

# COMPANION

SUMMER 2025 | [lortsmith.com](http://lortsmith.com)

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Remember to keep your pets safe and cool in hot weather

## A message from the CEO:

As we welcome the summer season, the warm weather brings not only brighter days but also heightened activity and needs within our community of pets and their families.

At Lort Smith, we see firsthand how the heat impacts pets of all kinds—making this one of our busiest times of the year. With animals more vulnerable to heat stress and other seasonal challenges, our hospital and clinic are hard at work providing essential care and support.

In this edition, you'll find valuable tips for keeping pets safe during the summer months, including practical advice on managing warm-weather playtime.

We're also thrilled to share some inspiring stories of recent patients whose lives have been transformed by your support. You'll meet Rocco, a courageous dog who found his forever home

after we helped him recover from a severe case of mange, and a resilient turtle who underwent surgery to remove a tumour from its foot. Stories like these remind us of the life-changing impact that compassionate care can have on animals of all shapes and sizes.

It's an honour to write my first message from the CEO in this edition of Companion. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your ongoing generosity. Your support allows us to rise to the challenge during these busy months, making sure we're here for every pet that needs us.



**Frances Mirabelli**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Lort Smith

## Dogs day out:

## A special Sunday treat

Our Adoption Centre dogs have loved their new weekly "Dogs Day Out" on Sundays.

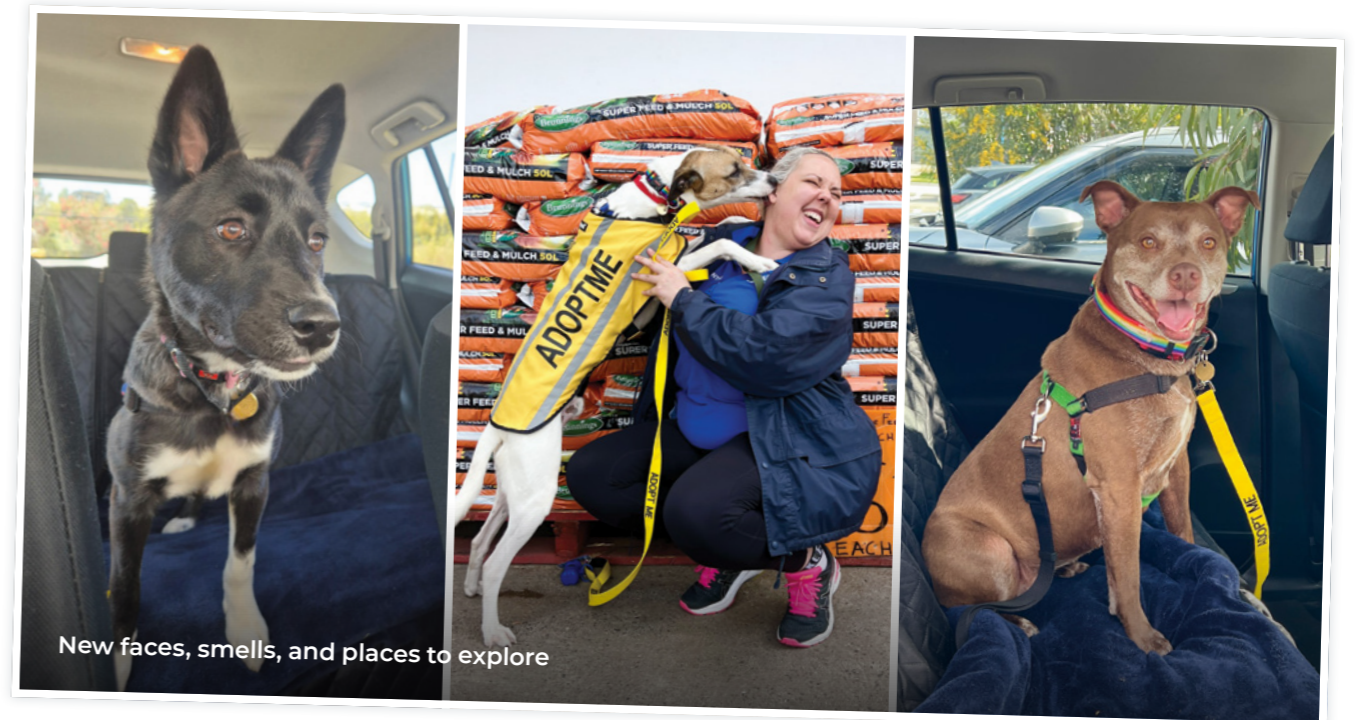
The program pairs volunteers with dogs for the day, who take them out of the Adoption Centre to explore new and exciting environments. After a day of exploring the big wide world, each dog returns to the comfort of their bed, happy and exhausted, knowing they've had a day full of new experiences. These outings provide vital enrichment, boosting their confidence and helping them adjust to life in a loving forever home.

Thanks to your support and our dedicated volunteers, the dogs enjoy walks, car rides, and plenty of cuddles, treats, and love. Thank you for making this joy-filled program possible!



**"It's great seeing the dogs all tuckered out when the volunteers return them on Sundays. More often than not, they fall asleep in their beds straight away, which is a good sign that they have burned off their energy and enjoyed themselves."**

— AMANDA, ADOPTION CENTRE MANAGER



New faces, smells, and places to explore

## The heart of a hero:

### Brendan's lasting gift

For Brendan Lincoln, animals weren't just companions—they were family. Over many years of volunteering at Lort Smith, Brendan became known for his kindness and deep commitment to every animal he encountered.

Whether he was cheering on a long-awaited adoption, sharing stories about beloved shelter pets, or doting on his own rescue greyhounds, Brendan's love for animals was evident to everyone who knew him. Through his generous Gift in Will, Brendan's legacy will now help future generations of animals find safety, healing, and forever homes.

Brendan's journey to Lort Smith began in 2016, after years of caring for his own dogs. Originally from Yackandandah, Brendan spent much of his early life in Shepparton before moving to Melbourne, where he became an integral part of the Kensington community. Though he loved sports like cricket and horse racing, it was his connection to rescue greyhounds that truly shaped his later years and led him to volunteer at Lort Smith.

Brendan quickly became a beloved figure at the Adoption Centre, building connections not only with the animals but also with our team. He could recall the stories of every dog that came through the shelter and shared updates with friends whenever a long-waiting pet finally found a family.

Dedicating over five years of his life to our mission, Brendan's contribution was recognised in 2017 with a nomination for a Lort Smith Hero Award.

At home, Brendan's love for dogs continued to shine through in his devotion to his own rescue greyhounds—Buckles, Jack, Missy, and finally, Molly, who stayed by his side until his final days. Brendan's dogs weren't just pets; they were family members who received every care possible. He took on greyhounds with special needs, like Buckles, who underwent surgery after a stroke, and Molly, who lost sight in one of her eyes.

When Brendan retired from volunteering, he stayed closely connected to Lort Smith's mission, sharing the joy of each adoption story. He never lost his belief that every animal deserved the chance to find a loving home. His generous bequest to Lort Smith ensures his passion for animal welfare will live on.

Leaving a gift in your Will to Lort Smith helps us plan for the future and continue our mission to help vulnerable pets in Melbourne for years to come.



**“He could recall the stories of every dog that came through the shelter”**

**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)**

## Fragile Rocco

### finds a fresh start

Rocco, the sweet one-year-old English Staffordshire Terrier x English Bulldog, was surrendered by a breeder after a tough and uncertain start in life.

Sold as a young pup, Rocco was soon returned to the breeder when his new family couldn't manage his severe case of mange, a painful skin condition caused by mites that burrow deep into an animal's skin, leading to hair loss, severe itching, and infections.

When Rocco arrived at our Adoption Centre, his condition was heartbreaking. His once-soft coat was sparse, and his skin was inflamed and irritated. At only nine months old, he already bore the visible signs of neglect and discomfort, with severe alopecia and bald patches covering his body.

Our team worked tirelessly to ease his pain, providing medicated baths multiple times a week. Despite his physical struggles, what struck us most was Rocco's sweet and friendly nature—he had a deep love for people and an endless capacity for affection, even though he was clearly feeling vulnerable. However, his anxiety around other dogs showed us that his journey to recovery would require healing of both his body and his spirit.

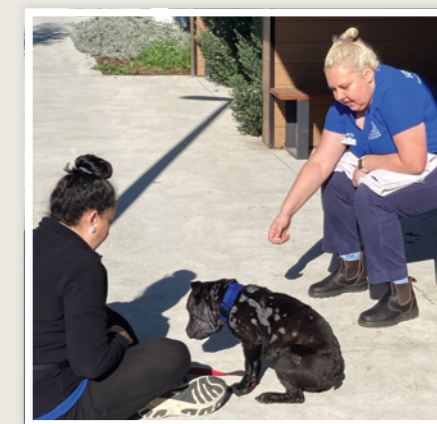
Through the dedication and care of our team, Rocco's health slowly improved. His skin began to heal, and with time and love, his confidence also grew. It was a joy to see him transform—his once fragile body became stronger, and his anxiety around other dogs diminished. He started

to relax, trust, and reveal his playful personality.

Then, in what felt like the perfect ending to his recovery, Rocco found his forever home with a wonderful young couple. They saw beyond his past struggles and embraced the loving dog he was becoming.

Deshanta, Rocco's new owner tells us he has settled in well with his new family. “Rocco is getting along with the cats now, still very interested in them. He's had some interaction with some bigger dogs and did very well. He's very happy and has started playing with his toys.”

Rocco's transformation from a sick, anxious pup into a healthy, thriving companion wouldn't have been possible without the support of our generous donors. Stories like his remind us just how important your support is—without it, animals like Rocco might not get the second chance they so desperately need.

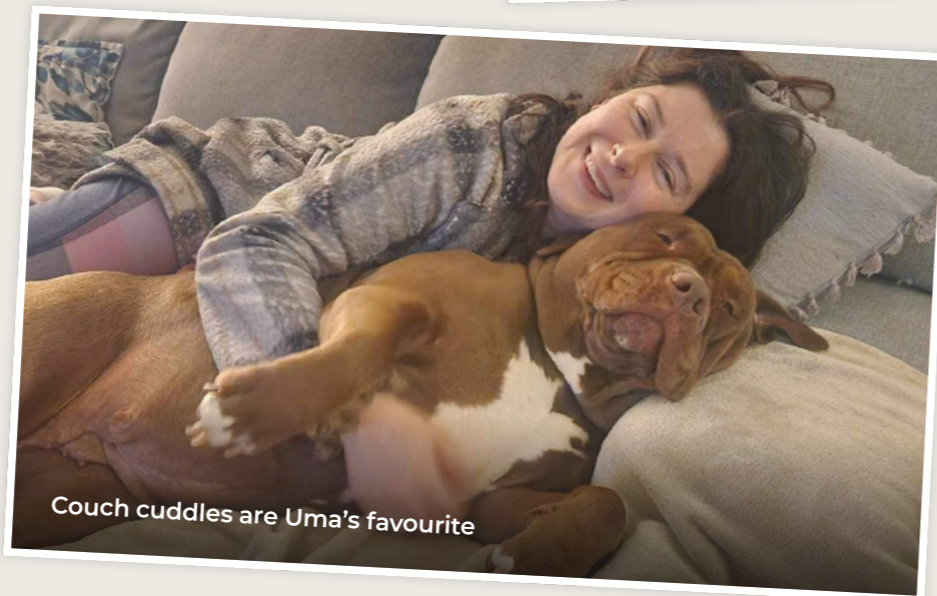


## Uma continues to thrive

We're thrilled to bring you an update on young Uma, the courageous two-year-old Staffordshire Terrier who captured all of our hearts.

After surviving a traumatic dog attack and enduring an intense recovery, Uma is now flourishing in her forever home with Teshayla and Bryn. Under their gentle guidance, she has made wonderful strides in her training and confidence-building, growing more comfortable and secure with each passing day.

For her very first Christmas with a loving family, we hear Uma was thoroughly spoiled and surrounded by love—an experience that showed her the warmth and care she deserves. Her calm and loving nature has been a source of comfort and strength to her new family, who were also on their own healing journey. Together, they've found a fresh start, one rooted in compassion, patience, and mutual support.



Uma's story reminds us of the life-changing difference love and care can make for animals in need. Thank you for your ongoing support, which enables us to help pets like Uma find the safe, loving homes they deserve.



## Cheques are phasing out – but supporting us is simple

We know many of our wonderful supporters prefer donating by cheque. While we are still accepting cheques for now, they will soon be phased out. But don't worry – there are plenty of other easy ways to keep supporting Lort Smith.

### To donate by credit card:

#### 1 Mail

Provide your card details on the enclosed form and return it in the reply-paid envelope.

#### 2 Online

Visit [lortsmith.com/donate](https://lortsmith.com/donate) or scan the QR code to make a secure donation online at any time.



#### 3 Phone

If you prefer, our friendly team is here to assist you over the phone. Simply call (03) 9287 6419

### By bank deposit:

Account Name:  
Lort Smith  
BSB: 033 132  
A/C: 199219  
Reference:  
Your supporter ID

## No toe, no worries!

## Squirt's going to be alright

Squirt, a spirited 12-and-a-half-year-old turtle, was brought to Lort Smith by his concerned owner, Vicki. Vicki noticed Squirt's toe was swollen and rapidly growing; she knew it was time to seek help. Upon arrival at Lort Smith, the Head of the Exotic and Unusual Animals department sprang into action. He quickly reviewed Squirt and decided that the best course of action was to remove the growth from Squirt's toe surgically.

Surgery was scheduled for that day to keep Squirt as stress-free as possible. After administering the anaesthetic, the team monitored Squirt's heart rate throughout the procedure using a Doppler ultrasound, ensuring he was safe and sound. Requiring great care and precision, the surgery took half an hour to perform. Squirt received absorbable stitches, which helped reduce the need for further stress during recovery.

Turtles do not eat out of water, so it was essential to make sure Squirt was comfortable and ready to return home to his enclosure as soon as possible.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of Lort Smith supporters, our dedicated vets and nurses had the tools to diagnose and treat Squirt immediately.

Squirt has bounced back since coming home from surgery, and he is back to his feisty, 'bitey' self, ready to take on the world.



**"I am so thankful for the amazing care that Squirt received from the team at Lort Smith. His foot has healed very well, and he is not missing his toe at all!"**

— VICKI, SQUIRT'S OWNER

# Pilot program brings hope for at-risk young people

Every day, we see the impact compassion and care can have on both people and animals. Through our new work experience program, we're proud to extend that impact to young people in contact with the justice system.

Developed in partnership with the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the program invites young people from Parkville Youth Justice Precinct into our Adoption Centre, where they work closely with our team, building workplace skills, emotional awareness, and responsibility, all while building positive connections with the animals in our care and the community.

## A journey of growth

The program's pilot phase runs over six weekly sessions, during which the participant joins our Adoption Centre team with the guidance of dedicated mentors, to contribute meaningfully to our work, reflecting on their strengths and skills along the way.

## Together we make a difference

The program is more than a work experience initiative; it's an opportunity for young people to harness their potential, fostering hope, empathy and connection.

Government partnerships like this mean that we can offer life-changing opportunities. By caring for and working with the animals at our Adoption Centre, the participants gain a new sense of purpose and the animals gain additional love and support while they await their new homes.



Giving the shelter cats some TLC



# Tales to tails

Lort Smith's much-loved Tales to Tails program is underway this spring. A special community initiative offering 30-minute sessions for children to practice reading aloud to the adorable cats and kittens at our Adoption Centre.

First introduced as part of the Australian Reading Hour Program in March 2023, the program was an instant hit. Partnering with Hume City Council Libraries, we welcomed 15 local school children, including many who face learning challenges, to read to our shelter animals. The results were incredible: our shelter animals benefited greatly from the extra socialisation and human interaction, making them more comfortable and, in many cases, more adoptable.

The positive effects extended beyond the animals; the children's confidence, motivation, and literacy skills flourished as they interacted with their non-judgmental audience.

Following the resounding success of the pilot program, we are eager to expand it this year, offering even more children the chance to participate. Tales to Tails encourages a love of reading, but most importantly, fosters empathy and helps find loving forever homes for our feline friends—a win-win situation for our cats and the children.

At Lort Smith, we are dedicated to enhancing the lives of both animals and humans. Our community programs provide uplifting and inspiring experiences and are made possible through the generous support of our community and donors.



Story time for the cats



Enjoying some playtime

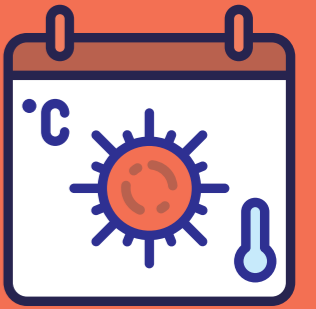


Proud as punch



## Tips for pet enrichment

### as it heats up



As the weather heats up, it's essential to find safe and fun ways to keep our furry friends engaged, especially when outdoor activities may be limited. Enrichment not only prevents boredom but also helps curb destructive behaviours that can arise when pets have pent-up energy. Here are some creative ways to keep your pets entertained and cool this summer.

#### Small dogs: Sniff and seek games



Hide small treats or kibble around the house in easy-to-reach spots, and let your dog use their nose to track them down. You can even try filling a muffin tin with tennis balls and hiding treats underneath some of them. This type of play not only satisfies their natural instincts but is also a low-impact way to tire them out.

#### Big dogs: DIY frozen treats



Fill a Kong or a durable food-dispensing toy with peanut butter, yogurt, or mashed banana and freeze it overnight. You can also freeze low-sodium broth with your dog's favourite toys submerged inside to create a "popsicle" that they can lick and chew on for hours.

#### Cats: Interactive playtime and puzzle feeders



Use a feather wand or laser pointer and encourage pouncing, jumping, and chasing. Puzzle feeders can also provide mental challenges and slow down feeding time. Try placing small kibble portions in different compartments to keep them curious and engaged.

#### Rabbits: Hide-and-seek tunnels



Use cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, or store-bought tunnels to create a maze for your rabbit to navigate. Scatter small veggie treats or pieces of hay inside to encourage foraging. This kind of play is not only great exercise but also provides mental stimulation as they hop around and explore.

#### Ferrets: Sensory digging boxes



Create a sensory digging box using shredded paper, non-toxic soil, or even uncooked rice grains. Hide small toys or treats within the box and let your ferret dig to their heart's content. This activity taps into their natural digging instincts and provides an excellent outlet for their boundless energy.



**Good pets,**

**great habits**

Understanding your pet's behaviour can be challenging. Pets express themselves in unique ways, and some behaviours can become issues if not addressed early. Our team is committed to helping you understand and manage your pet's needs, creating a stronger bond and a happier, more balanced life for both of you.

#### Common behaviour challenges

- **Reactivity:** Behaviours such as growling, lunging or showing discomfort toward people or other animals.
- **Separation anxiety:** Symptoms can include destructive chewing, excessive barking, or house soiling in dogs, and over-grooming or hiding in cats.
- **Excessive barking or meowing:** Barking and meowing are normal ways for pets to communicate, but when they become excessive, they could indicate boredom, fear, or even territorial behaviour.

#### How we can help

We offer a range of services for pet owners needing behaviour guidance. Join our puppy preschool to build foundational habits or book personalised sessions with our pet behaviouralist, Dr Tina Chen, for pets needing individual attention. For added convenience, phone consultations offer access to our team's advice from anywhere.

For more guidance on managing behavioural issues or to learn about our behavioural programs, visit our website or contact us.



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#### 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

