

## Living with pets during the COVID-19 pandemic

An Australian Veterinary Behaviour Interest Group (AVBIG) public notice

March 2020

The COVID 19 pandemic is disrupting our routines and this affects our pets- in some good and some not so good ways.

To minimise their being upset by the disruptions, we suggest the following:

- **Pets daily lives** should be kept as routine as possible.
- **Continue their regular walking routine** where safe to do so while ensuring social distancing is maintained.
- **Dogs can still gain the benefit of physical exercise** and mental stimulation without leaving the house or yard through games such as fetch, chasing a toy or hide and seek.
- **Pets on behaviour medications**, as with any ongoing medication, should continue to be given to them as normal and not be stopped during this time.
- **Everyone needs a break from the people they live with at times** and this includes pets. If you are home with your pets and children, remember to give your pets a break from the kids if the pet wants it. This may just be a chance to lie in another room or a have a rest outside. Make it a family rule that if the pets are on their bed (or other designated place) they are having a rest and must be left alone.
- **If you find working at home difficult with your pet**, consider restricting them from the room where you are working. A puzzle toy or device that rewards them with treats or a chewing item such as a *suitable bone* (as recommended by your veterinarian) may help settle them. While you are working at home, remember to take breaks- your pets are perfect at helping with that!

