

MEDIA RELEASE

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**Promoting
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Celebrate Irish Dog Breeds on St. Patrick's Day

On **Saint Patrick's Day** next Tuesday 17 March 2009, **Dogs NSW** will pay homage to all pure Irish dog breeds, all of which form an important part of Irish history and culture. The eight Irish breeds recognised have proved popular choices as pets around the world for their friendly attitude and loyal temperament.

"Each Saint Patrick's Day, we turn our heads to all things Irish. It's a day when we commemorate the things that have made 'Emerald Isle' a great nation. As well as food, drinks, and music, Ireland boasts a wonderful selection of dogs, all of which have become exceedingly popular the world over," says veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesman **Dr Peter Higgins**.

The **Irish Wolfhound** is the most easily recognisable of the seven breeds, having an giant body and shaggy grey coat. They are the tallest dog breed currently recognised by **Dogs NSW** and can stand up to 7 feet tall on their hind legs.

"**Irish Wolfhounds** are the 'gentle giants' of Ireland. They are such sociable creatures, and are particularly playful with their owners. They are generally quiet indoors, but needs a lot of space outdoors to stay active. You could say they make fine 'ambassadors' of Ireland!" believes **Dr Higgins**.

The breed was considered a symbol of luxury throughout the 19th Century, as only royalty and nobles were allowed to own them. This led to a serious decline in numbers, though breeding programs saved the line from extinction. Wolfhound crossbreeds also contributed in 19th century Australia with farmers in the bush.

The **Irish Setter** is another notable breed of Ireland, recognised by their distinctive red, silky, flowing coat and greyhound like body. They're friendly and protective, yet highly energetic, which makes them ideal as pets for families with large homes.

Other pure Irish breeds are **Irish Terrier**, **Irish Red and White Setter**, **Irish Water Spaniel**, **Irish Glen of Imaal Terrier**, **Wheaten Terrier** and Kerry **Blue Terrier**.

"Saint Patrick's Day is a worldwide celebration of everything we love about Ireland and Irish culture, and Irish dog breeds reflect the personality of the Irish as much as the people of Ireland do. It's a great day for the Irish, Leprechauns, a bit of blarney and of course Irish dogs.", reflects **Dr Higgins**.

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