



# AUSTRALIA'S WEIRDEST PETS

**THESE CREATURES CAN SING TO THE BEAT AND HANGTEN!**

**W**elcome to the weird but oh so wonderful world of unusual pets. These far from conventional critters somehow make companionship just that little bit more comical. Let's see what gives these pets, big and small, such personality.

**Pet: Surfing mice**  
**Location: The Gold Coast**

When they named Surfers Paradise, they probably didn't have board-riding rodents in

mind! You see, three mice called Harry, Bunsen and Chopsticks have become big names in this part of the world for their ability to surf the smallest of waves. Their owner, Shane Willmott, not only shaped tiny fibreglass boards for them, but also taught them how to ride the tiny bow waves produced by boats and jetskis in the canals and bays of the Gold Coast. He places them on their boards when the time is right and they do the rest, surfing the swell right to the shore. True

▶▶ From left: Johnny the bull with owner John; Shane with one of his surfer rodents; and Sarah, who trains her sheep to shake hands.

to their adopted sport, these mice live the easygoing surfer lifestyle, relaxing between surf trips in a custom-made poolside surf shack made of paddle-pop sticks.

**Pet: Johnny the Bullock**  
**Location: Mansfield, Vic.**

You've got to wonder what the other cows make of Johnny, Australia's only broken-in bull. But things were never simple for this saddle-wearing steer.

After losing his mum at two days old, Johnny was bottle-raised by property owner John Lovick. He quickly grew into the imposing creature he is today; yet while his size changed, his attitude didn't.

In fact, when it came to joining the other cows on the property, it was clear that Johnny preferred the high life at home to the high country.

Johnny now performs with the High Country Horsemen at agricultural shows in Victoria, with owner John Lovick proudly riding the Hereford among the other horses.

It's hard to know if Johnny sees himself as a horse, Hereford or human. Possibly all three.

**Pet: Four performing sheep**  
**Location: Nagambie, Vic.**

It's fair to say that Nigel, Sammy, Donald and Fred are doing more than their fair share to lift the public perception of sheep from simpletons to something closer to smart. In fact, some dogs might even be shown up by their impressive list of tricks.

The four Border Leicesters belong to Sarah Rawson-Harris, who took up the challenge

of training the seemingly untrainable animals just a few years ago when the quartet were your average paddock sheep.

Their education has been impressive to say the least. The sheep now wow movie audiences in such films as *Charlotte's Web*. The four can follow cues and show off skills such as shaking hands and spanish walking, where they high-step their way across a paddock.

**Pet: Dinky the Singing Dingo.**  
**Location: Stuarts Well, NT.**

Sure he might not always hit the right note, but this dingo hits the mark in terms of popularity.

After being found as an orphaned pup at just six weeks of age, Dinky was raised by Jim Cotterill, owner of the Stuarts Well Roadhouse. Things changed for Dinky when Jim's daughter was playing the piano one day. Unable to contain his talent any longer, Dinky howled along with the tune ... and a legend was born.

Dinky has since honed his talents and now regularly entertains Roadhouse guests visiting the Red Centre with soulful singalongs, and some paw-pounding piano playing.

The legend of Dinky has become so well known, this seven-year-old howlin' hound is now even featured on a question in Trivial Pursuit.

**DOES JOHNNY SEE HIMSELF AS A HORSE OR A HEREFORD?**

## Creature feature

▶▶ Our gorgeous Aussie bulldogs, Nugget (left) and Lulu, are playing in the sand around our rainwater tank. They love sand sandwiches!

Elichia Campagna, Leichhardt, NSW.

▶▶ Elichia will receive a \$100 gift pack from Bayer.



**WIN!**



▶▶ Email your questions to "Ask Dr Chris" at [womansday@acpmagazines.com.au](mailto:womansday@acpmagazines.com.au) You can read more advice about pets on our website

[www.womansday.ninemsn.com.au](http://www.womansday.ninemsn.com.au)