

Information for Pet Sitters

Our Objective

Australians love to travel and what better place to discover than our own wonderful country. There have always been many of us young and older who “do” the big trip....”travel around Australia”...be it for a few months or a few years. And then there are of course the many couples and families who use their annual holidays or just weekends to discover different places. Understandably many of these travellers do not want to leave behind the much-loved four-legged member of the family so we have more and more travelling pets. Although not always easy to find there are campgrounds and other forms of accommodation around Australia that allow animals so that means more and more people take advantage of this possibility.

However travelling with pets does have its restrictions. There will always be that special something to do where dogs or cats are not allowed.... and no friend or family near by to help out. This is where PetPlaces sitters come to the rescue. Someone local who will look after the beloved pet while its owners undertake what ever it is they wished to do knowing it will be well looked after for those few hours or days.

PetPlaces objective is to find as many of these special people as possible all round Australia and make their details available to member travellers for their convenience thereby making travelling with pets just that much easier and enjoyable. The directory is also beneficial to those people who cannot take their pets with them but need instead to find a good boarding home for them while away.

Pet Sitters Wanted

PetPlaces can only be as good as its sitters. That is why we are always looking for likeminded people who are prepared to take these pets into their homes. There are many reasons why a sitter may register. Perhaps you yourselves are one of those travelling with pets and can appreciate the difficulties involved, maybe you wish to take advantage of the service yourselves and can reciprocate at other times to help your fellow travellers. Or perhaps you are just an animal lover, have pets of your own or you used to and like the idea of caring for one occasionally. This is also another way of supplementing your income by earning a few extra dollars. PetPlaces cannot however guarantee how often your services would be required and therefore is not able to estimate just how much this might be.

Requirements

Naturally the most important criteria is that you are a responsible person and an animal lover. That you are prepared to take special care of “your guest” – to take it into your home and heart during its stay with you. Most pet owners who make use of this service pamper their pets and so expect that to continue to a certain degree. That is why we endeavour to give as much information to our members as possible about your situation and your stipulations so that they can make an informed decision. (*See below for “Information required”*). It is also not necessary that you be available all year round- (you might be off on travels yourself some of the time) –but it helps if you can give dates if known. It doesn't matter where you are in Australia but obviously some areas will be more frequented than others. If there are tourist attractions near you then the more sought after your services will be.

What's in it for you?

The joy of a four-legged guest's company! The satisfaction of helping tourists in your area enjoy their stay that much more! The enjoyment of meeting other animal lovers and their pets. All of the above plus making a few extra dollars. (see "Charges" below)

Who has access to sitters information?

PetPlaces is membership based. This means members pay a fee to access the sitters directory as well as all other information on the website. As a member they are issued with a number and password that enables them to access this secured site. Anyone "surfing the net" will not be able to view your details.

Charges

The listing as a "Sitter" is **free**. All you need do is complete and return to us the Sitters Registration Form and you will be added to our directory. (Upon your request you can be just as easily be removed or make changes to your details.)

Members contact sitters direct, we do not take any bookings! What you as the sitter charge the member for your service of boarding their pet is between the two of you. We can only give a guideline but it is at your discretion IF and how much to charge. It might also help to check what your local kennels charge. Perhaps you only wish to reciprocate the service by helping other travellers and their pets.

Guideline for charges

	Small dog/cat	Large dog
Day charge (regardless how many/few hours)	\$10 – 15	\$10 – 15
Night stays	\$10 – 20	\$15 – 20
Weekly stays	Discount	Discount
Where all food is supplied by owner		

Information Required – Sitters Registration Form

In many instances members will only have verbal or written contact with you before deciding to leave their "loved one" in your care and therefore we endeavour to give them as much information as possible about you beforehand. That is why we ask you to be as detailed as possible when completing the registration form. (see also "Example Registration Form") Please include any stipulations you might have. We have tried to list as many points as possible but you may add anymore of your own. Please remember that any of these items can be changed upon request quite easily as you require.

- Name address and contact information:
These need to be fully completed for our files however on the directory listing we only show first name, town with postcode, telephone numbers and email address (if indicated on Registration Form) which is sufficient for the members to contact you.
- Nearby attractions:
This is very useful for our members as they will also be able to search the directory for sitters near particular attractions.

- About you and your pets:
This information helps give the member an overview of the environment into which their pet will be placed. A fenced garden for instance will be for many an important consideration.
- Photo:
A photo of you, and/or your pet, maybe in yard or garden would be appreciated but is not essential. It will however personalise your listing. A short description with the photo will be included on the website.
- Your conditions:
If you have any stipulations this is the place to make it known so that the members will know from the start. It does not mean you have to be rigid with these conditions but it does give a guideline. If open to discussion then mark "negotiable".
- Type of guest:
The majority of the time it is dogs looking for a sitter but cats can be a local request and occasionally some other animal such as bird or fish (or even a horse).
Again the question if it is allowed inside or where it sleeps will be very important to the owner.
- Availability:
Please note that even if nothing is stated here it does not mean you will have to be always available. Also you as the sitter will always have the possibility to decline taking a pet for what ever reason. There are however some instances when sitters know that they cannot take guests in particular months of the year or even say weekdays because of work. By noting this on the form the members will not need to contact you unnecessarily. You can also inform PetPlaces at any time of change to this or any other entry.
- Other conditions:
Any other special comments can be entered here. For instance you might want to reserve confirmation of the booking until you have met the "guest". Or perhaps you are prepared to walk the dog if it is staying longer. The checking of vaccination certificate and heartworm control might be another stipulation. Or perhaps you might want "tourists only" or/and "short stays only".

Follow-up reviews

As part of a sitter's listing to be viewed by members is the Members Comment Section. Members are encouraged to make comments good or bad about any sitters they use. This is particularly helpful for fellow members as PetPlaces is naturally unable to vet every sitter listed.

Conversely we request the sitters to advise us of any adverse experience they might have with any members.

As stated before, PetPlaces is only as good as it's sitters so we want you to be happy. On the other side of the coin, if the sitters aren't good there will be no members and therefore no PetPlaces!!

Vaccinations and Health Issues

If you have pets of your own then it is important that they are up-to-date with their own vaccinations and any other relevant medication such as heartworm tablets if applicable. Also ensure they are wormed regularly and are flea free. PetPlaces strongly recommends that you check with your own vet for his/her suggestions as to what is essential in your area both for your own pets and for the visitor.

As for your guest, check with the owner that its vaccinations are current and we suggest asking to see the certificate on arrival. If your vet has suggested any other requirements then discuss them with the owner when you are contacted (see form "*Suggested Questions to ask the Pet's Owner*") or include it in the "Other Conditions" section of the Registration Form.

Suggested questions for sitters to pet owners

Sometimes it is easy to forget to ask some relevant questions when on the phone to a potential guest's owner. Therefore we have put together a few suggestions on a form with room for you to write the answers if you wish. (See form "Suggested Questions to ask the Pet's Owner".)

Example of Agreement / Indemnity between Sitter and Member

Several people have expressed their concern over litigation / liability issues if they were to become sitters for PetPlaces and in today's society that is a valid point. Following on from there perhaps both sitters and members should express in writing not only their own undertakings but also those expected of the other party, even though we tend to think of these as a given.

To that end, I have together with my solicitor, drafted an agreement for MY OWN PERSONAL USE as a sitter and member.

In conjunction with the following disclaimer, PetPlaces can upon request provide this example draft Agreement for your assistance. This is not an official PetPlaces document / form as PetPlaces is not involved in any agreement reached between a sitter and a member. **No responsibility can be accepted if information is incorrect or inaccurate. PetPlaces does not purport to be a legal entity or capable of giving legal advice and strongly encourages the sitter to make whatever investigation he/she feels necessary and to obtain legal advice before using the Agreement.**

As a suggestion, you may wish to consult the "Legal Aid Services" of your area, which I believe are free. This particular agreement is drawn-up indemnifying both the sitter and member equally. Please note that it is your decision if you use this or any other form of Agreement / Disclaimer between you as a sitter and a member.

Just advise PetPlaces Administration if you wish to receive a copy of the draft agreement.

PetPlaces Sitters Agreement

This form is really self-explanatory. Its main purpose is to record your acknowledgement and understanding of our disclaimer of liability, the collection and use of your personal information, and your agreement to these.

If you have received these forms by mail, there is a second copy of the agreement enclosed for your own files.

Next Step?

Hopefully you will decide to join our PetPlaces family and become a registered Pet Sitter.

All you need to do is:

- 1 complete the Sitters Registration Form
- 2 sign and date the Agreement (on the reverse side)

and

- 3 return these (with a photo if you have one, although this is not essential) to us at

PetPlaces
PO Box U19
Upper Burnie Tas 7320

We will confirm their receipt with you.

PetPlaces

The Australian Pet Sitters Directory

www.petplaces.com.au

EXAMPLE ONLY Sitters Registration Form

First Name:	Joe	Surname:	Blow
First Name:	Jean	Surname:	Polly
Address:	No. & Street:	5 Example Street	
	Town:	Sitters Town	
	State:	NSW	Postcode: 2xxx
Telephone No:	(0x) xxxxxxxx	Mobile No:	xxxxxxxxxx
Email Address:	xxxxxxx@xxxxx.com.au	Show in directory: Yes/No:	Yes
Nearby Attractions:	"Such and Such" National Park 10 Km ; Pleasant River Cruises 20Km; Wildlife and Hinterland Tour 5Km		

About You and Your Pets:

Do you have pets?	Yes / no:	Yes
Your pets are:	Type:	Name:
	Terrier cross	Charlie
	Moggy cat	Peewee
Are they allowed inside?	Yes / No:	Yes
Where do they sleep?	Inside/Outside:	Inside
Do you have a fenced garden?	Yes / No:	Yes
Title to attached photo:	Joe and Jean with Charlie in garden	

Your Conditions:

Type of guest:	Dog: All sizes / Small / Medium / Large:	All sizes
	Cat: Yes / no:	Yes
	Other: No / on request:	On request
If allowed inside:	Yes / no:	Yes
Sleeping quarters:	Inside / Outside kennel / Laundry / Other:	Inside
Your availability:	Specify if known when NOT available: (i.e. weekdays or particular months)	Aug & Sept 04
Other conditions and comments:	Booking confirmation only after meeting pet. Daily beach walks. Short term for tourists only.	

For our market research:

How did you learn about PetPlaces:
e.g. family/friend; club name; advert in which publication; web-search; other.

If you are already a PetPlaces member please enter your Member No.