

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Travels with your best friend

A day out, a weekend away, the trip of a lifetime – it seems that Australians are increasingly taking their four legged friends with them wherever they go.

The latest research from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service shows that in 2010, 47% of dog owners living on their own took their dog with them when they went out for the day and 37% took their dogs on holidays.<sup>1</sup> This compares with just 14% of dog owners who always took their pets away on holidays in 2000.<sup>2</sup>

“There was a time when taking a pet on holidays required months of research to find a place that would accept pets and provide a safe and welcoming environment. Now, you can find hundreds of options on the Internet, with everything from five-star, inner-city getaways to beautiful homes in premium beach locations. The great thing is that property owners really seem to be thinking about the needs of pets as well as people so taking a pet on a holiday has never been easier,” says Susie Willis from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.

“Our 2000 research showed that of all ‘pet friendly’ travellers, the largest groups of people who travelled with their pet tended to be in the 50+ age group, and there could be a good reason for this. Research from the James Cook University shows that Grey Nomads travelling with their pets reported having fewer chronic health conditions than those that did not travel with their pets. So whatever your age, think about taking your dog – or even cat if it has been used to travelling from a young age – with you on holidays. Like people, pets appreciate a bit of time out,” says Susie.

The Petcare Information and Advisory Service suggest the following tips for holidaying with pets.

- Use the Internet to find pet-friendly accommodation. A number of the major online booking services categorise properties in this way so it is easy to review a number of different properties in the area you wish to visit. Always check that the accommodation is suited to the requirements of your pet eg it is securely fenced or allows pets to be inside.
- Find a vet in the area you will be visiting before your holiday so there is no last minute panic if your pet does need veterinary assistance while you are away. Also, check out areas that are off-leash or cafes that welcome pets. You don't want to waste holiday time trying to find out information once you are there.
- Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date and that you have treatments for any conditions that may be a risk in the area you are going to. During summer, ticks are

<sup>1</sup> Newspoll, July 2010 for the Petcare Information and Advisory Service

<sup>2</sup> Newspoll, March 2000 for the Petcare Information and Advisory Service

common in many parts of Australia and are a real risk to your pet.

- Check that your pet's identifying tags are secure and that they carry a phone number where you can be easily reached while you are on holidays. Remember that you may be out of mobile range while you are away.
- If you are flying with your pet, always book your pet in before the flight and ensure he or she is in a secure crate. Arrive at the airport at least one hour before the flight. Discuss any special needs your pet may have with your vet well before travel time.
- Even if it is a short car trip, you need to be aware of the road rules about travelling with pets in vehicles. The rules vary from State to State so check with your local road authority or police as well as those for any areas you may be travelling to or through. At a minimum, ensure your pet is secured away from the driver, although it is better if your pet travels either in a carrier or a separate and secure area of the vehicle.
- Pets tend to prefer routine so on the day of departure, time your activities so your pet can rest in the car at its normal sleeping time. Cats are often more nervous about car rides than dogs but a cat will be more likely to curl up for a sleep if it is in a carrier that it is familiar with. Experts suggest that familiarising a cat with car travel when it is young, in the same way as you would a dog, is likely to result in a cat that is happy to travel in a vehicle.
- When you arrive at your holiday destination you will need to keep both dogs and cats secure for the first few days. For a dog this means only letting it outside to a secure back yard or on a leash. Cats will need to be kept inside for at least the first week and probably for the duration of your holiday.
- Take your pet's familiar bedding and toys as well as everything you will need for the perfect pet-holiday: bowls, usual food, kitty litter or dog poo bags, leashes, towels, special treats, and basic first aid for your pet.
- Remember that National Parks do not allow pets (even when kept in the car) so observe the rules if visiting a National Park.

(ENDS)

Issued on behalf of the Petcare Information and Advisory Service

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**Australia – A nation of pet lovers**

Australia is a nation of pet lovers. It is estimated that 63% of Australian households have some type of pet with 53% of households owning a dog or a cat.

Over many years, Australian and international research has shown that owning pets can help improve a person's mental and physical health, reduce the effects of stress, help children learn about responsibility, facilitate social interaction between people and build a sense of community.

The Petcare Information & Advisory Service (PIAS) provides non-commercial information on socially responsible pet ownership. PIAS' website: [www.petnet.com.au](http://www.petnet.com.au) is suitable for children, although PIAS encourages parents to supervise any online access by their children.

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