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January 2021 Newsletter 🐾 🐾 🐾

A new year is always a time of reflection about the year past. What went well, what didn't, and how we can improve things for the new year. Our newsletter has changed accordingly and has a fresh new approach. It will still be chock full of valuable information and is aimed at helping the pet owner through all stages of your pet's development. Our dedicated team is here to help you whether it is just a routine visit or whether it is a health issue your pet has that requires our help. You and your pet are welcome any time and our goal is to make your pet feel right at home during their visit.

As the seasons change, we like to point out the things to be aware of during the season. The summer has started with sizzling heat and although we know it is obvious, we'd like to remind pet owners that animals will be feeling the heat too. They require plenty of fresh water to drink, shade to escape the blistering sun, and that it is better to walk your dog in the cooler times of the day, ie the early morning or during the evening.

The Wombat.

'An Accidental Hero'



This Australia Day, here at HIGHlands Veterinary Hospital, we want to raise praise for our furry friend, the Wombat. The wombat lives only here in Australia and, here in the Southern Highlands it is most common for us to see the Bare-nosed Wombat and although very rare we also home the Southern hairy-nosed wombat. The wombat and can grow up to 1.3 metres and weigh as much as 36 kilograms. Although they have a strong stocky build with short legs, a Wombat can travel up to 3 kilometres every night for feeding on native grasses, shrub roots and trees, and can run up to 40 kilometres an hour.

Wombats use their strong legs and hard claws to dig burrows underground measuring from just 3 metres to up to 200 metres and up to 3.5 metres deep underground. Most Wombats live alone, and depending on the subspecies, it can very common that Wombat burrows interconnect and share tunnels making a colony. Large colonies of 10 -12 Wombats have as many as 7 entrances.

The Wombat burrow temperature can range from between 4 and 26 Degrees Celsius. With the natural dirt insulation deep underground, Wombat burrows became a refugee during times of catastrophe like bushfires. In the December 2019 fires here in New South Wales, it was found that lots of smaller members of our natural wildlife, like wallabies and echidnas were found emerging from the debris unharmed, with the only explanation being that they were hiding with the wombats, safe in the depths of the burrows.



TIPS For Photographing Pets.

Get down on their level – it will give you better angles to shoot from. Pets tend to loosen up when you are closer to their level.

Use natural lighting – some pets are frightened by a flash.

Focus on their eyes – that is where all the expression comes from.

Patience – you will need a ton of it. Don't get cross with them, they have no idea what you want. Plus following them everywhere while looking at them through a camera may creep them out.

Use a longer lens for those pets that may be scared of the camera, it will allow you to stay a longer distance away and zoom in on them. Prepare the area you want them to pose in. If your pet likes a certain toy, or loves a special treat, be prepared to use these tools.

Prepare the stage first, then work with your pet. And above all – KEEP CALM 😊

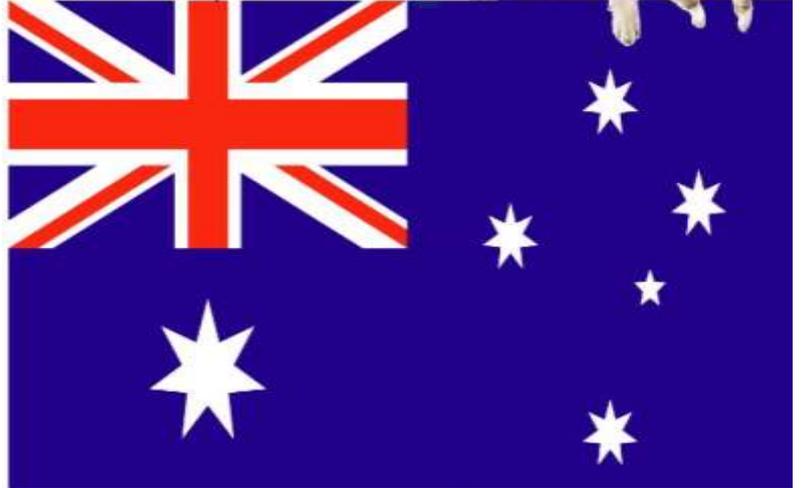
Come and Celebrate Australia Day with us

Get your pet decked out in their Best Aussie Outfit for your chance to win a \$1250.00 Holiday

Simply take a photo of your pet or pets celebrating Australia Day and Share to our Facebook Page

Runner Up Prizes for the next Best Dressed Pets

Entries open from 23rd of January 2021 to 30th of January 2021
Prizes drawn 01st February 2021



Case Study -Crate training for Dogs (and cats)

While some people cringe at using a crate for pet training, there are many that value it highly. Crate training gives your dog a sense of security and safety – it is their 'pet cave', a retreat from noise, children, or strangers who are visiting. It is their safe haven. Crate training has the advantage for travel – if your dog (or cat) is used to the crate, travelling within the crate is familiar which means less fear. The crate has their favourite blanket, some food and water and they will often take in their favourite toy to chew or cuddle. While most people use them for dogs, a crate can add value to your cats life as well. If you have visitors that become overwhelming to your cat, they can go into their crate and know they are safe. Just put it up at a higher level for kitty. See what Diederick has to say about crate training. [Watch our video HERE](#)



Is Your Cat Nervous of Visiting the Vets?

The main tip here is that you need to be super confident and calm. If you are nervous, your cat will be too. Train your cat to become used to a crate so they are not scared of being contained. Leave the crate handy where they can go to at will. Put in a nice blanket, a treat or two and a toy. Try taking them out for a short drive while you have them contained, just so they get used to the car. And bring them in to meet us, we are happy for them to have a look around. You want this to be just a friendly visit. You may need a few visits to get their confidence. Let them learn that a trip to see us isn't always about being poked and prodded. We will happily welcome a nervous cat with some cuddles and treats. Then when you do need us, your cat will know we are on their side. Less stress, happy cat!



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Senior Care - Looking After Your Aging Dog

Dogs are considered a senior around the age of seven. However the typical lifespan of a dog is around 12 -15 years. Smaller dogs tend to live longer, larger dogs have a shorter lifespan. Signs of aging is a general slowing down in their activity. They don't have the same level of flexibility or endurance as they did when they were younger.



Common signs of aging include disorientation, confusion or they may be less responsive. Several health issues may raise their ugly head such as blindness, loss of hearing, dementia and kidney disease. So how can you help them to adjust to these health issues?

Change to [six monthly wellness checkup](#) so you can catch health issues when they begin. If your dog has lost a bit of endurance, break their walk down to slower and shorter walks. They still need the exercise, but they do need to adjust their pace. If stairs or steps are a problem for your senior dog, build a ramp so it is easy for them to get onto things. Mats with gripping material to hold them in place will be a help to an elderly dog. Your dog may need more frequent toilet breaks, and a comfy bed with extra padding will be a welcome treat. Feed your dog a high quality dog food, perhaps even try the senior dog food formula which may be easier for your dog to digest. Keep a record of any health problems, medications and note any changes in behaviour for the vet. And finally, be patient with your older pooch, and give them a lot of extra tender loving care.

We would like to thank you, our valued clients, for all your support during the difficult times of 2020. What a year it has been, and we couldn't have survived it without you.

We wish you all the very best for the New Year.

May 2021 be a year of realised dreams, family harmony, and healthy pets to fill your year with love and bring you the unlimited happiness you deserve!



Your Cat Requirements for Their Senior Years.

If your cat could talk they would probably say they need plenty of peace and quiet! In other words, a senior cat can be less tolerant than they used to. They may have aching bones (not that they would tell you) or perhaps their hearing is not so good.

As your cat approaches its eleventh year, the transition from adult to senior begins. Your cat's diet may need to change, they will need high quality food that is easy to digest. You could even change to small but more frequent meals to help them maintain their health. Take it slowly with these changes as cats don't always welcome a change in their routine. Using a puzzle toy with food can promote physical and mental engagement at meal times.

Increase water as older cats are prone to constipation and kidney disease. And make sure that food/water containers, beds, and litter boxes are at the right level as your senior cat doesn't have quite the ability to jump up onto things as they did. Keep your cat a healthy weight so their joints are not put under pressure. [Dental care](#) is important, as are more frequent health checks.

All cats need places to climb, hide, scratch and to play. As they age, they may be slightly slower, but they will still enjoy these things, as well as a caring warm lap to snuggle in.



Summers Hidden Health Traps.

When the heat increases, the health dangers for pets also rises. With all the time you spend outdoors, ticks become a hazard to your dog or cat. Check your pets at least once a day and especially after any walks in wooded areas. Ticks carry a number of diseases and need immediate removal (using tweezers) if you find them. If you think the tick has been there a while (if it is bloated and large) bring your [pet in for a quick checkup](#) to ensure all is well. Never underestimate the damage these villains can do!

Dehydration and heat stroke become a reality when the temperature rises. Animals should always have several clean water options available to them. If you are walking your dog, ensure you take water with you or walk in an area where you know there are frequent water stations available. Short nosed dogs such as pugs, dark coloured pets or a pet who is a tad overweight can all suffer from too much sun. Cats can suffer too especially if they have a thick coat such as the Persian breed.

A sprinkler, pool, or paddling pool for your dog may be the ideal cool off remedy, but not all dogs like to swim. Pugs and terriers may have trouble swimming, so don't assume all dogs can swim. Only a foolish owner will try to make a cat cool down in the paddling pool – many cats will panic if forced into water so you could end up seriously scratched. Most cats prefer to be inside under the airconditioner. If you take your dog out on a boat, paddle board, or any other floatation device, make sure they don't jump overboard! A floatation device can be helpful here. After a salty or chlorine swim, rinse your dog off thoroughly to get rid of the chemicals.

Hot sidewalks can sizzle your pets paws, especially the black asphalt. Bee stings are common to curious cats and dogs. If there is a lot of swelling contact us and we can help. Snakes are also out and about, and they like to hide in tall grass or piles of junk. The best advice is to leave any snake alone. Check your yard before letting your cat or dog out. Call us immediately if your pet gets bitten by a snake and be aware that to a snake, a cat or a small dog can qualify as a perfect meal sized snack!

NEVER EVER leave [your cat or dog in a parked car](#) even if you are just 'popping in for a quick errand'. The temperature rises rapidly inside a parked car, and in a matter of minutes can become unbearable or even fatal for any animal.

Keep all these points in mind but don't be alarmed. Just be cautious and practice preventative pet care. Have fun and enjoy the long summer holidays with your best furred or feathered friend.

Interesting animal facts

It is much easier for dogs to learn spoken commands if they are given in conjunction with hand signals or gestures.

Cats like to nibble on grass as it helps the cat to regurgitate ingested fur which they acculate during grooming and the grass provides valuable vitamins for the cat's health.

The Koala has strong cartilage at the end of their curved spine (butt area) allowing them to make a eucalyptus tree a comfy home.



Call us anytime you need our help or advice.

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Help Our Wild life

During the hot summer, leave some bowls of water out for the local wildlife too. Visiting kangaroos, parrots, koalas and others will enjoy having some fresh clean water as they wander through. For birds and koalas, keep the water off the ground and out of reach of your pets. If you back onto a reserve, put the water bowl through the fence in a shaded area if possible.



We are here to help for any animal health & welfare concerns.

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