



City living goes to the dogs

BY EMMA RUGG

The City of Sydney Council is welcoming new research encouraging more 'pet-friendly' apartments to be built across the country.

The *Living Well Together* report, by Dr Lisa Wood at the University of Western Australia, has been presented to the Australian Local Government Association. It recommends new apartment complexes be fitted with dog doors, closed balconies, soundproofing, tiling and door-to-floor windows, making it easier to keep pets in small dwellings.

"Pets are sometimes the most important companion for people, particularly people living on their own, and they actually save the national health bill an annual \$4 billion," said Lord Mayor Clover Moore. "There is quite a deal of research to show that people who have pets are emotionally, physically and mentally healthier than people

who do not."

The Vivas Lend Lease apartments at Jackson's Landing, Pyrmont Point, hosts one of Australia's biggest pet-friendly communities.

With almost 200 dogs living at the development, residents have even formed the 'Pyrmont Pooch Party', which meets regularly to hold parties for their pets and owners in one of the harbour-front parklands.

Resident Stephenie McEwan had searched long and hard for an appropriate place to live with her 9-year-old Fox Terrier, Lance, after moving to Sydney from New Zealand.

Ms McEwan describes Jackson's Landing as a great meeting place for people with pets.

"When I first arrived here, my biggest point of communication with anybody was through my dog. I met most of my

friends through having my dog and walking my dog in these common areas."

There is no legislation forbidding pets in apartments, although some landlords and bodies corporate ban them.

The RSPCA says there is no problem with keeping either big or small pets in apartments, if owners walk them regularly, make routine toilet trips in the morning and afternoon, and provide stimulating toys while they're out.

"In New York, it's common to see bigger dogs in apartments, because some of the bigger breeds are actually more suited to apartments than the smaller ones," said a spokesperson from the NSW RSPCA. "Small dogs tend to have a lot more energy, where bigger dogs, like greyhounds, are usually happy to sleep and watch TV by their owners' side."