

# COMPANION

WINTER 2024 | [lortsmith.com](https://lortsmith.com)

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**LORT**  
**SMITH**  
Melbourne's  
Animal Hospital





Missy being assessed by Dr Tracy and Nurse Steve

## A message from the CEO:

A few weeks ago, I returned from a personal trip to the United States to visit my parents. While there, I also took the opportunity to explore pioneering animal welfare initiatives. I had the privilege of visiting several programs, notably by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), who are innovating ways to service the community across the full spectrum of care.

It was an invaluable exchange of ideas and learnings.

On my return, I reflected on Lort Smith's dedication to meeting the global benchmark in care set by our international peers.

As the rising cost of living continues to challenge communities worldwide, our partnership with Good Shepherd is supporting animal welfare here in Melbourne.

It enables us to extend a lifeline to pet owners facing financial hardships, by providing access to no-interest loans for urgent vet care.

Since its onset at the beginning of 2024, this partnership has

already made a big impact. A growing number of vulnerable pet owners have accessed much-needed treatment for their beloved pets, without added financial strain.

Donor support also plays a vital role in this partnership.

Your kind contributions help provide financially disadvantaged clients with access to free diagnostics when their pets have emergencies, a requirement when applying for a Good Shepherd loan.

Together, we are driving meaningful changes in the lives of pets and people, thank you for your steadfast support.



**Jennifer Fleming**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Lort Smith Animal Hospital



Graham Lowry and his dog,  
featured in The Sun Newspaper, 1930

## Crumbs of kindness

In 1930, our organisation first operated as a general vet clinic on Flemington Rd in Parkville during its embryonic phase.

A simple setup featured a table on the veranda, staffed by a vet surgeon. Across the courtyard, a dispenser provided prescribed medicine and comforting advice for pet owners. Among the medicine bottles were a large jar of free dog biscuits and another of oatmeal biscuits marked "For Hungry Children."

This scene mirrored the economic struggles of the 1930s and highlighted Lort Smith's deep roots in compassion for the most vulnerable.

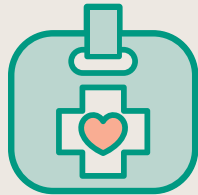
## Snapshot of your impact

in 2023



\$1.06M

in discounts given  
to clients in need



92

facilities visited  
by pet therapy



18,963

surgeries and  
procedures



631

animals placed  
with a new family



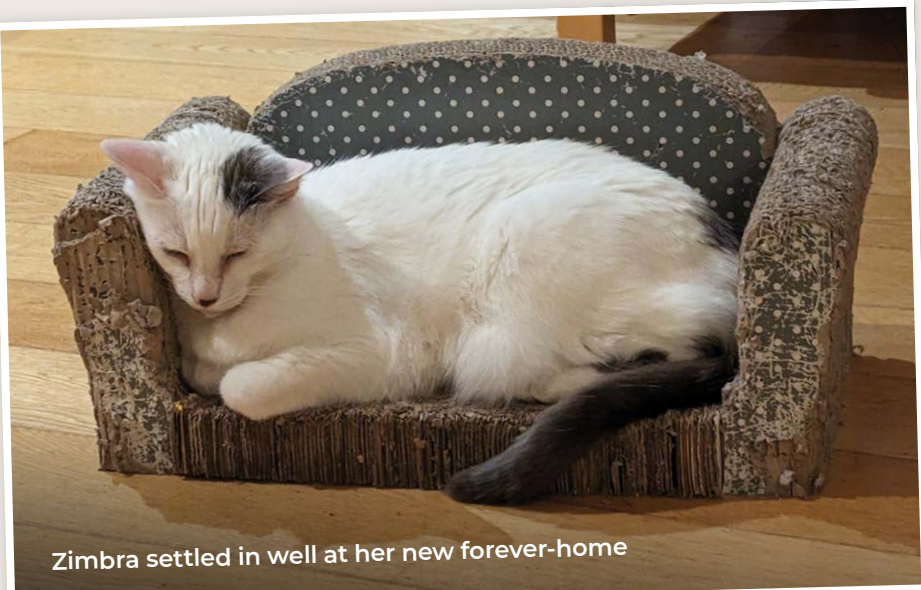
# Lee's lasting legacy

We are deeply grateful to Michael Livingston and Cindy Hauser for their generous gift in memory of Lee Brittain, honouring his enduring love and commitment to animal welfare.

Michael and Cindy's journey with Lort Smith began nearly 15 years ago when they adopted their beloved cat, Zimbra, from our Adoption Centre. Their positive experiences over the years inspired them to support our mission in a significant way.

When Michael's uncle, Lee Brittain, passed away, he left money to his nieces and nephews with a request that they consider a donation to an animal charity. Michael and Cindy contacted Lort Smith to discuss how to honour his wishes.

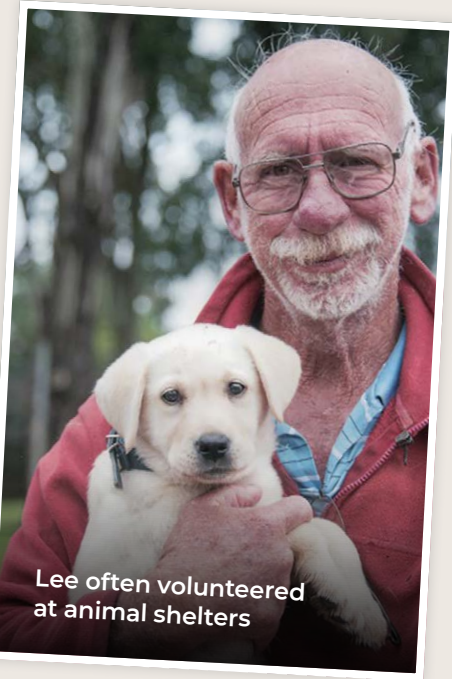
"We chose Lort Smith because the work they do reflects the thing that Lee loved about pets and because of our strong connection from adopting our cat, Zimbra, there many years ago", they shared with us.



Zimbra settled in well at her new forever-home

Michael and Cindy made a generous donation to Lort Smith; significant gifts like this are crucial for securing the future of our vital services. They enable us to provide urgent veterinary care, adoption and foster services, and deliver our community outreach programs.

We are honoured to be part of Lee Brittain's legacy and moved by Michael and Cindy's decision to support Lort Smith. Their generosity will have a lasting impact, ensuring we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of pets and people.



Lee often volunteered at animal shelters

**"We chose Lort Smith because the work they do reflects the thing that Lee loved about pets and because of our strong connection from adopting our cat, Zimbra, there many years ago"**

— MICHAEL & CINDY

**For a caring conversation about how you can leave a lasting legacy of kindness for companion animals, call Elaine McPartlin on (03) 9287 6417 or email [bequests@lortsmith.com](mailto:bequests@lortsmith.com)**

# Meet the vet: Dr Kassandra DVM, BSc

Get to know one of the many friendly faces behind the scenes here at Lort Smith, Dr Kassandra.

**Q: How long have you been a part of the Lort Smith team?**

**Dr Kassandra:** I've been with Lort Smith for five years. I spent the first three years as an Animal Welfare Officer at the Shelter while I studied to become a vet, and for the last two years, I've been working as a vet at our North Melbourne facility.

**Q: What led you to join the team at Lort Smith?**

**Dr Kassandra:** During my studies, I completed my clinical placements here and through my volunteer work at the shelter, I bonded deeply with Lort Smith's mission. I saw firsthand the dedication and care that go into every aspect of our work, which inspired me to be a part of this amazing team.

**Q: What are your main interests as a vet?**

**Dr Kassandra:** I am passionate about providing ethical vet care that reduces stress for pets and their owners. At Lort Smith, we achieve this through the fear-free design of our upgraded facility and by keeping the mental and physical health of animals at the forefront. We adapt our treatment methods to be less stressful whenever possible.

**Q: What makes your role at Lort Smith unique?**

**Dr Kassandra:** I get to work across all types of shifts across all types of shifts, from Emergency to dental, overnights in the ICU, and consulting. I enjoy the variety and the challenge it brings.

**Q: What areas of your work do you find particularly rewarding?**

**Dr Kassandra:** I find working in both emergency and outpatient care particularly rewarding. In outpatients, I'm passionate about this part of the hospital because early treatment can prevent more serious conditions. In emergencies, I aim to bring as much compassion as possible to help ease the distress clients and their pets experience during critical events.



Dr Kass enjoying our newly upgraded dental suite



# Top tips caring for exotic and unusual pets

Pets such as birds, reptiles, and small mammals are increasingly popular, but they do require specialised care. Here's how to ensure they thrive.



## Did you know?

61% of households in Australia own pets

12% of households own birds and fish

5% of households own mammals and reptiles

26% of Australian exotic pet owners did no research before getting their pet.



### Chickens

Hormone implants can prevent egg production, reducing health issues and extending lifespan.



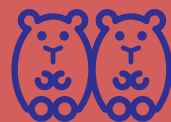
### Reptiles

UV lighting is essential for all reptile pets. They need it to convert vitamin D and absorb calcium. The requirements vary with species and their natural habitat.

Regular visits to an exotic and unusual pet vet are crucial for obtaining accurate, species-specific care and treatment.

Visit our experienced exotic and unusual pet team at Lort Smith in North Melbourne today.

Sources: RSPCA, The Conversation, World Animal Protection



### Guinea pigs

Guinea pigs thrive with companionship; in Switzerland, it's illegal to own just one.



### Rabbits

Prey animals like rabbits have evolved to hide symptoms of illness in order to survive. If they have not eaten for 6-8 hours, it is an emergency.



with Sam Lovett  
Unusual Pets & Wildlife Nurse at Lort Smith

## Pet therapy youth program: A beacon of hope

Last November, Lort Smith celebrated the completion of the 'Pet Therapy for At-Risk Young People' project, a ground-breaking initiative funded by generous donors.

This program has had a significant impact on hundreds of at-risk young people aged 14 to 25 in youth detention and in the community.

Dedicated volunteers with their specially assessed dogs provided a unique form of support, fostering a sense of safety, calm, and stability. These interactions helped young people develop more self-awareness, engage positively with others, and build effective relationships with service staff. They also practised care, empathy, and other pro-social skills essential for their rehabilitation, leading to improved participation in educational and therapeutic activities.

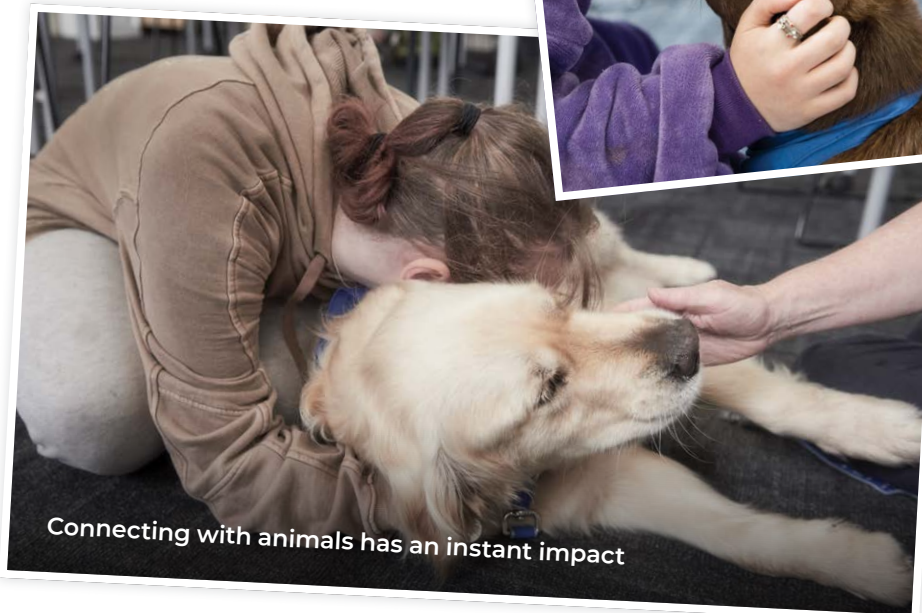
Elisa Stannard, Lort Smith's Pet Therapy Youth Programs Coordinator, highlighted the impact: "Pet Therapy dogs provide a catalyst for rapid and profound connection. When young people are in crisis, dogs have a unique power to reach them that some other more traditional interventional therapies can't. With a dog by their side, young people feel empowered to voice their needs and connect with others."

One young participant shared, "Pet Therapy made my true colours come out." Service staff noted, "The Pet Therapy dog's presence pulls our young people

out of their own heads and insecurities, helping them to attempt tasks and conversations that they wouldn't otherwise."

With 25 dedicated Pet Therapy volunteers and their dogs, the program recorded 1,652 interactions with at-risk young people aged 10-24. The success of this project highlights our commitment to community, partnership, and progressive programming for social impact.

Lort Smith is deeply grateful to our donors for making this vital work possible. Your support continues to change lives and build a brighter future for some of Victoria's most vulnerable young people. You can learn more about the Pet Therapy for At-Risk Young People project report on our website.



Connecting with animals has an instant impact



## Missy's second chance

Missy, the six-month-old toy poodle, arrived at Lort Smith in a critical condition, desperately needing life-saving heart surgery. Surrendered by her previous owners, her future looked bleak.

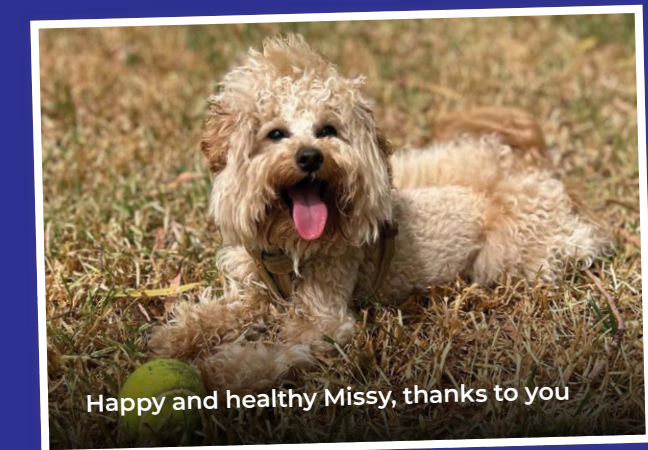
Your kind donations gave Missy a second chance at life. Because of you, she had access to the qualified vet surgeon, advanced medical equipment, loving foster care and rehoming services required to secure this little puppy's future.

We are pleased to share that today Missy is thriving in her new home loving home. Her new owner, Jo, describes her as a "pocket rocket" zooming around their living room and backyard regularly. Her heart is healthy, and her spirit is high.

Your generous contributions allowed Missy to experience the love and care she deserves. Thank you for making this possible and supporting our mission at Lort Smith.

Sadly, there are more animals like Missy who face euthanasia because they are unable to access the vet care they need to survive.

To support other animals like Missy on their journey through Lort Smith, make a donation today. Call 9287 6419 or visit [lortsmith.com](https://lortsmith.com)



Happy and healthy Missy, thanks to you



Yes, I would like to support animals at Lort Smith.

Step 1 The details of your gift

Gifts of \$2 or more are tax-deductible

☐ \$65 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500

OR an amount of your choice: \$

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   /

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE

Step 3 Please confirm your details

Fill in the blanks below

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

☐ Please email my receipt to the email detailed above

SUPPORTER NO.: (ON YOUR COVER LETTER)

☐ 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 ☐

Luna’s lucky escape

A sweet cat named Luna found herself in a prickly situation after accidentally swallowing a sewing needle. Luna, a cheeky domestic medium hair cat, was brought to the Accident and Emergency department at Lort Smith, where her anxious owners sought urgent help.

The situation seemed dire, but Lort Smith’s experienced accident and emergency team, led by Dr Tristan Rich, were ready to face this needle-in-a-haystack dilemma head-on.

Luna’s X-ray was astounding.

It clearly showed the sewing needle, still threaded with wool, lodged in the cat’s stomach. The stakes were high, but Dr Tristan, armed with skill and a steady hand, opted for an endoscope to retrieve the needle. “It’s always good to get things like that out with the scope rather than doing invasive surgery,” said Dr Tristan.

“Less pain, quick recovery, no chance of post-op complications, and lower costs.”

The procedure, although delicate, went smoothly. Dr Tristan initially couldn’t see the needle directly, as it was tangled in a furball. With patience and precision, he removed the furball and discovered the needle nestled inside. “I often use the endoscope to retrieve foreign bodies. Once you develop the skill, it makes for a very straight forward and quick process,” he said.

Kind community donations ensure that our team have ready access to the latest technology

such as the endoscope, needed to help pets like Luna.

Thanks to your support and Dr Tristan’s expertise, Luna was saved from a potentially dangerous surgery. She was back on her paws in no time, much to her family’s relief.



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**



4 Direct deposit

BSB: 033 132  
A/C: 199219  
Reference: Your supporter ID

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

Follow Lort Smith



**lortsmith.com**

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

