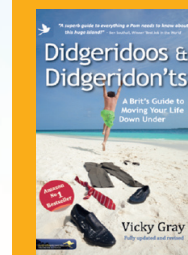


Pets in paradise

Taking your pet Down Under? The secret to a smooth stress-free move for your pet is to plan ahead, writes expat **Vicky Gray**...



GIVEAWAY

We have copies of Vicky Gray's book *Didgeridoos & Didgeridon'ts*, now in its second edition, available from Amazon to give away. For your chance to win one of FIVE copies, email us at competitions@australiamagazine.co.uk with your name and address and 'Didgeridoos' in the subject line by 22 February 2013.

Taking animals overseas is not a decision to make lightly. I was all for leaving my two cats in a nice loving home in England, maybe with a lonely elderly lady in a cosy little bungalow full of unusual nooks and crannies, homemade knitted blankets draped around precariously and a two-bar electric heater permanently on through all seasons.

But when it came down to it, I couldn't leave my moggies behind. They may have been old and ragged – in particular my male cat who resembled a threadbare cushion, had half an ear missing, a cataract and a surplus undercarriage – but they were my responsibility

and for that reason, I decided to take them with me to live out their twilight years in a place in the sun.

Your first impression may be that it is rather a performance to take your animals overseas, especially when you have so many other matters to attend to, but help is at hand. The professional companies that organise your beloved pets can take over the burden of quarantine permits, documentation etc, so don't be too disheartened.

As Australia is free of many animal-related diseases found around the world, AQIS (Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) stick to strict guidelines. So when you are looking to ship over your furry

friends, check that the shipping company can organise:

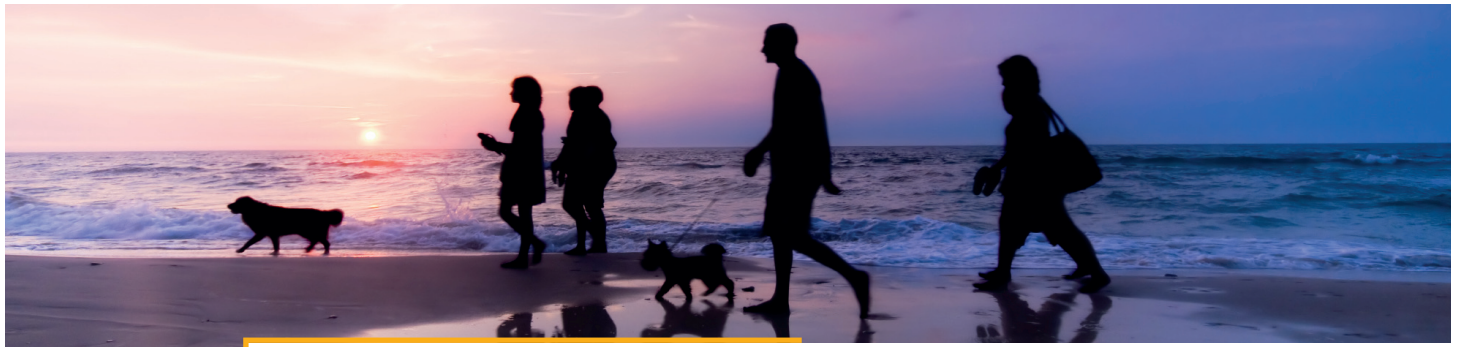
- Flights, documentation and veterinary requirements.
- Boarding and grooming.
- A collection service to wherever you live.
- Delivery to the airport and their final spray, worm and health certificate.

COMFORT FIRST

Another important factor is to ensure the comfort of your pet.

Ask the shipping company if the air kennels they use for transit are approved by the IATA (International Air Transport Association). This ensures that

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TOP TIPS FOR TAKING PETS

1. Although the thought may seem overwhelming (with extra paperwork etc), using a pet shipping company takes over all the stress, so pick one wisely and then just leave all the details to them.
2. Not all rental properties take animals – so be prepared to lower your standards in property if you are considering renting in Oz when you first arrive!
3. In some areas, local councils have a 'cat curfew' So just be aware that they must sleep in the house at night, no more nights on the tiles!
4. Having regular tick and flea treatments is a must, as the ticks in Oz are brutal and can potentially kill.
5. There are many mobile dog grooming services available, so your pooch can be shampooed and set, trimmed and tidied to enjoy their new climate!



they meet a certain construction criteria and will put your mind at rest about the animal's travelling safety and comfort. They will have adequate ventilation for the animal and will be 'nose and paw proof', which conjured up many distressing images.

VACCINATIONS

All animals entering Australia must have an import permit prior to shipment and be microchipped.

Your shipping company will have a list of approved veterinary surgeons in your local area, so you can hold their paw whilst they receive this little requirement.

Immunisations do change periodically, but generally the rule is that dogs must be fully vaccinated against distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza and kennel cough.

Cats get a better deal and only have to have vaccinations against feline enteritis, feline rhinotracheitis and feline calicivirus. Your pet shipping company can provide with updated information about vaccinations.

Both dogs and cats must be vaccinated at least 14 days before the flight (and not more than 11 months before) and they must be sprayed and wormed within a specified time of travelling.

Vaccination and blood test certificates must accompany the animals during shipment. Still want to bring them along?

NEWS IN BRIEF

- The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) announced recently that the quarantine rules are set to change, with a reduction from 30 days to 10 days quarantine on arrival in Australia. There has been no firm date announced as yet but the changes are likely to come into effect midway through this year. Please note that this is a potential minimum quarantine stay, so you will still need to get the rabies vaccines done at least six months before you go.
- Since 1 January 2012, flying pets to Australia became harder with a six

month wait for pre-travel rabies vaccinations and rabies blood samples. The Australians are happy with this even though the UK is currently still rabies free.

- In 2015, the Australian Quarantine Service is considering building a single quarantine station in Victoria so all dogs and cats will go there and may then have to travel on domestic flights to their destination in Australia.
- Qantas Airlines are operating a combined service with Emirates Airlines, which means that pets will fly to Australia via the main hub, which is Dubai.

PETS ON ARRIVAL

Once their Aussie adventure has begun, pets are given a thorough veterinary check and will then be transported to their new halls of residence at the quarantine station.

Although AQIS do not allow you to visit your precious pets on the day of their arrival, you can visit and interact with them during their stay. Visiting hours vary, so check with your station.

All animals must complete a 30-day quarantine stay and facilities are located in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Arrangements can be made by your shipping company to transport them to the other states, once their 30-day sentence is complete. They do not get out early for good behaviour!

Cost is another factor to consider when you are thinking of

transporting your treasured pets... My two cats both hailed from the wrong side of the alley, and never cost me a penny – so it was a bit of a wrench to fork out A\$1,000 per cat to bring them over – but I could never have left them behind, even if I had managed to find a sweet (slightly blind) elderly lady without high cat standards! 🇦🇺



USEFUL CONTACTS

Par Air: www.parair.co.uk
 Ladyhaye: www.petravelagent.com
 Jets4Pets: www.jets4pets.com
 PetAir UK: www.petairuk.com
 JCS: www.jcslivestock.com
 Airpets: www.airpets.com