

Would you spend \$6000 to save your dog's life?

Katrina Adamski

HOW much would you pay to save your pet, especially if they were entering their twilight years?

North Narrabeen's Brit Sooby recently had no hesitation in spending \$6000 for a pacemaker to save her 13-year-old dog Kya.

"The surgery was worth it within the first week - just to see my dog happy again," she said.

Such love and expense may seem extreme but one thing is certain - Australians love their pets - an estimated 63 per cent of the nation's 6.6

million households own some kind of critter, be it furry, finned or slithery.

The latest figures, for 2005, from the Australian Companion Animal Council show more than \$1.6 billion is spent in NSW and the ACT on petcare products and services.

The total amount spent in Australia is \$4.62 billion. Of this, 59 per cent was spent on dogs, 26 per cent on cats and 15 per cent on other pets.

Kya is only the second dog in Australia to receive a dual pacemaker, at North Shore Veterinary Specialist Centre, after

being diagnosed with a potentially fatal heart condition.

Canine cardiologist Richard Churcher, who performed both operations, described it as gratifying to see Kya bounce back to life.

"For a dog which was quiet and lethargic, and ultimately dying, she has been returned to full health," Dr Churcher said.

Kya, which turned 13 a week after the surgery, was adopted by stuntwoman Brit when she was just six-weeks-old.

"She was bought for the film but they decided not to use her and they were going to take her back to the pet shop," Ms Sooby said.

"Actors Michael Caine and Patrick Dempsey were working on another lot and they had fallen in love with her, like I had.

"So I adopted her and she's travelled with me for 13 years."

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