

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pets help create the simple life

With the Australian economy having survived the GFC better than most, pet lovers might be forgiven for thinking there is a link between our healthy economy and the high rates of pet ownership in this country.

“There is considerable scientific research that shows pets help reduce stress for children, adults and older people. In the last 12 months, when many people have had to face additional pressures brought on by the tough economy, the latest research shows that pets have played an important role in helping their owners to cope,” says Susie Willis from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.

Research just released in America shows that 83% of pet owners valued the steady presence their pets provide in an uncertain economy and 89% of owners said that their pets help them deal with the stresses of life.

These results are consistent with Australian findings from leading social values monitor, AustraliaScan.

“As the GFC started to impact in Australia, there was a notable swing to simplicity and a desire for connection with family, which for most people included their pet. When asked, “What’s really most important in your life?” 91% of people identified family and friends,” says David Chalke from AustraliaScan.

“Furthermore, spending in areas that provided a sense of security remained strong, despite the economic uncertainties. For example, the growth in use of pet groomers showed no sign of slackening through 2009,” he added.

The US study found similar results. When asked about spending cuts, US pet owners stated that they would be willing to compromise on personal purchases before cutting back on purchases for their dogs and cats with 79% saying they would reduce spending on vacations.

“There is no doubt that the bond between people and pets goes beyond simply caring for each other. In times of trouble, pets can help people to express emotions and “share” their thoughts and feelings in ways that they might not otherwise. Pets also help people connect with others in their community which is one of the measures of a healthy lifestyle,” says Susie.

And if that’s not enough to show you that pets are good for people, it is also possible that pet owners have helped keep the Australian economy on track over the last few years.

“Despite the uncertainties of the GFC, pet owners have repaid the love and affection they receive from their pets by continuing to spend on their wellbeing,” says David.

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