

The friendly road to pet Wellness
HIGHlands VETERINARY HOSPITAL

NOVEMBER 2026

The Better Pet Gazette

highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au



November is **Pet Cancer Awareness Month,** making it a good time to remind pet owners that cancer doesn't always announce itself with an obvious lump or dramatic change.

Sometimes, the earliest warning signs can be subtle and easy to dismiss as part of getting older. Keep an eye out for changes that persist or gradually worsen, such as **unexplained weight loss, reduced appetite, increased tiredness** or **a reluctance to exercise.** Other possible warning signs: **unusual lumps or swelling, unhealed sores, persistent coughing, difficulty breathing, changes in toileting habits, vomiting or diarrhoea** or **unexplained bleeding.**

Changes in your pet's behaviour can also be significant. A normally active pet that becomes withdrawn, less interested in family activities or reluctant to be touched may be experiencing pain or discomfort. Likewise, a sudden change in appetite, thirst or energy levels deserves attention, particularly when there is no obvious explanation.

It's important to remember that these signs do not necessarily mean your pet has cancer. Many of them can be caused by other, more common conditions. However, noticing a change and having it checked by your veterinarian can help identify the underlying cause.

Cancer is often easier to manage when detected early. Please check with us if you have any concerns about your pet's health. *Book online **here** or give us a call — we're here to help: (02) 4872 1144.*

When you order a puppy and accidentally receive a small bear. This adorable 11-week-old Akita came for a visit to the clinic recently. Weighed in at a casual 13kg - wow!!



The Better Pet Gazette is a monthly newsletter full of informative articles and tips on pet health as well as updates on what's happening at the practice. We hope you enjoy the read!

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need an appointment?
BOOK ONLINE

HERO OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER 2026



This month, our heroes are six very special little kittens who are showing just how much heart can fit into such tiny bodies!

Just two weeks old, these little ones tragically lost their mum after she was hit by a car. Now, they're facing the world without her, relying on round-the-clock care to help them survive and grow.

Our wonderful vet nurse, Rachael, has taken on the important job of bottle-feeding the six kittens every three to four hours, making sure they get the nourishment and care they need during these crucial early weeks.

These tiny fighters have a long way to go before they're ready to leave the nest, but with lots of love and dedication, they're being given the best possible chance at a happy, healthy future.

Once they're old enough, the kittens will be available for adoption through **Paws & Reins,** the rescue group that stepped in to help them.



Barking is a normal way for dogs to communicate, but when it becomes frequent or excessive, it can be frustrating for everyone — including your dog.

The key to reducing barking is understanding **why your dog is barking in the first place.**

Why Do Dogs Bark?

Dogs bark for many different reasons. Some bark to alert you to people, animals or noises, while others bark when they are excited, bored, anxious or seeking attention. Territorial barking is common, particularly when a dog sees people or other animals passing the house.

Some dogs bark because they have learned that it gets a response. If barking consistently results in attention, play, food or being let outside, your dog may learn that barking is an effective way to get what they want.

Separation anxiety can also cause persistent barking when a dog is left alone. In older dogs, a sudden increase in vocalisation may sometimes be associated with pain, illness or age-related changes.

Find the Cause First

Before trying to stop the barking, keep a note of when, where and why it happens. Does your dog bark at the front window? When left alone? During play? When you are busy and not giving them attention? Identifying the trigger makes it much easier to address the behaviour.

How Can You Reduce Barking?

Once you understand the cause, there are several practical strategies that can help:

- **Reduce triggers:** Close curtains, use frosted window film or move your dog's bed away from areas where they regularly see passers-by.
- **Provide plenty of exercise:** Regular physical activity and opportunities to sniff and explore can help prevent boredom.
- **Keep their mind busy:** Food puzzles, training sessions and interactive toys provide valuable mental stimulation.
- **Reward quiet behaviour:** When your dog is calm and quiet, reward them with praise, attention or a treat. This teaches them that being quiet is rewarding.
- **Teach an alternative behaviour:** Training your dog to go to their bed or look at you when they hear a trigger can give them something positive to do instead of barking. And remember, patience and consistency are the most important!



Come Help Yourself To Our **Community Grow Cart!**

We've stocked up our Community Grow Cart with plenty of FREE goodies, and we'd love for them to find a new home!

Available now:

- Pre-loved books
- Fresh lemons
- Yakon (a delicious and incredibly healthy root vegetable)

What is Yakon?

Yakon is a sweet, crunchy root vegetable, often described as tasting like a cross between an apple and a pear. It's packed with prebiotic fibre (inulin), which supports gut health, is naturally low in calories, and has a low glycaemic impact, making it a popular choice for healthy eating.

How do you cook it?

- Add to salads for a sweet crunch.
- Roast it like potatoes until caramelised.
- Stir-fry it with your favourite veggies.
- Add to soups for a subtle sweetness

No catch – just pop by and help yourself while supplies last!
Sharing is caring, so if you know someone who'd appreciate some fresh produce or a new book, let them know!

upcoming
LIVE TALK



Diabetes can develop in pets without obvious warning signs, and early detection can make a big difference. Join Dr Diederik for an informative livestream exploring the signs and symptoms of diabetes in dogs and cats, the risk factors to look out for, how diabetes is diagnosed, and why recognising the condition early matters. You'll also learn what subtle changes to watch for at home and when it's time to speak to your vet.

Please listen in on Wed, 4 Nov at 12.30pm on our Facebook page **here.** *If you are unable to attend this Facebook talk, you can find the recording in the Live section under the More menu for up to one month after the live - or click* **here.**

OCT FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

"Indoor Cats: Responsible and Necessary... or Overprotective and Limiting?"



Are indoor cats safer and happier, or are we limiting their natural instincts?

In his live talk, Dr Diederik explored the pros and cons of keeping cats indoors, considering their safety, wellbeing and natural behaviours. While indoor living can protect cats from traffic, predators and disease, it's important to provide plenty of enrichment, play, climbing opportunities and mental stimulation for our furry friends.

The key is finding the right balance between keeping our felines safe and allowing them to express their natural instincts. A happy cat needs both security and stimulation!

This livestream video is available until the 7 Nov, to watch **click here.**
To view any of the clinic's videos, just go **here.**



protect *your* pets

keeping pets safe from snakes and ticks

As the weather warms up, snakes and ticks become a greater concern for pet owners. Knowing the risks and taking a few simple precautions can help keep our dog or cat safe during the warmer months.

Snake Safety

Snake bites are a veterinary emergency, particularly in dogs and cats. Pets may encounter snakes while exploring long grass, bushland, gardens or areas around water.

Signs of snake envenomation can include **sudden weakness, wobbliness, vomiting, drooling, dilated pupils, difficulty breathing** or **collapse.** Sometimes the first signs can be subtle. If you suspect your pet has been bitten by a snake, seek veterinary attention immediately. Keep your pet as calm and still as possible and avoid trying to catch or handle the snake.

Keeping grass short, clearing away piles of debris and restricting access to areas where snakes may hide can help reduce the risk. When walking, keep dogs on a lead in areas where snakes are known to be present.

Protecting Pets from Ticks

Ticks can cause serious illness in pets, including potentially life-threatening paralysis caused by paralysis ticks. Regular tick prevention is therefore particularly important in areas where ticks are common.

Check your pet regularly, especially after they have been outdoors. Feel carefully over the head, neck, ears, between the toes and around the legs, as well as other areas where ticks can attach.

Your veterinarian can recommend an appropriate tick-prevention product for your pet. Follow the recommended dosing schedule carefully, as missing treatments can leave your pet unprotected.

Know the Risks

Prevention and early action are your best defences against these seasonal hazards. Talk to us about the most appropriate protection for your pet and make sure you know the warning signs that require urgent attention.

If you think your pet may have been bitten by a snake or paralyis tick, call the clinic immediately on (02) 4872 1144.

Both can cause life-threatening illness and require urgent veterinary treatment. Keep your pet calm and still, and don't wait for symptoms to develop.



Have you and your pet had a great experience with our team?

We love hearing your feedback, and your kind words mean the world to us. Not only does it brighten our day, but it also helps other pet owners feel confident about choosing our clinic for their furry family members.

If you have a moment, we'd be incredibly grateful if you could share your experience in a Google review. It's quick, easy, and makes a real difference to our small business. Thank you for supporting us and helping us care for more pets in our community!

CLICK HERE
to leave a review

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