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**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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COMPASSION FOR PET OWNERS!

Australia's Peak Animal Welfare Body says State and Territory Ministers need to be compassionate to pet owners during current crisis.

Australia's peak animal welfare body, Animal Care Australia, has written to all state and territory Ministers requesting they remind their animal welfare enforcement officers of the need to place compassion ahead of prosecution.

"The community is currently experiencing higher cost of living distress. Animal cruelty enforcement officers, particularly the RSPCA must remind that compassion is needed during these times.," said Michael Donnelly, President of Animal Care Australia. "The pressures being endured by constant interest rate rises and other rising costs of living across the board are placing a great deal of pressure on society."

Animal Care Australia recently wrote to the Reserve Bank of Australia's Governor Philip Lowe in order to highlight the need to consider family pets in the bigger picture when they are assessing future interest rate rises.

"People are now being forced to make decisions about how they live their lives, including needing to cut back on expenses. Prioritising expenses also comes down to not only being able to feed their children – but their pets," Donnelly stated.

"Routine pet expenses such as veterinary bills, worming, tick/flea prevention, grooming and even agistment for our larger pets are all expensive necessities – but ones that are more likely to be sacrificed for more important items, and yet are also requirements under animal welfare legislation. With 46 per cent of people reporting high levels of cost-of-living distress and one in six reporting having suicidal thoughts, the last thing our community needs right now is a heavy-handed enforcement of minor breaches of animal welfare legislation"

"People are also being forced out of their homes and into the rental market – and as we all know, where a rental property can be found it is highly unlikely their pets can stay with them. This loss of their family members adds further stress to an already extremely dire situation, and the children are the least likely to understand why their pets can no longer stay with them."

Animal Care Australia has requested Governments initiate a discount voucher scheme that can be redeemed at veterinary surgeries, etc

"Better still the RSPCA in each State (other than the Northern Territory) has millions of dollars sitting going unused. These organisations already receive funding from both government and the community – it's time that money was put to its intended purpose – to prevent cruelty. What better way to prevent it than by assisting people BEFORE they find themselves in that situation," said Mr Donnelly. "I call on the RSPCA to step up and do what people donate to them to do. The P in RSPCA is for Prevention."

Animal Care Australia is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals in Australia.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please call Michael Donnelly on 0400 323 843 or email president@animalcareaustralia.org.au

"Animal Welfare by the experts – those who keep, care for and breed animals"

About Animal Care Australia

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to advocate for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

ACA was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare. We estimate our foundation ACA clubs currently represent well over 150,000 members and that is just in NSW alone!

By educating our members and the general public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs, and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of collaborating, consulting and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- consulting with government for stronger welfare outcomes
- encouraging government to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educating the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educating the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights

Photo: ACA President, Michael Donnelly

