



Let sleeping dogs lies

A kennel in the backyard is no longer the sleeping quarter of choice for Australia's pampered pooches, according to a decade of data just released by the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.

"At the start of the 21st century the most likely spot for a dog or cat to sleep was in the backyard, with over 37% of pets sleeping outside at night. Only 19% of pets made it into the bedroom with a further 12% sharing the bed with their owners.¹ A recent survey among single people shows that approximately 80% of pets are sleeping indoors with 32% of pets sleeping on their owner's bed and another 15% in the bedroom. The pets of single women tend to be more likely to be sleeping in the bedroom than those that belong to single men although, overall, only 20% of pets are in the doghouse outside²," says Susie Willis from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS).

"It is well recognised that pets are seen by increasing numbers of people as part of the family. A recent report by the Australian Companion Animal Council showed that in 2009 we spent over \$200 million on clipping and grooming our dogs³, which may reflect the increasing popularity of low shedding breeds that need professional grooming but are great for indoor living. In 1995, when this data was first collected, the figure was only \$25 million⁴," says Susie.

Dr Kersti Seksel, veterinarian and President of the Australian Companion Animal Council, says that the trend to having pets indoors; including allowing them to sleep in proximity to family members, can be beneficial to both pets and people.

"An indoor pet generally feels more secure because it is in contact with its family. Allowing a pet to sleep indoors will reduce the risk of it being injured or lost and, for many people; a pet in the bedroom provides a sense of comfort and security. Provided the pet is well cared for and up to date with treatments, it is perfectly hygienic to have a pet sleep indoors," says Dr Seksel.

¹ Newspan, March, 2000. Commissioned by the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.

² 2 Pets and Single People, July, 2010. Research conducted by Newspan for the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.
Conducted among 610 respondents aged 18 years and over, 21 June to 4 July 2010.

³ Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy – 7th Edition, the Australian Companion Animal Council, 2010.

⁴ Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy – 2nd Edition, the Australian Companion Animal Council, 1995.

The Petcare Information and Advisory Service's research found that almost a third of dogs living in higher density environments spend virtually all of their time indoors and PIAS offers the following bedtime behaviour tips for indoor pets.

- Creating a safe and secure spot for your pet to sleep is essential. For cats this could mean a basket on the floor, with a rug for cooler nights or it could be a cosy corner on the couch. All dogs will appreciate bedding of some type and smaller dogs enjoy a basket. Both cats and dogs will need to feel secure so shutting a pet in a smaller space such as a laundry can be beneficial to your pet.
- If you have crate trained your dog, the crate will probably be his or her preferred sleeping spot. This is an ideal arrangement and is especially beneficial if you travel with your dog as it will always have a secure spot to sleep. There is plenty of good advice on the internet about crate training and it is well worth looking into, even for an older dog.
- If you do decide to let your pet sleep in your bedroom or on your bed, it is important to establish your own rules and stick to them. You will also need to remember that the rules you establish will influence your pet's behaviour when you are not at home. So, if the dog or cat is allowed on the bed at night, it is more than likely going to sleep on the bed at other times as well if you leave your bedroom door open. It is harder to keep your couch pet-free, but still important that your pet understands where it can and can't go.
- Always keep your dog or cat's flea, worm or other parasite treatments up to date. This is important for all pets but especially so if your pets are indoors and sleeping close to family members.
- Teach children, or others unfamiliar with pets, that a sleeping pet must not be touched or woken unexpectedly. An animal that is surprised in this way may be frightened and disoriented, which can lead to biting or scratching. Always call the pet's name before approaching and wait until he or she has woken up before getting close.
- Puppies and kittens generally need more sleep than older animals so keep an eye on them when they are young and, if necessary, put them in a quiet place every so often so they can catch up on sleep before the next period of play.
- Older pets, especially dogs, can develop arthritis and may find it difficult to get out of bed. Providing a heated sleep-pad for an older dog will help to relieve stiffness from arthritis. Also make sure that their bed is on a non-slippery surface so they can get up easily from the bed.

"Dogs and cats both need as much, if not more, sleep than people with the average indoor cat sleeping for between 16 and 20 hours a day. Even indoor dogs may spend as much as 14 hours asleep. After years of being a dog owner, my best advice is to create a secure sleeping spot - preferably indoors - and just let sleeping dogs lie," says Susie.

(ENDS)