MEDIA RELEASE

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Animals delight residents at Oakey Hospital

Smiles were the order of the day at Oakey Hospital this week when Old McDonalds Farm came to visit.

The visit was part of an animal blessing day at the hospital organised in honour of St Francis of Assisi. October 4 is celebrated around the world as the Feast of St Frances of Assisi, who was well-known for his love of animals.

Acting Director of Nursing Michelle Crawford said the day was just a good opportunity to bring some animals into the hospital for the residents and patients to enjoy.

“Many of the residents have come off farms so it’s a nice reminder for them.

“Animal interaction, also known as pet therapy, is known to produce many benefits for aged care residents, including lower blood pressure, improved mood and improved communication,” Ms Crawford.

Words were not needed, however, to interpret the joy on residents’ faces as they took turns holding and feeding the animals, which included lambs, baby goats, chicken and ducks.

Even staff took the opportunity to sneak a cuddle of a baby goat in between looking after their charges.

Ms Crawford also brought in one of her own horses “Invincible” for the residents to pat.

“I sometimes bring in a dog but many of the residents have been asking when I am going to bring in a horse for them to see so today was the day,” Ms Crawford said.

The horse was an opportunity to residents to reflect on their time in a saddle, with one resident proudly saying he had never been “dumped off”.

Pastoral care worker and volunteer Lesley Hughes then pronounced a blessing on the animals and said thank you for the joy they brought to everyone.

The morning concluded with a barbecue lunch under the trees.

Ends

Photo 1: Oakey Hospital resident Sally Keding nurses a baby goat at the recent animal blessing day.

Photo 2: Acting Director of Nursing Michelle Crawford introduces hospital resident Henry Hook to her horse Invincible.
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