

To: Baw Baw Shire Council Members
Warragul
Victoria 3820

22nd July 2008

Dear Members of Baw Baw Shire Council;

I am writing you to give testimony regarding Ms. Beverley Manners and the work of Rutland Manor.

I have been coping with the illness Fibromyalgia for over 15 years. It is a disease marked by severe muscular pain and over-whelming exhaustion, and as a result of these symptoms, I am classified as fully disabled by the Social Security Department of the United States Federal Government.

I was urged by my physician to look into obtaining a Certified Service Dog to help me with my physical limitations regarding balance in walking and to retrieve items (e.g; eyeglasses, car keys, etc.) I drop. An additional concern was providing me with companionship during the daytime while my sons were at school and my husband was at work.

Through my research on the internet, I was introduced to Canine Crossroads, a foundation set up to provide Certified Service Dogs to people with various disabilities. Ms. Manners had donated many Australian Labradoodles to Canine Crossroads. She focussed her breeding practices on the development of the dogs' intelligence, intuitive nature, hypo-allergenic qualities and gentle bearing --- the characteristics which are so essential in a service or therapy dog.

Were it not for Ms. Beverly Manner's devotion to the development of the Australian Labradoodle, I would still be spending my days alone in my bedroom, feeling completely without purpose and unable to go out into the world and experience the wonders of nature and life (the least of which includes the "daily grind" of grocery shopping for my family, walking to the mail box to retrieve our family's correspondance and bills, and visiting the local library).

Through Levi, whom we've nick-named "The Wonderdog", Ms. Manners not only helped me become a functioning mother for my children and a member of my community, but she, quite literally, saved my life. Before Levi arrived as my Certified Service Dog, I felt so helpless and "pointless" due to my restricted physical abilities, that I had attempted suicide and was fully prepared to attempt it "successfully" again. I thank God and Ms. Manners that Levi has totally changed all that.

The idea that Ms. Manners may be forced to abandon her commitment to the further development of this breed is absolutely heartbreaking for me to even

imagine. Her work in establishing the Australian Labradoodle is known throughout the world and her dogs have improved the lives of countless

individuals. To deprive those persons waiting in their bedrooms in quiet desperation for a “miracle on four paws” to come and help them become full members of society is beyond comprehension!

Ms. Manners’ work with the Australian Labradoodle, who are “Born to Serve”, makes her an asset, not only to your community in Victoria, but to Australia itself! Throughout the world, every time an Australian Labradoodle is seen wearing its Service Dog identification and providing support to a child or adult in a wheelchair, braces, or with affected gait, the world knows that Australia was the homeland of this magnificent animal! What a gift Ms. Manners has given the world and what a testament to the nation of Australia to support its development!

With the very strongest sentiments possible, I urge you to continue to support Ms. Manners’ work with the Australian Labradoodle breed! She has brought honor and accolades to your country and has helped many people in need of the unique characteristics and abilities of the dogs to whom she has devoted her life’s work. To prevent Ms. Manners from continuing her work would greatly be to the discredit of the Baw Baw Shire Council Members and the community they represent. I urge you to support Ms. Manners quest to continue her work with the Australian Labradoodle.

Sincerely,

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