



On call ... Niccole George and Gareth O'Connor with Megsie, a 14-year-old cattle dog.

Photo: Anthony Johnson

Pet paramedics come to the rescue

By **CAROLINE MARCUS**

SYDNEY has its first pet ambulance to help animals in medical emergencies.

PetMedics was created by Roseville couple Niccole George and Gareth O'Connor, both 24, who saw a need for the service while Ms George worked emergency shifts at North Shore Veterinary Hospital.

The vet nurse said she was disturbed after taking some

"heart-wrenching" phone calls from owners unable to bring their animals to the hospital. With often only two nurses on staff, the hospital could not send someone to collect the animals.

One evening last year, she received a call from an elderly woman whose great Dane had collapsed but the woman was too frail to lift the dog into the car.

"She was in absolute hysterics because he was her best friend and she could not get him to the

hospital," Ms George said. "I came home and talked to my partner, Gareth, about it. He said, 'There should be a pet ambulance for that.'"

While the RSPCA has an ambulance used mainly for welfare cases and some vet clinics occasionally send out a van, the PetMedics 24-hour service is the first of its kind in the city. The couple are now buying a second ambulance to meet increasing demand.