

Yappy in the service

HAPPY franchisees are a sign of a good franchise operation. DoggyWash, national franchisor Peter Krajewski says.

Though the franchisees are not quite wagging their tails, Krajewski says the fact that some are signing up for multiple franchises and recommending the franchise to their friends and family speaks volumes.

"People should take into account the satisfaction of existing franchisees when choosing a franchise," he says.

Krajewski advises people shopping for a franchise to look for the ones where

people stay a long time and recommend it to others.

"Potential franchisees look for a proven system, which is affordable, safe, secure and easy to operate, allowing them to be their own boss," he says. "They want to enjoy what they do."

Krajewski says he believes DoggyWash, which is Australia's largest van-based mobile dog wash and pet-shop service, is winning the fans.

The franchise has about 50 franchisees across Australia and uses vans rather than trailers.

"Several DoggyWash franchisees have 10 or more years' service," he says.



In the van: DoggyWash is Australia's largest van-based mobile dog wash and pet-shop service.

Support access

THE thought of running your own business is seductive.

You can sack the boss, work your own hours and be in control of your own destiny.

But with many small business start-ups going belly up, there must be another way. That way, for many people, is to buy a franchise.

A franchise network may provide you with the business, marketing, technology and administrative support you need to take that first step, Mortgage Choice's Debbie Ennis says.

Extensive networks of support services offered to Mortgage Choice franchisees mean they did not have to come from a financial background, she says.

Ennis, state manager for Victoria and Tasmania, says franchisees work independently writing loans for clients in an identified marketing area.

But they also have access to an extensive support network.

Ennis says the most common reasons people buy a franchise is to allow them to direct all their working efforts into a business from which they and their families can directly benefit.

Good way to do business

FROM humble beginnings, the franchise sector has developed into an \$80 billion industry, providing jobs for more than 600,000 people.

Nearly 1000 different franchise operations are in Australia at 64,000 workplaces. The sector accounts for as much as 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product in Australia.

And the figure is growing weekly as people see the franchise model as a good way to do business.

But creating a franchise, or buying a franchise, should not be done lightly. Though there are some great fran-

chise operations, it is important to do your homework.

Market leaders such as Gloria Jeans and Bakers Delight continue to show the way.

Franchise Council of Australia chief executive officer Richard Evans says good franchisees offer many advantages, such as shared business knowledge, information, strategies, resources and branding. But he says it is still daunting and challenging for any small-business owner.

Business consultant Rod Young, from DC Strategy, says with high employment in Australia, would-be

franchisees can afford to be fussy. He says in 1998, according to research undertaken at Griffith University, there were 693 franchisors. Today, that figure is well over 900.

Young says there is "substantial competition" for franchise owner/operators among more than 900 franchise systems.

But with many baby boomers looking to get out of their franchise businesses, there could be as many as 20 per cent of existing franchisees interested in selling their businesses.

It is imperative that franchisors have good systems in place, but Young

says individual store performance is also significantly influenced by the calibre of the owner/operator.

"Some of the best and most valuable businesses in franchised networks have been destroyed by incompetent franchisees who have been poorly selected," Young says.

"In addition, many franchisors have been influenced by franchisees wishing to exit the system.

"Conversely, many very good franchise owners are purchasing run-down or struggling franchises and turning them into extremely profitable ventures."