*NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.*

*Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.*

*Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.*

*While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*

**For more information see the technical table**