

Crematorium gives animal lovers send-off for best friends

GOODBYE: Genevieve Bradford with Bella and the ashes of Bella's sister, Cody; and (below) Pet Angel Nicole Watt with Peanut the dachshund. Pictures: Adam Head, Nigel Hallett



“Cody was a huge part of our family and it was a really lovely way to send her off

GENEVIEVE BRADFORD



Dog-gone genius idea

GREG STOLZ
GOLD COAST BUREAU

A \$1 MILLION pet crematorium is being built in Brisbane amid surging demand from heartbroken animal lovers wanting to farewell their precious pets, human-style.

Gold Coast company Pet Angel Funerals is establishing the River City's first pet crematorium using a state-of-the-art crematory imported from the US.

The Virginia facility, which was recently approved by Brisbane City Council, will be able to cremate up to 100 pets a day.

A builder by trade, Pet Angel founder Tom Jorgensen

started the family company in 2015 after seeing a distressed woman carrying her dead dog out of a vet's surgery in a plastic bag.

"I immediately knew there must be a better, more compassionate way to support people when they lost their pets," said Mr Jorgensen, the son of a vet.

His company now cremates about 600 pets a month at its Gold Coast crematorium, from dogs and cats through to piglets, koi fish, rats, snakes and even alpacas.

Services include full funerals, complete with celebrants in an on-site chapel, and body viewings. Owners can have their pet's ashes

put in a scatter-box, urn, locket or even inside a "memory bear".

Many people were also getting prints of their pet's paws to keep as mementos or turn into tattoos, Mr Jorgensen said.

"I've been to plenty of human funerals but I've never seen people as distraught than when they lose a pet," he said.

"They really are like family members and owners want their departed pets treated with the same care and dignity that you'd give to a human loved one."

While backyard burials had been the traditional way to send off furry and feathered friends into the after-

life, Mr Jorgensen said smaller yards and transient lifestyles meant more pet owners were turning to cremations.

Gold Coast couple Genevieve and Scott Bradford used Pet Angel to cremate their beloved Jack Russell cross, Cody, when she passed away about two years ago.

Ms Bradford said the company arranged for Cody's sister, Bella, to sit with her sibling's body and grieve before the cremation and provided mementos including a lock of Cody's fur, a plaque and

photograph of the dog. "Cody was a huge part of our family and it was a really lovely way to send her off," she said.

