



Meet Gerringong Pet Accommodation

Myah Garza

Tucked away among the trees in Gerringong is a place where dogs get their own version of a holiday. Though located next to the exit onto Princes Highway, Gerringong Pet Accommodation offers plenty of open space to run, greenery to explore and, importantly, people who genuinely enjoy having animals around.

What began in 2006 as a young family's attempt at the rural dream has grown into a much-loved home away from home for four-legged visitors.

Set on two acres at the entrance to Gerringong, Georgiana "Georgi" Bamfield's pet accommodation is a world away from the typical image of a boarding kennel.

There are sprawling gardens, mature trees, open space and plenty of room for dogs to explore, play and rest.

The property has been

home to Georgi and her family for around 20 years, but its history goes back much further.

It was established as a nursery around 50 years ago, explaining the abundance of established trees that now give the property its park-like setting. One of the buildings has an even older connection to Gerringong, having originally been the town's Surf Life Saving Club shed before being relocated to the property more than 50 years ago.

For Georgi, animals have always been part of life here.

"We used to have a horse, a Shetland pony, ducks and chickens," she said,

"We would look after people's animals," she said.

Before turning her attention to pet care, Georgi was a high school teacher, specialising in food technology, agriculture and practical-based subjects at schools including Oak Flats High, Shoalhaven High and

Bomaderry High.

The family's passion for animals eventually evolved into a small business, with the pet hotel established in 2016.

It began with dogs and has since grown to cater for both dogs and cats, offering boarding, daycare, grooming and a pet taxi service.

"Some people need a pet taxi for medical reasons, because they don't have enough cars, or simply because of logistics. They find it easier to have their dog picked up and dropped off. Some people also find it emotionally easier — they can put their dog into the car at home, and then we bring them here, rather than having to get to the gate and say goodbye."

There is even a wedding chaperone service in the works for couples who want their pets to be part of their big day.

What makes the business particularly personal is the familiarity that comes with

being a long-standing local operation.

"We've even reached the point, because we've been operating for about 10 years now, that a lot of people's dogs have passed on," Georgi said.

"We've done a whole life cycle of dogs."

Some customers first arrived as young dogs and have continued coming back as they have aged, with their needs changing along the way.

Puppies require plenty of attention and energy, while older dogs may need medication, eye treatments or even diabetic injections.

The team has grown alongside those needs. What began with Georgi and her son has expanded to around eight staff, with animal studies and veterinary nursing qualifications among the team.

"We try to have everyone with qualifications and experience," Georgi said.

There is also a volunteer

program, giving people the opportunity to spend time with the animals while helping with tasks such as walking dogs and cleaning.

And the dogs themselves have their own personalities and social circles.

Georgi laughs about "Silly Sausage Day", when the property can be home to six to 10 dachshunds at once.

"They're really moody... really funny," she said.

Dogs are grouped according to their size and temperament, with larger and smaller dogs separated when necessary.

For regular customers, the result is somewhere familiar, rather than simply somewhere to leave a pet.

With so many returning customers, Georgi also makes an effort to leave room for the dogs she knows well.

"Heaps of regulars," she said, describing the growing number of families who return each time they need somewhere for their pets to

stay.

That loyalty means the business isn't simply about filling beds. Georgi knows the dogs, their personalities and their individual needs, and tries to make sure there is space for her regulars when they need it.

Georgi says more local people are now using boarding services, with pet accommodation becoming an increasingly accepted part of pet ownership.

And while the business continues to expand its services, the setting remains at its heart: a leafy two-acre property where animals have space to be themselves, in good care.

For the dogs and cats that arrive at Georgi's pet hotel, it is a holiday.

For their owners, it is the reassurance of knowing they are leaving them somewhere that feels a little like home.

Paws before you go: Prep your pet for time apart



By Georgiana Bamfield,
Gerringong Pet
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After years of caring professionally for thousands of pets, I've learned that a little preparation can make a big difference when it comes time to leave your dog in someone else's care.

Whether you're heading away on holiday or facing an unexpected stay in hospital, it's worth thinking about pet care before you actually need it.

1. Deciding who will care for your pet.

This might be a trusted family member or friend, a professional pet sitter in your home, or a sitter or boarding facility where your pet will stay.

Whichever option you choose, look for someone

experienced and reliable. If using a professional pet carer, ask about their experience, insurance, ABN, references, pet first-aid knowledge and what happens if an unexpected situation arises.

2. A meet-and-greet is important.

Let your pet meet their carer in advance and discuss feeding routines, medications, sleeping arrangements, house rules and any quirks your pet may have.

3. Be honest (really).

About the good, the bad and the unusual. Does your dog dislike being touched in certain places? Are they nervous around other dogs? Do they have food aggression or particular sleeping habits? The more your carer knows, the better prepared they are.

4. Have a test run.

If your dog will be staying away from home, consider a

trial visit before a longer stay. Even a day visit can help your dog become familiar with the carer and environment and can reduce anxiety for both of you.

For longer stays, pack your dog's usual food, particularly if they have a sensitive stomach or are fussy. Clearly label food and provide feeding instructions. Medications should be supplied in their original packaging with clear directions.

5. Pack for comfort.

A familiar bed or blanket can also help, while an identification tag on your dog's collar is important in case they ever escape. Make sure vaccinations are up to date and provide your emergency contact details and your veterinarian's details.

6. Keep it calm and positive especially at dropoff.

Dogs are very good at picking up on our emotions, so if you are anxious, your dog may become unsettled too. Give them a reassuring goodbye, then leave confidently.

It is completely normal to wonder how they are doing once you're gone. A good pet carer should be happy to provide an update and, where appropriate, photos.

Cats can be a little different. They generally prefer familiar surroundings and may be better off staying at home with someone visiting them, rather than being moved elsewhere. Unlike dogs, pre-visits and trial stays can sometimes be more unsettling for cats.

The goal isn't simply to find somewhere for your pet to stay. It's to find care where they feel safe, comfortable and settled — allowing you to enjoy your time away knowing they are in good hands.

We offer a dedicated cat-only room, designed for comfort, calm, and individual care.

Gerringong Pet Accommodation

YOUR PETS DESERVE THE BEST

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