ANIMALS AND FIREWORKS DON’T MIX

The RSPCA is reminding all pet owners to keep their pets safe during the upcoming Australia Day celebrations on Sunday.

Animals can have an adverse reaction to loud noises, so it is a good idea to keep your pets in a secure and safe place if you anticipate fireworks displays in your local neighbourhood.

Also try and stay home with your dog or get a trusted friend or relative to stay with them and engage them in normal activities.

Signs to look out for are the subtle signs of mild stress where the dog will lick its lips, yawn, pant or tongue flicking. He may show some or all of these behaviours.

Signs of severe stress are heavy panting, shivering/shaking and escape or ‘flight’ behaviour.

Should your dog show any of these signs it may assist to sit with the dog and calmly massage him. If the dog is mildly stressed he may be up for some training or a game to take his mind off the noise. If your dog will take food, then you can give your do dinner in a frozen Kong or a treat ball which occupy your dog. Try not to show you are stressed as this could make him feel worse.

If you must leave the dog alone make sure there is a room from which they cannot escape.

Dogs often like to hide when they are scared, so providing a den or something they can safely get under may assist. Another good tip is to leave the radio or TV on.

“RSPCA and local councils receive many reports of missing animals whenever fireworks are held,” RSPCA WA CEO David van Ooran said.

“In previous years RSPCA has received disturbing reports of animals injuring themselves by running onto roads and also jumping through glass windows to get away from the perceived threat (fireworks). This also applies to thunderstorms.

“Please ensure your pets are easily identifiable through a collar with your phone number and a micro-chip, so that if they did go missing, they can be easily reunited with you,” Mr van Ooran said.
There are some training programs which can desensitise your dog to the noise of fireworks but these will need to start well in advance of the next fireworks display. If this does not work it may be worth speaking with a vet behaviourist about appropriate medication.

Other pets such as cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other pets should be kept indoors with somewhere dark and secure to hide if they need it.

With many barbeques and parties going on, it is timely to remind pet owners to not feed dogs barbeque treats, especially cooked bones as they can splinter and cause injury.

Onions, garlic and spring onions as well as chocolate are toxic to dogs. Please do not leave onions on your barbeque where they may be accessible to your dog.

Also do not over-feed your dog – keep your dogs and your diet separate and if in doubt consult your vet about your animal’s dietary requirements.

**For more information please contact Tim Mayne, Media and Communications Manager, RSPCA WA (Inc.) Phone: 9209 9313 or 0437 069 853.**