

Media release
Monday 13 November 2023

RACT and RSPCA join forces to warn against leaving pets in hot cars

With summer fast approaching, RACT and the RSPCA have joined forces to remind the community to never leave pets in hot cars.

RACT General Manager Advocacy and Government Relations, Mel Percival said animals are highly sensitive to heat and can quickly dehydrate and develop heat stress.

"Leaving animals in a car, even briefly, can lead to tragic consequences," Ms Percival said.

In an alarming statistic, in the 2023 financial year, RACT's roadside assistance team responded to nearly 100 pets locked in cars.

"If you find yourself in a situation where your pets are locked in a car, don't hesitate to call RACT's roadside assistance on 13 11 11, even if you are not a RACT member.

"Our roadside assistance team will respond as a priority to any call regarding an animal (or child) in a hot car, free of charge.

RSPCA Chief Executive Officer, Jan Davis echoed the call to action, saying it can take less than six minutes for an animal to die in a hot vehicle.

"Temperatures in a car can rise to dangerous levels and rapidly reach more than double the outside temperature even on mild days," Ms Davis said.

"Even mild heatstroke is an emergency. Treatment of heatstroke is intensive and difficult, and the sooner it's started the better.

"People should never leave their animals unattended in vehicles or even on the back of a ute, even for a short period of time.

"Better still, pet owners should leave their animals at home during the warmer months and ensure they have plenty of water and shade.

"Before leaving your vehicle, always remember to take your pet with you."

People may be surprised to know:

- Some heat stroke signs in pets are excessive panting, vomiting, weakness, bright red tongue, diarrhoea
- Darker coloured cars can reach slightly higher temperatures when parked in the sun
- Interior trim colour has little impact on the speed the temperature inside a car increases
- Tinted windows make little difference to the temperature of the interior of a vehicle
- A large car can heat up just as quickly as a small car
- Having the windows down 5 cm causes only a minor decrease in temperature

For more information on heat stroke in pets, or to report any concerns about the welfare of animals in vehicles, please visit the RSPCA website or for rescue, please call RACT's Roadside Assist on 13 11 11.

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For more information: Laura Verdouw, Timmins Ray Public Relations, 0430 553 318.