



Options for your dog while you are away

There are many fantastic dog-friendly holiday destinations in Australia where you can now take your dog. However, there are times when you need to leave your dog behind or the destination doesn't allow dogs. So, what are the best options for you and your dog when you go away?

Dog minder

This may be a friend, a relative or a professional dog minder. The aim here is for your dog to stay at home in their own environment and bring someone into your home who will look after your dog (and generally your home) while you are away. This is often the least stressful option for your dog because they are in their own space, where everything is familiar – the only thing missing is you.

You can leave detailed instructions for your minder and a thank-you gift. Of course, if you use a professional, you will also need to pay them. This is usually a per-day rate and should be agreed in advance.

Another benefit is that your house will not be left unattended while you are away, and your dog will maintain their structured lifestyle with minimal disruptions. This is the preferred option for many dog owners.

Boarding kennel

Another preferred option is the boarding kennel. It pays to investigate and shop around to find a suitable establishment that will provide excellent care for your dog. It is also wise to visit multiple kennels until you find the one that fits. You may need to make a prior appointment to visit.

Modern kennels have day-care options that may allow you to narrow your choice and observe staff-dog interactions. Once you find a good kennel stick with it. With every repeat visit, the kennel becomes more familiar and stays less stressful.

Boarding kennels provide a safe, secure place for your dog while you are away. Your dog will be closely monitored,



exercised and given enrichment opportunities. Dogs with special needs are also catered for in terms of dietary requirements or medical and health care needs.

If your dog requires an extended stay, consider a series of shorter visits to allow your dog to be familiar with the kennel. This will help to reduce stress when your dog is boarding for a more extended period.

Be aware that many kennels will share enclosures with other dogs, especially during holiday periods. If you believe that your dog will not tolerate sharing, please inform the kennel staff.



In-home care

For easy-going dogs, you can use a dog minding service where your dog goes to someone else's or a friend's home.

Remember that some dogs may become stressed in an unfamiliar environment and that another person's home may not be as secure as our home or a boarding kennel. Dogs have been known to escape while they are minded in an unfamiliar house.

If possible, plan ahead, take the dog to visit the different home many times before leaving them there and consider some overnight stays. It is best if your dog is not left alone in the new environment so that they can be monitored for signs of stress or escape behaviours.



Food and water option

The least preferable option, but unfortunately, a widespread practice is that dogs are left at home when their owners are away. Usually a neighbour, friend or relative pops in once a day to give the dog food and water. Occasionally, the dog will be walked or play a ball game for exercise.

The dog is usually given company for 10 minutes to an hour a day – basically, as long as it takes to feed, water and exercise them if they are lucky.

The issue with this method is that the dog is home alone for long periods of time. Should the dog get injured, sick, bitten by a snake or get a paralysis tick, they may not live to see their carer return. This option should only be considered in an emergency where you will be away overnight.

Your obligations

Remember, your dog is your responsibility, both morally and legally. Ensure that you provide your dog with the best possible care, so consider one of the first three options, otherwise, go on a dog-friendly holiday so your dog can be with you.

