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**MEDIA RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Changes to Tenancies Act will see pets homeward bound in NSW

Peak Animal Welfare organisation Animal Care Australia has been consulting closely with government in the development of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill over recent months, and in general supports the pet keeping amendments.

The Bill which has broad support from both sides of Parliament in NSW is expected to be assented any time now. The Bill includes new provisions giving tenants greater ability to keep pets.

“It is fantastic to see some clear progress that is moving in the right direction and it will certainly be easier for tenants to have their pets,” said Michael Donnelly, President of Animal Care Australia. “It is great to see our input reflected in the pet-related section of the Bill.”

Animal Care Australia sought to ensure that all rental properties would be pet friendly by default, however political pressure means this is still not the case in the final Bill. The new laws will still ultimately require consent to be obtained from the landlord with landlords having 21 days to object. The landlord will need to provide valid reasons, outlined within the legislation for rejecting the pets. Tenants will also be able to appeal to the Tribunal.

“We have a major homeless issue in this state and country. Statistics show a large number of pets are surrendered because families have had to decide between a roof over their heads or keeping their pets. Children have had to say goodbye to their pets because a landlord believes the dog or cat will cause more damage than the children. Yet existing legislation protects against that clear bias”, said Mr Donnelly.

“This legislation still leaves potential issues unresolved. With the continued rise in domestic violence, people seeking to find alternative rental accommodation will have to either remain in that situation for up to 21 more days or be forced to conceal the fact they have pets when they apply, and then risk potential objection or rejection by a landlord.” Mr Donnelly continued, “There is currently no specific regulation preventing landlords advertising their property as a ‘no pets’ property, and we can see this will take the courage of some tenants to challenge those landlords and the validity of the advertisements.”

“Clearly there is more work to be done in this space”.

Animal Care Australia will continue to work with government and collaborate with other parties to ensure future developments on this issue are more animal friendly. To achieve this Animal Care Australia needs your support by joining the organisation. Tenants should also contact their Local Members when there are issues encountered under the new laws.

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

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.

Animal Care Australia 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. Animal Care Australia estimates our foundation 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

