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## PRESS RELEASE

### FIVE REASONS WHY PETS HELP MENTAL HEALTH SUFFERERS

**November, 2017:** 1 in 4 people across the globe <sup>i</sup>will at some point in their lives suffer from a mental or neurological disorder. Closer to home that figure is said to be around 45% of the total Australian population<sup>ii</sup>.

Whether suffering short or long term; the most common trigger for mental health issues is social; with sufferers often experiencing long periods of isolation, social rejection and stigma.

Those that own a pet can show improvements in the fight against mental health issues.

[PetSafe® Brand Australia](#) this month partnered with Dr Leigh Plummer, a Sydney based Clinical Psychologist to further explore how of pet ownership can help to improve the lifestyle of those suffering mental health issues.

‘Experiencing a mental illness, such as depression and anxiety, can be a daily battle’, comments Dr. Plummer, ‘There is some research showing that owning and caring for a pet can help to support your mental health by improving social, emotional and physical wellbeing’.

PetSafe® Brand Australia and Dr. Plummer have come up with the top five reasons why pet ownership can help to improve the lives of those suffering mental health conditions:

#### 1. **Increase physical activity**

Being a pet owner can lead to more engaging and physical activity.

‘Whether you are being more active with a pet in the home, or getting out and about, having a pet can increase your level of exercise which in term has been shown to improve mood, decrease stress, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and enhance physical fitness’, states Dr. Plummer.

#### 2. **Increase social interaction and remove isolation anxiety**

Pet ownership can help to boost social interactions and lower isolation issues.

‘Having a pet can absolutely increase your social interactions be it through social media or face to face’ says Dr. Plummer, ‘incidental conversations with strangers about your pets can take place on a walk, at the dog park or even on a Facebook Community Pet Group’.

#### 3. **Provide companionship and reduce loneliness in the home**

Pets provide 24/7 companionship which helps to increase mood and reduce loneliness for people that live alone.

‘The unconditional love that a pet can give you is often a relief to those that have difficulty interaction with others or have low self-esteem’, says Dr. Plummer

#### 4. **Boosts mood by providing routine and purpose**

Owning a pet provides a person with daily routines, which in turn can boost mood and help stop feeling sad.

‘It’s not only what our pets do for us, it is also the act of caring for a pet that helps us to feel good’, says Dr. Plummer, ‘giving and caring for others can feel productive and be rewarding. We may also feel useful and needed. Caring for a pet may also temporarily take the focus off ourselves, our worries and negative thoughts’.

#### 5. **Reduces fear and anxiety**



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Pets are great listeners, cuddles and companions. They can provide those who suffer from fears, anxiety or depression comfort and unconditional support and love with no judgement.

While some pets might be better than others for people to own Dr. Plummer concludes that it is completely up to the individual and their needs.

'I don't think that there are any pets 'better' than others to own, it is all up to the individual and what suits your needs. What are you hoping to get out of caring for the pet and how will it fit into {or improve} your current lifestyle situation. I think every animal has its own individual personality, which makes caring for a pet all the more rewarding!'

*Comments provided by Dr. Leigh Plummer, Clinical Psychologist based in Sydney, Australia.*

*\*Additional health advice:*

*While there may be many benefits to caring for a pet, it is important to seek professional advice and support for a mental illness. If you think that you may be experiencing any mental health concerns, talk with your doctor and consider engaging in treatment with a mental health professional.*

-ENDS-

For more information about PetSafe® Brand products visit: [www.petsafe.com/AU](http://www.petsafe.com/AU) or contact Amanda Kuhn, Missy Mischief PR ([amanda@missymischief.com.au](mailto:amanda@missymischief.com.au) / 0410 570 993)

To access PetSafe® Brand Full Media kit go to:

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#### **About PetSafe® Brand**

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<sup>i</sup> Source: 2001 World Health Report: World Health Organization: [http://www.who.int/whr/2001/media\\_centre/press\\_release/en/](http://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/)

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; Mental Health services in Australia: <http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/home/>