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# Domain

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## Purrfect world

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# Pets get a taste of the high life

Developers are scrambling to accommodate animal lovers and their four-legged friends.  
By Susan Wellings.

**W**ould you love a pet but live in a unit without a garden so think it would be unfair to keep one? Think again, says the pet lobby, currently at the forefront of a major migration of small- and medium-sized dogs and cats from quarter-acre blocks into high-density living. At times, it may even be kinder to let them reside in cosy units close to their owners, rather than being banished to big, lonely backyards.

"It's a myth that you really need a big backyard to keep a dog," says Susie Willis, consultant to the Petcare Information & Advisory Service, which has just published a new book, *Pets in the City*, about keeping animals in smaller spaces. "A dog outside on his own is much more likely to be bored and unhappy than one indoors with his owner, feeling part of the pack."

"There's more and more research to say that dogs are now spending more time inside and that they're getting plenty of companionship and stimulation there. For many animals, apartment living is ideal."

The co-director of Critter Club, dog-walker Lee Gough, agrees they can be great for pets. "The number of dogs in apartments has exploded now," she says. "We'll take dogs out, they'll go crazy in the park and then they tend to sleep for the rest of the day until their owner gets home again. They're perfectly happy."

## A ROVER REVOLUTION

It is a four-legged revolution in apartment living that's happening throughout Sydney. "Fifteen years ago, Australians didn't want to even

think about keeping pets in apartments, no matter how popular it was in America and Europe," says a director of town planners Harlock Jackson, Virginia Jackson.

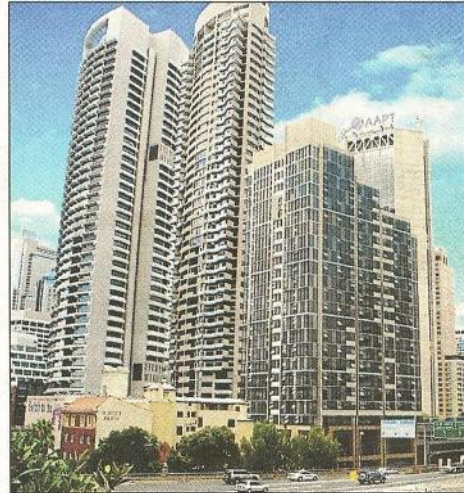
"But since then we've had a massive boom in apartment buildings and people want to take their pets with them. We're now advising developers to think about pets when they're planning apartments, so they have things like window sills that are wide enough for cats to sit on and areas outside on a balcony for animals that aren't close to bedroom windows."

Many developers are now making catering to pets a priority. Since about 63 per cent of Australian households have some type of pet, with 53 per cent owning a dog or cat, it makes sense not to exclude such a significant slice of the purchasing market from any new developments.

The director of marketing and sales for Brookfield Residential Properties, Phil Leahy, agrees. "There's no point in swimming across the tide when selling real estate," he says. "People purchasing property have plenty of choice and offering them a solution that makes it easier to choose our product helps, particularly when you're selling to downsizers who might want to relocate with a pet."

As a result, last year the company sold 56 apartments in the Prince Henry at Little Bay development with outdoor terraces both at the front and back, advertising them on the posters as one for the owner and one for the pet. Now with the second stage of its Bay Terraces brought forward, they're also pet-friendly.

Stockland is selling two pet-friendly projects: The Hyde at Hyde



Clockwise from top ... An artist's impression of Stamford Residences (foreground); our cover cat; Lee Gough from Critter Club walks apartment pooches; an artist's impression of Bay Terraces at Little Bay. Dog photo: Marco Del Grando

Park and The Village at Balgowlah.

"It's widely acknowledged that pets are considered highly valued members of many families... so it's critical as developers we are able to cater to that," says the NSW general manager of residential development for Stockland, Matthew Mears. "We anticipate as more and more people gravitate to inner-city living, the requirement for apartments that can

accommodate pets will only grow."

The NSW director of residential for Colliers International, Colin Griffin, says only about 10 per cent of apartment owners don't want to live in pet-friendly developments. Colliers is marketing four pet-friendly Sydney complexes: The Hyde, Stamford Marque and Stamford Residences in The Rocks, Dominion in Darlinghurst and Luxe in Woolloomooloo.

"Whether or not a development is pet-friendly is one of the first questions people now ask," he says. "If a developer asks us if they should allow pets into a complex, we advise that they should."

Other new pet-friendly developments include Lumiere in the city and Central Park at Broadway, both developed by Frasers Property; Edgewater at Bayview; and Setai at Narrabeen.



**Paws to reflect ... Pam and Paul James with their city-slicker dog, Elle.** Photo: Steven Siewert

## **PAMPERED POOCH LOVES BEING IN THIS DOGHOUSE**

When Pam James decided to buy an apartment in the city, her first priority was finding one that was pet-friendly, so her silky terrier cross, Elle, could come with her. She eventually bought a one-bedroom unit in Lumiere, right in the city centre, and Elle immediately made herself right at home.

"She adapted extremely well,"

Pam, a 56-year-old naturopath, says. "We'd get out of the lift and hesitate which way to go but she'd always know exactly which way to turn."

"It also made the building feel so much more friendly. Everyone knows her and stops to pat her."

While Elle lives some of the time in a big house on the south coast with Pam and her husband Paul, 57,

apartment living the rest of the time has presented no stresses.

"I don't think she cares as long as she's with us," Pam says. "And she loves our long walks around the city or to Hyde Park on Saturday mornings. I think all apartment buildings should allow well-behaved pets. Often pets are cleaner than some of the other residents!"

### **ANIMAL CRACKERS**

Within apartment buildings, two of the top-10 complaints made to the NSW Office of Fair Trading were about pets and the Institute of Strata Title Management is working to encourage owners corporations and pet owners to work together to make apartment living more pet-friendly.

The president of the ISTM, David Ferguson, says: "There is plenty of evidence to suggest pet ownership is good for our health and good for the health of our communities."

It may also be good for the pocket. Research done by property group PRDnationwide in 2006 on the Gold Coast found apartment buildings

that allowed pets recorded average capital growth of 14 per cent to 20 per cent over a four-year period, while the value of units in similar no-pets buildings rose between 4 per cent and 15 per cent.

An agent with Raine & Horne Neutral Bay, Terry Howard, says prices tend to rise strongly for apartments that allow pets. But he's had trouble selling garden apartments that don't allow them.

"People don't understand why they don't allow pets, especially as there's such a strong demand for them and short supply, which pushes the price up," he says.

At The Abode in St Leonards, Pat

Quirke-Parry says their pet policy works well and it's only idiotic behaviour by some pet owners that causes problems, such as leaving barking dogs locked on balconies.

Another building, The Bauhaus Apartments in Pyrmont, recently allowed pets – meaning toy poodle Phoebe, a long-time illegal immigrant leading a secret life there, could finally be admitted. "She now has a Certificate of Residency hanging above her kennel," says her owner, Cyndey Fenner-Smith.

*\*Pets in the City can be downloaded from [petnet.com.au](http://petnet.com.au).*