

From Passage 1

1. Why does the author include the phrase “nearly one for every person” (line 6) between dashes? [2]

From the passage/Lift	Pt	Suggested Answer	Marks
some of the 250 million animals — nearly one for every person — who populate American households. (lines 6-7)	A	[FUNCTION] The author wants to emphasise/highlight/underscore	1m
	B	[CONTEXT] the sheer number/large number /scale of pets/great extent in American households/how widespread pet ownership is in America. <i>Note: Intensity must be captured</i>	1m

2. In lines 11-14, what contrast does the author make in his observations about pet ownership? [2]

From the passage/Lift	Pt	Suggested Answer	Marks
there are deep shadows beneath the sunny narrative of pet ownership, (lines 11-12) things like physical abuse, animal hoarding, puppy mills, and dog fighting. But beyond such extremes, Pierce’s work aims to direct our gaze to where more subtle but far more common forms of neglect and cruelty lie. (lines 12-14)	A1	[CONTRAST: Positive perception vs. Existing cruelty] The author contrasts the positive perception that people have <u>of pet ownership</u>	2m or 0m
	B1	with the worrying/concerning mistreatment like pet abuse.	
there are deep shadows beneath the sunny narrative of pet ownership, (lines 11-12) things like physical abuse, animal hoarding, puppy mills, and dog fighting. But beyond such extremes, Pierce’s work aims to direct our gaze to where more subtle but far more common forms of neglect and cruelty lie. (lines 12-14)	A2	[CONTRAST: Visible vs. Hidden] The author contrasts the visible/superficial perception that people have <u>of pet ownership</u>	
	B2	with the underlying/hidden reality of how pets are often abused.	

3. According to the author in lines 26-30, what are **three** expectations of pet owners that are unrealistic? [3]

From the passage / Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
We demand companionship with <u>as little friction as possible</u> (line 26)	A	The first unrealistic expectation is that pet owners insist on affection/company with <u>minimal difficulty/resistance</u> ,	Any 3 for 3m
expecting our pets (especially dogs) to <u>always be docile and agreeable</u> (lines 26-27)	B	expecting pets to be compliant/pliable /cooperative at all times	
adapt <u>quickly to the human world</u> , with its countless rules and norms that <u>mean nothing to them</u> (lines 27-28)	C	and to adjust with speed to a <u>human world/context that is not relevant to them/that does not make sense to them.</u> (<i>Inferred</i>)	
And when they inevitably fail to do so at first, we deem their <u>natural habits misbehaviour in need of correction</u> , or abandonment . (lines 28-30)	D	And when the pets (predictably) miss the mark, pet owners judge their <u>innate behaviour to be wrong/to be in need of punishment/retraining or desertion.</u> (<i>Inferred</i>)	

4. Explain how the situation in paragraph 5 demonstrates that the relationship between pets and their human owners is “uneven”. [2]

From the passage / Lift		Suggested Answer	Marks
Just how uneven the relationship is between pets and their human owners was demonstrated during the pandemic when, lonely and stuck at home, one in five households easily adopted a new pet . (lines 33-35)	A	[KEY IDEA: ease of adoption vs. difficulty of adjusting to owners' absence] The situation demonstrates the unevenness by showing how, (<i>Inferred</i>) to cope with their isolation (during the pandemic), <u>people chose/were able to adopt pets without (any) difficulty.</u>	1m
As new pet owners returned to work, however, their newly lonely pets struggled with the sudden change (lines 35-36)	B	(<i>Inferred</i>) Yet, the pets had no choice but to contend with/found it challenging/were unable to cope with the <u>abrupt adjustment/ unexpected loss of their owners' presence</u> (once they went back to their offices).	1m

5. Suggest one purpose for listing the actions of the “newly lonely pets” (line 36) after the pandemic ended. [1]

From the passage/Lift	Suggested Answer	Marks
their newly lonely pets struggled with the sudden change, showing <u>high rates</u> of chewing, digging, barking, escaping, pacing, hiding, and indoor urination and defecation. (lines 36-38)	[KEY IDEA: Severe difficulty of coping] He wants to emphasise/highlight the <u>great</u> extent to which the suddenly isolated pets struggled with their owners’ unexpected absence. OR [KEY IDEA: Extreme irresponsibility of owners] He wants to demonstrate just how <u>incredibly/extremely</u> irresponsible the pet owners are as they adopted pets and then went off to work to the detriment of their pets’ wellbeing. <i>Note: Intensity must be captured</i>	1m

6. In paragraph 6, how confident is the author that there will be a solution to the dilemma of pet ownership? [1]

From the passage/Lift	Suggested Answer	Marks
I am <u>increasingly inclined</u> to think the answer could be yes — or that <u>at the very least</u> , there should be far fewer pets, and those owners should be prepared to put in the time and effort to provide them with far better lives. <u>However, abolishing pet ownership is a political and cultural nonstarter.</u> What might be more realistic is to radically rethink how we acquire and treat them, and just what we owe them. (lines 41-46)	[KEY IDEA – EXTENT OF CONFIDENCE] He is <u>not very/fully confident</u> of a solution to the problem.	1m

From Passage 2

7. Summarise what the author has to say about the benefits of owning pets.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**. [8]

NOTE:

- **BOLD** = key word(s)/phrase(s) that *ideally* should be paraphrased
- UNDERLINE = key ideas that need to be captured (but need not be paraphrased)

Source/Point		Possible paraphrase
increase in physical activity... This regular physical activity translates to <u>a multitude of health improvements</u> , including a stronger heart, lower blood pressure, and improved cholesterol levels, for both the human and the dog. (lines 2-7)	A	[Focus: Increased physical activity that leads to many health benefits] We engage in <u>more physical exercise/movement</u> , leading to <u>numerous/diverse/many/a variety of health benefits</u> .
Pets also play a <u>significant</u> role in managing stress. (line 7)	B	[Focus: Greatly reduces stress] Pets <u>greatly</u> contribute to dealing/coping with stress. OR <u>greatly alleviating</u> tension/strain.
Owning a pet often necessitates a <u>structured</u> routine, as they require regular feeding, walks, and playtime. This schedule can indirectly influence our own routines, <u>encouraging a healthy lifestyle</u> , especially for individuals who lack a sense of daily purpose. (lines 10-13)	C	[Focus: Pets need orderly routines, encouraging healthy living] Pets need <u>order/planning/routines</u> which <u>promotes/contributes to healthy/active living/well-being</u> for owners, particularly those without daily routines. <i>Note: Cause and effect sequence must be captured</i>
Additionally, pets that require frequent outdoor activities motivate us to spend more time in <u>nature</u> , which has well-documented benefits for overall <u>well-being</u> . (lines 13-15)	D	[Focus: Well-being improves from being in nature] Being <u>outdoors/in nature</u> with our pets contributes to our general <u>well-being/overall health</u> . <i>BOD: welfare</i>
caring for pets can also indirectly encourage <u>healthier eating habits</u> . The routine involved in pet feeding may influence our own eating patterns, and we might find ourselves drawn to making healthier choices not just for our pets but for ourselves as well. (lines 16-19)	E	[Focus: Healthier eating choices] Planning healthy pet diets helps us make <u>more nutritious</u> eating choices/habits. <i>Note: Comparative element must be captured</i> <i>Accept: better food choices</i>
pets foster <u>social connections</u> ... (line 20) <u>friendly interactions</u> with fellow pet owners... (line 21)	F	[Focus: Opportunities for engaging with others] Pets create/encourage opportunities for <u>engaging with others</u> (pet owners) OR Pets allow us to form new <u>friendships/relationships</u>

fostering <u>a sense of community</u> (lines 21-22)	G	[Focus: A sense of belonging] leading to <u>feelings of belonging</u>
and combating <u>feelings of loneliness and isolation</u> (line 22)	H	[Focus: Countering feelings of loneliness] and countering <u>a lack of companionship</u>
pets <u>significantly</u> contributing to mental health support (line 25) OR Therapy animals have been shown to be <u>effective</u> in helping individuals manage <u>crippling</u> anxiety, depression, and addiction. (lines 25-27)	I	[Focus: Significant mental health support] Pets offer <u>much</u> mental health/psychological support. OR Therapy animals are <u>successful</u> in helping people cope with <u>challenging/severe/paralysing</u> mental conditions.
And for individuals facing difficulties like substance abuse or homelessness, pets can provide a powerful source of motivation and a deterrent from risky behaviours. (lines 28-30)	J	[Focus: Very strong deterrence from risky behaviours] Pets can be a compelling/strong impetus OR prevent/stop individuals (facing challenges) from harming themselves.
The responsibility of caring for another living being offers a sense of optimism , even in challenging situations. (lines 30-31)	K	[Focus: A sense of hope] Looking after another living thing offers a feeling of hope/positivity (despite difficult circumstances.
Perhaps the most significant benefit of pet ownership is the love and companionship they offer, which can bring <u>joy</u> and provide a sense of belonging, fostering a more <u>fulfilling and happier life</u> . (lines 32-34)	L	[Focus: The love pets offer us gives us a sense of joy and meaning] (The most important benefit) might be the affection that pets provide that brings us more/greater <u>meaning</u> and <u>pleasure/contentment</u>. (accept either)

Points	1-2	3-4	5	6	7	8	9	10-12
Marks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Sample Summary

We engage in more physical exercise, leading to numerous health benefits.^A Pets greatly contribute to coping with stress.^B Pets need order, which promotes healthy living for their owners.^C Being outdoors with our pets contributes to our general well-being.^D Planning healthy pet diets help us make more nutritious eating choices.^E Pets allow us to form new friendships^F leading to feelings of belonging^G that counter a lack of companionship.^H Pets offer much psychological support.^I Therapy animals are successful in helping people cope with challenging mental conditions.^J Looking after another living thing offers a sense of positivity.^K The affection that pets provide brings us so much pleasure and contentment.^L

106 words, 12 points

From all the passages

8. Passage 1 states that ‘even well-meaning pet owners may have a lot to answer for’ when it comes to the pet’s wellbeing. (lines 14-15)

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to support this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

From Passage 3		Suggested Answer	Marks
		<i>The author in Passage 3 says that...</i>	
(Point) This seems <u>highly irresponsible</u> behaviour as a pet owner. (lines 13-14) OR (Observation) Could there be a <u>car, bicycle, snake, or any other animal nearby</u> ? I have seen pet owners who unleash their dogs to allow them to <u>roam freely</u> in areas where there are lots of <u>fast-moving cars</u> . (lines 11-13)	A	[PARAPHRASE] compromising the safety of their pets seems <u>extremely thoughtless/reckless</u> on the part of their owner. OR some owners seriously compromise <u>the safety of their dogs</u> even though they intend to allow them to <u>wander around</u> without restraint .	1m
		<i>This supports the statement in Passage 1...</i>	
	B	[JUSTIFICATION] as it shows that owners can mean well but still affect the well-being of their pets.	1m

9. Passage 2 states that 'pets foster social connections' and walking one's dog can '[foster] a sense of community'. (lines 20-22)

Identify **one** specific idea from Passage 3 which can be used to undermine this statement. Justify your answer. [2]

From Passage 3		Suggested Answer	Marks
		<i>The author in Passage 3 says that...</i>	
(Point)		[PARAPHRASE + JUSTIFICATION]	
I am always concerned about impacting others' use of the <u>space</u> , so if I do drop his leash, even for a moment, we are always scanning the environment to ensure we are <u>not deterring someone else from using the space</u> . (lines 7-10) OR	A1	by letting their dog go off-leash, they might affect someone else's use of the <u>common/shared space</u> .	1m
	B1	This undermines the statement in Passage 2 as, rather than bringing people together, pet owners are <u>avoiding/feel discomfort using these shared spaces</u> , thus reducing a sense of belonging.	1m
(Observation)		[PARAPHRASE + JUSTIFICATION]	
And what of the off-leash dogs that <u>liberally poop everywhere? Who's going to pick that up?</u> (lines 15-16)	A2	some owners let their dogs <u>dirty the shared environment/public spaces/common areas</u> .	1m
	B2	This undermines the statement in Passage 2 as rather than bringing people together, pets can be a source of conflict with people <u>fighting over the inconsiderate actions of the dog owners</u> .	1m

10. How far do you agree that owning a pet brings more benefits than problems?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society

AQ- Possible areas of evaluation

Passage/ Para	Author argues that/Quote	Possible areas of evaluation
(Torella) Passage 1, Para 2	<u>Lines 13-17</u> “Pierce’s work aims to direct our gaze to where more subtle but far more common forms of neglect and cruelty lie. To Pierce, even well-meaning pet owners may have a lot to answer for: punitive training, extreme confinement, lack of autonomy, verbal abuse, unhealthy diets, lack of grooming, inadequate veterinary care, lack of exercise, boredom, and even abandonment.” *Students can engage with one of the examples. They do not have to engage with all of them.	More likely to AGREE: <u>Possible EV + Examples/Evidence</u> Given how small most apartments in Singapore are, there really is not enough space in many homes for dogs to run around freely unless pet owners take them to the dog runs in public parks regularly. There are not that many, and the one at Bishan Park is often very crowded on weekends. Although the HDB has rules on the type of breeds of dogs allowed in HDB flats, this does not deter many from keeping very large dogs as pets, particularly popular breeds like Golden Retriever and even Husky, which require not only huge space to move about but also a cooler environment, which the tropical climate in Singapore cannot provide. The only option is for pet owners to turn on the air conditioner in the house for the entire day for these dogs, a highly costly and not environmentally friendly option. Furthermore, there is the issue of using dog collars as a form of aversive training, which many consider to be inhumane, and this was even raised at Parliament to request an update from the MND on the use of such collars. While NParks has provided guidelines on the use of these collars, it stops short of banning them, unlike other countries such as Austria, Sweden, Portugal and Switzerland. Even though there seems to be greater awareness among pet owners on the need to ensure greater well-being for their pets, keeping birds as pets remains a controversial issue as caging them is considered an inhumane act. This is often idealised as cultural heritage and seen as a way to foster a sense of community as bird owners and enthusiasts gather to admire the birds, but it is still a practice that restricts the freedom of the birds. With regard to well-meaning pet owners who inadvertently hurt their pets, there is an increasing trend of pet owners who ferry their pets around public parks in pet strollers. While this may be well-intentioned, this does limit the amount of exercise that the pet can obtain from such a walk.

(Torella) Passage 1, Para 3	<u>Lines 18-19</u> “All this is possible because, unlike children, pets are not really family members — they are property without legal rights and few laws to safeguard their rights.”	<u>Examples/Evidence</u> Related links: • https://www.hdb.gov.sg/residential/living-in-an-hdb-flat/keeping-pets • https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/new-size-criteria-let-bigger-dogs-home-in-on-hdb • https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/animal-cruelty-and-welfare-cases-surge-79-in-2023-highest-in-11-years-sPCA • https://traveltriangle.com/blog/bird-singing-club-of-singapore/ • https://www.straitstimes.com/forum/letters-on-the-web/phase-out-practice-of-keeping-caged-birds <u>More likely to DISAGREE:</u> <u>Possible EV + Examples/Evidence</u> Many Singaporeans now see pets as family members, driven by changing social dynamics and modern lifestyles. In smaller, dual-income households, pets offer companionship in a fast-paced, high-stress environment. Affluence in many Singaporean households has also contributed to this shift, with more wealthy individuals investing in premium food, healthcare, and grooming for their pets. Organic pet food is readily found in local supermarkets. More unique services for pets include new pet health therapies including Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Traditional Chinese Medicine for pets, a rise in demand for hospice and palliative care for animals, DNA tests as well as enrichment classes or daycare for pets. All these are services that one would expect for human family members rather than pets. All these demonstrate the willingness of Singaporeans to spend on their pets, and how much they value their wellbeing Furthermore, contrary to the claim that pets are not seen as family members, in Singapore, there is a growing interest in estate planning for one’s pet, and several local law firms offer such will-writing services. Like human family members, pets are included in the will, with provisions made for them in the event of the owner’s passing. Local social media amplifies this trend of greatly valuing one’s pet, with many owners, or “pawrents”, sharing their lives with pets, treating them as part of the family. This emotional connection reflects a broader societal shift where pets are seen not just as property, but as integral members of the household deserving care and affection. An example can be seen in how, following the tragic death of a corgi in 2024 due to a local grooming salon’s negligence, many netizens rallied behind the corgi’s owner in calling for greater
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		accountability by such grooming salons, harsher punishments for those who were negligent or abusive, and for more regulation of the pet grooming industry in Singapore overall. There are several laws against animal cruelty in Singapore, reflecting the government's efforts to foster a compassionate society. However, while many Singaporeans view pet ownership as a personal and emotional responsibility, the government tends to prioritise the broader public good over the well-being of pets or the sentiments of their owners. Its approach is pragmatic, promoting responsible pet ownership through laws and public education but focusing on public health, safety, and cleanliness. Regulations such as limiting the number of pets in public housing and enforcing strict rules on pet-related nuisances seem designed more to maintain social harmony and safety than to directly protect pets' welfare. That being said, the government's recent change in policy for cat ownership in HDB flats seems to have been influenced by many citizens' desires to own cats as pets. Crucially, it also looks at mitigating risks faced by cats kept in HDBs. Now, pet owners will be allowed to own up to two cats, provided they complete a free online pet ownership course, and microchip and register their pets. Owners will also need to take reasonable steps to protect their cats from hazards, such as installing mesh or grilles to prevent cats from roaming or falling from high rise windows. These regulations clearly aim to reduce the likelihood of animal abuse due to ignorance and negligence. Microchipping and registering the animal also reduces the likelihood of abandonment. The revised policy demonstrates the government's recognition of changing societal views around pet ownership in Singapore as well as commitment to the pets' welfare. <u>Examples/Evidence</u> According to the Animals and Birds (Amendment) Act 2014, anyone who is found guilty of cruelty to animals, including the abandonment of any animal, can be imprisoned for up to 18 months, fined up to \$15,000, or both. Related links: • https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/pets-part-family-rising-status-big-read-3569031 • https://www.nparks.gov.sg/avs/animals/animal-welfare/animal-and-pets-welfare/investigation-process • https://www.channelnewsasia.com/today/ground-up/pet-groomers-errant-regulation-certification-4635026
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(Walecki) Passage 2, Para 5	<u>Lines 26-28</u> “Therapy animals have been shown to be effective in helping individuals manage anxiety, depression, and addiction.”	<u>More likely to AGREE:</u> <u>Possible EV</u> Singapore is seeing a surge in mental health issues, particularly among youths. Heavy social media usage and a highly competitive education system contribute to this trend. In recent years, parents are more open to different ways of supporting their children’s well-being, as they become more knowledgeable about mental health issues. As such local parents are turning to animal-assisted therapy to help their children cope with anxiety problems and build up confidence to face challenges. As mental well-being becomes more of a priority for Singaporeans, the demand for therapy animals is expected to increase. At the same time, Singapore’s population is ageing rapidly. By 2030, around one in four citizens will be aged 65 and above. Singapore should be a home where seniors can age meaningfully with confidence and peace of mind. The growing recognition of the importance of mental health has led to broader acceptance of such nascent services. Government agencies like the Agency for Integrated Care link animal-assisted activities with nursing homes to engage seniors regularly and help improve their mobility, making animal therapy more easily accessible to the public. However, while animal therapy has significant benefits, this does not mean that the elderly should be encouraged to own pets purely for this reason, given that they might not be able to adequately care for them. <u>Examples/Evidence</u> • While animal-assisted therapy is relatively new in Singapore, some are turning to it to help them improve their emotional well-being. • In CNA On The Red Dot, therapy dogs from counselling centre Pawsibility helped 12-year-old Ralph Teo, who was having problems preparing for PSLE, tackle his anxiety problems. Studies have shown that interacting with a friendly dog for 15 minutes helps to lower our blood pressure, heart rate, and the stress hormone cortisol and increases oxytocin. According to Pawsibility founder Maureen Huang, animal-assisted therapy is not about simply playing with animals. Dogs can read human emotions in a way few animals can do. Having a friendly therapy dog during the sessions helps clients to have the mindset that they are seeing a good friend, instead of a counsellor they see for their problems. • The Sayang Squad was started in 2019 by a group of pet owners who got to know one another through the obedience training classes their dogs attended.
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		Three of them thought it would be meaningful for their dogs to perform tricks that they learnt in class and bring joy to the elderly. These dogs are suitable to be therapy animals because they like meeting people, obey basic commands, and do not bark much. They have been trained to work with elderly in nursing homes and young people struggling with mental health issues. Animal-related activities are in demand and an area of interest for many seniors, especially those who may have had pets before they came to live at a nursing home.
(Canine Companion Consulting) Passage 3, Paragraph 1	<u>Lines 2-3</u> “Often, we want our dogs to be able to run around and just be a dog. However, this is not easy in our increasingly urban environments.”	<u>More likely to DISAGREE</u> <u>Possible EV</u> As a small country with limited land space, Singapore has to prioritise its land use for the more immediate needs of its citizens and economy, such as housing, healthcare, schools, malls and office spaces. This of course then leads to a dearth of spaces for pet owners to walk their dogs, and many dogs end up largely confined to the small spaces of their owners’ HDBs or condominium units. However, with the government’s emerging push for greater physical, emotional and mental wellbeing for Singaporeans through ensuring access to nature and green spaces, many Singaporeans, and thus their dogs, are able to enjoy the many park and park connector networks that have been developed in recent years. Of course, pet owners will still have to navigate sharing these spaces with many other users such as joggers or cyclists, and some have raised concerns about public parks becoming overcrowded. There has also been a noticeable rise in commercial spaces designed for pets to play, driven by growing demand from pet owners in Singapore. Many pet owners prioritise their pets’ well-being, seeking out places where their pets can socialise and exercise. This trend is fuelled by increasing affluence, with some households opting to invest heavily in their pets’ care, especially as more people choose pets over children. In response, businesses like Café de K9, where owners and pets can relax together, and the Indoor Dog Agility Playground, have emerged to cater to this growing market. <u>Examples/Evidence</u> There are over twenty dog runs in Singapore across the country. The government even recognises this and has highlighted some (leashed and off-leash friendly) parks on the NParks website for dog owners and their dogs to enjoy. Beyond running, there are around ten dog pools in Singapore for pampered dogs to enjoy as well.

(Canine Companion Consulting) Passage 3, Paragraph 2	<u>Lines 5-8</u> “First, is it legal for me to have my dog off-leash in this area? In most places, that answer is no. If I happen to drop my dog's leash to let him run a little in a park or field, I am always concerned about impacting others' use of the space”	<u>Possible EV</u> As the safety and wellbeing of others is paramount, it remains illegal to unleash one's dog when walking dogs in public in Singapore. Many in Singapore's Muslim community are also uncomfortable with the close proximity of dogs, for religious and cultural reasons, and it is also a matter of sensitivity towards others to ensure that one's dog remains leashed does not impede others' use of the public space. Furthermore, there have been notable incidents of dog attacks in Singapore in recent years, where larger and more ferocious dogs have attacked smaller breeds or humans. These resulted in investigations by Singapore's Animal and Veterinary Service, as well as significant media coverage in our local papers and on social media, making local pet owners more conscious of the need to keep their dogs under control.
(Canine Companion Consulting) Passage 3 Paragraph 4	<u>Lines 15-16</u> “And what of the off-leash dogs that liberally poop everywhere? Who's going to pick <i>that</i> up?”	<u>Examples/Evidence</u> Related links: https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/dog-owner-fined-walking-without-leash-4260676 https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/owner-of-big-dog-that-mauled-smaller-dog-fined <u>Possible EV</u> Singapore's issues with dog poop in public spaces remain relatively low. This compliance is most likely a result of a combination of these factors: the threat of being fined by patrolling NEA officers, public education in the form of posters around parks and green spaces reminding pet owners to clean up after their pets, and fears of being judged or exposed online by other members of the public. However, while these measures help reduce the issue, there are still occasional complaints about irresponsible dog owners, especially in parks and public housing estates. In Singapore's densely populated environment, maintaining cleanliness is a priority. Coupled with its reputation for being a clean and well-maintained city, the government remains vigilant in addressing this issue to ensure public spaces remain sanitary and pleasant for all. <u>Examples/Evidence</u> Under the Environmental Public Health Act, it is an offence to leave behind dogs' poo, and owners who do not clean up after their pets in public areas could be fined up to \$1000.