

# ANIMAL HEARTBREAK

## Rental squeeze hits pets

By ANDREW DAWSON

FAMILY pets are the latest victim of the northwest's rental squeeze.

Forty pint-sized guinea pigs have been surrendered to the northwest's Australian Cavy Sanctuary this year, while state-wide the RSPCA's reports 700 dogs and cats had been received in the last 12 months.

RSPCA spokesman Michael Beatty said: "That is up 75 per cent on the same time last year, and last year was up 50 per cent on the year before."

Cavy Sanctuary shelter manager Jessica Proietti said their numbers had doubled since last year.

Ms Proietti said one Albany Creek woman was devastated to lose her guinea pig.

"It was her best friend, but they (landlords) wouldn't budge," Ms Proietti said.

Northwest resident Lauren Roberts was a "mess" handing her guinea pig, Gandalf, to the sanctuary.

"Finding accommodation that allows pets is pretty impossible," Ms Roberts said.

"I understand owners of

townhouses and units not wanting occupants to have larger pets, however, smaller animals such as cats, small dogs and guinea pigs really should be considered."

Another northside resident, Kylie Timmins, claimed only around 25 per cent of landlords accepted pets.

"The method we used was to inquire about every single property that suited us. Of course, most come back and say no, but out of maybe 20 emails, we had positive responses from about a quarter of them. We also had references from past landlords, as well as a letter from us explaining how our animals would be kept."

A poll of six northwest real estate agents revealed nine properties out of 37 accepted pets.

Samford Real Way Property manager Lorinda Vorster said: "Eighty per cent of my clients don't want pets inside the house."

Another agent said: "It is becoming more common these days that landlords did not accept pets in their investment properties." ■ To page 3



■ She cares... Jessica Proietti shelters surrendered guinea pigs at the Cavy Sanctuary, but who's looking after abandoned cats and dogs?



## Caution is urged

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Ms Roberts cautioned pet lovers to double check lease arrangements prior to committing to accommodation, citing the example of friends who accepted a unit in pet friendly accommodation, only to find the owner of the specific unit they had chosen did not allow animals.

"They have been living in one of the units of a pet friendly complex for a few months, however, decided to move to a larger unit within the same complex," Ms Roberts said.

"An application was put in and they were accepted as tenants - so they broke their current lease. When the lease was received, they noticed that it said no pets."

"My friends questioned the managers and were told that while the complex is pet friendly, the owner of that unit requested no pets."



PICTURE: CHRIS MCCORMACK