

Buying a dog without research is just barking



Hugh Gent has been breeding and exhibiting labradors like Lucy since 1964.

EMILY BURLEY

IT seemed like half the country rushed out and bought a dog during lockdown but experts are warning that picking the wrong breed as a Christmas present will be a costly mistake for you and see dogs dumped at pounds.

Instead you should learn the “three Rs” of dog ownership – different to the ones you learned in school.

The right time, the right breed and the right breeder should be the top considerations for people looking for a furry addition to the family, according to new not-for-profit, Dogs Australia.

The organisation is the new face for the Australian National Kennel Council and its creation coincides with the spike in dog ownership.

“We saw lots of people adopting dogs during the pandemic while they were at home in lockdown,” Dogs Australia president

Hugh Gent said. “Christmas is another time (we see a spike) but a dog isn’t just for Christmas, it’s for life.

“A dog will live for 15 years so we try to persuade people not to get one on a whim.”

The rebranding of Dogs Australia includes an education campaign to help people find the right breed for their life and home.

“You don’t just see a car and buy it, you do your research, and a dog should be the same,” Mr Gent said.

“It depends a lot on how much time you can spend with the dog and its surroundings in terms of how much space you have.”

The new Dogs Australia website offers a quiz to help you find the right breed of dog to suit your lifestyle.

Questions include how much shedding and barking the owner is prepared to tolerate and what they are willing to spend on food.

The education program also includes a video series categorising 180 dog breeds into seven groups – toys, terriers, gundogs, hounds, working dogs, utility and non-sporting.

Mr Gent said the size of a dog should be the first consideration for new owners, with large dogs more likely to be abandoned at pounds.

“If you’ve got a big dog you need a lot of space, but people

might not realise they also need a lot more exercise, so you need to have the time to give them,” he said.

Anecdotally, dog rescue services are being inundated with larger dogs.

Mr Gent, who has bred and exhibited labradors for almost 60 years and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2006 for his services to canine activities, warned prospective dog owners away from scam-heavy online marketplaces.

“All our breeders follow a strict code of ethics, conduct health and DNA tests and give ongoing support,” he said.



PUPPY LOVE IN THE PANDEMIC

69% Households that own a pet in 2021

Increase in pet ownership since 2019 **8%**

30 million Pets in Australia

One-fifth of all dogs were adopted during the pandemic **1/5**

About **70%** Of owners said their pet improved lockdown

Of existing pet owners want an additional pet **85%**

\$3200 Average yearly cost of a pet

Source: Animal Medicines Australia

Borders open but delays feared

JESSICA MCSWEENEY

FAMILIES are being warned to expect massive queues and potentially a bureaucratic nightmare as Queensland’s hard border finally comes down on Monday.

Travellers from virus “hot spots” including the entirety of NSW and Victoria will be able to travel into Queensland from lam on Monday if they are fully vaccinated.

But they will need proof of a negative test within the previous 72 hours, even if fully vaccinated.

Another test must be taken on day five of being in Queensland and all travellers will still need a border pass.

Many fear this will spell traffic jams and long queues.

Residents have complained for months about border crossing disrupting local traffic.

The physical barriers dividing towns Tweed Heads and Coolangatta will stay in place until the state reaches 90 per cent double vaccination and all border crossings will still be at strictly controlled points.

Eager NSW travellers have already arrived in border towns ahead of the opening, with authorities warning delays of four hours are expected on Monday morning.

Many are Queenslanders who were stuck in NSW with dogs, cars and kids, unable or unwilling to pay for costly quarantine to return home.

But border passes won’t be available until midnight, just one hour before the border opens. Queensland Health Minister Yvette D’Ath defended the decision to wait until the last minute, claiming the system will be able to process all the applications.

If that is not the case, then it is likely to cause even more delays and dramas.



Health boss Yvette D’Ath.



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