

COMPANION

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we will never give up**

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A message from the CEO: A force for good

For more than 87 years, Lort Smith Animal Hospital has been caring for the pets and people of Melbourne, without pause. But as society has changed, the needs of animals and their owners have changed too, and we have had to adapt so that we can continue to serve.

As I write to you, Lort Smith is undergoing yet another transformation, with our new hospital at North Melbourne poised to open in a matter of months. This will enable us to significantly increase the number of treatments and surgeries we offer, to better keep up with community need.

I've been CEO of Lort Smith Animal Hospital for a year and a half now, and have been personally reflecting on the difference that we make, and what it is that makes this organisation so special.

Our hospital in North Melbourne is one of the biggest and busiest general hospitals for animals in the southern hemisphere. Our adoption centre in Campbellfield operates under the promise that we will never euthanise an animal that is capable of being rehomed, no matter how long it takes.

Our clinics make general vet services such as vaccinations, desexing, dental care and treatments accessible to thousands of people in our community who would often otherwise be unable to give their pets the care they need. And our community outreach teams champion the special relationship between pets and people, and bring joy to hundreds in our community every week at hospitals, aged care facilities, juvenile detention centres, and more.

But above and beyond all those services, I've come to the conclusion that it's our community that makes us special. You and I, and everyone who volunteers for, donates to or works at Lort Smith Animal Hospital, make up a family of dedicated animal-lovers that are an incredible force for good.

It's the Lort Smith community, working together, that enables us to provide happy outcomes for animals who otherwise simply wouldn't get the help they need.

Please know that your support is appreciated, valued, and that it makes an extraordinary difference to animals and people who rely on us for help.



Jennifer Fleming
Chief Executive Officer,
Lort Smith Animal Hospital



FROM THE ARCHIVES

All society girls who can drive a car and handle an elephant

In 1936, in the midst of the Great Depression, a ballroom-dance teacher from Melbourne, Mrs Louisa Lort Smith, opened the doors to what was then known as the Lort Smith Lyle Hospital for sick and injured animals. Her singular goal was to provide excellent veterinary care to the pets and working animals of Melbourne's poor.

"One and all they file into the big square courtyard, and line up in turns for their numbered admission cards," wrote Mima Andrew, vice president of the Animal Welfare League, in the 1930s. "Each carries or leads an animal of some sort. They pay their shillings and drift over to the seats on the grass to await their turn."

Pet owners who were unable to bring their animals to the hospital found help via an ambulance service, driven mostly by young women who had recently finished school. An article in Sydney paper the Sun and Guardian in July 1938 announced, "All the society girls who can drive a car and handle an elephant turn out and do a spot of volunteer driving of the Animal Welfare Ambulance."

Elephants are less common in the Lort Smith waiting room nowadays, but our Animal Hospital has been unwavering in providing compassionate care to animals and the people who love them for almost nine decades.

Throughout the years, while Melbourne has changed, Lort Smith has changed with it to keep pace. And in the post-pandemic boom in pet ownership, we are facing busier clinics and theatres, with more animals than ever before. Every year, we treat more than 20,000 animals who walk, fly, slither and crawl through our doors.

To meet that ever-growing need, and continue our legacy of caring for pets (and their people) in our city, we are significantly expanding our hospital at North Melbourne.

Once complete, there will be room for twice as many surgeries; dedicated separate areas for dogs, cats and small pets to ensure they feel safe and calm; and cleverly-designed fear-free seating in the waiting areas.

The face of our hospital, and the equipment inside, is almost unrecognisable from the "square courtyard" of our earliest days. But our fundamental goals are still the same. A true Melbourne icon, Lort Smith Animal Hospital has never wavered in its mission to improve the health and happiness of animals and the people who care for them.

**A true Melbourne icon,
Lort Smith has never
wavered in its mission.**

DONATE TODAY lortsmith.com

Your kindness, our promise:

we will never give up

On any given day at the Lort Smith Adoption Centre, heart-warming stories are unfolding. They are stories of bravery and resilience, compassion and kindness, patience, humour, sometimes loss, and above all, love.

Every story is unique, just as every animal, staff member and volunteer at the Adoption Centre is unique. But the thread that draws them all together, the theme at every twist and turn, is always the same: we never give up.

Titus: gentle rehabilitation

Everybody pitched in last year, when Titus, a friendly and boisterous pup of 18-months-old, was hit by a train and suffered significant trauma to his head. The surgeons at Lort Smith Animal Hospital performed life-saving emergency surgery on Titus, including dental reconstruction and a wiring of his jaw, as well as tending to other injuries on his body.

He came to the Adoption Centre to recover, and has stayed with the staff and volunteers ever since, receiving all the careful medical care and loving attention he needed in order to heal. Now, after more than three months of gentle rehabilitation, Titus is finally available for adoption and looking for a loving home.

Casper: a tearful reunion

Not every animal that comes to the Adoption Centre stays for a long time. There were tears of joy at the Centre on a hot afternoon late in February this year when Casper, a sweet black-and-white cat, was reunited with his family after many years apart.

Casper slipped out of the house while his family was packing their car to move to rural Victoria seven years ago. Heartbroken, they thought they would never see their beloved pet again. But when a concerned citizen carried a lost little cat into the Adoption Centre just last month, the staff scanned his microchip and couldn't believe their luck when they were able to locate his family. Within days, the little cat was back purring in their arms.



TITUS

CASPER





As long as it takes

The cost of keeping an animal in the Adoption Centre is significant: even a healthy animal costs us \$35 a day to provide care, shelter and food. When animals have additional medical or social needs, like Titus, that cost becomes significantly higher.

And this is why it is so important that we never give up on an animal that is capable of being rehomed, despite the financial cost. We never give up on providing the shelter and medical care our animals need, never give up on giving them the love and social training that helps them feel safe and happy, and never give up on our commitment to find them loving, permanent homes.



A real home

One of the very special elements of the Lort Smith Adoption Centre is that it is what's known as a Foster Shelter. This means that whenever possible, animals are taken out of the shelter environment, and spend time living in the safe and loving homes of an army of volunteer foster carers.

For the animals, life in a foster home is often a place where they can de-stress, feel safe, learn social skills (with both pets and people), and their individual personalities are allowed to shine through.

Amanda Doolan, Lort Smith's Adoption Centre Manager, says the impact that these volunteer foster carers have on the animals is huge. "Foster care gives frightened animals a break from being in the shelter," she says, "they can go out into a home and get the love and care they need in a homely environment."

Your kindness, our promise

The stories coming out of the Adoption Centre never stop. Some animals in our Adoption Centre come and go quickly, while others are with us for many months. But they are all loved, and they all enrich our lives every bit as much as we nurture theirs.

The reason we are able to care for each of them is entirely because of philanthropy. After all, the Lort Smith Adoption Centre is 100-percent funded by donations. Every donation to the Adoption Centre enables us to provide care, time and love to every animal that comes through our doors.

If you would like to foster or adopt an animal in our Adoption Centre call (03) 9287 6426 or email adoptions@lortsmith.com.

Some animals come and go quickly, others are with us for many months.

But they are all given the best chance at a long and happy life.

Pip

can see

clearly

now

Animals come in all shapes and sizes, and so do the people who love them.

Pat could not imagine a time without Pip the budgie in her life. So when Pip started to grow a lump on her eye, Pat was understandably worried. She took Pip to the Lort Smith Animal Hospital at North Melbourne to see Dr Tristan Rich who cares for some of the more exotic creatures who come through our doors. Upon examination, Dr Tristan determined that the lump on Pip's eye needed to be surgically removed.

Pat was experiencing financial hardship, and was concerned that she would not be able to pay for the delicate surgery. But because of the generosity of our supporters, we were able to offer Pat a small grant that would help her cover the costs of Pips treatment.

'Pets in Need' is a donor-funded initiative used to help pet-owners who are experiencing extreme financial difficulties, and who fit the qualification criteria, meet the costs of their pets' medical needs.

Pip made a full recovery and returned home to a very grateful and relieved Pat.

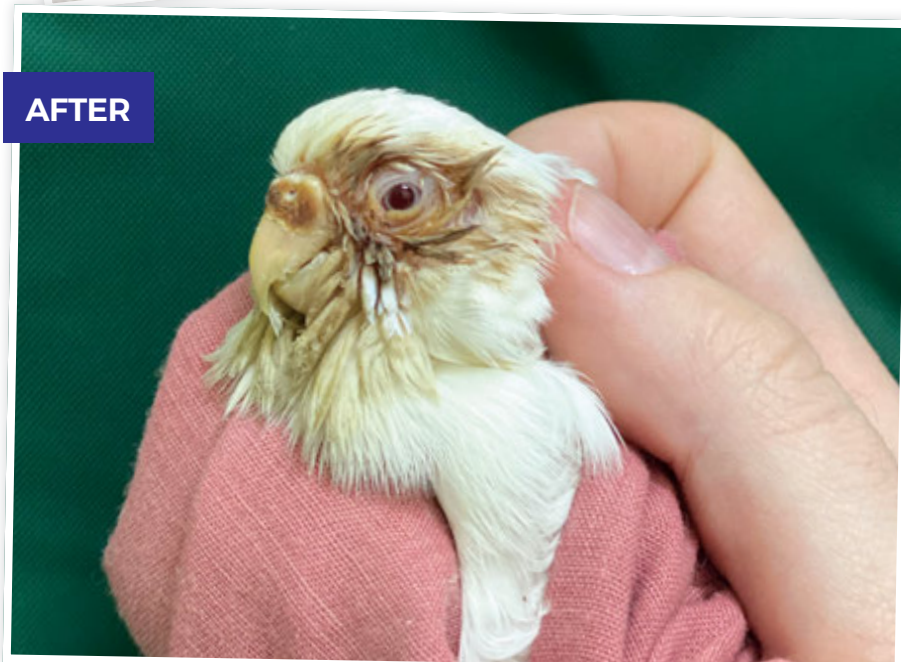
Inspired by the special connection people have with their pets, the unique 'Pets In Need' program is entirely funded by Lort Smith supporters.



BEFORE



AFTER



Reminder: human treats are not pet treats

Did you know that chocolate is toxic for dogs?
As are sultanas and raisins?

With Easter now behind us, it's a good idea to be mindful of where you hid all those chocolate eggs, and double-check just how accessible the last of the raisin-filled hot-cross-buns on the kitchen bench are to your four-legged friends.

What does chocolate do?

Chocolate is toxic to dogs because it contains theobromine and caffeine. These are not harmful to humans because we metabolise them quickly, but dogs process them much more slowly, allowing toxic compounds to build up in their system.

The effects of chocolate toxicity will differ depending on the size of your dog, the type of chocolate they eat, and how much of it they gobble up. Milder symptoms include vomiting and diarrhea, while more extreme responses may include seizures, tremors, irregular heart-rate, heart arrhythmia, and internal bleeding.

What do grapes and sultanas do?

Scientists have not yet discovered why sultanas, currants, raisins and grapes, can be so dangerous for dogs, or why they seem to affect some dogs and not others, but the toxicity is thought to be related to levels of tartaric acid in the grape / sultana skins.

Grapes and sultanas have the potential to cause rapid, sometimes permanent and possibly life-threatening kidney failure, so it's important to keep those hot-cross-buns out of reach at all times.

Help! My dog ate that!

If you see (or suspect) that your dog has eaten either chocolate or grapes or raisins, don't wait for the symptoms to appear. Call or visit your vet immediately, or contact your closest emergency vet clinic. The sooner your dog is treated, the more likely it is that they will recover without long-term damage.



**"I was touched by the
incredible attentiveness
the vets and nurses
showed to every animal
in their care."**

– CATHERINE, ELIOT'S OWNER



Eliot's future is in safe hands

Cats have an extraordinary ability to leap with both grace and accuracy. Thanks to a unique balancing ability known as the “righting reflex,” cats can turn themselves the right way around even as they are falling, making the old saying (mostly) true, that cats always land on their feet.

That's why Catherine was so surprised and concerned when her little blue cat Eliot jumped off the bed one morning, and injured his leg.

She took him to the Lort Smith Animal Hospital at North Melbourne, where an examination revealed that Eliot had unusually weak bones. The vet explained to Catherine that sadly, this was most likely a result of Eliot having been consistently underfed by his breeder when he was a kitten.

During the weeks and months that followed, Eliot and Catherine made multiple visits back to Lort Smith for check-ups, to ensure the little cat was healing and receiving the proper care.

“I spent a lot of time in the Lort Smith waiting room, observing all the different families of every shape, size and species that came through the doors each day,” Catherine told us recently. **“I was touched not only by the expertise of the staff at Lort Smith and the kindness of the volunteers, but also by the incredible attentiveness the vets and nurses showed to every animal in their care. They make sure the animals are healing from their immediate injuries, but also help ensure they are receiving the proper care and safety at home.”**

Eliot's bone condition and his need for ongoing medical treatment also raised another important question in Catherine's mind:

“If anything happened to my husband and I, if we got in a freak car crash or other tragedy, what would happen to Eliot? My family wouldn't necessarily be in a position to take him on.”

This prompted Catherine to explore and ultimately join Lort Smith's Pet Legacy bequest program. Through the program, Catherine and her husband made a bequest in their Wills, which will be used to care for Eliot.

Pet Legacy has given Catherine the reassurance and peace of mind that Eliot's future in good hands, a reassurance that she otherwise simply would not have. And it's something she hopes other people will take up, too.

“I think that many older people avoid getting pets despite the joy and affection they bring, because they worry about what will happen to the pet after they die,” Catherine explained. “Pet Legacy gives those people the confidence to get a pet, which is incredibly important to their mental and physical health — especially if they live alone. It gives them security.”

Talk to our team about how we can help secure your pet's safe future.

Call (03) 9287 6419 or scan the QR code.



Story time

for shelter animals

“We don’t know if Kobe the bunny is used to people,” said Amanda Doolan, Manager of the Adoption Centre at Lort Smith Animal Hospital, Campbellfield. “He has only just arrived at the Centre, and is very frightened and skittish.”

With this warning in mind, and under supervision, nine-year-old Harry quietly settled himself on the floor next to Kobe’s hutch. The bunny cowered in the back, pressing himself as deeply into the far corner as he possibly could. Harry took out a picture book – one about a dog who became a roving reporter and got too busy to play with his family – and started reading the story.

Page by page, Kobe’s natural curiosity won over his fear, and he hopped closer. Harry continued reading. Kobe didn’t judge or criticise when Harry stumbled over a word, or forgot to pause at a comma. By the time the dog in the story had remembered how fun it was to chase tennis balls, Kobe was leaning so far over Harry’s book that he almost landed on the pages.

Later, after 10-year-old Madeleine entered the enclosure and read another story to Kobe, the little bunny sat next to her with his eyes closed while she gently massaged him behind the ears. “I guess that answers what he’s like around people,” said Amanda.

The children were visiting the animal shelter to trial a new initiative in which children read to animals at the Adoption Centre. A week after Harry and Madeleine made their visit, another 18 school-children from Coolaroo South Primary School came to the Adoption Centre and read to shelter cats and pet therapy dogs during the nationwide Australian Reading Hour.

“Reading-to-animals programs are relatively common in the US, and are becoming increasingly popular in Australia,” explained Megan Nutbean, who manages Lort Smith’s pet therapy and community outreach programs.

“Studies have found these programs to be very beneficial for both children and animals.”

For children, reading to animals helps to improve feelings of safety and calm, and provides a non-judgemental audience if the child lacks confidence when reading.

For shelter animals, having someone read to them has been proven to reduce the animal’s stress, improve their socialisation, and ultimately improve the likelihood that they will be adopted and find happy homes.

Lort Smith partnered with Hume Libraries to host the Australian Reading Hour event, and hopes to be able to welcome more children into the Adoption Centre for reading visits in the future.



ABOVE: Nine-year old Harry reads to a very interested Kobe. ABOVE RIGHT: Ginger cat Fanta enjoys story-time with 10-year-old Madeleine.



It took more than a spoonful of sugar: a happy ending for Mary Puppins

The story of Mary Puppins is one that has been circulating the halls of Lort Smith Animal Hospital quite a lot of late. Right from the beginning, this big, goofy dog with the cutest name this side of Cherry Tree Lane was up against the odds. She faced abandonment, deep-seated fear and distrust, a life-threatening illness, and a long wait for adoption.

But what makes all of us at Lort Smith so proud when we think about her story is that you can see the hands of our vets, nurses, volunteers, trainers, shelter staff, and our wonderful supporters on her at every turn, every time she needed help.

And the best part of Mary's story is that it has a happy ending. Mary Puppins, after surviving a sad and trouble-filled first year of her life, has found her way into to a beautiful home with people who will love and care for her.

We used donations to help Mary Puppins at every step in her journey at Lort Smith: donations funded the Adoption Centre that gave Mary shelter, nutrition and care; donations funded the staff who created a behavioural plan for Mary to help her overcome her fears; and donations resourced the volunteers who showered her with patience and love.

When Mary fell ill with a potentially life-threatening intestinal obstruction, donations made it possible for her to receive surgery, nursing care, medications and rehabilitation, despite having no owner to pay for her or advocate on her behalf. And after she recovered, donations paid for Mary to continue living at the Adoption Centre, and then covered the cost of her food and medicine while she stayed with a volunteer foster carer.

Without the generosity of each and every person who makes a donation to Lort Smith, the outcome for Mary Puppins could have been very different indeed.

Earlier this month, we received some wonderful news about Mary. Home from hospital and fully recovered from her surgery, Mary Puppins had finally found her forever-home with a wonderful new family.

She met her new family and her four-legged sibling, Koda, a sweet chocolate Labrador, in the dog park outside the Lort Smith Adoption Centre at Campbellfield.

The two dogs took to one another instantly, racing joyfully around the park before snuggling together in the car on the ride home.

Mary's new owner will be taking her to obedience training, giving her the support and boundaries she needs in order to feel confident and safe.

Thanks to the generosity and kindness of Lort Smith supporters, Mary Puppins is living her best life in her new home with her new best friend.

You can help more animals like Mary Puppins by scanning this QR code.



Pet protectors help plan ahead

There is a great deal of comfort to knowing you are actively making a positive difference.

It's the comfort that lets you see a neglected and frightened dog, and know you can help it find a loving home. To see a badly injured cat, and know you can help it access the medical care it needs. And to see people who are in crisis, and know you can help them care for their beloved pets.

For Lort Smith's dedicated community of 'Pet Protectors', people who have committed to make regular, monthly donations, that comfort is tangible.

By donating regularly, they proactively help sick and vulnerable animals and the people who love them. And because of their foresight, the money is already there when a crisis occurs, and Lort Smith can leap to the rescue.

To make a regular donation to Lort Smith, visit lortsmith.com.



Three easy ways to donate

1 Mail

Mail your cheque or money order (payable to Lort Smith) to:
24 Villiers Street,
North Melbourne VIC 3051

2 Phone

Call our fundraising team on
(03) 9287 6419

3 Online

Visit lortsmith.com
or scan the QR code



Lort Smith Animal Hospital North Melbourne

24 Villiers Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
(03) 9328 3021

Lort Smith Campbellfield

25-35 Berwick Road
Campbellfield VIC 3061

Donations & Fundraising

(03) 9287 6419

Bequests

(03) 9287 6417

Volunteering

(03) 9287 6424

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To-the-minute updates and announcements.



lortsmith.com

Lort Smith acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which Lort Smith stands, and pays our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

ABN 87 004 238 475

