

EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY – AND BUSINESS IS TAKING NOTICE

It's International Dog Day and while there is no better excuse to give our four-legged friends a little extra attention, Tamworth Business Chamber says Australia's love affair with dogs is also creating some serious *paw-sibilities* for business.

With almost three-quarters of Australian households now owning a pet and dogs firmly holding the title of Australia's most popular companion animal, our furry family members are increasingly influencing where we eat, where we stay, where we shop and how we spend.

According to Animal Medicines Australia's *Pets in Australia 2025* report, 73 per cent of Australian households now have at least one pet, up from 69 per cent in 2022 and 61 per cent in 2019.

Almost half of all Australian households — 49 per cent — own at least one dog, representing an estimated 7.4 million dogs nationally.

And our affection for them comes with some serious spending power.

Australians now spend an estimated \$21.3 billion every year feeding, caring for and accessorising their pets, with dog-owning households spending an average of around \$2,520 a year.

Tamworth Business Chamber says the figures point to a much bigger business trend than simply growth in traditional pet services.

Pet humanisation — the increasingly common view of pets as genuine members of the family — is changing consumer expectations and creating opportunities across industries that may never have considered themselves part of the pet economy.

"Dogs aren't just living in our backyards anymore. They are part of the family, they come on holidays, they join us for coffee and increasingly they influence the decisions we make about where we spend our money," a Tamworth Business Chamber spokesperson said.

"That presents an interesting opportunity for businesses. You don't necessarily have to be in the pet industry to benefit from the pet economy."

Hospitality venues are introducing dog-friendly outdoor areas, water stations, treats, puppuccinos and even dedicated dog menus. Accommodation providers are reviewing pet policies and offering pet-friendly rooms and facilities, while tourism operators and retailers are increasingly considering how they accommodate customers travelling or shopping with their four-legged companions.

"And then, of course, there are businesses operating directly within the pet sector which are responding to owners wanting an entirely different level of care and experience for their animals," the Chamber spokesperson said.

“Premium grooming, daycare, wellness, training, boutique accommodation and pet transport are a long way from the traditional kennel in the backyard.

“Pet owners are looking for convenience, quality and experiences for their dogs in much the same way they do for themselves — and smart businesses are responding.”

Tamworth businesses getting *paws* through the door

Two Tamworth businesses are already demonstrating just how far the trend has evolved.

Hopscotch Restaurant & Bar, part of Central Hospitality Group, has embraced its four-legged customers alongside its two-legged ones.

Dogs are welcome throughout its extensive outdoor areas, with water bowls and dog treats on hand and willing pooches photographed for the venue's Hoppy Dog House Wall of Fame.

The venue's social media regularly celebrates its furry visitors and Hopscotch has even played host to a dog's birthday celebration.

At the other end of the pet economy, Steph's Dog Grooming & Retreat demonstrates the extraordinary growth possible within the sector itself.

What began as a grooming business has evolved into a multi-service canine destination offering grooming, supervised doggy daycare, training, boutique boarding, retail and canine health and wellness services.

Its boutique accommodation takes the concept of a *fur-cation* to another level, while the business's unmistakable BIG Pink Bus now provides a “chauf-furr” service transporting dogs to and from the retreat in air-conditioned comfort.

“Steph's is a fantastic example of a regional business identifying what its customers want and continuing to evolve its business model around that demand,” the Chamber spokesperson said.

“And Hopscotch demonstrates that you don't need to sell pet products to participate in this market. Sometimes it can be as simple as recognising that the customer walking through your door may have four legs.”

Chamber says the lesson for businesses on International Dog Day is not necessarily to start stocking dog biscuits tomorrow — but to consider whether changing household dynamics are creating an opportunity they may have overlooked.

“With 7.4 million dogs in Australia, that's an awful lot of purchasing decisions being influenced by a wagging tail,” the spokesperson said.

“So perhaps International Dog Day is the perfect time for businesses to ask themselves: are we missing out on a slice of the pup economy?

“And if nothing else, give the office dog a treat. It's their day after all.”

ENDS

Sources:

Animal Medicines Australia, *Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people 2025*

Dog Friendly Chamber Members:

Austin Tourist Park
Back to Nature Co
Bendemeer Hotel
BeWoofed Bakery
Camp Grounds Café & Wine Bar
CH Boutique Apartments
Connections Café
Greyhounds as Pets
Marius Veterinary Clinic
Peel Inn
Sheffield Bed & Breakfast Farmstay
Steph's Dog Grooming & Retreat
Tamworth Car & Dog Wash
Tamworth Vet Hospital
The Deck Cafe
The Rural Sitter

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