



PET CARE: Don't Fret Pet's! Jenny Brearley and Kathleen Mansfield have a real love for animals.

Don't fret about your precious pets

Less stress when holidaying without your pooch

MORE than 63% of Australian households own a pet, spending about \$4.62 billion every year on their pampered pooches, pussies and parrots.

One business cashing in on the booming sector is Yandina-based Don't Fret Pet!, a dog-minding service that places pooches in the homes of caring minders while their owners are away.

Founded in 1993, the company has franchises in New South Wales, South Australia, the Northern Territory, ACT and Queensland, the latest franchise opening on the Sunshine Coast in May.

Business director Jenny Brearley said the venture had averaged 30% growth a year since it started, the result of "a lot of hard work".

"We've had some serious challenges. One of the biggest came when we were told by Yellow Pages that we could no longer advertise under the Dog Boarding Kennels classification, after we'd been doing that for

SECRETS OF OUR SUCCESS

Don't Fret Pet!

about six years," she said.

"At the time, 22% of our new business was coming to us from Yellow Pages, so it was a severe blow. We ended up lobbying other businesses in the industry and managed to convince Yellow Pages to create a new heading."

Ms Brearley's 18-year computer background has also helped the business to grow.

"I've designed a database interface system that caters specifically for our needs. It enables each franchisee to deal with a greater number of clients and carers at a very personal and professional level," she said.

"Having a computing background also means we have the skills on board to maintain and update our software."

After running the operation herself for the first nine years,

Ms Brearley brought an old school friend, Kathleen Mansfield, on board as a business partner in 2002, despite admitting "I'm a bit of a control freak and I thought it would be hard to share the decision making."

Bringing a partner on board happened shortly after the company was relocated to the Coast from Sydney, another move Ms Brearley said had worked out extremely well.

"It was an easy choice really. We wanted a lifestyle change and we certainly found it here."

"From a business perspective, with modern technologies such as the internet, VOIP services and phone conferencing, it has been simple to run our national operations from here."

Don't Fret Pet's Sunshine Coast franchisee, Ralf Munson, said she found out about the business when looking for accommodation for her own two dogs. I was so impressed with Don't Fret Pet! as a service I bought my own slice of the company," she said.

FACT FILE

COMPANY: Don't Fret Pet!

HEAD OFFICE: Yandina

CONTACT: 1300 307021 or go to: www.dontfretpet.com.au

SECRETS TO SUCCESS: "It was a unique idea that addressed a real need. From day one I always surrounded myself with good advisors and tried to educate myself by doing commercial courses and reading as much about business as I could."

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