

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Pets continue to power the economy**

The latest report on pet ownership in Australia, released by the Australian Companion Animal Council today, shows that pet ownership contributed \$6.02 billion to the Australian economy in 2009.<sup>1</sup>

While Australia's levels of pet ownership have remained relatively static in recent years, the report shows that 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.

The report from the Australian Companion Animal Council shows that the continuing high rates of pet ownership in Australia reflect the importance pets have in the lives of Australians.

"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.

"It is also interesting to note that although the population of cats and dogs is relatively static, the amount of money we choose to spend on our pets is increasing. In 2009, Australians spent \$6.02 billion on pets, pet care products and services; up from \$4.62 billion in 2005.

"Spending on dogs accounted for 60% of this 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.

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“Of course, it is important to assess whether you can afford the long term commitment to feeding and caring for any pet prior to acquiring it, but these figures do give a sense of that commitment,” says Dr Seksel.

And in other good news for the economy, the report also shows that employment across the pet care industry is increasing to reflect our love of pets – up from 44,700 people in 2005 to 47,627 people in 2009.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of The Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy covers:

- pet population numbers and trends within Australia at a state and national level, and provides an international comparison with the United States of America and the United Kingdom;
- a summary of consumer expenditure across pet food, pet care products and services, the purchase of pets, veterinary services; and
- the researched benefits of a companion animal to owners and the broader community.

(ENDS)

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Further information on companion animals and the Australian Companion Animal Council is available on [www.acac.org.au](http://www.acac.org.au)