

Companion

Winter/Spring 2025



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From the Heart

Welcome to the first edition of our newly designed Companion!

We hope the fresh look reflects the many happy endings experienced by the tens of thousands of animals who come into our care each year—made possible thanks to the generosity of our wonderful donors and supporters like you.

After eight months in the interim role and developing a deep passion for the mission and admiration for the wonderful team here, I was thrilled to accept the

permanent position as CEO in June. Lort Smith also said a fond farewell to Dr Alastair Stott after five years as Chair, and a warm welcome to our new Chair, Rick Moscati, who we introduce to you on page three.

It's my greatest pleasure to be sharing with you some of the wonderful outcomes for animals coming through our doors, as well as information and advice on how to make sure your best friends stay happy, healthy and safe.

In this edition you will hear of Leroy's mishap during an unexpected outdoor adventure, and learn hints and tips on how to keep your feline friends entertained and safe indoors. Of Ringo's big scare when he found and helped himself to the family's chocolate stash over Easter! As well as a tribute to former CEO, the Reverend Ric Holland, who

passed away earlier this year. Ric played a pivotal role in making sure the Hospital could help countless individuals and their beloved animals.

Then, and now, none of what we do could be possible without the support of our special and thoughtful donors. Please enjoy reading what has been made possible, all thanks to you.

With heartfelt thanks,

Frances Mirabelli
CEO

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Connect with us:



Lovingly designed by: U-bahn design

Front cover image: Bear and Steffi

Lort Smith is Australia's largest not for profit animal hospital. We make sure pets enjoy happy and healthy lives with the people who love them, through providing accessible, compassionate care.



Welcome to our new Chair, Rick Moscati

The charity board Chair plays a crucial role in making sure of an organisation's success and effective governance. They are instrumental in shaping the board's agenda, in particular the organisation's goals, strategy, budget and performance of the leadership team.

Following the retirement of Dr Alastair Stott, after five years in the position and successfully navigating Lort Smith through the challenging times of COVID and significant construction projects, we were delighted to announce the appointment of our new Chair, Rick Moscati, at this year's AGM in June.

Rick was previously the Chair of our Investment, Risk and Audit Committee.

Like so many Australians, Rick considers his life has greatly been enriched by pets. And he is committed to promoting and expanding the missional work of Lort Smith. With a staggering 69% of Australians considering pets as part of their families,

and many doing it tough and finding it difficult to fund even basic veterinary care for their much-loved pets, Rick said on his appointment:

"Our services have never been more needed. I'm inspired to deepen and expand our reach, to help even more families and their pets during difficult and challenging times."

With over 30 years of experience as a financial services executive—and deep expertise in finance, risk management, relationship management, and commercial and institutional banking—Rick is exceptionally well equipped to guide Lort Smith on our path of sustainable growth. Making sure we can continue to increase the breadth and depth of our services, and keep even more pets with their people, through compassionate care.



You put Bear back together again

Thank you for bringing love, care and happiness to hurting animals like Bear.

Poor little Bear came to us at just 12 weeks old, whimpering in pain. That's because his right femur had been broken in two as the suspected result of terrible violence.

His heartbroken mum faced an impossible choice. The complex surgery and extensive

rehabilitation Bear needed would cost nearly \$10,000. Even with our financial assistance, she couldn't afford the treatment or provide the intensive post-operative care he'd need. In an act of love, she surrendered her beautiful boy into our emergency shelter care.

This is where angels like you came in.

It's only through the generosity of kind and caring people that our dedicated team could get to work right away to relieve Bear's suffering as soon as possible. Caring gifts funded life-saving

emergency surgery, post-operative care, extensive physiotherapy, and months of rehabilitation.

And would you look at this sweet boy now!

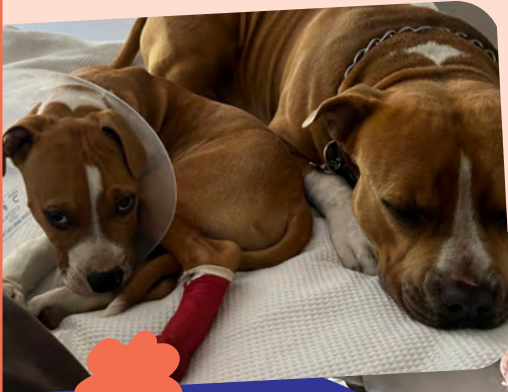
After a successful surgery, Bear needed a peaceful place to recover. Steffi, who works front-of-house at our hospital, kindly opened her home to foster this brave puppy (who looks like a mini-version of her own dog, Bruno).

We are thrilled to share that Steffi decided to officially adopt Bear. Bruno couldn't be happier with his new baby brother!

We rely on the continued kindness of the community to keep our doors open. Our winter appeal to raise funds for pets just like Bear, who find themselves in very difficult circumstances with no-one to look out for them, was a huge success. A big heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who donated.

"Bear loves to play with everything and anybody. He's confident and friendly and just really sweet. He's grown into a big boy, but he still thinks he's a lapdog."

— Steffi, Bear's new mum



Is this the first time you're hearing about Bear?

If you'd like to stay connected and be part of stories like Bear's, please let us know by emailing fundraising@lortsmith.com, or calling our friendly fundraising team on **03 9287 6419**.



For three months, Steffi and her family lovingly cared for Bear as he healed.

“The best lunch break we’ve ever had!”

City workers get a free pet therapy session at lunch.

If you’ve ever spent time in Melbourne’s CBD during lunchtime, you probably wouldn’t describe it as a tranquil sanctuary where people go to escape the stresses of office life.

But for one afternoon in April, hundreds of city workers and shoppers rushing around Collins Place Plaza found themselves pleasantly calm and serene when eight sweet pups showed up to brighten to everyone’s day.

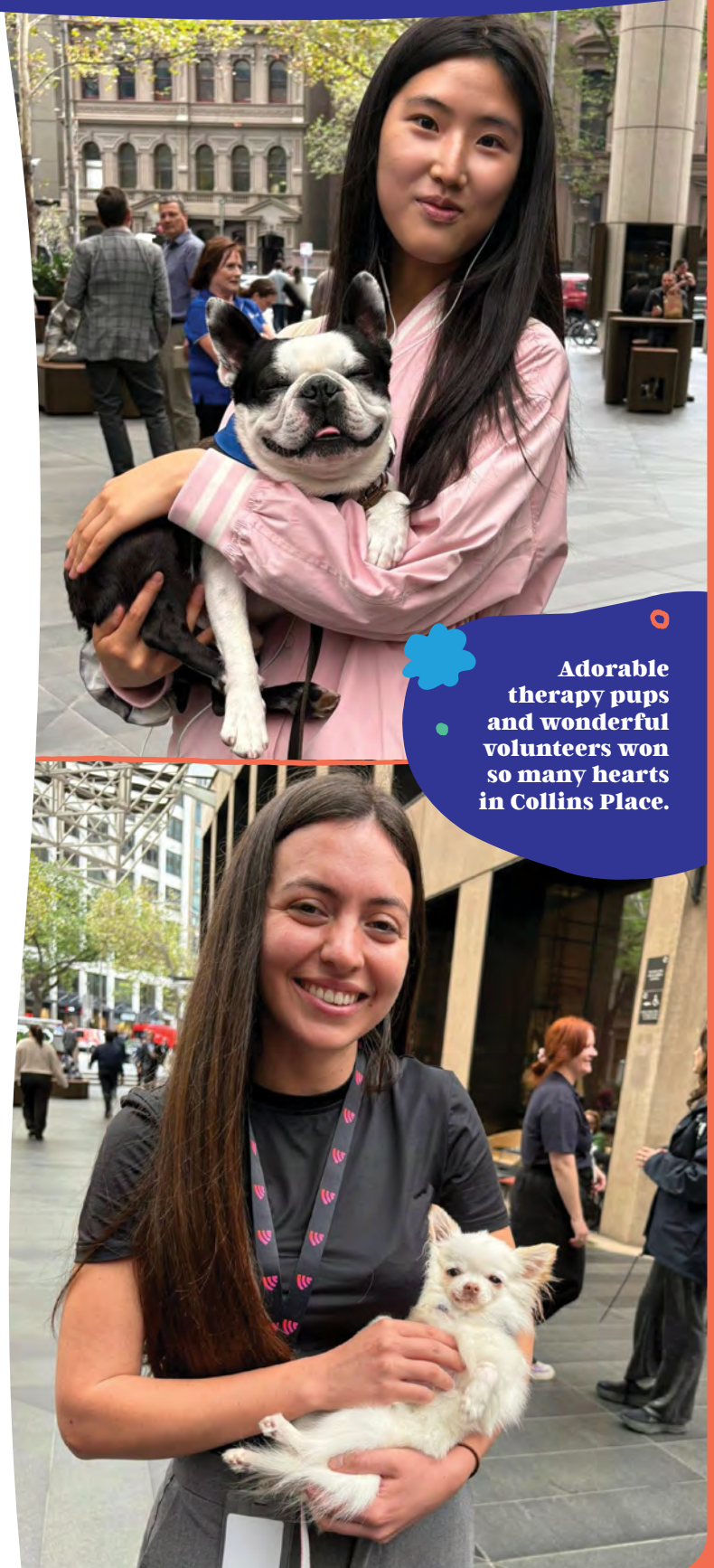
To celebrate National Therapy Animal Day, we held our pop-up pet therapy event with our volunteer Pet Therapy teams and their irresistibly cute dogs. Unsurprisingly, there was no shortage of people lining up to give pats and receive a smooch or two from the friendly pups.

“It’s probably the best lunch break we’ve ever had!” one person said with a big smile.

As the lunch rush ended, there were a few last pats and doggy kisses given as people reluctantly headed back to work. The pleasant encounter had left them all with wide smiles and rejuvenated spirits.

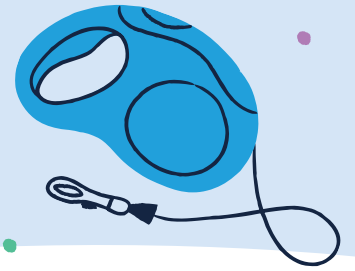
For over 30 years at Lort Smith, we have witnessed the profound psychological and physical benefits that come from a human-animal bond. It’s why we treasure the work of our 123 Pet Therapy teams. These amazing volunteers and dogs are visiting people in hospitals, residential care centres, justice facilities and other settings throughout the city. Each visit offers comfort and relief to people experiencing illness, adversity, loneliness and trauma.

Let’s give a big thank to all our Pet Therapy volunteers and their cuddly pups who provide hope and comfort to people going through difficult times. Your dedication is an inspiration to all of us!



Adorable therapy pups and wonderful volunteers won so many hearts in Collins Place.

How Cath's gift of love will reach animals beyond her lifetime



For the last eight years, the 'Cath and Baz' team have been part of the Lort Smith Pet Therapy Program, visiting patients at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, bringing them comfort.

Baz is an adorable and calm-natured spoodle, and Cath has always felt privileged to share Baz's love with people going through the most challenging experience of their lives.

"Lort Smith is an amazing place, providing practical care and support for people and their animals; particularly those who can't afford it. In a very small way, I get to provide practical care by

volunteering weekly with the Pet Therapy Program," said Cath.

As well as being a regular supporter of ours for over 10 years, Cath recently made a remarkably generous decision. She has included a gift in her Will to Lort Smith, knowing her thoughtful donation will help continue the life-changing bond between animals and people for generations to come.

Gifts in Wills from animal lovers play a significant role in Lort Smith's ability to continue providing the best care to precious animals when they need it most.

"I would encourage others to consider donating to Lort Smith as a way of providing care and support to their animals when life changes unexpectedly," Cath says.

Whether it's emergency surgery for a life-threatening injury or caring for an abandoned animal until we can find them a new forever home, your legacy gift to Lort Smith will allow your love for animals to live on well into the future.

If you are interested in remembering Lort Smith in your Will, Tracey Pratt, our friendly Gifts in Wills Manager, would love to answer any questions you may have. Email Tracey at bequests@lortsmith.com or call direct on **03 9287 6417**.



Baz and Cath — the dynamic duo bringing a spark of joy to people doing it tough.

Leroy's tail mishap

Why indoor cats live safer, happier lives.

Leroy just wanted to explore the world around him. How could he not? He's a curious kitty.

Like he had done so many times before, this beautiful Burmese cat went out for his morning stroll, seeking a little adventure. But on this particular day, Leroy decided to wander a bit farther than usual, found himself in unfamiliar surroundings, and got into a bit of trouble.

When he finally returned home, Leroy's cat sitter could see he had injured his tail badly.

Leroy's sitter rushed him to Lort Smith for help. Once he came into our care, we immediately provided pain relief to Leroy while we assessed the extent of his injury.

"Leroy was in quite a bit of pain when he arrived at the hospital," said our veterinarian Dr Bec. "Luckily, we were able to save him from any infections spreading through his body, but we had to act quickly."

But despite the obvious pain he was experiencing from his injured tail, sweet Leroy never stopped purring and affectionately rubbing his soft head against Dr Bec and all the staff.

Sadly, after a thorough assessment of his injury, it was determined Leroy's tail couldn't be saved. We were able to perform successful surgery to give Leroy a comfortable life, even if it meant saying goodbye to his lovely tail.

"Lort Smith is excellent in every way. The staff genuinely care about the animals, and the vets made sure to communicate clearly, letting me know how Leroy was going," Leroy's mum shared.

Unfortunately, Leroy's story isn't an isolated one.



We are pleased to tell you that Leroy is back home recovering. What a brave boy!

How do I keep my cat happy indoors?

Here are some recommendations to keep your cat happy and busy inside:

- Stimulate natural behaviour through play
- Provide toys and other enrichment tools
- Provide different walking surfaces
- Adopt another cat for companionship

And if all else fails...

To minimise outdoor risks, make sure your cat:

- Is vaccinated
- Wears a collar with your contact details
- Is microchipped and your contact details are up to date

We understand families want to let their cats explore the outside. When your sweet kitty scratches at the door and looks at you with those adorable eyes, it's almost impossible to say no.

The truth is, though, keeping your feline friends indoors will ensure they are safe and enjoy a longer, healthier life. They'll be safe from road accidents, fights with other animals, and other potential dangers like getting lost and not being able to find their way home.

We know how much you love your cats, so we always want to help, in whatever way we can.

Whether it's general advice or emergency care, our dedicated team of veterinarians and vet nurses are here to help. Visit lortsmith.com to book online for an appointment with one of our caring and knowledgeable vets. Or in an emergency call **03 9328 3021**.



What's the BIG deal?

An important thing to know before you adopt.

Earlier this year, a litter of incredibly adorable pups were brought to Lort Smith's adoption centre. Five gorgeous, four-month-old staghounds whose cuteness levels were off the charts.

An enthusiastic crowd of animal lovers were ready to adopt the puppies, but what many people hadn't considered was that these 'little' beauties were actually gentle giants-in-training.



Nessie (right) and her new big brother, Fred, are already best buds for life!

Fully grown, staghounds can reach 70cm in height and weigh-in around 45kgs. That's as tall as most dining room tables and as heavy as a small washing machine! So, these sweet-natured pups needed families who could give them plenty of space to run, play and explore.

Thankfully, the overwhelming interest in adopting these cuties allowed each of the

siblings to be matched with wonderful families.

Sweet Nessie was the last of the five siblings to be adopted. Sarah and David, who were already parents to another darling staghound, Fred, took one look at Nessie and knew she would be the perfect addition to their lovely family.



Do you know the health benefits of desexing?

Not only does desexing help prevent unexpected litters, it can also spare your pet from common conditions like:

- An infected uterus
- Mammary tumours
- Prostate disease
- Hormonal or sex-related diseases

And desexing will also help with your pet's behaviour. Desexing decreases anti-social behaviours such as urine marking, mounting or aggression.

For more information on what to consider when adopting your new best friend, visit lortsmith.com/adoptions/ and click on the 'before you adopt' link.



Remembering Ric

The unforgettable legacy of animal welfare pioneer, Reverend Ric Holland.

Ric's best mate, Dave, was always by his side during his five-year tenure at Lort Smith.

(Photo courtesy of the Herald Sun)



Many of you will remember Reverend Ric Holland, our CEO from 2005 to 2010—whose compassion, courage, and vision left a lasting impact at Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

Ric's journey to Lort Smith was as inspiring as his work here. In 1972, he began as a young Methodist minister in Glasgow in the UK who wanted to impact the lives of people beyond the pulpit. So, Ric took to walking the city's most dangerous streets at night, hoping to connect with members of local street gangs. It was an unorthodox and risky approach.

"I was terrified," Ric said in an interview with The Age newspaper.

But Ric wasn't alone. At his side was his loyal German Shepherd, whose lovable charm won over the hearts of the young people Ric was trying to reach. Isn't it amazing how animals can build the most unexpected relationships?

Later, Ric moved to Australia. In 2005, after 33 years as a minister and leading voice for social justice, Ric joined Lort Smith as CEO. It was a role that perfectly brought together his lifelong dedication to community and his deep love for animals. Ric quickly became known as 'the heart of the organisation' by those who were fortunate enough to work with him.

Ric pioneered many 'firsts' for Lort Smith, including the securing of Deductible Gift Recipient status for animal charities across Australia.

He also set up emergency pet boarding for people in crisis, reinstated the Lort Smith ambulance service, advanced purpose-built adoption centres in pet stores, and brought the State Welfare Leagues together as a national champion for animals.

Ric sadly passed away on 7th April, at peace with his family around him, including his two beloved Labradors, Oscar and Ted, both adopted from Lort Smith.

Ric, your memory lives on in every special bond between pets and their people here at Lort Smith.

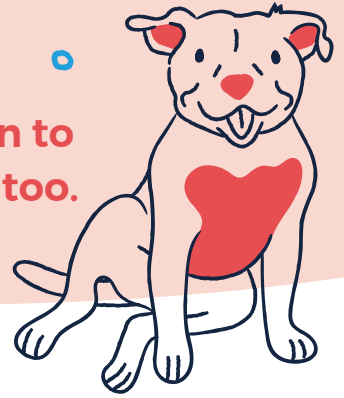


Reverend Ric Holland—forever in our hearts as we remember his many wonderful achievements to give every pet the best chance of a happy life with the people who love them.

(Photo courtesy of the Herald Sun)

“Hide your chocolate!”

Don't let Ringo's life-threatening experience happen to your beloved pets too.



Ringo, a 16-year-old Staffy, gave his family a big scare when they returned home to discover that he had found their chocolate stash—and helped himself.

At first, Ringo vomited then acted like himself again, seemingly unaffected by his wayward treat. However, later that night, his family could see he was visibly distressed, unable to settle, panting, and trembling.

They rushed him into Lort Smith's Accident and Emergency Department, where he was admitted for treatment for chocolate toxicity.

What was happening to Ringo? Chocolate contains theobromine, similar to caffeine, which acts as a heart stimulant, diuretic and blood vessel dilator. Dogs cannot metabolise it, and it can become fatal.

Side effects include increased heart rate, changes in heart rhythm, agitation, tremors, vomiting and diarrhoea.

With close monitoring, medication, and fluids, Ringo felt better and was ready to go home to his family by morning. He spent the whole day asleep at home, recovering from his misadventure.

Ringo fell dangerously ill after eating chocolate, but he received help just in time!

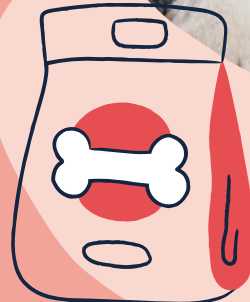
Look at this sweet face. We are so relieved Ringo is back to full health after quite the fright.



Do you know these Top 10 most dangerous foods for pets?

Please keep these foods out of reach from your pets to keep them safe.

- Chocolate
- Cooked bones
- Raisins and grapes
- Corn cob
- Onions and garlic
- Nuts
- Sweeteners (xylitol) look out for this in peanut butter
- Raw fish
- Fatty foods and meat trimmings
- Dough



Falling in love all over again

See how foster care can change an animal's life... and yours too.

In early 2024, Mia was looking for the companionship of a pet and Lort Smith's foster care program was the ideal scenario for her, company while giving something back.

In April, Lort Smith reached out to her about 11-year-old Monkey, a sweet, quiet cat who had spent the last 335 days at our Adoption Centre. Our team loved and cared for him, but Monkey needed a

home environment where he could feel relaxed and come out of his shell.

"At first, Monkey seemed very shy and withdrawn," Mia told us. "You could tell he was grieving the loss of his person. But as he started to settle in and feel safe, his personality slowly came out... once he feels comfortable, he becomes incredibly affectionate and loving."

When a potential new family popped into Mia's home for a meet-and-greet, Monkey's shy nature meant his being distracted and a little offhand with his special visitor.

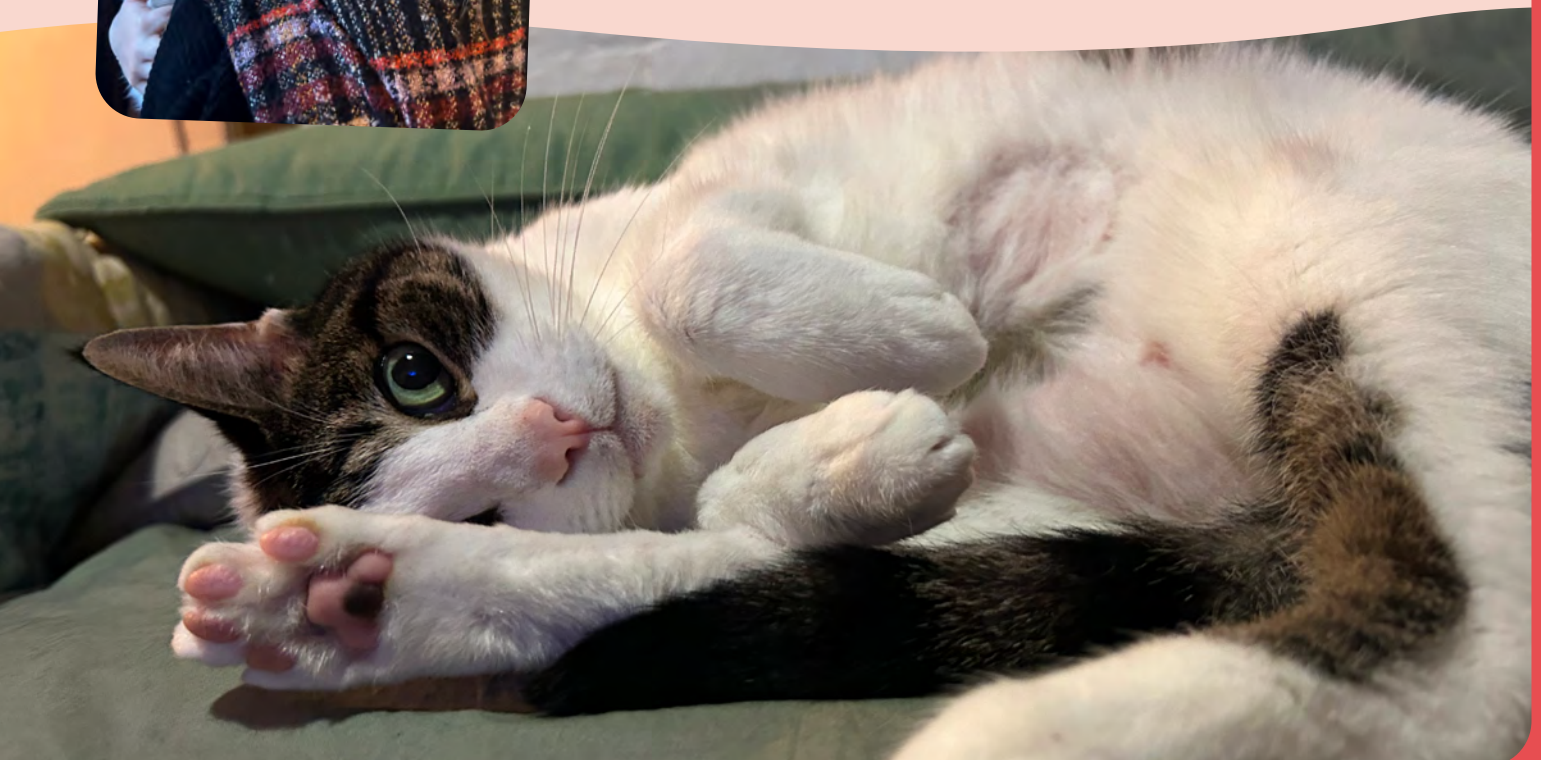
But perhaps the 'failed' meeting was what convinced Mia that Monkey had already won her heart. Three weeks later, Mia couldn't resist adopting Monkey as her own.

"Monkey is such a character! One of the sweetest things he does is head-butt us for attention... he is very chill, a little weird, and super lazy – but that's exactly what makes him so lovable!"

– Mia, Monkey's new mum

It's been a long journey for Monkey, but we're thrilled he's finally found his loving forever home!

Do you have room in your home and your heart to welcome a vulnerable animal through foster care? Visit the 'get involved' section of lortsmith.com for more information.





Your greatest gift for future generations of animals in need

Leaving a kind and thoughtful gift in your Will to Lort Smith is one of the most powerful ways you can help vulnerable animals into the future. Generations of animals will receive the urgent care and new loving homes they need, all because of the decision you make today.

Your legacy of love will help:

- Care for the pets of people who are struggling financially, protecting the bond people share with their pets, keeping them together.
- Find surrendered pets their loving new forever homes.
- During times of crisis, provide a temporary safe haven for pets of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Scan this code to find out how you can write your Will for free in just 10 minutes through our partnership with 'Gathered Here', Australia's largest online Will-writing service:



Or contact Tracey Pratt, our friendly Gifts in Wills Manager for a confidential chat and to receive more information: bequests@lortsmith.com or call direct on **03 9287 6417**



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