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## Good Owner, Good Dog - Socialisation



The number of dogs being put up for re-homing could be significantly reduced if owners paid greater attention to on-going socialisation from an early age, a leading animal behaviourist has claimed.

**“The number one reason** dogs are surrendered to shelters and pounds is owners who have not put in enough effort so that their dog is well socialised. In fact,

the most common age for a dog to be put up for re-homing is around one half to two years of age, which is when they have moved past the cute puppy stage and into the troublesome teen years. Sadly, this is also a common point at which dogs are euthanized because of **behavioural problems,”** says Dr Kersti Seksel, a leading veterinary specialist in Behavioural Medicine.

**“There are many factors** that appear to increase the risk of dogs, especially puppies, being surrendered or euthanised. They include incorrect choice of pet, unrealistic expectations of the pet or a lack of knowledge of the time,

money and effort required to be a responsible pet owner. Proper socialisation reduces the likelihood of behavioural problems and is necessary for all dogs, no matter how sweet-natured they are as puppies.

**“Socialisation is so easy and** is great fun for pets and people. It is really just taking part in activities that introduce a puppy to a variety of experiences in a positive and safe environment so they learn how to be a confident and friendly, well behaved **member of society,”** says Dr Seksel.

Dr Seksel says there are ten priorities for a well-socialised dog.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## New DOGS Victoria website



DOGS Victoria has launched its re-designed website,

which is now live at [www.dogsvictoria.org.au](http://www.dogsvictoria.org.au).

We hope that this site will be more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

Features include a month-by-month calendar so you can quickly see what events are happening in the near future and an updated and easier to access breeders directory.

We also think our new site is much better looking than the old one and it offers clubs the opportunity to make more information available about their breed, activity and training details.

Of course, the Companion Dog Club website will remain available to members at [www.dogsvictoria.org.au/cdc](http://www.dogsvictoria.org.au/cdc).

# Socialisation (continued)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Select your puppy carefully. It is important to know as much as possible about the parents of any puppy you are considering, as well as the conditions in which it has **been raised**. **Don't be afraid to ask** lots of questions or inspect the premises where the puppy was raised. Early socialisation occurs between three and 12 weeks of age so by the time you bring your puppy home, it will have learnt many behaviours from its environment – good or bad.

Be consistent. Your puppy depends on you for everything: food, shelter, care and companionship. Puppies also depend on you to show them how to manage situations so make sure you provide clear and consistent leadership at all times.

Puppy classes. Most vets and many private trainers offer socialisation classes for puppies. Well run classes are a great way to positively introduce your puppy to other pets and people and to establish basic obedience.

Start early. Some dogs have a confident, relaxed temperament from day one; others are timid when introduced to something new. Either way, it is important to start to introduce your puppy to new people and situations early on, in a positive and controlled environment. Talk to your vet about what

activity is possible during the period your puppy is being vaccinated.

Keep control. It is important that you have control of the socialisation environment and can avoid situations that may frighten your puppy.

Variety is good. Introduce your puppy to people of all ages, shapes and sizes right from the start. Always supervise any contact between your puppy and other people, especially children, but make sure he or she is introduced to as wide a range of people as possible in a positive environment. If your pup is nervous around other people it is important not to overwhelm the puppy with too many people too soon.

**Don't force it.** When introducing your puppy or dog to a new experience, allow him or her to



explore the situation in their own time. If your pup is nervous around other dogs, ask a friend who has an older gentle dog if you can introduce your puppy. As your puppy becomes used to this contact you can gradually increase the opportunities for your puppy to meet other dogs.

Practice makes perfect. Use every day events as a way of socialising your puppy. For example, a daily on-leash walk might be an opportunity to go past a skateboard park, which will help your puppy to see and hear unfamiliar activities while you provide positive support.

Do it in dog time. **A puppy's** attention span is short so keep all socialisation and training sessions short and make sure they always end on a positive note so your puppy will be keen to start the next session.

Keep at it. Your dog continues to learn throughout its life so it is important to continue to reinforce their social skills at all times.



*(Continued on page 3)*

# Socialisation (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

**“The good news is that recent research shows that pet owners are becoming more responsible about training and managing their pets in public environments. However, all owners can do more so that their dogs are able to be the best dog they can. This means socialisation at an early age and then more socialisation throughout the dog’s life,” says Dr Seksel.**

For more information on socialising and training your dog, go to [www.petnet.com.au](http://www.petnet.com.au) or [www.dogsvictoria.org.au](http://www.dogsvictoria.org.au).



## Book Review - Dog Bible

*The Original Dog Bible – everything you need to know about dogs*  
 Edited by: Kristin Mehus-Roe

**This highly recommended “Dog Bible” can teach all of us new tricks.**

An essential canine compendium. Renowned writers, breeders and judges offer essential advice from their respective canine fields, compiled in the most inclusive book on dogs available.

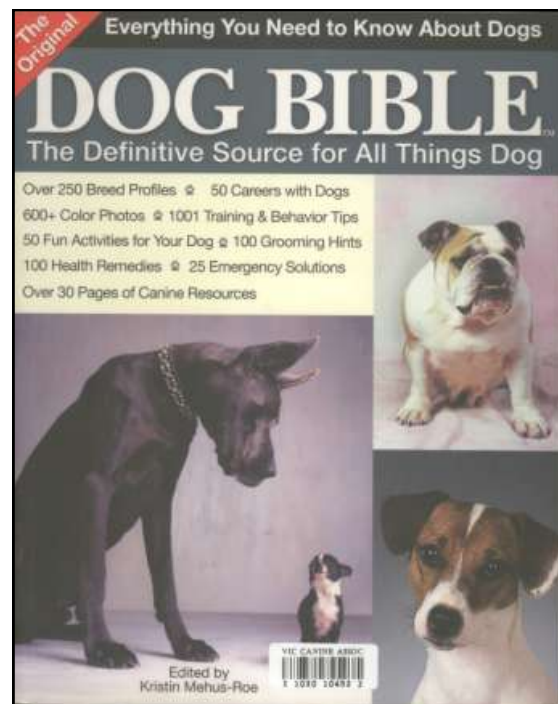
An attractive, well illustrated easy-to-understand volume covering every aspect of responsible dog ownership including, careers with dogs, training dogs, grooming, health remedies and emergency solutions. Fun activities with dogs,

Dogs and The Law, Life with dogs as well as over 600 glossy colour photos to view.

A wealth of information packed into nine overflowing sections.

*Review by Tracey Coyle*

CDC members can borrow books and movies from the DOGS Victoria library. Visit [dogsvictoria.org.au](http://dogsvictoria.org.au) for details.



RSPCA MILLION PAWS WALK - SUNDAY 15 MAY – REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN!  
[www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au)



The 16th Annual RSPCA Million Paws Walk, the big day out for animal lovers, is being held across Victoria on Sunday 15 May, 2011. The Million Paws Walk is a fantastic way to help raise vital funds for the RSPCA and the animals in their care, and you are invited to join the pack and walk with thousands of animal lovers and dogs across the state!

This year the RSPCA needs your help to raise over \$430,000 from the Million Paws Walk. So slip on your walking shoes, involve as many of your two and four legged friends as possible, and have a great day out at Australia's most well-loved canine event!

RSPCA Victoria will host 16 events across Victoria at: Albert Park Lake, Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Geelong, Mansfield, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Portland, Sale, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Warragul and Wyndham. Walks will vary from one to six kilometers and, in addition to the Walk, this exciting event also features food and refreshments, stalls, entertainment and pet advice. It's a great way to do something active with your loved ones, or why not get a team together with your dog club or work colleagues?



### RSPCA Million Paws Walk

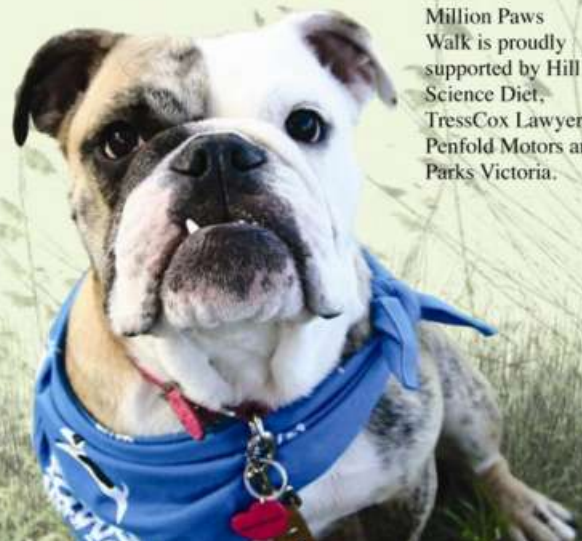
Registrations for the RSPCA Million Paws Walk are now open! This well-loved canine fundraising event will take place on Sunday 15 May at Albert Park Lake and a further 15 great locations across Victoria. Visit [www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au) to register and find out more. Remember, register before 4 May and save!

A sensational range of Million Paws Walk merchandise is also available online for adults, children and dogs. The range includes t-shirts, hoodies, singlets, hats, dog coats and dog bandanas.

The RSPCA is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation. Community support of their events is a vital part of raising funds for their work in animal welfare. Each year RSPCA Victoria cares for over 37,000 animals at a cost of over \$26 million. So please come along to the Million Paws Walk and help raise money for 'all creatures great and small' and give your beloved pooch a real treat by taking it along to the biggest event on the canine calendar!

For information or to register for the RSPCA Million Paws Walk, visit [www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au). Register before 4 May and save on your entry fee!

Million Paws Walk is proudly supported by Hill's Science Diet, TressCox Lawyers, Penfold Motors and Parks Victoria.



For more upcoming doggy events, please see our Doggy Diary on the next page, or visit the online CDC Diary at [www.dogsvictoria.org.au/cdc/diary.htm](http://www.dogsvictoria.org.au/cdc/diary.htm) or the [DOGS Victoria online calendar](#).

Holding your own doggy event? Contact us with details to share it with even more dog owners!

**Bully Walk - all dogs welcome**

The Bull Terrier Club has organised a walk from Elwood Beach (Melway Ref 67 C5) to Brighton. For more information please contact Leigh on [bullterrierclubvictoria@yahoo.com](mailto:bullterrierclubvictoria@yahoo.com) Sunday, 10 April 12 noon

**RSPCA Million Paws Walk**

Various locations around Victoria - visit [www.millionpawswalk.com.au](http://www.millionpawswalk.com.au) to find your nearest location Sunday, 15 May

**Dog Walk - Assistance Dogs Fundraiser**  
Yan Yean Reservoir Park, Recreation Rd, Yan Yean  
(off Arthurs Creek Rd)

Sunday, 19 June  
10:00am -  
11:00am

Gold Coin Donation to Assistance Dogs Australia  
For more info contact Trish on [longweisau@yahoo.com.au](mailto:longweisau@yahoo.com.au)

**Mark your doggy diaries now!**

**DOGS VICTORIA BIG DAY OUT FOR DOGS 2011**  
KCC Park (State Dog Centre), 655 Westernport Highway, Skye  
Free entry, plus Lure Racing, Lure Coursing, Agility and more!

Sun, 11  
December  
10:30am - 4pm

## What is the Companion Dog Club?



The club provides pedigree and non-pedigree dogs and their owners with a club that will promote and appreciate the uniqueness of all types and breeds of dogs. It also recognises that each one of our canine friends is in a class of its own and is a companion in its own right.

As a member of the Companion Dog Club you and your dog will receive a number of benefits that encourage responsible dog ownership and welfare from within your own community.

The Companion Dog Club is an initiative of DOGS Victoria.

DOGS Victoria



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Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership

### DOGS Victoria is proudly sponsored by



[www.animalnetwork.com.au](http://www.animalnetwork.com.au)  
for more information on DNA testing and upcoming events



[www.purina.com.au/proplan](http://www.purina.com.au/proplan) for more information on Pro Plan dog food and other Purina products