

Australian National Kennel Council

Media Release

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Blood Donor Dogs Save Lives

Dogs, like humans, rely on donated blood in many instances such as disease and elective surgery. Thousands of dogs around Australia each year benefit from transfusions, and facilities have only recently been established to meet demand. The **Australian National Kennel Council** asks owners to consider donating their dog's blood to a canine blood bank for the benefit all dogs.

Dogs need blood transfusions just as humans do for cases involving trauma, surgery, disease, and poisoning. Blood was once collected only by individual vets from their own dogs and client's dogs. Today a National Canine Blood Bank operates in Melbourne to help keep up with demand.

“Blood donations save dog's lives everyday. Australia, despite being a nation of animal lovers, has relatively few clinics to collect dog's blood. These clinics are important because the process is more complicated for dogs as there are at least eight major blood groups, compared to humans who have four. Luckily, the blood types are not breed specific and a dog of any breed can donate.”, said **Dr Peter Higgins**, veterinarian and spokesman for the **Australian National Kennel Council**.

In the past and in some instances today vets relied on their own dogs and the goodwill of their clients for dog blood donation.

“Each vet keeping their own supply works well in most cases, but having larger blood banks exclusively for canine blood is a safeguard for those communities who don't have such a ready supply available to them. We need more to be established all over Australia.”, believes **Dr Higgins**.

Just as for human blood donations, dogs go through a thorough screening process before they are able to give blood. Dogs must be weigh more than 26 kg, and be between one and six years old. They must be on preventative medications such as heartworm tablets, and pass an annual physical in order to stay on the donor registry.

Good blood donors are relaxed and calm animals, as the donation takes about half an hour to collect during which time they must lie completely still. In an emergency, such as a supply shortage, it's safe for dogs to give blood monthly.

“We all know how important it is for humans to give blood regularly, as it saves thousands of lives each year. More owners should look into regularly donating their dog's blood to keep up with new surgical procedures that are being increasingly utilised for dogs. You never know when it might even save your own dog's life.”, said **Dr Higgins**.

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