

MEDIA RELEASE

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How liveable is your city for your pet?

While Australians celebrate World Animal Day this Sunday, October 4, a survey has found that we are not doing all we can to provide for our pets.

According to the Australian Companion Animal Council's survey of 1800 Australian pet owners, all Australian cities could be doing more to deliver liveability for people and pets.

The survey looked into how liveable pet owners believe the city or area they live in is. Melbourne polled first as the most liveable place for people and pets in Australia, with an average ranking of over 7 out of 10.

Dog owners were also asked to rank in order of importance the key criteria that make a city liveable for people and pets. Respondents ranked the most important three as:

- being permitted to keep a dog where they live (95.8%);
- taking the dog to the park or beach (75.7%); and
- having open spaces where dogs can meet and play off leash (60.9%).

For cat owners most importantly was simply being permitted to keep a cat where they live (90.8%).

However, Dr Kersti Seksel of the Australian Companion Animal Council says while Melbourne received the highest ranking, there is room for improvement across all Australian cities.

"If we are to improve our cities' liveability for people and pets, we should ensure certain key criteria are met. For example pet-friendly regulations for tenants and owners wishing to keep pets in their homes and an increase in the number of dog-friendly open spaces. In many cities such as Geneva, dogs are accepted in many restaurants and shops, and can travel on public transport. In Europe, pets are such a part of daily life, they may hold a European Union Pet Passport containing contact and vaccination details, which enables them to be moved between European countries ensuring many happy family holidays."

"Cities and communities need to plan for pets if you consider six out of every 10 Australian households own a pet," Dr Seksel says.

"Pets are very important, not only to provide happiness to their owners, but also in terms of health benefits. Research shows living with pets provide health benefits including decreasing your blood pressure and your cholesterol levels, as well as many psychological, social and emotional benefits," Dr Seksel says.

World Animal Day is a good time to reflect on what our cities and communities can and should do to ensure they are truly liveable for us and our companion animals, thus ensuring we obtain the full benefits of pet ownership.

City	Ranking (out of 10)
Melbourne	7.13
Adelaide	7.09
Perth	6.58
Canberra	6.49
Brisbane	6.24
Hobart Sydney	6.07
Darwin	5.82

(ENDS)

Issued by 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) is funded by Mars Petcare Australia as part of its commitment to socially responsible pet ownership. PIAS' website:

www.petnet.com.au provides information on the responsible and enjoyable ownership of pets. The site is suitable for children, although PIAS encourages parents to supervise any online access by their children.