

Suggested article for ACAC Member publications

Pets continue to power the economy

The Australian Companion Animal Council (ACAC), of which our organisation is a member, has just released the seventh edition of its well respected and influential report 'The Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy'. The ACAC Report summarises the economic value of the many segments within the Australian pet industry.

Through reviewing the expenditure on pet care products, pet purchases, pet food, veterinary services and pet care services, ACAC reports the pet care industry contributed \$6.021 billion dollars to the Australian economy in 2009. This is a 30.3% increase over the previous three years (since the 6th Edition of the ACAC report) which represents an average annual growth rate of 10%.

Throughout Australia there are over 33.3 million pets of various species. Australia's levels of pet ownership has remained relatively static in recent years, the report shows they now stand at 3.41 million dogs, or 36% of households owning a dog; and 2.35 million cats, or 23% of households owning a cat. These figures give Australia one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, although still significantly behind the US where 40% of households own a dog and 33% own a cat.

In addition, there were also 8.1 million birds, over 18.4 million fish and 1.06 million other pets including pleasure horses, rabbits, guinea pigs and other small mammals.

"The continuing high rates of pet ownership in Australia reflect the importance pets have in our lives. Pets provide significant psychological and physiological benefits to owners, they help our children learn about caring and being responsible, they improve feelings of safety and help build social bridges in our communities," says Dr Kersti Seksel, President of the Australian Companion Animal Council.

"Spending on dogs accounted for 60% of the total expenditure, or \$3.6 billion; with expenditure on cats accounting for 24% of the total, or \$1.4 billion.

"Despite this, the annual costs of owning a pet are still relatively low. In 2009, dog owners spent \$1,056 per year on their pet, including food, products and services and veterinary care. This is just under \$3 a day. Cats require even less of a financial commitment. The average annual expenditure per cat is \$602, which is just over \$1.50 a day."

The Australian Companion Animal Council has reported steady growth on consumer expenditure in each segment – pet care products, pet purchases, pet food, veterinary services and pet care services – since the first edition of the report in 1998. This suggests that we are moving towards owning fewer pets, but spending more on them as a reflection of not only our changing lifestyles but also advances in veterinary medicine and increased choices in products and services.

{INSERT Member Name} is profiled in the report, along with the other nine national member organisations. As a collective voice and peak body within the industry ACAC presents a united position for the pet care industry to government and policy makers on the benefits of socially responsible pet ownership in the Australian community. To find out more about the Australian Companion Animal Council, go to www.acac.org.au

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Further enquiries: Megan Bisson, Executive Officer, Australian Companion Animal Council - officer@eggmedia.com.au