

# Companion

Summer/Autumn 2026



Celebrating  
90 years of  
compassionate  
animal care!



  
**LORT  
SMITH**  
Melbourne's  
Animal Hospital



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## From the Heart

**This year is a special milestone for Lort Smith.**

**We are celebrating 90 years of delivering compassionate care to Victoria's vulnerable animals.**

I feel incredibly privileged to be leading such an iconic and very special organisation. Every day I'm inspired by the legacy of our founders, Louisa Lort Smith and Lady Frances Lyle. We work hard to honour

their vision and ensure it lives on through everything we do.

The original hospital building on Villiers Street in North Melbourne was officially opened on the 16 April 1936 by Sir James Barrett, the then Chancellor of Melbourne University. Today we still have a strong connection with the University, welcoming students and graduates of the veterinary school to learn from and join our amazing team of professionals.

It's fitting that we have recently launched our new 2025-2030 strategy. Find out how you can access a copy of this important document on page 9. In it we recognise that, although our core purpose has not changed, supporting the animals of people experiencing hardship is much more complex than it was nearly a century ago. We need to be

well equipped to make sure we are providing affordable, high-quality care that is accessible to all.

Our supporters and donors are our most important partners in this task and the evidence of how you are making a difference is perfectly illustrated through the stories captured in the following pages. I hope you will enjoy reading each and every story in this special 90th Anniversary edition!

**Frances Mirabelli**  
CEO

### Contact us:

#### Lort Smith Animal Hospital

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**[lortsmith.com](http://lortsmith.com)**

**Connect with us:**



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**Front cover:** Celebrating 90 years of compassionate care at Lort Smith.

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.





# You brought Sky's smile back

Thank you for the special care you make possible.

**W**hen sweet eight-year-old Maltese Cross, Sky, came to us she wouldn't let anyone near her mouth. And it's no wonder, because we discovered she was suffering from severe dental disease.

Sky's treatment would cost her family thousands of dollars. As an older dog, there was also a strong likelihood of further veterinary treatments that would be needed in future. In an act of compassion, they surrendered their beloved girl into our care before her condition got any worse.

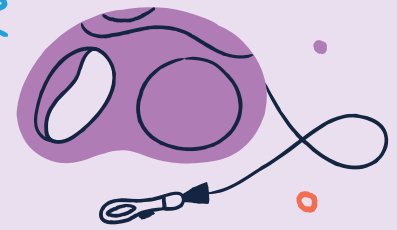
It's only through the generosity of caring people like you that our dedicated team could get to work to help Sky as soon as possible. The very next day, Sky went into surgery. Her dental disease was so severe, our vet had to remove 16 of her teeth.

Sky needed four surgeries in total when lumps were also discovered, costing \$8,309. What a brave girl! The lumps were thankfully found to be non-malignant and removed. And now, Sky was ready to find love in a new forever home.

Alice was visiting our adoption centre when Sky caught a glimpse of her across the lobby and ran straight over, tail wagging. She knew Alice was the one for her! And we are thrilled to share that Alice adopted Sky.

**"Sky chose me. She's brought so much joy into my routine. We sit together while I crochet each night."**

**– Alice, Sky's loving new mum**



## 2025 Christmas Appeal Update

Our appeal was a great success, with all funds now going straight to making sure more animals like Sky get the life-saving surgeries, post-operative care, and loving forever homes they desperately need.

**THANK YOU** to everyone who donated!

### Want to stay informed about stories like Sky's?

Please let us know by emailing [fundraising@lortsmith.com](mailto:fundraising@lortsmith.com), or calling our friendly team on **03 9287 6419**.





# Grace's love will help animals beyond her lifetime



Grace has been part of the Lort Smith family since the 1980s, when she first began donating to support our care for the most vulnerable animals.

Over the years, she's kindly volunteered in our Pet Therapy Program with her beloved dogs Albert and Harley, visiting retirement homes to bring comfort, cuddles and tail wags to residents.

And in 2009, Grace and Albert proudly took part in the launch of our Gifts in Wills program. It was an experience that cemented a decision Grace had made long before: to leave a gift in her Will to Lort Smith.

**"That choice was easy. It came from the heart. To this day, it fills me with warmth, pride, and a deep sense of satisfaction knowing that my legacy will help care for animals in need long after I'm gone."**

Grace's thoughtful and generous decision to remember Lort Smith in her Will is a wonderful way to help continue the life-changing bond between animals and people for generations to come. Thank you Grace!

Gifts in Wills from animal lovers like you make it possible for Lort Smith to provide the best care to sick and injured animals when they need it most. Whether it's emergency surgery or caring for an abandoned animal until we can find them a new forever home, legacy gifts to Lort Smith extend your love into the future.

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

**Grace and her sweet dog Penny, with Lort Smith CEO Frances Mirabelli and Gifts in Wills Manager Tracey Pratt**

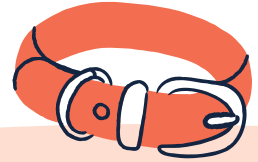


**"I share my story in the hope that it will inspire others to consider leaving a Gift in their Will to Lort Smith. It's a powerful way to ensure your love for animals lives on."**



**Brave Hamlet recovering from surgery in his cosy blanket.**

# Hamlet is his happy-go-lucky self again



**Loveable Hamlet was born with a wry mouth, where one side of the jaw grows longer than the other, causing misalignment of his teeth and jaw.**

**D**espite this, Hamlet had always been a happy-go-lucky cat. But recently his personality had changed. He went from playful and social to withdrawn – certainly not the same happy chappy he was known to be.

Poor Hamlet had developed dental and gum disease which was making him feel very uncomfortable. Sadly, cats with wry mouth are more susceptible to dental and gum disease, even with the best care from their people.

Hamlet's loving human, Kate, brought him to see us, where our vets removed eight teeth to treat the disease in his little mouth. We're pleased to report the procedure was a success, and Hamlet is back to his old happy self!

"I was unbelievably overjoyed to the point of tears with the treatment of my little man. Hammy is an incredibly peculiar young man, but the vet treated him with dignity, affection and he came back to me in cuddly, high spirits."

**"He is like a kitten again. He has so much energy. It's so funny to see his sense of humour back again! He is just perfect. My soul cat."**

**– Kate, Hamlet's loving mum**



**Hamlet's x-ray scans show the misalignment of his jaw.**

## What is wry mouth?

Wry mouth is where one side of the jaw grows longer than the other, causing misalignment of the teeth and bite. This can affect a cat's ability to chew properly and makes them more susceptible to dental and gum disease.

### What causes it?

- Genetics (certain breeds are more prone to wry mouth)
- Injury during jaw development
- Persistent baby teeth pushing permanent teeth out of place

### What to do if you suspect your cat has wry mouth

Although rare in cats, **see a veterinarian** if you notice teeth that don't line up, difficulty chewing, persistent bad breath, or visible ulcers. Addressing the issue early can help prevent a lifetime of pain and dental complications.





# You answered the call for pe

**THANK YOU for making our first ever giving day a huge success!**

**O**n 10th September, we launched our first ever Pet Care Crisis Appeal – an annual one-day-only event calling on our wonderful community to help raise funds for emergency veterinary care

for the pets of people doing it extra tough. Thanks to our generous Pet Crisis Partners, every donation was matched, doubling the impact of your kindness.



## Little Dobby's late-night snack attack



**Dobby's family had a big scare when they woke one morning to find the one-year-old chihuahua had chewed up a sandal and the cap of an olive oil bottle during the night. They raced him to Lort Smith Animal Hospital.**

**W**hen Dobby arrived, he was throwing up, lethargic and trembling. Scans showed his stomach was very enlarged. Our vets performed exploratory surgery to check for foreign objects – and after further testing, discovered Dobby had gut stasis which is a condition where the stomach and intestines slow down.

We gave Dobby medicine to settle his tummy and gently get his digestion moving again. Thankfully, Dobby's little body responded well to the treatment.

After a few days of recovery and close monitoring, Dobby was able to head home to his very relieved family (who now watch him like a hawk to make sure he doesn't get into anything he shouldn't!).

**Thanks to generous supporters like you, Caitlin and her family were able to get the financial assistance they needed to pay for Dobby's treatment.**

**Dobby is back to running around and playing with his human brother.**



# Pets in crisis

And what a day it was! Together, our animal-loving community (that's you!) raised an incredible \$223,823. Every dollar has gone straight to work helping animals like Dobby get the urgent care they need.



## Dobby was the first recipient of our Pet Care Crisis Appeal

This special appeal helps pets and their people access critical and urgent vet care, such as pain relief, life-saving diagnostics, and surgeries, in distressing times of financial difficulty.

**"When we got the quote for surgery, I was really stressed. Without the Pet Care Crisis Appeal, we wouldn't have been able to get the money. When we found out it was all covered, it was a huge relief."**

– Caitlin, Dobby's loving mum

## Every day, we see loving families face impossible choices

Between the rising cost of living and unstable housing situations, so many families are struggling just to manage day-to-day expenses, let alone when something unexpected comes up, like emergency veterinary care.

**"If you're on low income and your pet gets sick, you can feel judged and guilty for not being able to pay for the vet cost. People need this help."**

We believe people don't stop loving their animals no matter the challenges they face. And sometimes, love means seeking help.

**"He's part of the family. I don't know what we would have done without him."**



# 25

animals so far have received the urgent care they desperately needed... Thanks to your kindness!

With no government funding, we can only help animals like Dobby through the generosity of our wonderful supporters like you. Thank you for standing by our most vulnerable animals in their time of need!

## A special thank you to our Pet Crisis Partners:

The Lyle Foundation

A generous friend of Lort Smith

who wishes to remain anonymous

Decjuba Foundation

The Sheehan-Birrell Foundation

If you would like to be a Pet Crisis Partner in 2026 we'd love to hear from you! Contact Brianna on 03 7037 2267.



# An early morning surprise at our gates

Jessie went from all alone on a cold winter morning to warm and loved in her forever home!



Here's Jessie getting a big cuddle from one of our nurses.

Clearly, Jessie stole our hearts from the moment she arrived at our hospital!



**Y**ou can imagine our surprise when we opened the doors of our hospital in the early hours of a bitter cold morning to find poor Jessie waiting outside, all alone.

This sweet 10-month-old Staffy cross had been left on our doorstep with a heartbreaking note attached to her collar.

It was clear Jessie had been well-loved, but we don't know

how long she had been out in the cold by herself wondering where her family had gone.

And at some point, she had snapped free from the lead tied to our gate and was found rummaging in a nearby rubbish bin for something to eat.

One of our caring vet nurses brought Jessie inside from the cold straightaway. Jessie was checked over by our team to

make sure she was in good health, then given nutritious food, lots of cuddles, and a cosy warm bed.

We shared Jessie's story on social media and caught the attention of a special someone...

Maria and her family lost their beloved dog last year and had a big paw-shaped hole in their hearts. When they saw Jessie's story pop up online, she reminded them of their precious dog. They thought Jessie would be the perfect match for their family.

And it turns out Jessie agreed!

We are thrilled to share that Maria and her family adopted Jessie. Together, they're now making Jessie's dream of a happy ever after come true.

We understand the heartbreaking choices families face when they can no longer care for their pets – and we urge people to reach out to caring shelters so animals like Jessie can receive immediate safety and be properly looked after. Thanks to your kindness, we are ready to help pets in their time of deepest need.



Look at this happy family. Smiles all round!



# Celebrating Kind Hearts

November 27th was a memorable day for Lort Smith. We officially launched our new five-year strategy.

We were honoured to have our Patron, Lady Southey AC, join us at the 'cosy' morning tea event to say a few words to mark the occasion. Our Hub building, next door to the hospital, looked spectacular, and it was wonderful to share such an enjoyable and important moment with everyone who attended.

Looking ahead, we're planning to host an annual event and will most likely move to a larger venue in 2026. This is so we can welcome many, many more of our incredible supporters to be able to thank you properly – in person.



You can find Lort Smith's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan on our website under the **About Us** section, or email the fundraising team to request a copy [fundraising@lortsmith.com](mailto:fundraising@lortsmith.com)

**Lady Southey AC shares her story of connection with Lort Smith**





# You won't believe what Tubby swallowed

Milica noticed her ten-year-old cat Tubby hadn't been his usual contented self, then a mysterious wound on his neck revealed why.



The team acted quickly to safely remove the needle and thread, clean the wound, and carefully close it. Here's Tubby recovering – we can only imagine his relief!

Every day, when Milica arrived home from work, she'd see her sweet Tubby sitting in his favourite spot in the window. But on one particular day, he wasn't there. Milica knew something wasn't right. She recalls her frightening discovery...

"He was lying in his bed, and I saw blood on his blanket and neck. It was very scary. I'm very attached to him, he's like family. My daughter got him for me because I live alone. I was so sad thinking I might lose him."

Milica rushed Tubby into our Emergency Department at the North Melbourne Hospital. The veterinary team examined

Tubby's wound and found a long piece of string that seemed to be tethered to something deep inside his throat.

## X-rays showed the shocking discovery...

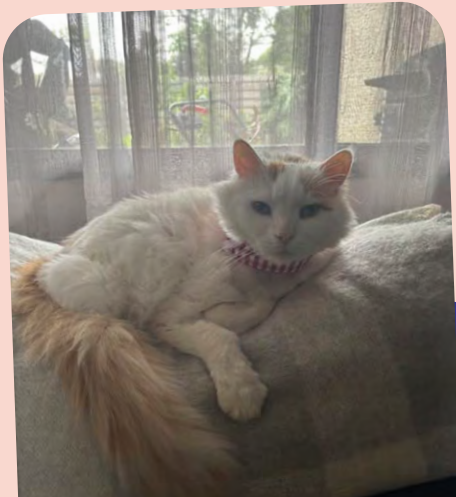


The string coming out of Tubby's throat was attached to the object he'd swallowed – a sewing needle!

"Tubby is back to his old self. The treatment we got from Lort Smith was great, everyone was so friendly. Honestly, it was better than how I've been treated in a human hospital!"

- Milica, Tubby's loving mum

Tubby is now back home, resting and on the mend... with the sewing kit now safely out of reach.





# Our oldest boy found his forever home

Love at first sight!  
We know Wendy  
and Ned will  
have the best  
life together.

**At 14 years old, Ned arrived at our Campbellfield Adoption Centre after his family could no longer care for him.**

**T**his cheerful Jack Russell Terrier cross Welsh Corgi wasn't about to let his predicament get him down. Ned may be small, but he has a big heart full of love! He showed us his zest for life and was always up for a good stroll. Age, after all, is just a number.

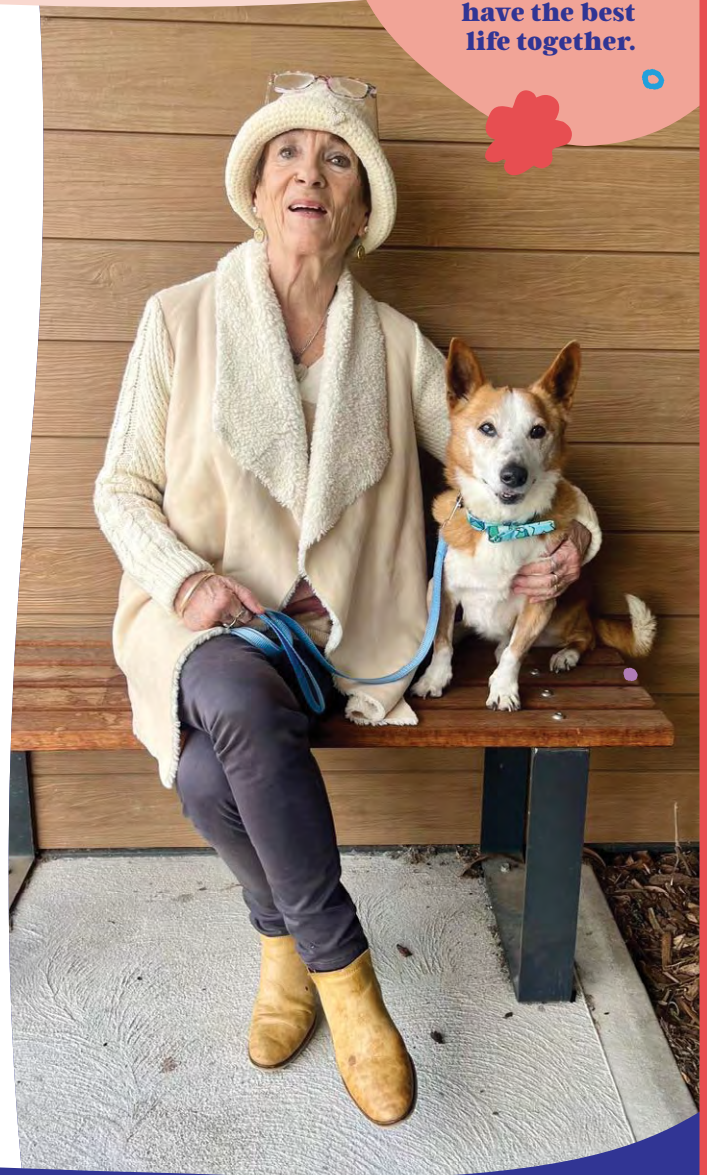
**Sweet Ned patiently waited two months to find his new forever home. Then Wendy came along!**

Wendy had recently lost her beloved dog and knew she wanted another senior companion - a dog who might otherwise be overlooked. When she heard about Ned, she drove more than two hours to meet him.

The moment they saw each other, it was like they'd known one another for a lifetime.

We're so happy to share that Wendy adopted Ned and he's now settling into retirement exactly as he deserves - loved by someone who chose him precisely because of who he is.

**Around the shelter, Ned (or "little Neddy" as we loved to call him) became an absolute star with his happy smile and tap-dancing feet!**



**The JOY of adopting a senior pet like Ned**

There's something special about giving an older pet a loving home for their golden years.

## Why senior pets make wonderful companions

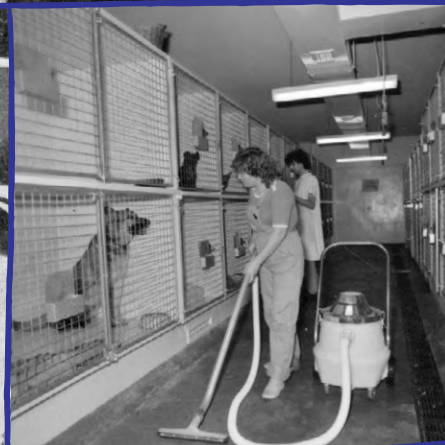
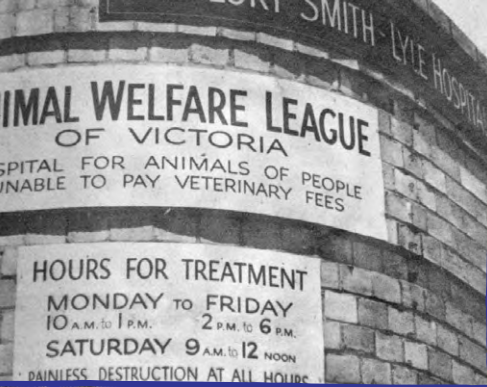
- They're already trained (no puppy school required)
- They're calmer and less destructive
- What you see is what you get (no surprises with size or temperament)

- You're giving them a much-needed second chance at love

**A few things to consider** - Your time together will be special but it will also be shorter, and they may need more vet visits or medications.

**Adopting a senior pet provides a secure home when they need it most, and you'll gain a devoted friend in return.**





### Lort Smith Animal Hospital

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