

Herald Sun

Leader

Bayside

Carrum Downs shopping centre 'sorry' after woman and her therapy dog told to leave

- by: Christian Tatman
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A WOMAN ordered from a Carrum Downs supermarket wants people to be aware of the importance of service and therapy dogs.



Peta with her therapy dog Cooper, who alerts her when she is about to have an epileptic attack. Picture: Channel 9
Source: Leader

Peta, who does not want her surname published, said she was surrounded by staff and told to leave Woolworths at the Carrum Downs Regional Shopping Centre after entering with her therapy dog Cooper.

"He became terrified. It was humiliating," Peta said.

The 32-year-old suffers from epilepsy and said Cooper could smell a chemical change in her body and alert her to an impending attack.

"He lets me know that I need to get down on the ground or need to sleep," she said.

"He is vital to me. I don't get a warning. I reduce the risk wherever I go by having him with me."

Woolworths has verbally apologised to Peta for the April 11 incident and made a donation to the Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria.

Spokesman Benedict Brook said: "Staff at the store and across our store network will be educated about our position on allowing access to customers with assistance dogs.

"The store manager contacted the customer the following day to apologise."

Peta said staff at the Carrum Downs supermarket told her that Cooper, a Jack Russell cross fox terrier, was not allowed in the store.

"They were not going to back down, so I decided to leave," she said.

Peta said epilepsy and the need for service and therapy dogs was something that should be "discussed and not hidden".

Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria development manager Jeremy Maxwell said Cooper was an accredited assistance dog who increased Peta's ability to take part in the community.

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