

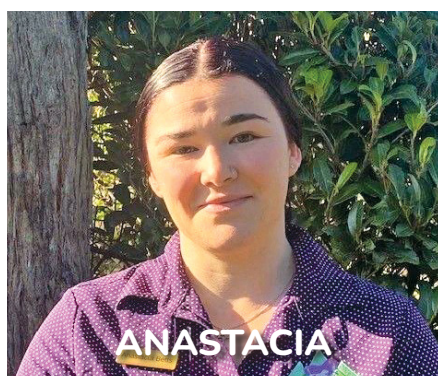
SEPT
2026

The Better Pet Gazette

h i g h l a n d s v e t e r i n a r y h o s p i t a l . c o m . a u



Say 'hello' to our newest veterinary nurses!



ANASTACIA

Anastacia (Anna) completed her Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing in 2022 and has been passionate about caring for animals ever since. Together with her husband, Sidney, she is raising their beautiful daughter, Ella.

Anna shares her home with a much-loved collection of animals, including Millie the Blue Cattle Dog, Xena the Border Collie, Alfie the Thoroughbred, and Buster the Jack Russell x Maltese.

She has always been passionate about working with animals, but what drew her to veterinary nursing was the opportunity to support both pets and their owners during difficult times.

Anna understands that bringing a pet to the vet can be stressful, so she is dedicated to providing compassionate care and clear communication to help every client and patient feel as comfortable and supported as possible.



RACHAEL

Rachael joined the Highlands Veterinary Hospital family in May 2026, bringing several years of veterinary nursing experience from around the Southern Highlands. She completed her Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing through Yallah TAFE in 2020 and has been dedicated to animal care ever since.

Animals have always been at the heart of Rachael's life. After spending six years working at a local animal shelter, her passion for animal welfare, dog training and canine behaviour flourished.

At home, Rachael and her fiancée are raising their young son alongside two rescue dogs and three adopted cats she bottle-raised from tiny kittens.

Rachael's knowledge, compassion and leadership make her an invaluable member of our team and a passionate advocate for every animal in her care.

When your mum says, 'Just a little vaccination today...' and you suddenly remember all the life choices that led you here. Don't worry, brave fluffball — extra treats were prescribed for recovery!



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



did you know

that osteoarthritis pain
is present in nearly

40%
OF CATS?



It's not always easy to see whether cats are in pain - as they are masters at hiding it!

Osteoarthritis (OA) pain can be a serious health problem for your cat. Changes in your cat's movement, activity and playful behaviours can indicate osteoarthritis pain.

Just as in humans, chronic pain negatively impacts your cat's quality of life, not just physically, but also emotionally.

If you have a cat you think might be suffering from OA-related pain, contact us to make an appointment for an evaluation. Before attending the consult, fill out this checklist so our veterinary team can identify your cat's activities and behaviours that might be signs of osteoarthritis.

There are many treatments that could benefit your kitty and get that spring back in his/her step, including some new and exciting products for this condition.

not every dog is a **social butterfly**



the truth about dog parks and daycare

Doggy daycare and dog parks can be wonderful outlets for exercise, enrichment and social interaction—but they aren't the right fit for every dog.

While some dogs thrive in these environments, others can become overwhelmed, anxious or develop unwanted behaviours.

The Socialisation Myth

Many people believe that socialisation simply means letting dogs play with as many other dogs as possible. In reality, good socialisation is about helping dogs feel calm, confident and comfortable in different situations. Constant exposure to large groups of excited dogs can sometimes increase arousal levels rather than teach appropriate social skills.

When It's All Too Much

Busy daycares and dog parks can be highly stimulating. Some dogs may become overexcited, develop rough play habits, rehearse bullying or reactive behaviours, or return home exhausted rather than relaxed. Puppies and adolescent dogs are particularly impressionable, making positive, well-managed experiences especially important.

Signs a Break is Needed

It's important to pay attention to how your dog responds before, during and after daycare or dog park visits. Signs that your dog may be struggling can include hiding, avoiding other dogs,

excessive panting, becoming more reactive, appearing unusually tired, or showing changes in behaviour at home. A dog that is constantly practising high-energy play may need more opportunities to relax, sniff, explore and engage in calmer activities. Remember, a tired dog isn't always a happy dog—emotional wellbeing is just as important as physical exercise.

Finding the Right Balance

Some dogs genuinely enjoy daycare or regular visits to the dog park, while others are happier with quieter walks, enrichment activities, training sessions or playdates with familiar canine friends. Dogs that spend every weekday at daycare may also become so accustomed to constant company that they struggle to cope when left home alone.

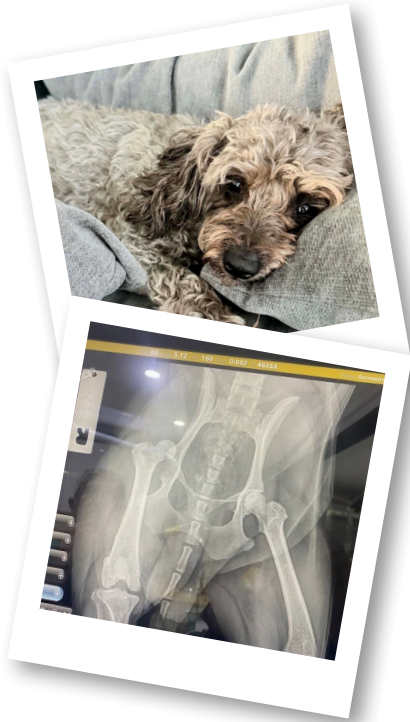
The best approach is to consider your dog's individual personality, age and temperament. A well-matched environment that builds confidence and encourages calm behaviour is far more beneficial than assuming every dog needs group play. If you're unsure of what's best for your dog, speak with us here at HIGHlands or a qualified force-free dog trainer for personalised advice.



HERO

OF THE MONTH

SEPTEMBER 2026



Meet Dixie, the adventurous Poodle cross who recently discovered that not every gap in the fence is as big as it looks!

In an attempt to squeeze through a small hole, Dixie ended up with a dislocated hip.

A hip dislocation (also known as a coxofemoral luxation) occurs when the "ball" of the thigh bone is forced out of the hip socket. The good news? Dixie was treated under anaesthetic, and we were able to pop her hip back into place without the need for surgery. She also received plenty of pain relief to keep her comfortable.

Unfortunately, Dixie's hip has since popped out twice more. So, she has had surgery, which went well. She is now recovering with plenty of rest. After everything Dixie's been through, she has truly earned her title as our Hero of the Month!

upcoming

f LIVE TALK



indoor cats

responsible and necessary...
or overprotective and limiting?

facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital

f LIVE Highlands Veterinary Hospital
02 SEPT • 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:
02.09.26
@ 12:30pm

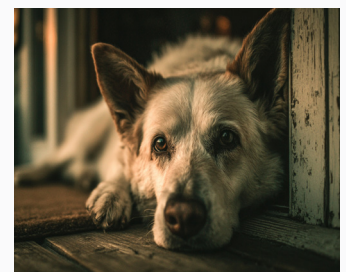
Join Dr Diederik for an engaging live talk as he explores one of the biggest debates in cat ownership: should cats be kept indoors, or do they need outdoor access to live a happy, fulfilled life? Dr Diederik will discuss the health, safety and behavioural impacts of both lifestyles, examining how indoor 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, 2 Sept 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](#).

AUGUST FACEBOOK LIVE TALK RECAP

Senior Pets & Surgery: Tough Decisions with Older Pets

Dr Diederik discussed the challenges of making medical decisions for ageing pets, particularly when major surgery is being considered. He explored how owners can weigh the potential benefits of treatment against the risks, recovery process and likely outcomes.



The talk emphasised looking beyond age alone and considering each pet's individual health, circumstances and quality of life. It also highlighted the importance of having honest conversations with veterinarians to make informed, compassionate decisions that prioritise the pet's wellbeing.

This livestream video is available until the 5 Sept, to watch [click here](#). To view any of the clinic's videos, just go [here](#).



pet first aid

be prepared for the unexpected...

Accidents can happen when you least expect them, and having a well-stocked pet first aid kit can make all the difference while you're arranging veterinary care. First aid is not a substitute for treatment by a veterinarian, but it can help keep your pet safe and comfortable until they can be seen.

What Should Be in a Pet First Aid Kit?

A basic pet first aid kit should include gauze pads, bandages, adhesive tape, antiseptic solution (safe for pets), saline for flushing wounds or eyes, tweezers, blunt-ended scissors, disposable gloves, a digital thermometer, a towel or blanket, and your veterinarian's emergency contact details. It's also helpful to keep a muzzle on hand (if appropriate), as even the gentlest pets may bite when they're in pain.

Caring for Cuts and Burns

For minor cuts, gently flush the wound with saline or clean water and apply light pressure with a clean gauze pad to stop any bleeding. Avoid using human antiseptics or creams unless advised by your veterinarian.

If your pet suffers a burn, cool the area immediately with cool running water for 10–20 minutes. Never apply ice,

butter or ointments, as these can make the injury worse. Burns should always be assessed by a veterinarian.

If You Suspect Poisoning

If you think your pet has eaten something toxic, don't wait for symptoms to appear. Remove any remaining substance if it's safe to do so and contact your veterinarian immediately. Unless specifically instructed by a veterinary professional, never try to make your pet vomit, as this can sometimes cause more harm than the poison itself.

When to Go Straight to the Vet

Some situations require immediate veterinary attention. Seek urgent care if your pet has difficulty breathing, severe bleeding, a suspected broken bone, seizures, collapse, heatstroke, snake bite, poisoning, severe burns, or has been hit by a vehicle. Trust your instincts—if your pet seems unusually distressed or unwell, it's always better to have them examined.

Being prepared and knowing a few basic first aid steps can help you stay calm in an emergency, but prompt veterinary care remains the most important part of helping your pet recover safely.



brave baby!

This adorable baby ringtail possum was recently brought into Highlands Veterinary Hospital after being attacked by a cat. Thankfully, after a thorough examination, we found only a small puncture wound on the inside of one of its legs. Apart from that, this little one was bright, alert and in Good health.

After receiving treatment and a full health check, it has now been transferred into the care of an experienced wildlife carer, where he will recover and grow stronger before being released back into the wild where he belongs.

This is a timely reminder that even well-fed, much-loved pet cats and dogs have natural hunting instincts. Australia's native wildlife is incredibly vulnerable, especially young animals like this little ringtail.