



**Murray Bridge Veterinary Clinic**

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## Welcome to Dr Sarah!

We asked our newest team member to tell us about herself, we have loved having Sarah around the clinic for the past few weeks!

A lot of people comment about my funny accent, which is a blended result of my many homes. I was born in South Africa and lived in sunny Durban until my family moved to Invercargill in NZ's South Island. Moving there mid-winter was a cold shock, but my sister and I loved the extra space, helping out on neighbouring properties and having a few cattle and sheep of our own. Deciding to go to vet school moved me to Massey University in the North Island. Then, in my final year, I completed vet placements while visited family in Adelaide and was offered a job. I really enjoyed that first visit to South Australia, so decided to move here after graduating in 2011. I've worked in a few different clinics since then and love the variety of species in mixed practice. I also did an honours research project on bovine somatic cell counts at The University of Adelaide.

I now live in Meadows with my husband Josh, our two boisterous dogs and noisy cat. Panda, a boxer cross staffy was emaciated when she was rescued. She started out quite timid but is now so full of life that Thor (a two year old staffy cross Bernese Mountain dog) can't keep up with her! Jax, the Bengal, serenades us with his loud yowls night and day. He doesn't know this is the reason he was rescued so doesn't let that dampen his volume!

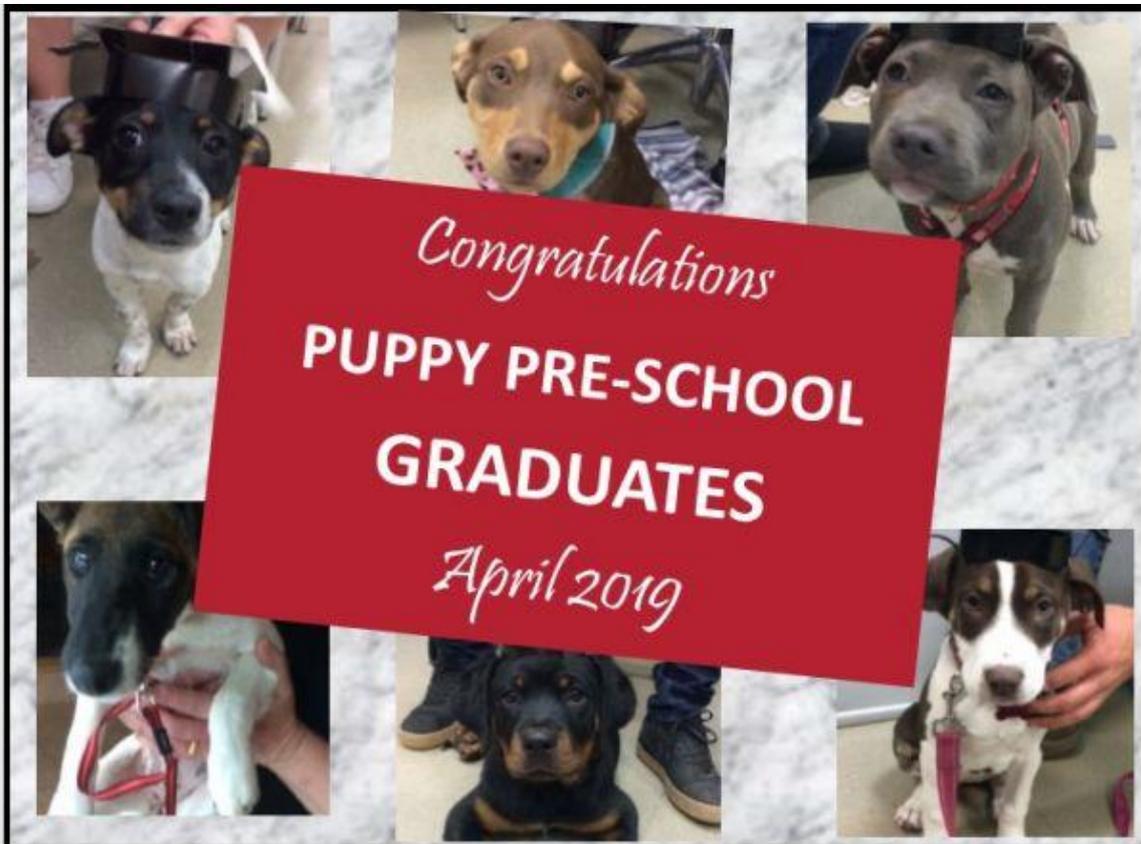
Josh and I love walking the dogs in the forest, beach outings, camping and doing volunteer work with our Christadelphian church. We've made a few trips to Papua New Guinea and have been very touched by the positivity and friendliness of those we've met on isolated islands where they have so little. They help us gain perspective of the things that really matter in life!

## Mother's day vibes



With Mother's Day falling this month we'd love to wish all the mothers of the animal kingdom a happy Mother's Day and also share [this heartwarming YouTube video](#).





## Puppy Pre School

Congratulations to the puppies who have graduated from the April Puppy Pre School Class.

Milo  
Bowi  
Sophie  
Brucey  
Nala  
Tala

To view all the adorable graduation photos please visit our [website](#).

What will my puppy gain from Puppy Pre School?

Your puppy will gain valuable social skills by simply interacting with other puppies and people. These skills the pup develops it will use for life. Your puppy will learn how to interact with lots of people, loud noises and children and even a visit to the vet will become fun rather than something to shake about. Your puppy will develop into a friendly, educated, confident adult dog.

How will I benefit?

Owning a dog will be enjoyable rather than a chore. Having an obedient, well socialised dog is much more pleasant and stress free. You will also gain knowledge in all areas of pet care from dental, nutrition, solving behavioural problems, toilet training and lots, lots more. Weekly freebies and samples to take home for the puppy. For more information please visit our [website](#).



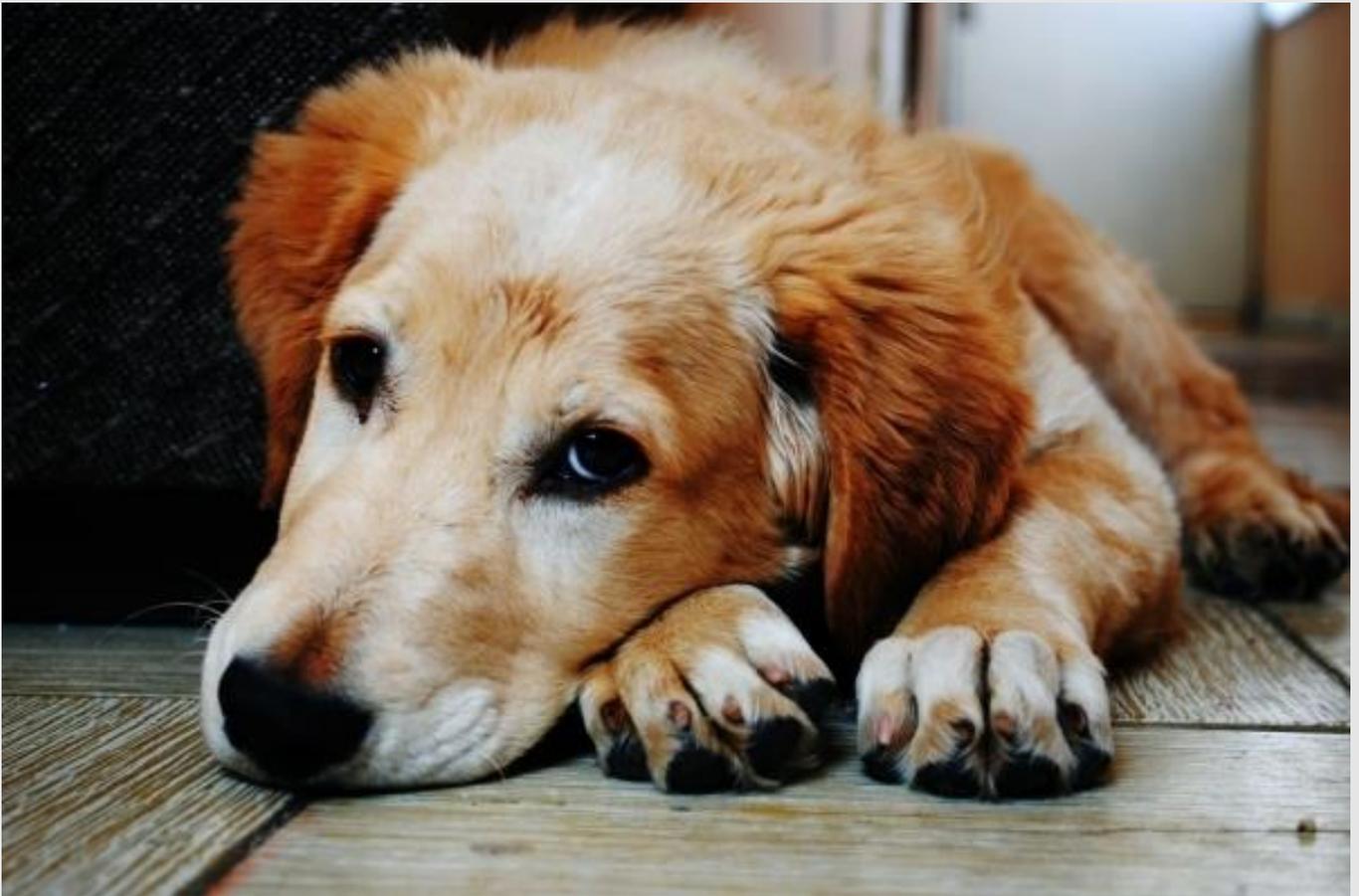
## Hip Hip Hooray!!

A BIG Happy Birthday to our current Healthcare members who will be celebrating in May:

Molly - 16 years old  
Voss - 15 years old  
Turbo - 12 years old  
Ellah - 13 years old  
Jessie Cee - 14 years old

MBVC Healthcare plans are available for cats and dogs of all ages! If you would like some more info on our Healthcare Plans please [Contact Us](#) or read more on our [website](#). Here you will find how the plan could help you to provide comprehensive preventative healthcare for your pet, spread the cost and take advantage of special offers for Pet Healthcare Members.

## Could your pet have arthritis?



If you're finding it a bit harder to get out of bed on these colder mornings, spare a thought for your pet. Arthritis loves to rear its ugly head around this time of the year and the reason your pet might be sleeping in more than usual could be due to pain.

Arthritis is characterised by the wearing down of the cartilage that covers the bones at the end of a joint. This cartilage usually helps joints move freely but as it wears down, the ends of the bones become exposed and rub together. This can be very painful and can really affect your pet's quality of life.

Arthritis does seem to be worse in the colder months but it can certainly affect your pet all year round. It is very important to understand that your pet won't necessarily limp or yelp if they are in pain so we recommend you watch out for these signs in your dog (we'll talk more about cats in the article below):

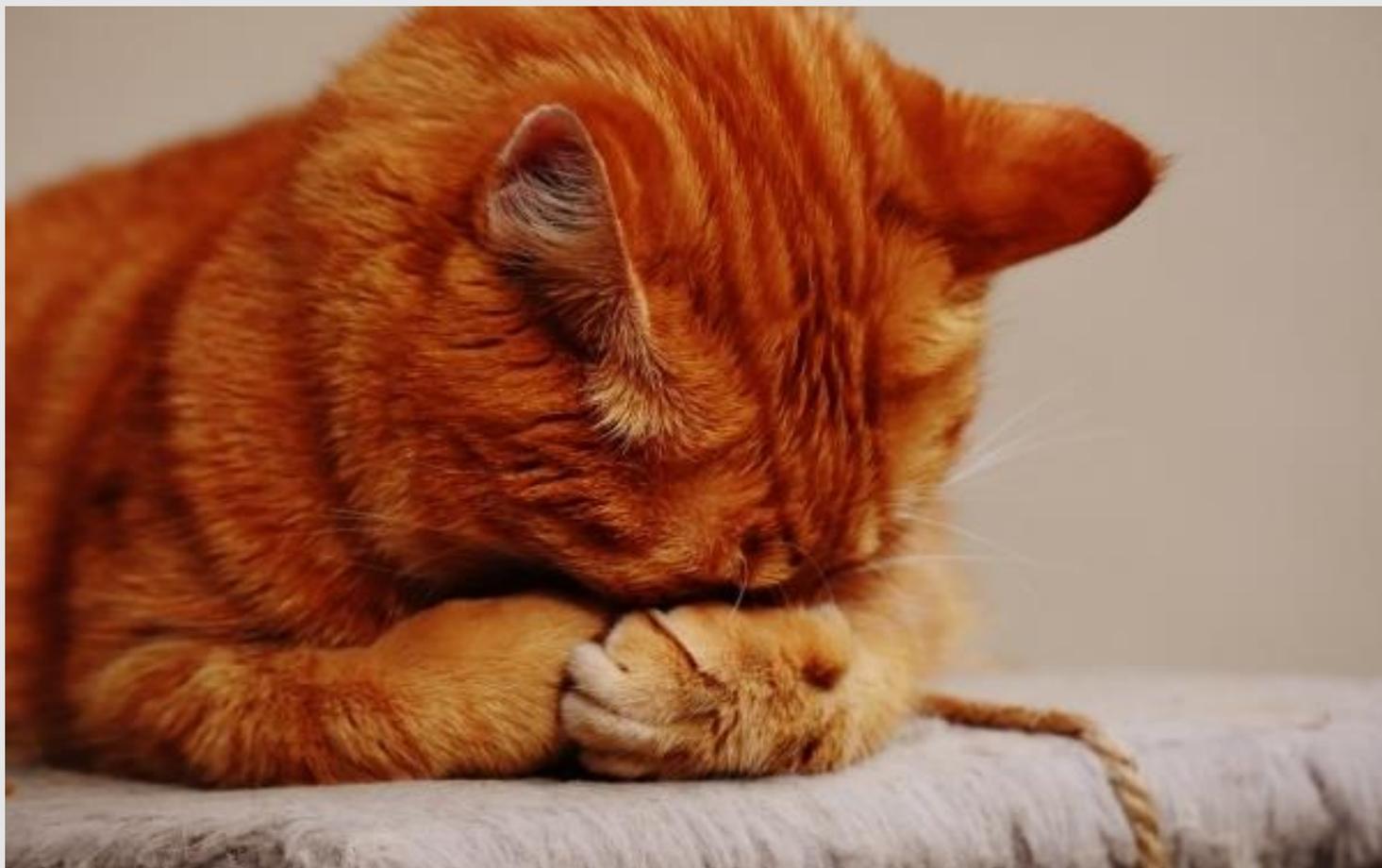
- Hesitant to jump into the car, up onto furniture or use stairs
- Lowers their body slowly when going to lie down then falls in a heap
- Is a bit slow to get going after getting up and may slip on floorboards
- Is slowing down on walks or is reluctant to walk as far as they used to
- Exhibits behavioural changes such as being a bit grumpier than usual

Try not to put any of the above changes down to your pet "just getting old". Even if your pet is a senior animal, they shouldn't be uncomfortable!

The best news is that there are plenty of ways to manage arthritis. We work towards a multi-targeted approach where we use different drugs to reduce the overall dose rate and side effects of any one treatment.

**Now is the perfect time for an arthritis check with us, phone now to make an appointment.**

## Why are cats so good at hiding arthritis?



Cats are even better than dogs at hiding or covering up pain caused by arthritis. This is because cats spend much of their time sleeping and given that we generally don't take cats for a walk, it is harder to see a change in their mobility. As well as this, in the wild, they tend to hide and keep to themselves if they are sick or in pain. This is just another reason why it's vital to keep a close eye on your feline friends and get them checked regularly by us. Look out for these subtle signs:

- Landing 'in a heap' when jumping off furniture
- Hesitant when jumping up or down from the furniture and reluctant to climb the fence or trees
- No longer using the litter box properly (especially if it has high sides)

Matted or scruffy coat (grooming is painful) and long nails because of reduced activity

**Ask us for advice if you are worried about your cat. If we do diagnose arthritis, good pain management can make a huge difference and help your cat live a longer and happier life.**

## Max has 'done his knee'



Max the 8-year-old border collie was enjoying his morning run at the park but landed awkwardly when he went to catch the ball. That afternoon he wouldn't place any weight on his left hind leg so a visit to us was scheduled ASAP.

An examination revealed all the signs of a ruptured cruciate ligament. This is one of the more common orthopedic injuries we see in dogs and if not treated effectively, can lead to painful arthritis. Some dogs will 'snap' the ligament after jumping off a height or turning quickly. These dogs present to us just as Max did and won't put any weight on the leg. The disease can also be a degenerative condition and some dogs will present with a mild, intermittent lameness and thickening of the joint.

Max's diagnosis was confirmed under a general anaesthetic where the stability of his knee was found to be compromised (because the ruptured ligament was no longer able to do its job at stabilising the knee). This is hard to determine when a dog is awake, especially if the knee is painful. Radiographs were also taken to look for swelling and arthritic changes.

Surgery to stabilise the knee joint is the best option for treatment and Max had surgery the next day and is recovering well. He needs to undergo careful rehabilitation but his prognosis for enjoying the park again in the future is good. To reduce the risk of him rupturing the other cruciate ligament, catching of balls will need to be limited.

It is important to realise that arthritis may still develop in the affected joint following surgery, but will be significantly reduced than if surgery was not performed.

**If you are ever concerned about your pet please call us for advice, we are always here to help.**

## Pet profile: Guinea Pigs



Guinea pigs make great pets. They are very friendly and are a little easier to handle than rabbits. They make ideal pets for kids in preschool or above and it's important to remember that they require a good diet and careful husbandry to help prevent health problems.

Here are our top tips:

### **Diet**

Diet is very important. A guinea pig's teeth grow continuously so they require lots of fibre to help wear them down. They also require Vitamin C in their diet as they are unable to produce it themselves. Abundant veggies and fruit are essential and they love red capsicum, broccoli, strawberries, parsley, spinach (plus lots of others!) Good quality pellets should be a treat (max 1 tablespoon per day).

### **Housing**

Guinea pigs are social animals and are best kept inside to help to strengthen their relationship with you. They require dust-free bedding (e.g. shredded paper) and this needs to be changed daily. Providing hiding spots and tunnels is essential. If your guinea pig is kept outside, keep them safe from predators (dogs, cats, foxes, birds). They are very susceptible to heat stroke so bring them indoors when temperatures get above 28 degrees. Never keep guinea pigs inside a metal hutch as these heat up very quickly.

### **Friendships**

Guinea pigs are picky about their friends. The best situation is usually a desexed male with two to three females. They are not great companions for rabbits as they have different dietary requirements to rabbits and often get beaten up by dominant rabbits. Rabbits can also carry a disease that is deadly to guinea pigs.

**We are here to answer any questions you might have about your pet so always feel free to ask us for advice.**

This email contains comments of a general nature only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional veterinary advice. It should not be relied on as the basis for whether you do or don't do anything.

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