

COMPANION

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Families come
in all shapes
and sizes

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Photo By: Jacqui Boyd



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Since joining Lort Smith, I've been doing a lot of reading about the wonderful Louisa Lort Smith, the founder of this great organisation. What I found fascinating is that one of the driving factors behind Louisa's decision to open a general veterinary hospital was her desire to not only help animals in need, but also the people who love them.

Back in 1936, the only veterinary clinics in Melbourne were all privately owned, and Louisa identified the need for a low-cost clinic where everyone could get help for their beloved pets. She understood the important place that animals hold not only in our families, but in our heart.

86 years later, Louisa Lort Smith's progressive ideas about the common good of animals and the people who care for them, are as powerful as ever: the original Lort Smith vision of a world where everyone can share the love of an animal is definitely alive and well in the 21st century.

You are central to that vision. It is only thanks to you that we can offer affordable veterinary and support programs for people in difficult situations. Thank you so much for your incredible support.

Jennifer Fleming
CEO, Lort Smith



FAREWELL... AND THANK YOU BARBARA



We have been so fortunate to have the remarkable Barbara Pesel as our President since 2016, and a key presence on our Board since 2011. Barbara's insights and sensibility have helped guide our organisation through both good times as well as some very difficult circumstances. The global Covid-19 pandemic, declared early 2020, certainly provided our board with a number of unforeseen challenges. With Barbara at the helm, we have been able to both remain open to continue providing much needed aid and assistance to the animals in our care and also look to the future and ensure plans were not derailed to open the purpose-built Campbellfield site at the end of 2021. Although Barbara is sadly stepping down as President

this year, she will always be an important part of the Lort Smith Family. Barbara adores animals, saying they are an important part of her life. In her words **"Their voices are often not heard. Lort Smith is a haven for all animals and the people that care for them and must be preserved. I want to be a voice for them and a part of Lort Smith's future."**

We are pleased to announce that Dr Angus Anderson will be taking on the role of Chair in January 2023. Angus joined the Board in 2020 and has an accomplished track record in strategic management and business planning, with a focus on healthcare and medical technologies.

THE FIGHT TO KEEP KARSTEN, KENAN AND KARA TOGETHER

It's every parent's worst nightmare. Very soon after losing his job, Karsten received a notice to vacate from his home of 11 years — the only house his 14-year-old son Kenan could remember.

Suddenly, the father and son were staring down the barrel of homelessness. And to make matters worse, they knew their gorgeous greyhound Kara wouldn't be able to come with them as they moved into emergency housing,

It hit Kenan pretty hard when we made the decision that we'd probably have to give Kara away, Karsten says. **And personally, I knew I'd be lost without her. She helps me a lot with my anxiety and getting through each day.**

Thankfully, Karsten's case worker got in contact with Lort Smith to see if we could help. We often work with the Department of Human Services on special cases where we provide emergency boarding for pets of people experiencing homelessness or are moving into emergency accommodation to escape family violence.

"It's an area of our work that I feel very passionate about," says one of our Senior Welfare Officers, Lisa. "It is a very good feeling to know that we can help to ease the burden on someone who is already going through so much. Forcing people who are experiencing homelessness to give up their pet can often cause them to spiral further."

It's all about making a connection with people, treating them with dignity and letting them know that their pet is in safe hands while they get back on their feet.

By a happy coincidence, Karsten was able to secure some casual work across the road from Lort Smith's Campbellfield Clinic. Every day at lunchtime, Karsten would pop over the road to visit his beloved dog and take her for a walk.

"All the people at Campbellfield are so beautiful," Karsten says. "It was such a relief to know Kara was being so well cared for."

While in our care, Kara was desexed, vaccinated and given injections for her arthritis.

When I'm back at work and on my feet, I'd love to be able to pay off everything they did for her, so that the next person who is in my position can get the same help that we got, says Karsten.

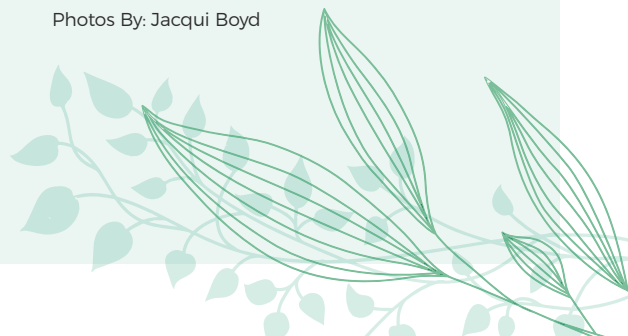
We're happy to report that Karsten was able to find new pet-friendly accommodation, and the family were recently reunited.

"Kenan was rapt to find out we were getting her back," says Karsten. "Despite all the hard times, I'm looking on the bright side — that we're all still together."



Donate now at lortsmith.com to help more families in need stay together.

Photos By: Jacqui Boyd



DR TRISTAN PERFORMS AN OWL FEATHER PLANT

Not many people know that Lort Smith cares for more than just cats and dogs. Yes, they make up the majority of our clients, but our vets also regularly treat birds, rabbits, ferrets, turtles, lizards, snakes and wildlife!

So, when an owl was brought to our emergency unit after being discovered on a construction site, covered in a sticky substance, our Unusual Pets and Wildlife Veterinarian, Dr Tristan Rich immediately set about getting it cleaned up. Sadly, he realised that the owl had lost a lot of feathers during its ordeal and was no longer able to fly.

Owls need to fly in order to hunt and it would take months for the feathers to grow back before releasing it back into the wild. The poor bird was extremely distressed being inside the vet clinic, so Dr Tristan decided to try something a little outside the box.

"We were incredibly lucky in that an owl of the exact species – a Boobook Owl – had been brought to us just a few days prior," he says. "Unfortunately, that owl didn't survive but it had completely undamaged feathers. So, I decided to perform an imping."

An 'imping' is a procedure traditionally performed by falconers that involves transplanting old feathers onto a new bird to help them fly. Dr Tristan says the technique has been around for hundreds, if not thousands, of years and involves making cuts in the quill of both the damaged and replacement feathers and connecting them together using a small rod. The new feather is then glued into place.

It's a very fiddly procedure, says Dr Tristan. The more feathers, the longer it takes, and this particular case took forever because the owl had lost a lot of feathers!

While it's not entirely uncommon for bird clinics to perform an imping, it was certainly an unusual day for Dr Tristan and was only possible thanks to the coincidence of the two owls being brought in just days apart.

It's sad that the first owl didn't make it but I'm grateful that it was able to save another bird's life, Dr Tristan says.

Soon after, the team had the privilege of releasing the owl back into the wild.

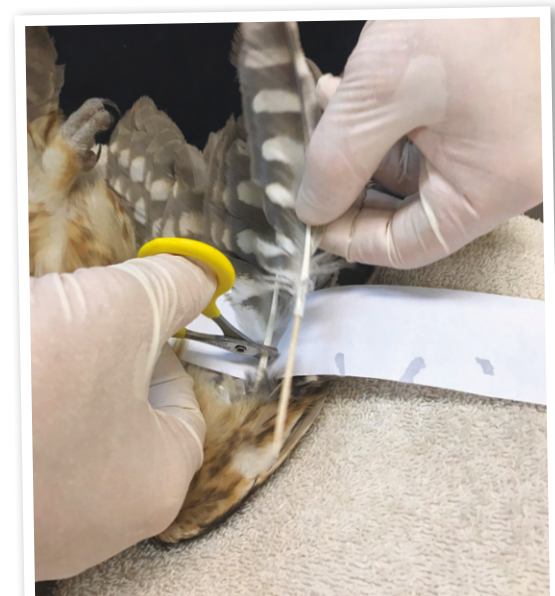
Thanks to the support of our donors, we can support five trained wildlife carers each year.



Before



After





BRUSHING UP ON DENTAL HEALTH

Anyone who has ever experienced a toothache can attest to the severe, throbbing pain that is almost impossible to ignore. So, how important is dental hygiene when it comes to our pets? We spoke to Lort Smith's Professional Interest Practitioner in Dentistry, Dr Tom Rampton, to find out more.

The pain caused by dental disease always ranks highest in human pain scales; yet up until the last 10-15 years, dental disease in pets was not properly understood. he says.

"Dental disease is the most common disease you'll find in dogs and cats. Our pets can be living in pain for years and we would not necessarily know. They're not going to tell you; they're not going to stop eating because they need to eat to survive. They will just put up with it because they've got no choice. It's heartbreaking."

Thankfully, Dr Tom says there is a growing emphasis on dental health in dogs and cats, with more vets realising the significant

impact it can make to an animal's welfare.

"The gold standard would be that we put your pet under anaesthesia so we can properly assess their mouth with an x-ray, as a lot of disease lives beneath the gum line," Dr Tom says. "However, external mouth checks should be a part of every routine vet check, so make sure you ask your vet to check your pet's teeth."

And there are things families can be doing at home as well!

Dental chews are better than nothing, but they can be fattening, so watch out there, Dr Tom says. **The best thing you can do at home though, is to brush your pet's teeth.**

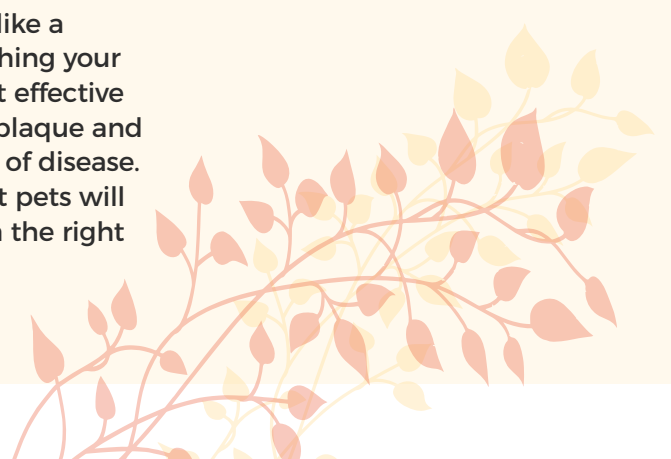
While this may seem like a strange concept, brushing your pet's teeth is the most effective means of controlling plaque and reducing the chances of disease. Dr Tom says that most pets will learn to accept it with the right training.

It's just a matter of getting into the habit, he says.

You can slowly work up to it, by touching your dog or cat's teeth with your finger at first and then rewarding them afterwards. Soon, most pets will get used to it and may even look forward to it!

Dentistry can be expensive, but it is so important to the overall health of your pet.

To book your pet in for a dental check go to lortsmith.com or call (03) 9328 3021.



THE LASTING LEGACY OF KEN AND MAGGIE MAY

In Rod Stewart's well-known song Maggie May, he sings, 'Oh Maggie, you stole my heart, I couldn't leave you if I tried.'

But for Ken Payne, leaving his beloved cat Maggie May in the safe hands of Lort Smith was the best way he could ensure she continued to live a long and happy life.

Sadly, Ken was recently diagnosed with a serious lung related illness and his health began rapidly deteriorating. At his medical specialist's insistence, he was forced to choose between surrendering Maggie May or keeping her locked outside the house without companionship.

An impossible option for a loving cat like Maggie May, says Ken.

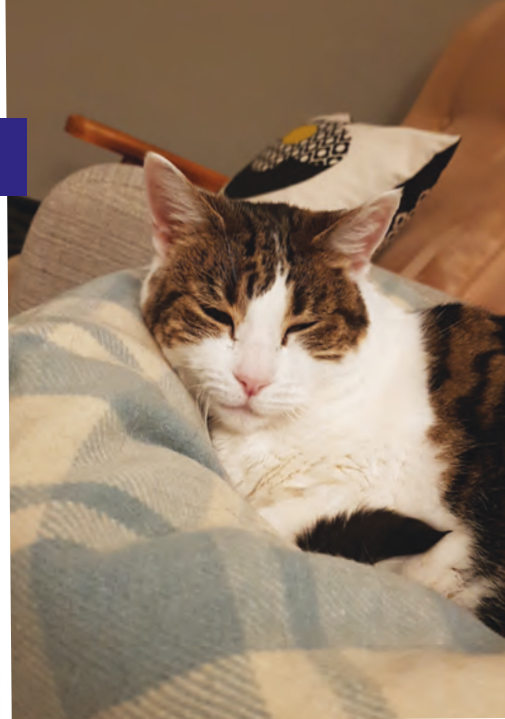
The sweet cat first came into Ken's life when she was only 12 months old. Ken says she was the most unique cat he'd ever

had in his life, and she quickly became his much-loved and valued companion.

Out of options, Ken had Maggie May brought to Lort Smith's Campbellfield Adoption Centre where after some searching, she was placed with a loving new family. Our team managed to put Ken's heart at ease with a pic of her at her new home, snuggled on a warm blanket, happy and content.

I can't tell you how happy you have made me, even though the picture brought me to tears, Ken wrote. **Just knowing she is healthy, safe and happy is all anyone can ask for a beloved pet.**

Ken has been very moved by his experience with Lort Smith and has indicated that he will



honour his support of our work by leaving a bequest in his Will. He wants to ensure that others in need will always be able to find a similar happy outcome for their beloved pet. We want to thank Ken for his generous support and wish him and Maggie May all the very best.

If you're interested in learning more about supporting Lort Smith's work through a gift in your Will, please contact bequests@lortsmith.com or call (03) 9287 6417.



FROM THE LAUNDRY

At Lort Smith we are very fortunate to have 340 dedicated volunteers working across our two facilities. 31 of these volunteers work exclusively in the laundry – a sometimes thankless and often seemingly endless job. But without them the endless piles of laundry would overwhelm our facility and we would not be able to best support the frontline teams.

Collectively, doing over 260 hours each month, our

volunteers in the laundry dedicate time to help care for our animals in a role that isn't public-facing, nor has the reward of playtime with a pet. Yet they always seem to have a great time together, building close relationships and contributing to a cause they care so deeply about.

We thank all of our volunteers, whose commitment makes a huge difference to the successful working day of our teams.

I love volunteering in the laundry because I know I am helping in some way to make the hospital staffs' day a little bit easier and the sick animals will always have soft clean bedding. Kaye

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS, ONE PAT AT A TIME

As animal lovers, we all know the powerful effect a pet can have on us. They can calm us down when we're feeling stressed, they can fill us with joy when we're feeling low and they provide us with a quiet companionship that can help us feel less alone.

It is because of this power Lort Smith is so committed to our Pet Therapy program, which aims to bring connection, support and hope to young people within the youth justice system.

Led by a team of incredibly dedicated volunteers and their Pet Therapy dogs, the program has made a significant impact on young people in youth justice and other settings supporting vulnerable young people across Melbourne.

One volunteer, Jo Riley and her gorgeous staffy Maisy, have been volunteering at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct (PYJP) for three years. Jo says Maisy is a beloved figure amongst the young people at PYJP, thanks to her incredibly friendly and loving disposition.

Barriers are broken down to the point that relationships are formed between the Pet Therapy dogs and the young people, she says.

The love and respect shown is insurmountable and they look forward to every visit.

Hearing Jo share a story about a connection Maisy made with a young man says so much about the small moments that can leave such a lasting, positive connection.

Because he was temporarily segregated from the other residents, the young man's first interaction with Maisy was restricted to speaking to her through his bedroom door.

But Jo says,

Maisy refused to leave him.

This brief but powerful moment, where a dog paid special attention to a boy who wasn't able to connect with humans, left an incredible impact. In a subsequent visit, despite having never met face-to-face, Maisy and the boy ran excitedly to each other as if they were old friends.

Dogs don't judge people. They treat everyone the same, regardless of their circumstances. And as Lort Smith's Pet Therapy manager, Megan Nutbean, says, although the program may seem to sit outside the original Lort Smith intention, it is an initiative that the organisation is honoured to support.

It's about bringing all the benefits of that human-animal bond to people who, for whatever reason, don't have access to that healing power she says.

The Pet Therapy program relies solely on donations from supporters like you. To support this program, donate today at lortsmith.com



INTRODUCING OUR NEW ADOPTION CENTRE MANAGER!

Mandy Doolan will be a familiar face to many of our supporters (and animals!). She's been part of the Lort Smith family for over 10 years and has extensive experience across the organisation. Starting as a volunteer in 2012, Mandy worked in a number of important full time roles at North Melbourne before making the move to our new Campbellfield clinic and Adoption Centre at the end of 2021. After a thorough recruitment process, we're thrilled to announce Mandy as our new Adoption Centre Manager and know that she will continue to do an outstanding job, making sure that the animals in her care are properly loved and sent to the very best new homes.



3 EASY WAYS TO DONATE

1 Mail

Mail your cheque or money order payable to Lort Smith to
24 Villiers St, North Melbourne VIC 3051

2 Phone

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03 9287 6419

3 Online

To donate online at lortsmith.com or scan the QR Code



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