

2014

V2: Updated January 2016

From Overseas to Australia – a Guide to Migrating with Pets



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Please note that in 2015 all three quarantine stations mentioned in this book, that's Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, were centralised into one new post entry quarantine facility in Mickleham, Victoria. Located on the northern outskirts of Melbourne, the 144 hectare facility opened in October 2015 and began accepting cats and dogs from 23 November 2015.

Full details of this new facility can be found here:

<http://postentryquarantine.govspace.gov.au/>

Furthermore, the DAFF website became agriculture.gov.au and all links have been updated in this version.

Section 5. 'In Quarantine' has also been updated to reflect the recent changes.

Introduction

My name is Karen and I am the founder of Dog Walks Pty Ltd. My family and I migrated to Australia in November 2007. My husband, Rob, started www.BobinOz.com and the experience of bringing our beautiful Labrador, Baggy, over with us prompted me to launch Dog Walks Pty Ltd in April 2008.

For 6 years, Dog Walks operated all 3 Australian quarantine stations. It targeted families migrating to Australia and bringing their pets with them, but not able to go and see their dog or cat themselves during the quarantine period for whatever reason. Its aim was to provide love, cuddles and exercise for dogs as well as reassurance to owners through updates and photos that their beloved pets were

fine and well. As the name suggests, we were targeting dogs but opened our services to cats within months to include cuddling, grooming, play and, most importantly, company.

Dog Walks has been lucky and privileged enough to visit, walk and love over 2,000 families of dogs and cats in that time.

We operated in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne so have a wealth of experience of being in quarantine, seeing how it operates and working with the staff there. Sadly we had to close in March 2014 after quarantine changed the rules, no longer allowing any access to pets during their quarantine period.

The experiences I have gained from

- bringing my own dog from the UK through Sydney quarantine and ultimately on to Brisbane;
- running Dog Walks in (then) Sydney, Perth and Melbourne for 6 years; and
- being a local pet owner (we now have 2 cats and a dog).

are what give me the knowledge to write this guide and that I now wish to share with you.

The process of emigrating is quite a daunting one with so much to do. It feels like one long never-ending round of paperwork and paying fees of one sort or another. As well as wondering where to live, where to work, maybe trying to find schools for the children, then there is the question of the family pets – do you bring them to Australia with you or re-home them in your native country.

This guide aims to at least make the question of what to do with the family pet a lot easier by giving you much of the information and advice you will need to make an informed decision.

For our family, bringing the family pet was a wonderful decision but not necessarily a straightforward one. Well for me, quite frankly, there never was a question. But my thoughtful and more considered husband, Rob, said we should think about it.

On the plus side, the quarantine period had relaxed from 6 months to 1 month (and is now only 10 days) and my brother and family were already there in case we needed Baggy housing temporarily until we found our own home. On the downside, Baggy was then a month away from his 10th birthday and truly hated heat.



Rob, being a tad more objective than me, asked me to ask our vet's opinion as to what would be kindest option for Baggy given his age – rehousing in England or flight, quarantine + Australian heat. Doesn't sound like I was going to win, does it?



I answered all the vet's questions honestly and he still concluded that he would be better off with us despite the upheaval. I think my tears during the session may have influenced him a little bit but he was right to advise to bring Baggy. He learned to love the heat, spending hours laying out in the sunshine. It gave him a new lease of life for his final few years.

Good luck and best wishes with your move plans,

Karen

Ps. if this e-guide does not answer your question, please email it to me and I will do my best to help.

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1. Deciding to bring your pet

Things to consider would be :-

- Where are you going to live ie is it a suitable property for pets;
- Will your new job allow you to care for your pets;
- How your pet(s) will cope with their new environment, and
- How your pet(s) will cope with the journey and quarantine?

The first three are quite personal and probably only you and your family members can provide the answers to those questions. I would, however, offer the following advice:-

- If you are intending to rent a property when you first arrive in Australia, a letter from your vet or animal trainer vouching for your dog or cat's good manners, good training and quietness could be a big help in persuading a potential landlord that your family – including the furbabies – would be the perfect tenants;
- The heat has rarely been an issue for any dogs or cats I have seen and, indeed, most actually come to relish the warmth. During extreme heat, there are several precautions most people in Australia take in order to help dogs with the main difference in environment they will notice – the heat :-
 - o Avoid walking their dogs in the middle of the day (5am is not uncommon to see people out exercising their pets!);
 - o Clip your dog wherever possible in summer. My friend's Golden Retriever looks particularly Labrador-like in summer before regrowing her glorious locks in Autumn;

- Provide plenty of fresh water, and
- Never leave your pet unattended in the car – pets can perish very quickly from heatstroke (in minutes) if left locked in a car.

Eligibility

I can offer you advice and information on the journey and quarantine later in this book, however, your first task once you have decided to bring your pet is to check if your pet is eligible to enter Australia.

The criteria are outlined on the Agriculture (Department of Agriculture) website, there is a link to the useful step by step guides in Chapter 3. The main points covered there are:-

- Are you coming from an 'Approved' or 'non-Approved' country'?
- Dogs and cats must not be more than 30 days pregnant nor suckling young at the time of export
- Breeds: certain breeds and hybrids are not eligible for export into Australia. For current information on prohibited breeds, visit this website <http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/biodiversity/wildlife-trade/live-plants-and-animals/live-import-list/hybrid-animals> or contact the Australian Customs by phone: +61 2 6275 6666 or 1300 363 263 (within Australia)

2. How much does it cost?

As you may expect, the cost of bringing your cat or dog is not particularly cheap. In fact, the flight fare alone for our dog, Baggy, was more than the one-way flight for my husband, daughter and me! I cannot give you an accurate door-to-door cost as it depends on the size of your pet, for example, and where you are travelling from and to. Here, I just hope to give you some idea of what it is you may be looking at in terms of costs:-

- in 2013, my friend brought her Golden Retriever, Popsy, from the UK to Sydney quarantine at a cost of Gbp 3,500. This included all paperwork, testing and flight but not quarantine fees or the onward transportation from Sydney to Brisbane. I have heard from other migrants that smaller pets (jack russell or cat equivalent size) is around Gbp 1,500;

- below are the old and proposed for July 2014 costs of quarantine as per the Agriculture website:-

Table 1. Quick guide - Existing and proposed Post Entry Quarantine fee for cats

Fee Description	Daily fee	Minimum number of days in PEQ	Total minimum cost of PEQ	% Uplift in cost
Historic fee (First cat in a consignment)	\$29	30	\$870	–
Required fee uplift (alignment of effort to dogs)	\$39	30	\$1 170	34%
Required fee uplift (alignment of fee to ensure cost base supported)	\$54	30	\$1 620	38%
New fee required (Due to impact of 2013 policy)	\$149	10	\$1 490	–8%
		Overall increase in cost	\$620	71%

Table 2. Quick guide - Existing and proposed Post Entry Quarantine fee for dogs

Fee Description	Daily fee	Minimum number of days in PEQ	Total minimum cost of PEQ	% Uplift in cost
Historic fee (First dog in a consignment)	\$39	30	\$1 170	–
Required fee uplift (alignment of fee to ensure cost base supported)	\$54	30	\$1 620	38%
New fee required (Due to impact of 2013 policy)	\$149	10	\$1 490	-8%
		Overall increase in cost	\$320	27%

For an update on the latest post entry quarantine fees, please visit:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs/quarantine-facilities-and-fees/fees-for-government-animal-quarantine-facilities#fees-charged-for-quarantine-services>

A full explanation of these costs and updated fees can be found here:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/fees?k=import>

- internal flight costs within Australia can vary hugely but Popsy the Golden Retriever's journey in November 2012 including pick up from Sydney quarantine and then flight to Brisbane airport cost \$345.

3. The Import Process

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs/step-by-step-guides>

The above link will help guide you through the steps of what to do, the main highlights being:-

- a) Eligibility – is your pet eligible for import into Australia – this point we have already addressed above as part of the decision making process
- b) Are you coming from an Approved Country? There are 3 categories of Approved Country which are currently (check the Agriculture website for up-to-date information)

Category 1 countries are New Zealand, Norfolk Island and Cocos Island

Category 2 countries currently include (check the Agriculture website for the up-to-date list):-

American Samoa, Bahrain, Barbados, Christmas Island, Cook Island, Falkland Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Iceland, Japan, Kiribati, Mauritius, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

Category 3 countries include, for example, Europe, the Republic of South Africa and the US. Check the Agriculture website for the full list.

Countries in Categories 1 and 2 have a different process for importing cats and dogs into Australia, hence this guide will mainly reference Category 3 countries.

Non-Approved Country

If your pet is not domiciled in an Approved Country, he will have to spend some time in a country that is approved on his way to Australia. Here is an example of the guidelines given by Agriculture in order for your pet to qualify for export to Australia:-

- the cat/dog is currently living in Country A
- Country A is not an approved country
- Country B is an approved Category 3 country
- the Country B government allows cats/dogs to be imported from Country A to Country B
- the animal receives the rabies vaccination and testing in Country B and certification is provided by the Country B competent veterinary authority
- the animal returns to Country A
- about 5 months later the animal returns to Country B until the time of export to have final preparations undertaken by an approved veterinarian
- the animal spends about, or a minimum of, 45 days in Country B for the preparations to be completed
- final vet check is performed in Country B 5 days before export to Australia
- certification of the permit conditions is provided by the Country B Official Government Veterinarian

- animal is exported from Country B to Australia.
- c) Microchip – although Rabies testing takes the longest period of time, I would recommend you start by ensuring your pet is micro chipped and that the microchip is one that can be read by an approved reader. This microchip must be read and recorded correctly at every appointment (including proof of Rabies vaccination and subsequent testing) so is a very important part of the process.

Accepted microchip readers currently are Avid, Trovan, Destron or other ISO compatible reader. Your vet will be able to advise or check the Agriculture website.

- d) Check or start your Rabies vaccination process and begin testing as soon as you can. This is the longest part of the process and can take up to 220 days from start to finish. Discuss with your vet as soon as possible.

There are, I believe, rabies vaccinations that can last between 2 and 3 years. This may be a safe option to go for as a contingency against any possible delays.

The government's website has a very calculator, see <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs> which will give you a good guide to the time it will take you put everything into place. You just choose 'dog' or 'cat' from the options; the country of export; and the date you wish to export your pet. It will then work backwards and give you an indicative timetable as to when and what you should start with.

- e) Locate a Government Approved Veterinarian. This is a person that will be authorised by the authority of the exporting country to perform all the

necessary tests. This person is not an Australian or representative of Australia.

The Government Approved Veterinarian is actually a representative of your home country and someone able to prepare the export side of things. Australia is concerned with the Import Permit but you need an Export Permit first.

I was very lucky that my local vet was actually an Approved Veterinarian. Ask yours. Many are but if not, they can most certainly point you in the right direction. Otherwise, the authority of the exporting country should be able to advise (as examples, in the UK this is DEFRA; in the US it is the USDA)

- f) Apply for Import Permit. This is not an overly difficult process and one that you can do yourself if you choose. It may help to keep costs down if you do but otherwise, a pet transport company can arrange much of this for you.

You will need an Australian address and telephone number to use as contact details on the Import Permit but it is acceptable to use your own name c/o a family member or work colleague for example. It may be done online or by post. Here is a guide to completing the Import Permit: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/online-services/bicon>.

- g) Tentatively book the quarantine accommodation – again you may do this yourself or a pet shipper can do it for you. If you email the quarantine station of your choice (contact details on the Agriculture website), they will tell you the information you need to complete the booking
- h) Choose a pet shipper if you have not already done so (see section 3 below on Pet Shippers). In our case, the pet shipper also provided the crate for travel. I had to provide specific measurements and then a crate was custom made for

our dog. Do make sure the measurements are accurate and not over-estimated – you absolutely do not want the crate being too big or too small

for your pet. For their safety, your dog or cat should have room to stand, turn around and lie down.

- i) Complete the remaining testing with your Government Approved Veterinarian.
- j) Apply for the Export Certificate. For me, this meant driving to my nearest DEFRA office with all the relevant paperwork to date (import permit, evidence of testing etc), and then collecting this – sealed – once ready to hand to the vet and then the pet shipper. The Export Certificate must be signed by a representative of the export authority (Official Government Veterinarian) and is not the same person as the Government Approved Veterinarian. The Official Government Veterinarian for example works for DEFRA and does not usually have a veterinary practice.
- k) Finalise travel arrangements with your pet shipper and ultimately your furbaby will be popped on a plane to Australia.

In most cases, your pet will depart from the freight terminal and not the passenger terminal.

Ensure the Import Permit is still valid.

4. Pet Shippers – do you need one and how do you find one?

The first thing I can say is yes you do need a pet transport company to assist you with the relocation of your four-legged family member. When bringing my own dog to Australia, I arranged much of the paperwork myself and then gaily called British Airways to book his flight. I was told in no uncertain terms that flight bookings were not accepted from private individuals and that I needed to go through a recognized pet transport company.

How much you use the pet shipper for is up to you (as discussed in the section on The Import Process) however they are absolutely essential when it comes to the travel side of things. I was told by a person in British Airways that too many things had gone wrong in the past (owners just turning up at the airport expecting to book a pet on a plane like buying a train ticket; wrong paperwork; unsealed crates etc).

I think I understood their point and, in the end, I was grateful for the reassurance of using a pet shipper, at that final stage, that all was in order.

In terms of finding the right pet shipper for you, I would absolutely recommend you go to the IPATA website. IPATA is the International Pet Animal Transportation Association and, in my view, all reputable and trustworthy pet shippers will be registered with IPATA. It is the body that oversees and monitors the pet transportation industry.

Their website is an excellent place to start your research and this search function will be very helpful in finding a pet transport company near you:
<http://www.ipata.org/search-on-line-for-a-pet-shipper>.

I think it is preferable to find a pet shipper in your country of origin to manage the international leg of the journey as they will be the most familiar with local regulations regarding pet export.

I would advise you to get approximately 3 quotes; they can vary quite a lot and the service you ask for can range from the initial call to ask what to until your dog is delivered to your door in Australia having completed quarantine to just the flight arrangements. The price of course will vary too and it depends on how much you wish to do yourselves.

Making the final choice then will be a combination of

- Is the pet shipper IPATA registered;
- Are they located in my home country and is it easy to get my pet to their premises (either driving yourself or they can collect);
- Do they offer the service I need and at the price I am happy with; and
- Do I feel comfortable entrusting my pet with them?

Given there are currently only two quarantine stations covering the whole of Australia (ie Spotswood, Melbourne and Eastern Creek, Sydney), it is very likely that, once the quarantine period has been completed, your pet will have to make another journey by plane to your home.

Many international pet shippers will have partnership arrangements with domestic Australian transport companies but if not, again IPATA will provide some names.

Domestic pet shippers can collect your pet(s) directly from quarantine and take

him to the airport to board his flight. If you wish to, you can collect your pet yourself from quarantine. Just make sure you check the quarantine website for current collection times as they can be quite short (there was a 30 minute window between 10:00 and 10:30 am on Saturdays for example).

5. In Quarantine

Update January 2016

Please note that in 2015 all three quarantine stations mentioned in this book, that's Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, were centralised into one new post entry quarantine facility in Mickleham, Victoria. Located on the northern outskirts of Melbourne, the 144 hectare facility opened in October 2015 and began accepting cats and dogs from 23 November 2015.

Full details of this new facility can be found here:

<http://postentryquarantine.govspace.gov.au/>

This new facility does not allow visitors at all and as such I have never seen what it is like inside. For this reason, this section is somewhat out of date, as it mostly refers to the old quarantine stations. That said, it's a fair assumption that the new facility was modelled quite closely on the old facilities and that the accommodation will be similar.

Again, by visiting the post entry quarantine website already mentioned above, you will be able to see some photographs of the new facility. This is what they say about accommodation for cats and dogs:

Cat compound

How many cats can the facility accommodate, and what size are the pens?

There will be 240 cat pens, and each pen will be 1.2 metres wide by 2.04 metres long.

Will the pens be heated in winter?

Yes. All the cat pens will have underfloor heating.

Dog compound

Will the kennels be heated in winter?

Yes. All the dog kennels will have underfloor heating.

How many dogs can the facility accommodate, and what size are the kennels?

A total of 400 dog kennels will be built in two stages – 226 kennels in the first stage, 174 kennels in the second stage. Each individual kennel will be 6.3 metres long by 2.62 metres wide and include both internal and external pen areas.

Many more questions about the new facility are answered on this page:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs/quarantine-facilities-and-fees/post-entry-quarantine-facilities>

Once your pet lands in Australia, she will be collected by quarantine officials and transported (still under quarantine conditions) to the quarantine station.

As a general rule, animals arrive in quarantine from the airport early to mid-morning in Melbourne.

Upon arrival, your pet will be 'checked in', paperwork verified and then taken to her assigned kennel or cattery. Pets are usually given a small meal to see how they are after the journey, and, then if all is well, normal feeding patterns will follow.

The details of the new facility have been given in the update above, for interest, the rest of this chapter describes how Sydney was set up as described in V1. The new facility is probably not too dissimilar.

Accommodation

Dogs

The accommodation for dogs is a concrete run which is approximately 1.5 metres x 4.5 metres. For the most part, it is closed to the elements.

The main run has a wall about 70 cm of the way up on both of the long sides (4 ½ metres) with fence meshing above and then the end of the run is open with fence meshing so they can see out clearly. There are other dogs either side of the longest side. Bigger dogs are able to see their neighbours if they stand.

There is a solid roof above to protect from too much sun or rain.

These pictures overleaf should give you a good idea of what the dog kennels look like (these were taken in Sydney but Melbourne is very similar):-



This picture shows the main part of the run with the half wall (see left of photo) and the fence meshing at the end so dogs can see out. They are looking out onto another row of kennels opposite.

NB: only 2 dogs may share a kennel – a family with more dogs was able to request that they be allowed to socialize together from time to time but kenneling together has never been an option I have known.



Molly modeling for us and showing the half wall with mesh fencing above. There are other kennels either side. In the picture on the left, you can just see the door to the enclosed sleeping area.



Rocky (above left), AJ (above right) and Bella (left) show us the inside sleeping area of the kennel quarantine

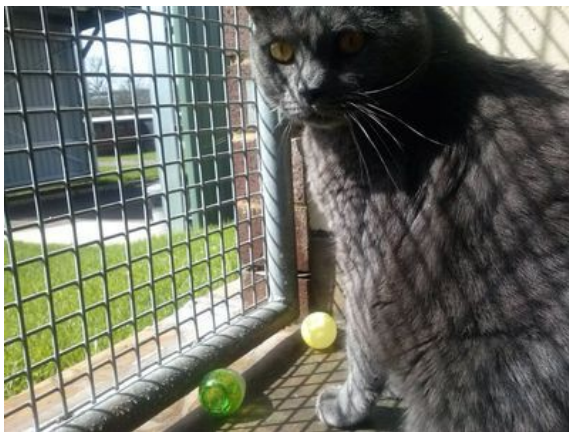
Cats

The accommodation for cats is telephone box style ie it is quite small inside (two people can just stand side by side or one cat sit down on the floor) but it goes up high. There are levels of steps to take cats to the top where there is a partly open (meshed) roof.

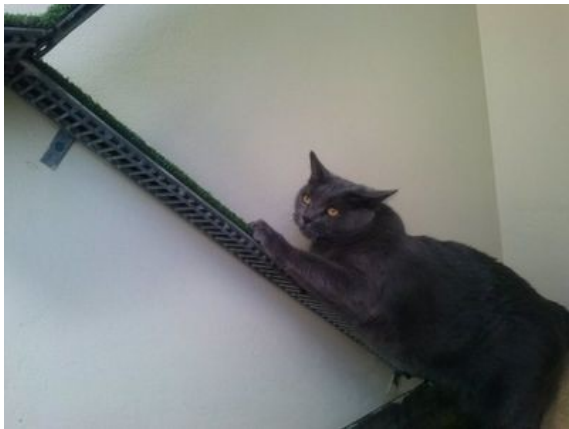
Cats are provided with an enclosed box to sleep in. The 'telephone box' is concrete and brick on 2 sides, 1 side has the metal door and then the fourth side is the meshed fencing to the outside.



Toonses playing peekaboo! The enclosed box shown is for sleeping.

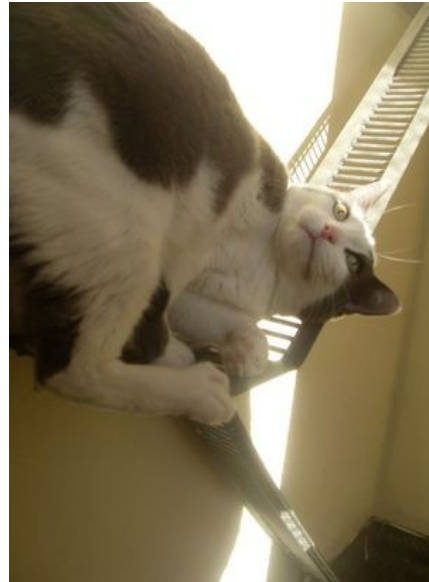


Ulysses showing us the view to the outside





Demonstrating the levels and showing that some of the cattery steps are covered in fake grass and some are not. Ulysses has the grass covering and Dizzy's run was has open steps.



Litter trays are provided

Bedding

Quarantine discourage owners now providing any additional bedding. They say “All bedding, soft toys, comfort items etc that travel with the animal in their transport crate will be destroyed upon arrival as they become soiled during the journey”. They further say they will provide bedding appropriate for breed and age.

Typically, the bedding provided for dogs is the trampoline style bedding; a raised metal frame with either hessian or plastic (shade sail style) stretched over the frame.



Bruce is demonstrating the type of bed provided for dogs. Additional blankets are often provided

Cats are provided with an enclosed box and either a mattress or blanket inside



Toonces shows us the cubby bed he slept in during quarantine

Update January 2016

The dog food mentioned below, 'Advance', was always used in the previous three quarantine stations. I have not checked what the new facility uses as this could change at any time. Their website specifically says "*Your animal will be fed a high quality, nutritionally balanced commercial dry food, once daily during their stay (unless veterinary advice states multiple feeds are required).*"

Please check exactly what pet food will be used when booking in your animal.

Food

Quarantine state they will feed your pet a high quality, nutritionally balanced dry food. Feeding is once daily and their brand of choice is Advance.

Advance is an Australian food and further details can be found on www.advancepet.com.au.

It is available through vets, pet shops and online pet stores but not usually in supermarkets.



The base ingredient of both the dog and the cat food is chicken

Here is the nutritional breakdown of the dog food:-

Nutrients

Ingredients

Chicken, Rice, Corn, Sorghum, Corn Gluten, Chicken Tallow, Chicken Digest, Beet Pulp, Iodised Salt, Sunflower Oil, Potassium Chloride, Inulin, Turkey, Dicalcium Phosphate, Choline

Chloride, Taurine, Plant Extracts (Tomato Powder (source of Lycopene), Marigold Meal (source of Lutein)), Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Zinc Sulphate, Citric Acid, Beta-Carotene, Antioxidants, Iron Sulphate, Copper Sulphate, Vitamin B5, Vitamin A, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B12, Potassium Iodide, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B3, Vitamin D, Selenium, Vitamin B6, Vitamin B9.

Nutrient	per 100g	Grams per 1000kcal
Crude Protein	26.0%	71.2g
Crude Fat	15.0%	41.1g
Moisture	8.5%	23.3g

Sodium	0.8g	2.2g
Beet Pulp	2.5g	6.8g
Inulin	0.5g	1.4g
Taurine	0.18g	0.5g
Vitamin C	18mg	50mg
Lutein	0.46mg	1.3mg
Beta Carotene	0.46mg	1.3mg
Lycopene	0.46mg	1.3mg

Average Metabolisable Energy : 365kcal/100g

Here is the nutritional breakdown of the cat food.

Nutrients

Ingredients

Chicken, Corn Gluten, Rice, Corn, Chicken Tallow, Chicken Digest, Iodised Salt, Potassium Chloride, Choline Chloride, Plant Extracts (Slippery Elm Bark, Tomato Powder (source of Lycopene), Psyllium Husk, Marigold Meal (source of Lutein), Yucca Extract), Sunflower Oil, Turkey, Methionine, Taurine, Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Manganese Sulphate, Beta-Carotene, Zinc Sulphate, Antioxidants, Vitamin B3, Vitamin A, Copper Sulphate, Iron Sulphate, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Citric Acid, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B6, Potassium Iodide, Vitamin B9.

Nutrient	per 100g	Grams per 250kcal
Crude Protein	35.0%	22.2g
Crude Fat	20.0%	12.7g
Moisture	6.0%	3.8g
Sodium	0.9g	0.6g
Slippery Elm Bark	0.3g	0.2g
Psyllium Husk	60mg	38mg
Yucca Extract	35mg	22mg
Vitamin C	18mg	11mg
Lutein	0.45mg	0.3mg
Beta Carotene	0.45mg	0.3mg
Lycopene	0.45mg	0.3mg

Any other food required or change to the standard once daily feeding will require veterinary sign-off that it is necessary and you will have to provide the food yourself. No discount is given for not using the Advance offered.

6. Once home

Council Registration

Regulations change on the subject of council registration for domestic pets from state to state and city to city. For example, dogs need to be registered in Brisbane but cats do not whereas in Sydney both have to be registered. You are advised to check with your local council for requirements where you live but here are the registration page links some of Australia's major cities:

Brisbane:	Registration page for dogs in Brisbane
Sydney:	Registration page for dogs and cats in Sydney
Canberra:	Registration and guidelines for responsible pet ownership in ACT
Melbourne:	Registration page for dogs and cats in Melbourne
Adelaide:	Adelaide registration page for pets
Perth:	Registration page for dogs and cats in Perth
Darwin:	Registration page for dogs and cats in Darwin
Hobart:	Registration page for dogs in Hobart
Launceston:	Information for responsible pet ownership in Launceston

If your council area is not mentioned above, a quick search of Google.com.au would be a good place to start or telephone your local council office to request information on pet registration. Initial registration fees vary from council to council however they can range from around \$150 - \$280 per annum.

In general, a desexed pet is much cheaper than an entire cat or dog. It is a good idea to bring proof of desexing with you from your home country if possible. It is fairly obvious in a male dog but not so in a female dog.

Renewal fees are generally not as much as the initial registration. Most councils supply a small plastic tag which should be then fitted and attached to the collar at all times.

The blue one shown is our council registration tag for our dog Hippy (the green one is the microchipping registry mentioned below):-



NB:- note there are also often guidelines on how many and what sort of pets you are allowed to keep at your property depending on the zone you live in (rural, residential, commercial etc). Do make sure to check this point too with your council

Microchipping

Most councils also require that pets are micro chipped. If you have brought your dog or cat into Australia from overseas, your pet will already be micro chipped in order to comply with the import regulations.

It is however a good idea to register your pet's microchip details as soon as you can with your local vet. I think it is also a good idea to register with one of the pet registry bodies. Unfortunately there is not one overall registry but here are a couple of examples to look at which will hopefully help inform your choice:-

- [The National Pet Register](#)
- [Central Animal Records](#)
- [Australian Animal Registry](#)

Heartworm

This advice was previously given out by the Australian Government on Import Permits

<< Please note that heartworm disease of dogs is endemic in Australia. Its occurrence varies widely in different areas of Australia. Heartworm can be caused by the microorganism 'Dirofilaria immitis' and is spread by mosquitos. The larvae migrate to the heart and develop into worms over a period of about 6 months. No testing or treatment is required for importation into Australia.

A range of drugs is available to prevent heartworm disease. For dogs that have never been exposed to heartworm, there is at least a four month window during which preventative treatment can be safely started.

For most dogs there is no need for treatment during quarantine. >>

In our case, I took our dog to the vet immediately after arriving home after his (then 30 day) quarantine period. I chose the option of an annual injection (versus

regular pills) as it was less difficult to forget and the annual injection had, I understand, a 3 month reach back thus covering our dog completely.

The annual heartworm injection now just becomes part of the regular treatment my pets require each year.

Dog Off-Leash Areas

Parts of Australia are very strict about where and when dogs are allowed off leash. In most residential streets of Brisbane, for example, you are required by law to have your dog permanently on leash and you must also clear away any dog droppings (you must also carry on you the means to clear it away).

There are however some fabulous, dedicated off-leash areas for dogs to play in and socialize in. Many also have obstacle and agility courses built in (for the dogs of course although my daughter loves playing on them too!).



This is a guide on just how many there are in the Sydney - [Off-leash areas of Sydney](#) and Brisbane areas alone - [Brisbane dog parks](#).

These were taken at my local dog park. On a Sunday afternoon to early evening, there are regularly between 20 and 40 dogs playing. Some areas also have separate parks for small dogs.

It is the owner's responsibility to ensure dogs are well socialised with both people and other dogs as well as being up-to-date on all vaccinations and flea treatments.

We are usually here at least daily and love it! We even had a Christmas Party for dogs last year.



Insurance

Once your pets are home, you may wish to consider pet insurance. It is sometimes possible here to add pet insurance as an option with household insurance. Here are a couple of suggestions as to where to start when looking for a quote to insure your dog or cat:-

- [RSPCA](#)
- [RACQ](#)
- [Medibank](#)

Ticks and Fleas

Paralysis ticks (*Ixodes holocyclus*) are one of the major things to be aware of in Australia for your dog and treatment against them is essential.

Paralysis ticks (and other ticks of course, but we are only concerned here with the harmful ones) attach themselves to the dog as it brushes past long grass, bushland and general vegetation although they can be found just in your back garden too.



Here is a picture of a tick before and after feeding on a dog. Notice how engorged the tick is on the right.

Once attached, the tick buries into the dog and feeds on its blood. Ticks can similarly attach themselves to cats too so if your cat goes outside, it may also be at risk of paralysis tick poisoning.



A tick removed from a German Shepherd Dog. The ball point pen gives perspective as to the size of the tick.



A tick buried in a dog's fur

Ticks are much harder to find on the coats of longer-haired pets – hence another reason pets tend to be clipped quite short during the summer months here when ticks are more rife.

This map shows the areas of Australia where paralysis ticks are most prevalent (in red):



What are the signs of paralysis tick poisoning in dogs?

It can take several hours or days – or both - for signs of poisoning to fully develop, which ultimately results in paralysis.

Early signs of tick poisoning include:

- Lack of coordination of the back legs (the dog may have a wobbly and an unsteady gait). This can then move on to the front legs
- Dilated pupils.
- Drooling or salivating more than usual

- Change in bark (or meow in a cat).
- Difficulty swallowing (due to paralysis of the throat).
- Coughing.

If undetected, these may then move on to:

- Incontinence (due to paralysis);
- Difficulty breathing;
- Paralysis;
- Coma

You should go to a vet immediately if you suspect tick poisoning. Survival chances are very high but prompt treatment is required.

How do you know it is tick poisoning?

Finding the tick is definitely a priority. The dog will need to be checked from head to toe (and even between toes and in the mouth). They can be very tricky to find. Once located, pulling whilst twisting using hands, tweezers or tick removers (such as the one shown on the left) can be used.



Take care not to squeeze the tick though as this will release poison back into the dog. If you are in any doubt about safely removing a tick, see your vet immediately.

How to protect against paralysis ticks?

Unfortunately, no treatment promises 100% prevention. If you live in a tick prone area you should check your dog for ticks every day. Mostly, ticks are found around the head, neck and front legs of the dog, so start from the head and work your way down to the tail. Even if you find one tick, continue to check the dog as there may be more.

There are several products that may be used to help prevent ticks. The products shown are mainly for dogs however equivalent feline products are available. Make sure you consult your vet and use only as breed and size appropriate.

- **Advantix** is applied to the skin on the back of the neck every two weeks. It kills and prevents ticks. **NB:** Advantix is poisonous to cats so take care puss doesn't accidentally come into contact with it.



- **Frontline** is applied to the back of the neck every two weeks.



- **Permoxin** spray and rinse is applied to the dog on a weekly basis.
- **Proban** tablets or oral liquid.
- **Tick collars.**

Loading up is not the answer to more effective prevention. Never use more than one of the above together or increasing the dose without checking with your vet first. Some of the treatments are not compatible with each other and could actually poison the animal.

Fleas are a nuisance rather than a danger (when compared to paralysis ticks anyway) and will be covered against by the above treatments.

(Some of this information was derived from www.dog-world.com.au)

Treatments against other cat and dog diseases

As in many other parts of the world, many vets here advise to treat your pets regularly against certain diseases. They are for dogs and cats respectively :-

- **Canine Distemper**

This is a virus that affects dogs and can be spread through food and water as well as through contact with an infected animal. It comes with a pretty long list of nasty sounding symptoms and can ultimately lead to your dog being put down for humane reasons.

- Canine Infectious Hepatitis

This is just as nasty as the above and can lead to death due to liver failure although some dogs do recover without treatment.

- Canine Parvoviral Enteritis

This may be the scariest of the lot for dogs; this disease is highly contagious and if it goes untreated can kill up to 91% of dogs.

- Feline Parvovirus

Feline parvovirus is highly contagious and very often fatal, especially in kittens.

- Feline Herpesvirus

It is an upper respiratory or pulmonary infection.

- Feline Calicivirus

This is another virus and it causes respiration problems but cats can and often do fight this one off with the help of their own immune system, often making a full recovery.

Not everyone believes you need to immunise annually against the above as, I understand, some vaccinations may be valid for longer than one year. If you have any doubts, I would advise you to do your own research and discuss with your vet.

I should point out, however, that most boarding kennels will require evidence of fully up-to-date immunization certificates before accepting a pet onto their premises.

As a guide, here are the costs incurred at our last round of vaccinations:-

- Dog: \$214.45 including annual heartworm injection and a standard wormer
- Cat : \$87.50

(Hippy is a dog and Remy and Coco are cats)

Date	Vet	Qty	Description	Price	Payment	Balance
3 JUN 13	CM		Invoice No. 108205 Hippy			
		1	C5 Vaccination	79.50		
		1	Heartworm Injection 31-40kg	110.00		
		1	Drontal Chewable 35kg	24.95		
			Total for Invoice	214.45		214.45
3 JUN 13	CM		Invoice No. 108226 Remy			
		1	F3 Vaccination	73.00		
		1	Milbemax Cat Tablet 2 - 8 Kg	14.50		
			Total for Invoice	87.50		301.95
3 JUN 13			Payment Received Thank You		301.95	0.00
3 JUN 13	CM		Invoice No. 108230 Coco			
		1	F3 Vaccination	73.00		
		1	Milbemax Cat Tablet 2 - 8 Kg	14.50		
			Total for Invoice	87.50		87.50

Food

Some people are concerned about the range and brands of pet food that are available in Australia. Experts recommend introducing a new food slowly and over a period of several weeks which is clearly not possible when coming from one country

to another. This guide is designed to give you some idea of the types of food readily available in Australia through 3 different outlets:-

- Supermarkets

- Pet shops and veterinary practices, and
- Online stores

Supermarkets:- an indication of dog foods available in supermarkets are: Banquet, Beneful, Chum, MyDog, Optimum, Pedigree, Purina and SuperCoat. A quick search on the internet will show you ingredients and further details on the brand.





Popular cat foods are:-



Pet Shops and Veterinary Surgeries:- Advance (as used in quarantine); Iams, Eukanuba, Hills Science Diet and Royal Canin are the main brands although ranges vary greatly from outlet to outlet.

In terms of range, it is usually possible to find a similar or equivalent food in Australia although the name of the range may differ. I know for example that Royal Canin does many breed specific foods in the UK that are not directly available here.

I have shown dog foods here but the same brands are available in feline versions.



Online Stores:- online stores are becoming increasingly popular as postage prices are now quite reasonable. The online stores do seem to carry a wider range of specialty foods, for example, grain free and holistic foods. Here are a couple of online stores to try:-

- vetshopaustralia.com.au
- mypetwarehouse.com.au
- vetnpetdirect.com.au
- naturalpetstore.com.au

7. Wildlife

It is very different in Australia to many other parts of the world. In Queensland, for example, cane toads and snakes are particular pests. I am not at all saying that they are a major problem all day every day but I do think it is wise to be aware of them. Snakes mostly try to get away but I did have to actively teach my dog to stay away from cane toads (still work in progress actually!).

If you would like to know a lot more about snakes, then I this book may be worth reading called [Living with Snakes](#) by Geoff Coombe.

Otherwise, this is what we do to hopefully protect our pets against snakes:-

- If you live in an area where there are poisonous snakes, watch your pet's behavior when outside. If he starts paying a lot of attention to an area of the garden or begins to bark and bounce around, it is either worth investigating to make sure there is no snake 'game' or (my tactic) move away quickly. Pay attention to your dog if you live in an area with poisonous snakes.
- As far as possible, keep your garden clear and open. Large piles of twigs, rubble, leaves or grass are often favoured by snakes and snake food. As a general rule, snakes do tend to avoid open, clear areas.
- Ensure your dog is trained in the 'leave it' command to hopefully bring your dog's focus back to you rather than the snake or possible snake. I usually have a supply of treats too which helps persuade my Labrador that I am more fun to be with (yes, bribery works well in my house!).

- And my final piece of advice is to know what to do in case your dog is bitten by a snake. Keep your dog as quiet as possible to reduce the venom further travelling around the body and take your dog to a vet as soon as possible.

Cane toads are very different from their cute cousin, the frog, and (sorry toads) very ugly. Originating from Central and South America, they were introduced into Australia deliberately in 1935 to control cane beetles.

They quickly spread to become quite a major and unpleasant pest today.

Cane toads are poisonous and to be avoided where possible but not often fatal. Amazingly though, most dogs and cats I know (even ones that were not born in Australia) instinctively know to give this hopping horror a wide berth.



A fully grown cane toad (Bufo Marinus)

It is also advisable (and in some parts of Australia it is mandatory) to keep your cats indoors at night. This has a dual effect – to protect the wildlife from your cat and to protect your cat from the wildlife.

This is what the Brisbane City Council say for example "Brisbane City Council encourages all cat owners to be responsible by keeping cats indoors at night to protect native wildlife and for the cat's own protection." I know Canberra, ACT is very similar so always do check the guidelines applicable in your specific council.

Just as an example, at a recent family party, a couple of my daughter's friends were shouting at me that our cat had a lizard in his mouth. I wasn't overly surprised as, despite being 10, he does still think himself a bit of a lad and, to our disapproval and despite doing all we can to discourage it, he frequently 'toys' with the natives.

This time, however, he was surpassing himself and was now locked into a major stand-off with a 30cm long bearded dragon (pictured right). My husband managed to rescue the bearded dragon and relocate him to a nearby park but not



before killer-cat (otherwise known as a very angelic looking Burmese cat called Remy) landed himself a scratched eye.

Here is BobinOz's link to the episode: <http://www.bobinoz.com/blog/14287/a-brisbane-bearded-dragon-versus-a-psychotic-burmese-cat/>

Who were we saving from whom? Difficult to say but it is advisable to keep your cats in after dark.

Some people say that possums are dangerous to cats and may attack them. The jury is out for me in terms of whether possums do actually pose a threat to cats as others say that possums 'play dead' rather than attack.

Better safe than sorry though is our motto with our moggies being securely locked indoors at night.

The main message though is be aware of what is in your area so perhaps ask your local vet or the RSPCA for advice.

8. My most frequently asked questions

- a. *Will my pet be sedated during the journey?* The simple answer is no. It is now thought that it is safer if pets are not sedated for the journey.
- b. *What is the flight like and can I see pet pet during the flight?* Pets travel in a pressurised compartment in the “bulk hold” area of the plane. This is at the front of the aircraft just underneath the pilots. The area is dark however, Qantas assure me that most pets sleep and that there is plenty of space in this area.

They can, if requested, segregate animal crates with little curtains too. You may arrange a water bottle to be fitted to the crate to allow your pet to drink from.

Unfortunately, even if you travel on the same flight as your pet, you will not be allowed to have any contact with your pet whatsoever. This applies to any stopovers as well. Quarantine conditions must be preserved at all times or your pet will not be allowed to enter Australia.

You can monitor your pet's progress via the “Freight” tracking information given to you by the airline.

- c. *Can my pet stay one or two nights longer in quarantine until I can collect them?* In most of the cases I know of, the answer has been no, Quarantine has not allowed an ‘overstay’. An exception, for example, was when the pet was being transported to Far North Queensland and no flights were available on the day the animal was being released. There are local boarding kennels that may be able to take your pet after

quarantine if needed. Ask quarantine or the vets cited in e. below for recommendations.

- d. *My pet will not eat the standard food provided. Can I provide an alternative?* Yes you can but it is at your cost. I would recommend contacting the major supermarkets for delivery options or using the online stores mentioned.
- e. *Will quarantine administer medication to my pet?* They always have done this. I recommend you contact them to discuss options but you will have to provide the medication at your cost. There may be an additional 'handling charge' from quarantine for this extra service.
- f. *Do you know a vet that would be willing to visit my pet in quarantine if needed?* Please call the Melbourne quarantine station directly to ask.
- g. *My pet's crate – will it be returned to me after quarantine?* Yes, quarantine will return your crate to you and it may also then be used for any other journeys your pet needs to make.

If you no longer require your crate (for example, you may not have room to transport it if you are collecting your pet from quarantine by car), often people consider donating them to the RSPCA or a local vet.

- h. *Is it possible to insure my pet in quarantine?* Australian pet insurers, I believe, require the pet has to be in your specific care to be covered by most pet insurers, so no, I do not know of any insurance companies here that cover your pet during the quarantine period. It may be worth speaking to your pet shipper in the country of export.

- i. *Would it be cheaper if I drove my pet to the airport?* It is not actually possible for owners to do this themselves, as far as I am aware, as I believe this journey already has to be under quarantine-like conditions (pets already locked in their crates). It may be worth checking this within your own country of export for the latest regulations.

Disclaimer

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Sources

I would like to thank the photographers and acknowledge that some images within this guide are courtesy of the following sources:-

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