



OCTOBER
2026

The Better Pet Gazette

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battling the bulge

recognising and
managing pet obesity

13 October is Pet Obesity Awareness Day — a timely reminder that maintaining a healthy weight is one of the most important things we can do to support our pets' long-term health and wellbeing.

Just like in people, carrying excess weight can have serious consequences for pets. Obesity can increase the risk of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and other joint problems, while also reducing mobility, energy and overall quality of life.

But how do you know if your pet is carrying too much weight? It's not always obvious, particularly with thick coats or certain body shapes. We can assess your pet's body condition score and determine whether they are at a healthy weight for their age, breed and lifestyle.

If your pet does need to lose weight, the good news is that even modest weight loss can make a meaningful difference. A tailored plan may include adjusting portion sizes, choosing an appropriate diet, increasing activity where suitable, and monitoring progress regularly.

It's important to remember that treats count, too! Ask us how to incorporate treats safely without unintentionally adding too many extra calories.

Please check with us if you have any concerns about your pet's weight.

We can provide personalised advice and help you create a diet and exercise plan tailored to your pet's needs. *Book online [here](#) or give us a call* — we're here to help: (02) 4872 1144.

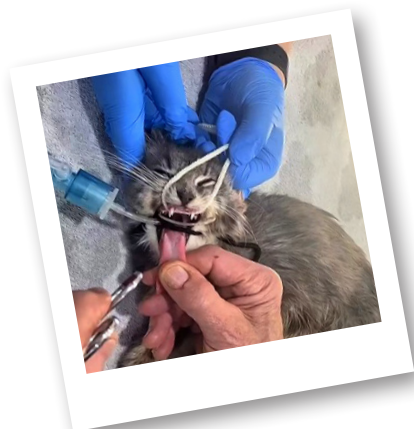
The lovely Ava, who is here at the clinic every day greeting patients (and owners) and barking at couriers. Her playful personality and wonderful sense of humour never fail to brighten our days!



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



Five-month-old Weetbix certainly had a big problem for such a little kitten!

He came to us struggling to breathe and failing to gain weight, and even in 47 years as a vet, Dr Diederik had never seen anything quite like it.

During his examination, the team discovered the surprising cause — a polyp the size of a grape lodged in the back of his throat and obstructing his breathing.

Thankfully, Weetbix received the treatment he needed and is now hopefully on his way to a happy, healthy, and much more comfortable future. You can watch the video of Weetbix's surgery on Facebook [here](#).

Weetbix came to us through **Little Beans Cat & Kitten Rescue**, an organisation we are proud to support as they rescue, rehabilitate and rehome abandoned, stray and surrendered cats and kittens. Could you give a kitten like Weetbix a forever home?



behind every great vet

are our veterinary nurses

Veterinary Nurse Awareness Week runs from 5–9 October, giving us the perfect opportunity to celebrate the incredible veterinary nurses who are such an essential part of our clinic team.

While veterinary nurses work closely alongside our veterinarians, their role extends far beyond assisting during consultations. They are highly trained professionals who play a vital role in almost every aspect of patient care — from preparing animals for surgery and monitoring anaesthesia to administering medications, changing dressings and caring for patients as they recover.

They are often the reassuring voice and gentle hand that helps a nervous pet feel safe when they are away from home.

Caring for Pets When They Need Us Most

Veterinary nurses are there through some of the most challenging moments in a pet's life. They monitor patients closely, recognise subtle changes in their condition and provide the ongoing care they need to recover. Whether it's comforting a frightened puppy, keeping a hospitalised cat comfortable, or carefully monitoring a patient after surgery, our nurses combine technical expertise with plenty of compassion.

Keeping You and Your Pets Informed

Our nurses also play an important role in educating and supporting pet owners. They may demonstrate how to give medication, care for a wound, manage a post-operative patient or provide advice about nutrition, preventative healthcare and ongoing treatment.

Their knowledge and experience can make a real difference to how confidently owners care for their pets at home.

A Huge Thank You!

There is a tremendous amount that happens behind the scenes to keep a veterinary clinic running safely and smoothly — and our veterinary nurses are at the heart of it.

This Veterinary Nurse Awareness Week, we'd like to say a huge thank you to our wonderful veterinary nurses for their skill, dedication, compassion and, of course, all the cuddles they give our patients!



parasite protection shouldn't smell like a compromise

Did you know that cats have an incredibly strong sense of smell?

So strong-smelling parasite treatments can be unpleasant for them. NexGard SPECTRA® Spot-On for Cats is a scientifically proven, low-odour formulation providing comprehensive parasite protection in one convenient monthly treatment.

Independent testing found NexGard SPECTRA had the lowest odour concentration of five commonly used topical cat parasite treatments in Australia.

Available to purchase from our clinic. Ask our veterinary team about NexGard SPECTRA for your cat.

NexGard
SPECTRA®
SPOT-ON SOLUTION FOR CATS

upcoming f LIVE TALK

indoor cats

responsible and necessary...
or overprotective and limiting?

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f LIVE Highlands Veterinary Hospital
07 OCT • 2026 • 12:30PM

Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman explores the question of whether keeping cats indoors is a responsible way to protect their health and safety, or a restriction that compromises their natural behaviours and wellbeing.

Join us on your lunch break:
07.10.26
@ 12:30pm

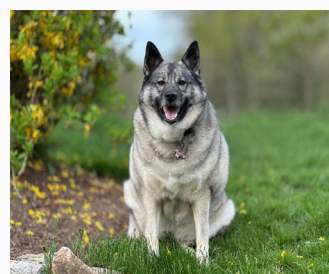
Join Dr Diederik for an engaging live talk as he explores one of the biggest debates in cat ownership: should cats be kept indoors, or do they need outdoor access to live a happy, fulfilled life? Dr Diederik will discuss the health, safety and behavioural impacts of both lifestyles, examining how indoor living can protect cats from traffic, disease and other hazards while considering whether it limits their natural instincts to hunt, climb and explore. He'll also share practical tips for creating an enriching indoor environment, helping you make the best decision for your feline companion.

Please listen in on Wed, 7 Oct 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**.

SEPT FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

Battling the Bulge: Recognising & Managing Pet Obesity

Dr Diederik tackled an important but often overlooked aspect of pet health — maintaining a healthy weight. He explained how to recognise when a pet is carrying excess weight, why obesity is much more than a cosmetic issue, and the health problems it can contribute to, including joint disease, diabetes and breathing difficulties. He also shared practical tips for managing your pet's weight, from making sensible dietary choices to incorporating appropriate exercise and monitoring progress. Most importantly, he highlighted how maintaining a healthy weight can help pets enjoy a longer, healthier and happier life.



This livestream video is available until the 4 Oct, to watch **click here**. To view any of the clinic's videos, just go **here**.

squishy-faced pets

thinking of adding one to your family?



There's no denying that French Bulldogs, Pugs and other flat-faced breeds are incredibly cute. But behind those adorable squishy faces can be some significant health challenges that prospective owners should understand before bringing one home.

What Does “Brachycephalic” Actually Mean?

Brachycephalic means “shortened head”. These dogs have a shortened skull that gives them their characteristic flat faces. However, the soft tissues inside the head haven't always shortened along with the bones, which can leave less room for air to move through the nose and throat. French Bulldogs, English Bulldogs, Pugs, Boston Terriers, Shih Tzus, Pekingese and Boxers are among the breeds commonly affected.

When Snoring Isn't Just Snoring

Many brachycephalic dogs develop *Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS)*. Narrow nostrils, an elongated soft palate and other airway abnormalities can make breathing harder than it should be. Snoring, snorting, gagging, struggling with exercise or having difficulty coping with warm weather shouldn't simply be dismissed as “normal for

the breed”. These can all be signs that your dog is working too hard to breathe.

Because of their compromised airways, affected dogs are also at greater risk of overheating, heatstroke, exercise intolerance, collapse and issues such as reflux and gastrointestinal discomfort.

Helping Your Flat-Faced Dog Breathe Easier

There are ways to improve your dog's comfort and quality of life. Keeping them at a healthy weight, avoiding excessive heat and humidity, managing exercise carefully and using a harness (rather than a collar) can all help.

For dogs with significant airway obstruction, surgery may be recommended.

Considering a Flat-Faced Dog?

Brachycephalic dogs can absolutely live happy, fulfilling lives, but informed ownership is essential. If you're considering one of these breeds — or already have a flat-faced dog and are concerned about their breathing — our team is happy to assess your pet and discuss their individual needs. Give us a call on (02) 4872 1144.



when a beak tells a story

Sadly, this beautiful cockatoo had to be euthanised after developing advanced *Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease (PBFD)*. Severe deformity and overgrowth of its beak made it extremely difficult for the bird to eat and survive in the wild.

PBFD is a highly contagious viral disease affecting parrots, cockatoos, lorikeets and other native birds. Signs can include abnormal or missing feathers, feather loss, overgrown or misshapen beaks, difficulty eating, weight loss and weakness.

Unfortunately, there is no cure, and advanced cases can have a very poor prognosis.

How can you help? Keep pet birds away from wild parrots and cockatoos, and if you find a wild bird with unusual feather loss or an abnormal beak, contact a wildlife rescue organisation or veterinarian for advice.