A message from the CEO:
A new chapter of the Lort Smith story

As spring unfolds in our neighborhood, it symbolises a time of transformation and renewal. This seasonal shift has prompted me to reflect on Lort Smith's journey and the changes on our horizon.

Having now completed the first stage of our redevelopment at North Melbourne, the team is settling well into our new environment. The state-of-the-art facilities will empower us to provide the best possible care for many years to come, and we are beyond grateful for the support we have received in our mission to care for animals and the people who love them. Completing the first stage of work marks an important step on our journey and illustrates how we are evolving with the changing needs of the community.

Louisa Lort Smith's mission when starting the hospital was to build a place where all Melburnians could come when their animals needed assessment and options for care. And to make that place where those who had means came together with those in need over a shared love of animals. Your generosity provides our vets and nurses with the tools and facilities to get the best possible outcomes for the thousands of animals who come through our doors each year. It also helps reduce the need for costly surgeries or treatments that force many families to surrender their pets, particularly in tough economic conditions.

Looking back, the unwavering community support over the past 87 years that has led us to become an iconic Melbourne institution. Looking ahead, Lort Smith hopes to still be a vital part of the community for another century supporting the health and wellbeing of animals and their people.

Jennifer Fleming
Chief Executive Officer
Lort Smith Animal Hospital

Driven by compassion

Passionate people coming together for the love of animals has long been the life force of the Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

Dating back to the mid-1950's, the Essendon auxiliary was an active group of women who raised much-needed funds for the animals of Lort Smith for decades.

The group orchestrated many fundraising initiatives including tin-rattling, basket luncheons and afternoon tea parties, which helped to fund everything from dog coats, blankets, night services, a kiosk, and a crematorium. Notably and in 1983, the group raised enough funds to help purchase an animal transport vehicle through a successful fashion parade.

Although the auxiliary officially closed in the late 1980s, many of its members remained stalwart supporters and fundraisers for Lort Smith for years to come. Reflecting on our history, the bond between humans and animals shines, uniting us in love and purpose.

Do you have a story to share with us?

We love hearing from our wonderful community of supporters. If you have a story about your connection to Lort Smith or with animals you would like to share, please write to us at fundraising@lortsmith.com

Caring Lort Smith vets tend to a precious pup.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Caring Lort Smith vets tend to a precious pup.
From the equestrian tracks to the heart of Lort Smith, the path of Lort Smith’s new Vet Director, Dr Julie Bellamy is as intriguing as it is inspiring.

**What inspired you to become a vet?**
It was a meaningful conversation with another person that inspired me to build a career with animals. My long-term vet recommended I study veterinary medicine, as they could see my bond with animals and my understanding of their care.

I was lucky enough to be invited onto the West Australian Young Riders squad, where I rode for six years before making it onto the Australian Young Riders squad. At 21-years-old, I reflected on how far I had come. I had been very successful and competed both nationally and internationally as a professional rider, but I didn’t want to pursue the next step to the Olympics, as it was such a competitive space. Very few make it. So, I decided to hang up my riding boots and start a new chapter.

After so many labour-intensive years out in the country working with horses, I moved to Glasgow to study in the city, and it was a refreshing change. I never looked back.

**Do you have any pets?**
Yes, I have a grey and white cat named Gecko – whom I saved from a litter of kittens trapped in a drain pipe. The person who found them was a client of mine, and thought I might be able to help. I was running my very first vet practice at the time, and we would regularly help to rehome kitten litters for a local rescue shelter.

Five of the six kittens found were perfectly healthy, but one was much smaller and quite unwell, so I decided to keep her as I suspected she may have ongoing health issues. Fourteen years later she is healthy and happy, perching on my shoulder every morning while I get ready for work.

**What do you love about working at Lort Smith?**
It is wonderful to work with such a dedicated and widely experienced team. All the vets and nurses at Lort Smith are highly committed to providing the best care to animals and I can see that day in and day out. It’s also great to work in such a large facility. We are very fortunate to have so much equipment on hand and be able to do most things in-house. It means we can get the best possible outcomes for the animals we treat.

**What are you most looking forward to for Lort Smith?**
I am excited for the final stage of our redevelopment works in North Melbourne to be complete in 2024, so we can share it with the community. The team have settled well into the first stage of works and it’s been great to see the positive impact the space provides. The completion of the full hospital will be a huge milestone for Lort Smith, supporting us to continue serving the community for many years to come.

I am also looking forward to meeting more of the wonderful people who support our work. Coming together over a shared love of animals is an important part of who we are at Lort Smith.

“A meaningful conversation with another person inspired me to build a career with animals. My long-term vet recommended I study veterinary medicine, as they could see my bond with animals and my understanding of their care.”

— DR JULIE BELLAMY
Last month, we proudly unveiled stage one of our state-of-the-art hospital redevelopment. This new fear-free facility stands as a shining testament to the generosity of our supporters, who have played a pivotal role in ensuring we can evolve with the growing needs of the community.

On a brisk Thursday morning, our doors opened to the lucky first patient...

**Lucky’s tale**

Lucky, a somewhat robust looking chihuahua, became the first patient to experience our expert care in the newly updated hospital. The procedure went well, held in our spacious new dental suite, flooded with natural light and stocked with the most up-to-date equipment. Lucky’s short stay was comfortable and stress-free, and our team are thrilled to now have this calibre of space in which to treat animals.

“It was wonderful to work in the bright and open space. We had easy access to everything we needed and didn’t feel at all crowded, which meant the procedure went really smoothly,” said Dr Harry.

**More than just a hospital**

Studies show that daylight provides the same therapeutic benefits to animals as it does to humans. Our new hospital maximises natural light and space, providing an environment where healing can take place in the most soothing and uplifting manner possible.

One of the stand out features are the ‘seating pods’ in the waiting rooms. They are custom-designed to ensure that pets and their carers have a sense of privacy, which helps to reduce the stress and anxiety that often accompanies a visit to the vet.

When patients are calmer in the waiting room, clinical staff can get more accurate readings of their vital statistics, such as the heart rate. This translates into more efficient assessments, particularly in the Emergency Department.

The same “fear-free” principles are applied throughout the new hospital with separate wards for dogs, cats and exotic pets such as birds, rabbits and reptiles. This helps to soothe and reassure animals, and allows our caring vets and nurses to focus on the unique needs of each species.

Though the new facilities are modern and technologically advanced, we still carry with us the values and principles that have defined our work for nearly a century — a commitment to caring for animals and the people who love them.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Paws, jaws, and a world of smiles.
Dogs flash 42 teeth, cats 30, while humans have 32.
Last year, Lort Smith vets ensured bright smiles, conducting 768 dental procedures. Let’s keep those pet grins gleaming and healthy!
Spring has sprung

Spring has sprung and the great outdoors are calling. It takes a village to support the wellbeing of animals, so here are some tips to keep pets and local animals safe and happy.

Duck feeding
Did you know that feeding bread to ducks is bad for their health and can be extremely harmful to their environment? But that doesn’t mean you can’t spend a nice afternoon by the pond. Instead, grab a bag of frozen peas, birdseed, corn, oats, or chopped lettuce to share and keep our feathered friends happy and healthy.

Fledgling birds
It can be jarring to see a young-looking bird hopping on the ground and you may be tempted to pick up or ‘rescue’ them. However, this can do more harm than good. These birds are often learning how to fly and need space while they go through this important developmental phase. Parents are also likely close by, so unless they are visibly injured or have been picked up by a dog or cat, it is best to keep your distance.

Flowers for spring
Spring is the time for flowers, especially in our homes and gardens, but remember that not all plants are pet-friendly. Flowers like lilies, daffodils and azaleas are toxic to dogs and cats, so ensure that they are out of reach of any curious paws.

Kitten season
Spring is synonymous with babies, kittens included. While kittens are cute little bundles of joy, it is important to have your cats desexed as it prevents unwanted litters and the proliferation of stray cats. Just one female cat and her offspring can produce up to 5,000 kittens in seven years.

Seasonal allergies
Speaking of flowers, it’s allergy season. Symptoms such as asthma, itchy skin, and ear infections can affect animals and can get worse over spring, so speak to your vet about how you can help your beloved pets.

Healing a broken heart
Extraordinary things can happen when animals and humans form meaningful bonds. When Charles was surrendered to the Lort Smith Adoption Centre in Campbelfield he had no teeth and was diagnosed with a life-threatening heart disease.

But when volunteer Raquel fell in love with the cuddly five-year-old cat, something unexpected happened.

When King Charles Rupert — or Charles for short — first came to Lort Smith, we thought it would be difficult to find him a home, as he was likely not going to survive many more years. But we never give up on cats like Charles.

Charles was an incredibly affectionate cat and took a liking for one of our long-term volunteers, Raquel. Charles would follow her for pats and roll on his belly whenever he saw her. Raquel couldn’t resist and what began as a palliative foster care arrangement, ended up as a full-time home for Charles.

"We kept telling ourselves ‘Don’t get too attached, he doesn’t have long’ but we couldn’t help it, he was the best cat," says Raquel.

Then, something incredible happened. Under his new family’s loving care, Charles’ condition changed.

"I just fell in love with him, I’ve never had a cat before."
— RAQUEL, CHARLES’ OWNER

A routine ultrasound performed by Lort Smith vet, Dr Harold, indicated that Charles condition was not worsening. “I never get to say this,” he said with a grin, “but it looks like Charles’ heart is working well,” he told them.

In some circumstances, health conditions in both humans and animals can stabilise if they feel safe, happy and cared for. This is exactly what had happened to Charles.

With loving support from his new family and regular medication, Charles’ condition became easier to manage and his quality of life improved.

Charles’ story is a beacon of hope, illustrating how love, care, and commitment, can pave the way for a happy, healthy future.

Pictured right: Charles and his loving new owner, Raquel.
Uniting love for animals and people

With a corporate background and a degree in mathematics, it was ultimately her appreciation for the joy animals bring to our lives that drew Elaine McPartlin to come and work for Lort Smith.

I love the idea that Lort Smith helps animals, but what I was most excited about is that Lort Smith supports the people who love animals. It’s true. I think when we talk about animal health and welfare, we often forget the human part of that equation, but Lort Smith doesn’t and it’s built into the very fabric of the organisation.

Do you have any pets of your own?
Yes, I have three beautiful pets at home. A golden retriever, Nessie, who is named after the Loch Ness monster, but she is really a sweetheart. Harvey, a black Labrador whose official name is ‘Harvest Moon’, one of my husband’s favourite albums. And our cat, Neji, whom my eldest daughter named after a character in one of their favourite anime shows.

Do your pets help you connect to Lort Smith’s cause?
Yes, but my beloved pet Pepper who passed away recently is the one who makes me realise how special my job is. Pepper the black Labrador was more than just a pet to me. Unfortunately, her journey was marred with a series of health complications, ranging from leg straightening, ACL reconstruction to partial jaw removal due to an invasive growth, and eventually, liver disease. Despite these challenges, her spirit remained unyielding, constantly bouncing back with an infectious zest for life.

For a confidential discussion about how you can leave a lasting legacy by remembering Lort Smith in your Will, please call 03 9287 6417 or email bequests@lortsmith.com

Precious moments and gentle paws
Rachel, a dedicated volunteer, and her loyal companion Cooper, a nine-year-old Labrador, have left an indelible mark on people living in aged-care facilities across Melbourne. They work with Lort Smith’s supporter-funded Pet Therapy program.

Rachel’s volunteering journey began in disability support where she already felt the immense satisfaction of making a difference in people’s lives. It was through a friend that she stumbled upon Lort Smith’s Pet Therapy program; a community outreach opportunity for volunteers and their specially assessed dogs to visit facilities in Melbourne ranging from aged care facilities, youth programs, hospital wards and schools. When she heard about the positive impact on the community and how she could help, Rachel’s reaction was nothing short of pure enthusiasm, “Isn’t that just the best idea ever?” she said.

Cooper, a rescued pup, has been by Rachel’s side since he was a mere eight months old. Their bond grew stronger with each passing day, and together, they embarked on their mission to spread happiness and comfort in the lives of those who needed it most. Their regular visits to aged care facilities across Melbourne have become moments of pure joy for residents. Rachel’s eyes light up as she describes the impact they have witnessed, “I love seeing the joy on people’s faces. It warms my heart, seeing their smile as soon as they see Cooper.”

What would you say to anyone considering leaving a bequest to Lort Smith?
I would tell them to pick up the phone and call me. I am happy to talk through any question you may have about the process.

Throughout her seven and half years with us, we faced numerous heart-wrenching decisions, always prioritising her quality of life. This journey, although painful, has been a significant catalyst in deepening my empathy and understanding towards pet owners navigating similar paths.

Research has shown the wide spread benefits of pet therapy to human wellbeing, spanning from improved mental health to reduced blood pressure. For people living with dementia, pet therapy may increase mental stimulation, memory recall and reduce feelings of loneliness and agitation.

As we express our heartfelt thanks to Rachel, Cooper, and the entire Lort Smith community of supporters we’re reminded that sometimes, the simplest acts of kindness can make the world a better place, one wagging tail at a time.

I love seeing the joy on people’s faces. It warms my heart, seeing their smile as soon as they see Cooper.
— RACHEL, VOLUNTEER

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COMPANION SPRING 2023

From socks to frolics:
An update

Nala, a curious and playful Shetland came to Lort Smith’s Emergency Department after swallowing a sock. Today a pet owner is pleased to share that Nala has been doing well since her little sock adventure.

“I was confident everyone knew what they were doing but I was amazed – the staff were compassionate and assured me that dogs do this all the time.” Said owner, Kerry.

Lort Smith vets sprung into action when Nala arrived at Lort Smith’s Emergency Department, firstly confirming where the sock was in her body with an ultrasound and then removing it with surgery by performing an endoscopy.

Thanks to the generosity of Lort Smith supporters, our vets and nurses had the tools on hand to immediately diagnose and treat Nala. Her procedure was quick and non-invasive meaning that Nala was able to go home with her family that night.

Today Nala is back to her old self, playing with her sister Molly. According to her family, she continues to have a penchant for mischief so they keep socks well out of the way.
To have and to hound

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to celebrate our cherished pets.

In the vibrant locale of Abbotsford, Altar Electric, known for their alternative, no-fuss weddings, recently hosted a heart-warming community fundraiser named ‘Puptials’. This delightful event saw our furry friends stepping into the limelight, adorned in adorable veils and bowties, ready to tie the knot for a noble cause.

The day was filled with wagging tails and joyous barks, as dogs exchanged vows and received their certificates of ‘mutt-trimony’. Guests couldn’t resist the charm of the pet photography session, where the newlyweds posed with grace and a touch of whimsy. Adding a sweet note to the event were the delectable wedding ‘pup-cakes’, generously provided by Collingwood’s Dog House Cafe.

This unique and fun occasion not only brought smiles to faces but also raised $1,200 for Lort Smith. A big thank you to Altar Electric and all the participants for showcasing the vibrant spirit of community and compassion.

Three easy ways to donate:

1 Mail
Mail your completed form, cheque or money order to:
Reply Paid 85054,
North Melbourne VIC 3051

2 Phone
Call our fundraising team on
(03) 9287 6419

3 Online
Visit lortsmith.com or scan the QR code

Step 1 The details of your gift
Gifts of $2 or more are tax-deductible

- $65
- $250
- $500
OR a regular monthly gift of: $ __________

Step 2 Choose your payment method

- Cheque/Money Order is enclosed (please make cheques payable to Lort Smith)
- Mastercard  Visa
- Card number
- Expiry ___ / ___

Step 3 Please confirm your details
Fill in the blanks below

NAME
ADDRESS
PHONE
EMAIL

- Please email my receipt to the email detailed above
- Please contact me about leaving a special gift in my Will

Step 4 Return this completed form in the reply paid envelope provided

Thank you for your support

You can review the Lort Smith privacy policy on our website.
If you no longer wish to receive fundraising communications please tick this box

lortsmith.com

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

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Lort Smith acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land on which Lort Smith stands, and pays our respects to Elders past and present.
Lort Smith values and celebrates diversity in our community. We are committed to providing animal care services that are inclusive and support equality and accessibility.
ABN 87 004 238 475