



Sydney Mobile Vet Service®

This is the first anniversary edition of [VETaround's](#) newsletter. We are very proud to have turned one on October 11 and have been reflecting on an amazing first year in business. VETaround has certainly grown from strength to strength gaining new clients regularly and reaching a vast cross section of Sydney's eastern suburbs community and beyond. From the smallest cute little mouse up to the large [Leonbergers](#) we have been able to offer comprehensive in-home veterinary services which has truly been very satisfying.

Some wonderful achievements & highlights range from winning the [Service Excellence Award](#) from the [Australian Excellence Awards Centre](#) to holding a wonderful stall and judging "Best Trick" at

[Puppies In The Park](#) at Christison Park in Vacluse.

VETaround also hosted it's first [Work Experience student](#) who travelled around with Ari providing a helping hand. It was such a good week that we have signed up for regular students.



VETaround's website has been updated and is full of information about general health care as well as a growing blog of informative anecdotes & stories about pet health and our [mobile vet's](#) travels around the suburbs. We also have a flourishing [Facebook page](#) which is updated regularly from the blog and other little anecdotes so make sure you join straight away.

And lastly thank you to all our clients for welcoming us into your homes and for all the wonderful feedback we have received.

Inside this issue:

- Featured Pet
- Microchipping
- Recognising Animal Pain
- Dental Disease - How important is it?

Featured Pet:

Introducing Noodle...

Noodle is a most fortunate pussy cat who was adopted from a rescue shelter. She and her litter mates were discarded callously in a garbage bag and left for dead. In fact Noodle miraculously was the only kitten to be found alive by a passer by and taken to the local rescue shelter where she was rehabilitated.



As you can see from the photo Noodle, 12 years on, is a lot more comfortable, lapping up the spoils provided by her doting owner Rhys. Amazingly this photo was taken while I was there for a consultation! If only all my patients were as relaxed with me as that.....

MICROCHIPPING - ARE YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE?

If you read our Facebook page you would be familiar with [BB's story](#) - a lost little cat who was reunited with her owner after one year on the streets, when finally having her microchip scanned. Unfortunately this story isn't all that common as very often microchip details aren't transferred to the new owner from a breeder or aren't updated when the family moves or the pet changes hands for any reason. In emergency practice I saw many stray



pets arrive only to be sent to the pound as there were no current owner details on the microchip register. When you buy a kitten or puppy you must [Lifetime Register](#) them no later than 6 months of age otherwise their details will slip off the database. Similarly if any of your details change, make it a priority to update the microchip register. This can be done at any council with the microchip number which any vet or council ranger can scan for.

RECOGNISING ANIMAL PAIN

Recognising severe pain may be easy ie. suddenly collapsing, vocalising, hiding or not eating to name a few. However recognising chronic or less debilitating pain is often very difficult and can be easily overlooked. If left unnoticed, your pet could be suffering silently and further more hazardous problems could arise.

The first thing to recognise is species differences in the manifestation of pain. The more common pets such as dogs and cats are predators while having a strong survival instinct and pain manifests in a variety of ways, while rabbits and guinea pigs, being prey animals, show very subtle if any signs of pain. Reptiles may be even harder to assess being so far removed from our “normal” behaviour patterns. This leads to the second most important thing which is to recognise what is “normal” for your pet. You know your pet better than anyone else and so are best placed to recognise behaviour



changes even when subtle, for example exercising less, less social, not greeting you in the morning, staying on the couch for longer than usual, quieter than usual, having a “sad look”, not quite himself.

One of the common comments I get from clients following an examination for a limp is “Do you think he needs pain killers, I’m not sure if he is in pain?”. This is a beautiful illustration of the difficulty. The limp is a direct manifestation of the pain yet he still seems happy, with tail wagging or is affectionate, is eating, and even wants to play as usual. With behaviour like this it is easy to miss the cues that are begging to be noticed. These all throw us easily off the track and it takes longer for this patient to receive pain relief, if he does at all.

Take Home Message
If you notice **any** change in your pets demeanor or physical appearance, or in what you consider “normal” for your pet, he or she may be experiencing pain. You should seek veterinary assistance immediately.

The bottom line is if you notice any change to your pet’s “normal” or recognise any of the species specific manifestations of pain you should seek veterinary assistance immediately.

DENTAL DISEASE - HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

Dental disease is probably one of the most overlooked aspects of our pets’ general health. Dental disease can be a source of serious pain and discomfort and also cause far reaching systemic problems if left unchecked.

As a comparison, human animals brush their teeth (or are supposed to!) twice a day and are still recommended to visit the dentist twice a year. Of-course in the “wild” our pets wouldn’t be brushing their teeth but their environment and diet would be different too. And if they did happen to get any dental problems, they would often simply die from starvation if they were unable to eat their natural diet.



Fig 1: Greenies dental chew

In carnivores plaque builds up very quickly within hours and soon turns to tartar which is the bacteria laden hardened mineral that sticks to the teeth. Tartar begins to invade under the gums eventually causing “periodontal disease” which is the irreversible loss of bone around the tooth roots. The end result is the tooth falling out but along the way your pet can change from

happy & playful into being more reserved and guarded. As it happens slowly you may not even realise, considering the changes to be “aging”. Clients have been amazed at how much their pet brightens after a full dental prophylaxis, often with the extraction of several teeth required when left too long. We then realise that our pets have been living with chronic oral and dental pain and have learnt to mask it very effectively.



Fig 2: Tartar, gingivitis and gum recession

The goal of course is not to let this happen in the first place. Some pets require very regular dentals, once or twice a year, and others less often but the most important thing is to include a thorough dental assessment with every [annual health check](#), and to implement a [dental health plan](#) through the year.

My blog article [“Are bones good for keeping our dog’s and cat’s teeth clean?”](#) has more information on this. Please also see my blog article on [rabbit diets and dental care](#).