

A howling success

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LANE Cove resident Maureen McLachlan is happy to admit she has always been "dotty about dogs". However, at 69, she feels she doesn't want to have a dog of her own any more. So Maureen looks after dogs belonging to other people through a service called Don't Fret Pet.

Don't Fret Pet is a specialised dog boarding service which provides an alternative to boarding kennels.

Dogs are matched with carers and Maureen has "regulars" who stay with her whenever their owners go on holidays.

Toto, a silky terrier, has been to stay 11 times.

"I call him the little grey man," Maureen said. "He rules the household when he is here. When I sit down he jumps up to sit on my lap and at night he sleeps on a corner of my bed." The canine visitors eat well when they visit.

"A few have canned dog food but most of them like cooked chicken with rice

and vegetables and some dried dog food," Maureen said. "If the owners don't bring their food, I cook it for them."

Jenny Brearly, of Don't Fret Pet, says carers indicate the size and type of dog they would like to mind and whether or not it would be welcome inside. Most carers mind only one dog at a time but some will take more if they are compatible.

There have been some odd requests. A Chihuahua had to be given cups of tea during the day.

Owners complete a questionnaire about their dogs to assist both Don't Fret Pet and the carers. Minders are paid a daily allowance but love of dogs is the prime reason for participating.

For more information about Don't Fret Pet, phone Jenny on 1 300 30 7021.
