Dear Owner,

Darlinghurst's premier buildings including The Republic, The Dominion and The Residence all have pet friendly policies and we believe the residents are reaping the rewards. Below are some points for your consideration in changing Horizon's By-Law to be Pet-Friendly.

Why permit pets in strata communities?

Two thirds of Australian households own pets and half of all households' own dogs and cats.
Given that pets are a normal part of life for the vast majority of Australians, it's not surprising there is a strong demand for pet-friendly accommodation. Consequently, Australian strata communities are increasingly putting pet-friendly policies in place.

Ten Reasons to Consider Pets in Strata

1. Increased property values – pet-friendly strata properties sell for higher prices
Australian research and financial and property experts indicate that strata premises that permit pets sell for higher amounts. Quite simply, two thirds of Australian own pets, and by excluding pets a strata community is effectively excluding two thirds of buyers. Many leading property experts and real estate agents have commented that pet-friendly properties sell for higher prices. Leading Sydney real estate agent and Chief Executive of McGrath Estate Agents, John McGrath, has predicted that capital gains in pet-friendly buildings will far outstrip strata buildings that ban pets. "I can see a pet-friendly strata policy adding five per cent to a building's value by increasing the potential number of wealthy buyers who may be interested in it."[1]
Research conducted by PRD Nationwide compared resales in a number of high-rise apartment buildings on the Gold Coast. The outcomes indicated that buyers were prepared to pay a premium for apartments where they were permitted to keep pets. This resulted in an increased capital growth of 5–10%. [2]
For more details see: Better financial returns for pet-friendly apartments
2. Increased rental returns – pet-friendly strata investment properties rent for more money
Pet-friendly strata rental properties attract more people and have lower turnover rates and higher profitability. Australian research reveals that many dog and cat owners would be prepared to pay more for a pet-friendly rental; in fact landlords may be able to receive from 7 to 14% more rent. Pet-friendly properties rent faster and the tenants tend to stay longer. [3]
3. Strong communities - pets contribute to vibrant strata communities
Australian research indicates that dogs contribute to a sense of community in strata developments by encouraging residents to interact. New research by Dr Emma Power from the University of Western Sydney reveals that:
- Dogs help their owners to get to know others within an apartment building and local neighbourhood, and can be valuable in creating a strong apartment community.
- Pet owners were keen to ensure their pets fitted in well with others in the community, and regularly helped one another with advice on training and caring for pets.
Other Australian research findings by Dr Lisa Wood from the University of Western Australia demonstrated that pets encourage social interaction and improve perceptions of neighbourhood friendliness. Also, people walking with a dog are more likely to have conversations with other people. Put simply, pets help people to connect. [4]
4. Better health - pet owners are happier and healthier than non-pet owners
Pet owners visit the doctor less often, are less likely to report feeling lonely and exercise more. Pets offer a fantastic antidote to many of the problems associated with modern lifestyles. At a time when people are increasingly sedentary and socially isolated, pets encourage exercise, social interaction and provide much needed companionship. Pets are clearly a significant part of the Australian community, but more than that, they should be seen as an important part of healthy Australian strata communities. [5]
For more details see: The benefits of pet ownership
5. Pets matter - for many people their pets are as important to them as family
Most Australians feel their pet is part of the family and care for them as such. In fact, 91% of pet owners report feeling 'very close' to their pet, reinforcing the fact that pets are integral members of the Australian family unit. People tend to look after their pets as they look after other members of their family; they look after their health and hygiene, exercise and entertainment, they clean up after them and generally care well for them. More than 83% of Australians have had a pet at some time in their lives. Of the people who do not currently own a pet, 53% would like to own one in the future. [6]
6. You won't be overrun with pets - allowing one resident to own a pet doesn't mean allowing them all to
Each application to keep a pet should be judged on their individual merits. Only responsibly owned pets should be permitted. A leading Sydney pet-friendly strata community, Jacksons Landing, reports that one third of the 1350 apartments in the development have pets. Approximately 200 dogs reside there, meaning that, even though every property could own a dog, only approximately 15% of premises actually have dogs. [7]

7. Reduce euthanasia - many pets are surrendered and destroyed because their owners can't find suitable accommodation
Australian animal shelters indicate that up to 30% of animals are surrendered by owners who can't find suitable accommodation. This creates a huge animal welfare issue and unnecessary stress for pet owners that are forced to relinquish much loved pets. [8]

8. Prevent keeping pets in secret – better for you to know about pets so you can manage them
With many strata and rental properties prohibiting keeping a dog it's not surprising to find that many pet owners simply don't reveal their pet owning status on their application. 11% of tenants (mainly cat owners) indicated in the Australian research that their landlords or body corporate were unaware that they kept pets. In the US, a study found that as many as 20% of tenants were keeping pets illegally.
Illegal pet possession is not something renters want to do. However, given that 91% of Australians feel very close to their pet, some people will take the risk. Somewhat ironically there are clearly many pets being kept secretly in strata developments that remain undetected because they do not impact the amenity of other residents. [9]

9. Few problems – pet owners experience very few difficulties managing pets in apartments and smaller spaces
Many people mistakenly believe that you need a large house and garden to keep pets. However, an Australian survey of residents of medium to high-density dwellings revealed that many people keeps dogs and cats successfully and responsibly in high-rise apartments and small dwellings with very little difficulty. They also reported the same high levels of satisfaction with pet ownership as the general population. These results are not surprising, people have been keeping pets in apartments successfully overseas for many years. [10]

10. Resources are available to help you implement a successful pet management policy
Pet Application and Pet Agreement forms have been developed by the Petcare Information and Advisory Service in conjunction with Strata Community Australia to support pet ownership in strata communities. Pet Application Forms provide a simple, standardised system that allows pet owners to present relevant and specific information relating to their pet. The form also allows the owner to provide information on the way the pet is cared for. A more informed and accurate decision can thus be made by the owners corporation or strata manager by assessing pet ownership on a case by case basis.
Pet Agreement Forms enable the owners corporation or strata manager to clearly detail their expectation as to how a pet will be kept and managed once they are approved. Such an agreement sets both a benchmark in pet keeping practices and a confirmed communication channel. The forms are available on-line and can be modified to suit individual situations and agreements.
There is also a wealth of information available to pet owners on ways that they can responsibly care for their pet.

The following are collected media quotes from real estate experts on the financial benefits of pet-friendly apartments...

'The Legal Light' - Manning River Times – 12.9.12 Justin Stack, Managing Director, Stacks/The Law Firm - *"More than half of Australian households have a pet of some sort. An increasing number of people keep pets in apartments, and an increasing number of Australians – now one in ten – live in strata titles. That's why an apartment up for sale might be advertised as 'pet-friendly'. It adds about 10 percent to the value."*

New Claws in the Contract' - Sydney Morning Herald – 8.8.09 Jennine Leonarder-Collins , Prestige Property Agent -*"I will often say to owners of apartments in smaller blocks they are nuts to have a no pets policy. Apartment buildings that ban animals do a disservice to their owners and limit the money they can fetch."*

Billy Bridges, Ballard Real Estate - *"The no-pets policy in Horizon (prestige apartment building in Sydney) can only hurt its values."*

Rise in pet-friendly digs' - Sunday Telegraph 13.5.07 John McGrath, CEO McGrath Real Estate -
"Chief Executive of McGrath Estate Agents, John McGrath, has predicted that capital gains in pet-friendly buildings will far outstrip strata buildings that ban pets. "I can see a pet-friendly strata policy adding five per cent to a building's value by increasing the potential number of wealthy buyers who may be interested in it."

Justin Woodcock, Project Director of Jacksons Landing -*"Encouraging residents to keep pets had been a marketing success. If developers disallow pets they're excluding a significant number of potential buyers. We have advertising campaigns and events devoted to attracting resident s with pets, setting us apart from most other developments in Sydney."*

'Flats with pets offer more bang for their bark' – Weekend Australian – 14.4.2012 Erle Cramer, Cramer Property managing director -*"Apartment buildings that allow pets are doing very nicely, with people keen to move in. Being pet friendly is a big thing. Ten years ago, you would have trouble selling in a building that allowed pets. Now it's the opposite: it's hard to sell an apartment that won't allow pets. I'd be very reluctant to buy any apartment now that wouldn't take pets."*

Prue Holcombe, sales agent Ray White Inner West in Sydney –*"A pet-friendly place has stronger buyer appeal than one that is not. Years ago, any ground-floor flat was really hard to sell for security reasons. Now they are easier because people want them for their pets."*

David Stanger, building manager, Altair luxury apartment block in Sydney's Rushcutters Bay –
"We have buyers and renters who would buy or rent in this building simply because it's pet-friendly. About 20 per cent of our current occupants have pets." The Altair has been pet-friendly since it was built 12 years ago but is the only one of eight developments he manages that allows pets. His company would have no problem managing other pet-friendly places and he says it works very well.

'Dog day after all' – Sunday Telegraph 17.10.04, John McGrath, McGrath Real Estate –
"There is a big demand for pet-friendly apartments... A number of "smart" developers have realised over the past five years that catering to the needs of pet owners is good business. ....It's a growing trend. People want apartments where they can have a dog. We're now seeing better quality developments understanding this need. ....In this day and age allowing pets adds to the market value as a lot of people with good budgets want to have pets in these places."

'Doggy in the Window as Good as a Bird in the Hand' – Sydney Morning Herald 29.11.12, Residential agent Ewan Morton, managing director of Morton & Morton -
"A growing number of apartment buyers want to have their pets with them. I think bodies corporate are going to have to deal with that, and buildings that are able to accommodate pets will do better in terms of sales prices."

'Fetching Sites for Pet Lovers' – Sydney Morning Herald, Domain 10.11.12 David Milton, Managing Director, CBRE Residential Projects –
"The demand for pet-friendly apartments is ''very high". You'd find now 10-15 per cent of your buyers will have a pet. They won't buy if they don't have permission for their pet, or they know they won't get permission. The trend for pet-friendly apartments is being pushed by more owner-occupiers taking up high-density living, rather than just investing in it. They tend to be more disposed towards having a pet."

'Larry in the Doghouse' – Telegraph, 13.10.12 David Ferguson, NSW President, Strata Community Australia –
"Pets in strata buildings are on the increase. Couples are deciding nopt to have children and to have pets instead – it's the new modern Australian lifestyle. Owners' Corporations are going to have to get their heads around this issue."

Jacksons Landing, Pet-friendly Information provided to Strata Paws -
"If developers disallow pets they're excluding a significant number of potential buyers. We feel that being pet-friendly adds to the appeal of Jacksons Landing, and increases the value of the apartments when it comes time for vendors to sell. Whilst we haven't done any definitive research into this, we generally achieve capital gains in excess of the average – partly as a result of our pet friendly policies and features."

More information can be found at http://www.stratacommunity.org.au/strata-living/pets

Thank you

Jo & Leo Cooper

