

MEDIA RELEASE

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Adopt or Foster a Pet This Christmas ***Give the Gift of a Home Amid Rising Pet Surrenders***

With a steady rise in pet surrenders, national animal welfare charity **Companion Animal Network Australia (Australia CAN or CANA)** is urging Australians to adopt or foster this festive season to provide much-needed relief to animal shelters and give animals the gift of a home.

“Animal shelters need help over the holiday period, as pet surrenders continue to rise due to cost-of-living pressures, a shortage of pet-friendly housing, and changing family circumstances. The holidays also bring an increase in animals gifted as pets, sometimes to families unprepared for the responsibility,” says Trish Ennis, CEO of CANA, which comprises [five member agencies](#) across the country.

According to data consolidated from member organisations, total pet surrenders increased by **14 percent** from the fiscal year 2022/23 to 2023/24. Notably, there was a significant **46 percent** rise in cases where pets were surrendered because they were no longer wanted by their owners.

This rise in pet surrenders places an even greater burden on already strained animal shelters during the holiday season, compounded by the temporary return of animals as many foster carers go on holiday.

“By providing temporary care and socialisation for animals in their homes, foster carers give shelters more capacity to assist others,” says Ms Ennis. “Fostering not only provides a much-needed lifeline for animals in shelters but also offers carers a deeply fulfilling experience. It’s a wonderful way to help ensure these animals have the best chance of being adopted.”

It’s important to understand that adopting a pet is a [lifelong commitment](#), but bringing one home during the holidays offers unique benefits, such as more time for pets to settle in and bond with their families during the festive break.



“A carefully considered adoption or foster placement can be one of the most meaningful decisions a family makes this season,” says Ms Ennis.

“Giving an animal a second chance at life is a deeply rewarding experience, and pets can bring joy to family gatherings while easing holiday stress.”

Caroline Esera, Marketing and Communications Manager of CANA member Animal Welfare League Queensland, echoes this sentiment, emphasising the impact adoption can have for animals in need.

“We want to give the animals in our care the best gift they could ever receive this Christmas—a loving new home,” she says. “This is an opportunity for the whole community to help make a difference and save the lives of animals in need. And if you can’t adopt right now, you can always consider fostering or donating.”

With the number of animals in shelters growing—especially during peak kitten season around Christmas—the need for foster carers is greater than ever.

“Every animal placed in a foster home is one less that shelter staff and volunteers need to manage, creating space for other animals to receive care,” adds Ms Ennis.

CANA promotes responsible pet ownership through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives. Its member foster care programs provide food, bedding, litter trays, bowls, toys, unlimited advice and support and all veterinary care, ensuring carers have all the resources and support they need.

“Whether through adoption or fostering, Australians have the chance to truly transform an animal’s life this festive season. Christmas is a time for family, love and giving, and there’s no better way to embody these values than by opening your heart and home to a pet in need,” says Ms. Ennis.

If you are considering adopting or fostering a pet, contact your local animal shelter today.

Links to CANA member foster programs:

- [Animal Welfare League Queensland](#)
- [Lort Smith Animal Hospital](#) (VIC)
- [Sydney Dogs and Cats Home](#)
- [Dogs’ Homes of Tasmania](#)
- [Saving Animals From Euthanasia \(SAFE Inc\)](#) (WA)

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