

MEDIA RELEASE

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Living the high life – pets in the city

If the absence of a big backyard prevents you from owning a pet, you may be living in the past according to an Australian pet care organisation, who believes there is no reason for inner-city residents to deny themselves the love and affection a four legged friend can bring.

With around one in four Australian households currently living in flats, units or apartments¹, the Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS) believes it is time to take a contemporary look at pet ownership.

Pets in the City, released today by the Petcare Information and Advisory Service, is a non-commercial guide to owning a pet in a city environment and is available at no cost from www.petsinthecity.net.au. It contains a comprehensive range of information on selecting an inner-city pet; how to negotiate rental and strata property pet ownership; downsizing with a pet; caring for a pet with limited or no outdoor space; and general tips on dog and cat care. It also provides information on how our changing lifestyles and living arrangements can work for both pets and people.

“Our motivation in producing this guide came from research² that showed people want to own pets, although many of them didn’t feel they knew enough about how to make it work in a smaller, inner-city home. We also wanted to provide information that might stop people from acquiring the wrong type of pet or acquiring a pet when they couldn’t make the necessary commitment to its care,” says Susie Willis from PIAS.

“In a society in which people often live on their own, pets give pleasure, they teach responsibility, they provide security, and they love and are loved in return,” said the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore MP, at today’s launch of *Pets in the City*. “In recognising the joy pets provide to their owners, the City of Sydney encourages responsible pet ownership and offers free micro-chipping and free dog obedience training. We also have expanded off-leash parks where we promote the safe and courteous sharing of public space.”

“We support the guide as a tool to educate people about high density living with pets and reinforce responsible dog ownership including giving pets adequate exercise and outdoor time as well as time socialising with other dogs and people,” she adds.

One of the key findings from the PIAS research was that those people who do keep dogs and cats in high-density situations do so successfully and responsibly, and report very little difficulty. In fact,

¹ *Year Book Australia 2009-2010*, Australian Bureau of Statistics

² *Pets in the City*, qualitative and quantitative research, Blue Moon, 2008

dog and cat owners in highly urbanised environments expressed similar levels of satisfaction with their pet-owning experience as those in the general population: 94% for dog owners and 93% for cat owners³.

However, pet ownership isn't always problem free. The most common problem associated with pet ownership in medium to high-density dwellings was hair-shedding, reported by 27% of owners. At the same time, 90% of pet owners reported very little difficulty in having a pet and 48% of owners reported that they did not find it difficult at all⁴.

"Keeping the right pet in the inner-city is just as responsible – and rewarding – as keeping a pet on a quarter acre block. We hope that *Pets in the City* will help pet owners, as well as providing useful information to those that develop policies and regulations about pet ownership," says Susie.

"Dog owners should not be treated as second-class citizens. They should be able to take their pets with them to public places and green spaces provided by the city," said Ms. Moore.

www.petsinthecity.net.au

(ENDS)

³ *Pets in the City*, qualitative and quantitative research, Blue Moon, 2008

National People and Pets, Professor Bruce Headey, PIAS

⁴ *Pets in the City*, qualitative and quantitative research, Blue Moon, 2008