As the shortage in pet friendly housing in Victoria continues, pet owners are being forced to surrender their animals, with possible euthanasia consequences. The AVA report thirty per cent of dogs and cats are surrendered by owners who are unable to locate adequate accommodation.

This lack of pet-friendly rental properties continues to be a major issue for Victorian pet owners with a search on leading rental network revealing current listings in Victoria for pet friendly rentals equate to about two per cent of total listings.

This low availability of pet friendly homes has found the search to be very stressful, with many pet owners left with feelings of housing insecurity. Furthermore, the low availability forces pet owners, most who have strong emotional bonds to their pet, to choose between surrendering their pet or keeping their animal without landlord approval.

A survey conducted by Dogs Victoria, the peak body representing ten thousand owners and breeders of purebred dogs, on renting with dogs identified over 40 per cent of respondents found it difficult to secure a rental home, with over 80 per cent citing it was due to owning a dog. The survey revealed that virtually everybody renting with a dog had special provisions put on their rental agreement, from pet bonds, extra cleaning fees, numerous inspections and higher rent.

However, most respondents were prepared to pay more rent or have special provisions put onto their rental agreement to secure a pet-friendly property. Australian research has revealed that pet owners would likely pay up to 14 per cent more rent – which could see landlords receiving over three thousand extra dollars per annum, based on an average weekly rental of four hundred dollars.

Dogs Victoria, Chief Executive, Dr Tim Adams says ‘We believe that renting with a dog should be widely accepted as normal and we are we are calling on landlords to change their perception on renting to a tenant with well-behaved dogs, and the government to consider legislation to facilitate this. Our survey has proven that dog owners often make excellent tenants with many stating they cared and tended more for the property as they recalled the difficulty in first securing it.’

The survey also showed that many pet owners included quirky elements to get noticed, including using a dog resume to secure their rental property, citing it helped to personalise and introduce their pet to the landlord. Many included in their dog resume achievements from advanced training, previous rental history references and the goals and responsibilities of living with fellow humans.

Respondents stated they supported their rental application by providing details about their obligation as a Dogs Victoria member, which identifies the owner as a member of an organisation recognised by the government as a responsible authority on canine affairs, and included their duty in respect to health, welfare and upkeep.

Dogs Victoria remains committed in representing canine interests and issues and will work with the Government, sector bodies, the community and Dogs Victoria members on building a fairer Victoria for all dog owners.

For more information on Dogs Victoria visit www.dogsvictoria.org.au

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References:

1 ACAC 2014, Renting with pets, Australian Companion Animals Council

2 Power E 2015 Renting with pets: a pathway to housing insecurity?, Western Sydney University

Current research has found pet friendly rental homes can provide excellent economic benefit for landlords. So here are six great reasons why you should consider listing your home with a ‘pets considered’ option.

- Get more rent: Dog owners will pay more rent to secure a good rental property.
- Find tenants quickly: With so few homes available the demand is high therefore pet friendly rentals are often snapped up quickly by eager dog owners.
- Home is valued: Dog owners have shown to care and look after the property more as they recall the difficulty in first securing a rental and don’t want to revisit the process.
- High occupancy rates: Leases are often held for longer periods as most tenants do not want to go through the process of finding alternative pet friendly housing.
- No undeclared pets: You’ll find better communication will result as tenants will be more open with landlords regarding their furry friends.
- Locate trustworthy tenants: Prospective tenants are happy to disclose information about their pets, consider requesting a ‘pet resume’ along with rental applications.

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