

MEDIA RELEASE

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The adoption option

According to the latest statistics, adopting a pet is fast becoming the preferred choice for many people when they decide to become pet owners. And, social trend researchers say this shift could be part of a broader move towards values-based lifestyles.

According to the Petcare Information and Advisory Service, the latest information shows that around twice as many people are choosing to obtain dogs and cats from animal shelters as they were a decade ago.

“Our research shows that there is a broad swing towards people becoming more humane and compassionate in the purchase decisions they make. In choosing a pet to join a family, these motivations are becoming increasingly powerful,” says David Chalke from AustraliaScan.

Rescue organisations are responding to this interest in adoption by creating on-line search facilities that allow people to browse for pets of a particular breed, age or sex. Some are also opening shop-front facilities in shopping centres where people can meet a prospective pet while still knowing that it has been assessed as suitable by the rescue organisation.

“The great thing about pets from a reliable rescue organisation is they will have been health and temperament assessed and they have usually spent time indoors with their owners which means they have basic manners and toilet training,” says Susie Willis from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service.

“We adopted our Yellow Labrador, Jai, through Luv-A-Lab, one of many rescue organisations using PetRescue, which is an online service that works with pounds, shelters and rescue groups to present the pets they have available for adoption. It was a very easy process and we knew that Jai, as an older dog, had been well socialised and already knew how to be part of a family before we got him,” says Jai’s owner Kirstie.

“With summer and extended holidays here, the next few months can be a good time to introduce a new pet into your household. Toilet training a dog is easier in warm weather when you and your dog will be happy to be outside and the extra time you can spend with a pet during holidays will help create a bond between you and your new best friend,” says Susie.

However, she cautions that the same considerations about whether you are ready for a pet exist whether you acquire your pet from a rescue organisation, breeder or family friend.

“Owning a pet is one of the greatest joys of life but it is also a huge responsibility. Your pet relies on you for everything: food, shelter, healthcare, exercise and companionship so making the choice to become a pet owner requires serious thought.

“Some of the considerations you may want to take into account include the type of residence and area you live in, the amount of company you can provide and the amount of exercise your pet will need. All pets cost something to keep so it is important to think about the day to day costs as well as the unexpected costs that can come up if your pet gets sick. The age of people in your home is also important as some dogs, in particular, are not well suited to young children or elderly and frail people,” says Susie.

The Petcare Information and Advisory Service has a free online questionnaire that can help you decide if you are ready for a pet and, if so, some of the breeds that may be better suited:

www.petnet.com.au

“People often assume that pets that are available for adoption must have some sort of problem but there are many reasons why a pet may need a new home: their owner may be moving overseas or be unable to care for the pet due to illness. Sometimes the owner is moving to rental accommodation that doesn’t allow pets or their circumstances may have changed and they are no longer able to afford to keep a pet. Adopting a pet can be a great way to experience all the benefits of pet ownership, with an extra feel-good factor,” says Susie.

Rescue organisations with online search facilities include:

Animal Welfare League: www.awla.com.au for details of the AWL organisation in your state.

PetRescue: www.petrescue.com.au for details of pets available for adoption throughout Australia

RSPCA: www.adoptapet.com.au for details of pets available through RSPCAs throughout Australia