

# Best Mates

Summer/Autumn 2024



## Hearts of the Home

Meet Mel, Dedicated Vet Nurse at Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic

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THE  
LOST DOGS  
HOME.

# From One Friend to Another

Welcome to our 2024 Summer/Autumn edition of Best Mates magazine.



I'm delighted to again be sharing some of our most special stories with you in this edition of Best Mates. It's an extra pleasure to do so because these stories may never have happened without the vital support of our donors. This has been especially true as we find ourselves not only facing another kitten season, but also with an emerging challenge of increased numbers of dogs being surrendered by their owners. The cost of living continues to bite hard, meaning people often have no option but to surrender their beloved pets, for example when a medical expense is far beyond what they could ever be able to afford.

The numbers of puppies coming into our care is also steadily increasing, partly due to the lingering after effects of people rushing to obtain a pet for company during the COVID lockdowns. Unfortunately, during this time numbers of backyard puppy breeders increased. However, now that demand has all but gone, we are left to deal with the repercussions. The (happy ending) story of puppies Chunks, Nico and Winnie on page 10 explains this challenging topic in more detail.

I'm also delighted to introduce you to one of our wonderful Vet Nurses, Mel, who absolutely loves her job and 'wouldn't change it for the world'. This is typical of our dedicated and warm-hearted workforce, whether on the front-line feeding and nurturing our vulnerable residents or in the background making sure the computers are working!

We also celebrate our foster care heroes and highlight the importance of microchipping your pet. I challenge you not to shed a happy tear when you read Shirley and Manaia's story on page 5!

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading all the stories in this edition. After all, as I mentioned earlier, the effort, commitment, happy endings and joy, are all made possible thanks to the amazing support we are so fortunate to have from our wonderful community of donors and supporters.

Please, read on and enjoy!

**Grant Robb**  
CEO, The Lost Dogs' Home

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**Manaia comes home!**

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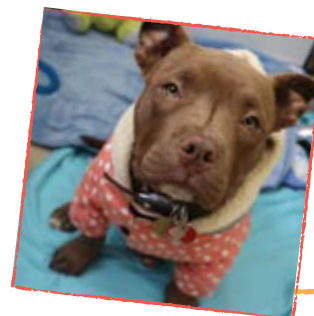


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**The Lost Dogs' Home**

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[dogshome.com](http://dogshome.com)

**Connect with us online:**



**Front cover image:**

Vet Nurse Mel treating a feline patient at Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic.

The Lost Dogs' Home is an open-intake shelter, meaning we will never turn away an animal based on their health, age, breed type, temperament, or situation. We are a leading animal welfare organisation based in Victoria caring for more than 15,000 lost and abandoned mostly dogs and cats every year. For more information visit [dogshome.com](http://dogshome.com)

# Hearts of the Home: Meet Mel, Dedicated Vet Nurse

**Here at The Home, we don't just have lovable animals to fill your heart with joy, but we also have an incredible team of dedicated animal lovers.**

**U**nderstandably, our furry friends can be a little nervous when it's their time to visit the vet. But we'll always do everything possible to give our animals lots of love and special care, especially when they are sick and injured.

That's why we're so happy to have Nurse Mel on our team. Animals can count on Nurse Mel for a warm cuddle to help them feel as comfortable as possible while receiving medical care.

Nurse Mel's friendly smile has been lighting up the Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic for over a decade! Her lifelong love for animals shines through in her daily work, as well as the loving care she pours into her own animals. Nurse Mel's eight-year-old dog Ryder and 14-year-old cat Eva were both adopted from the Home. She told us she couldn't imagine life without them!

“

**I absolutely love my job and wouldn't change it for the world. I get to care for animals like they're my own. I fall in love with a new animal every day!"**

*— Nurse Mel, Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic*

As well as treating gorgeous pets from the community, we also care for shelter animals at the veterinary clinic.

It's the most incredible feeling to see an animal go from being scared and alone when they arrive at the Home, to leaving our care as confident, loving animals with forever homes.

This job is not just about playing with puppies and kittens (although that's one of my favourite parts of the job!). We're all here for the wellbeing of animals, and the bigger vision for animal welfare. We all want to do everything we can to make a positive change in the lives of animals."

**All proceeds from our public veterinary clinic go straight back to helping our shelter animals have the best life possible.**





# Meet Lee and Andrew, Foster Care Heroes

Perhaps a dog needs some help building their confidence with people, or a cat is recovering from major surgery. These are the types of situations where our animals might need a little extra special care before they're ready to find their forever homes.

**T**hat's why we are delighted to have foster care heroes like Lee and Andrew who kindly open their home as a peaceful place for animals to relax on the couch and get lots of cuddles while they prepare for adoption.

You'll be amazed to hear how many animals Lee and Andrew have fostered through the Home—one puppy, six cats, and 51 kittens!

“

**The best part about foster care is the love and affection you get from animals.”**

— Lee and Andrew, foster care heroes

**We asked Lee and Andrew a few questions about their experience as foster carers:**

**Why did you decide to become foster carers with The Lost Dogs' Home?**

*We wanted more pets in our life, but we frequently travel with work, so it made it difficult to commit to a pet permanently. We found that fostering gives us the wonders of animals in our life whilst being able to fit their care into our schedule.*

**What is the best part about fostering?**

*We especially enjoy watching the kittens grow and develop. We've had kittens as young as one day old. It's incredible seeing them open their eyes, learn to walk, learn to feed, and start to play.*

**What is your advice for anyone considering foster care?**

*Fostering is incredibly rewarding! You can specify the type of care you're comfortable with and you'll receive support along the way. The Home provides everything you need to get started—beds, blankets, carrier, bowls, food, litter, trays, toys.*

Are you interested in opening your own home to animals in need? Find out about becoming a foster carer at [dogshome.com](https://www.dogshome.com)

# After two years missing, Manaia comes home!



**Shirley adopted Manaia in 2016 when he was four years old. Shirley and her husband absolutely adored Manaia, and so did their three children.**

One day, the unthinkable happened. Shirley looked outside her window and saw that Manaia wasn't in the backyard. He was gone.

Shirley told us:

"The fence had fallen down. We searched everywhere for Manaia. We contacted the Home and the council. I was devastated. I would walk around the streets looking for him."

Nobody knew what happened to Manaia. Two long years went by, with Manaia's family missing him every single day.

During this time, Shirley experienced even more heartbreaking loss. Tragically, her husband passed away.

Shirley remembers sitting at her husband's grave on the day before his birthday. It was then that something unbelievable happened...

"I saw an email on my phone, and I couldn't believe what it said. Manaia had been found! After all these years! It was surreal. I was so happy."

Manaia had been brought to the Home and, thankfully, he was microchipped. What an unforgettable moment it was to see Shirley and Manaia reunited.

"Manaia came to me straight away. It was as if he was never gone. I kept thinking, 'I can't believe you're here.'"

Shirley couldn't wait to take Manaia to visit her husband—and tell him the wonderful news that their sweet boy had come home. In front of her

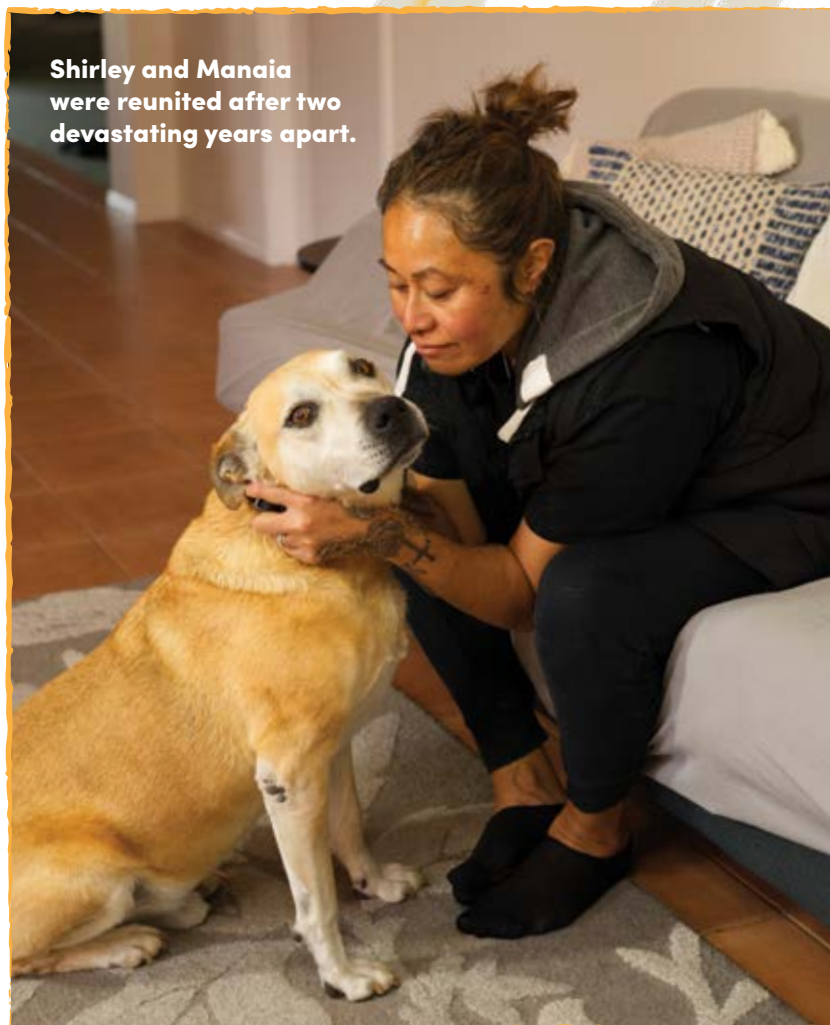
husband's grave, Shirley and Manaia sat side by side, together again at last.

"It was my husband's birthday that day. I said to him, 'Thank you for bringing Manaia back to me.' It was very emotional."

Shirley and Manaia now spend their days enjoying precious time together.

"We're inseparable. He sleeps by my bed and follows me around the house. My kids are so happy that he's around. When I go out, they say, 'He waits for you to come home.' And I say, 'Of course he does. I'm his mum.'"

**For the best chance of a happy reunion when the unexpected happens, please ensure your pets are microchipped and your contact details are up to date, just like Manaia.**



**Shirley and Manaia were reunited after two devastating years apart.**

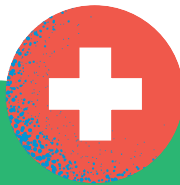
# Advancing Animal Care

Everyone is familiar with our North Melbourne shelter, but you might not realise we also have a large responsibility for caring for the lost and abandoned animals in Cranbourne and the surrounding areas. Our Cranbourne shelter first opened in 2002. Since then, the number of dogs and cats cared for by our dedicated team there has grown steadily each year.

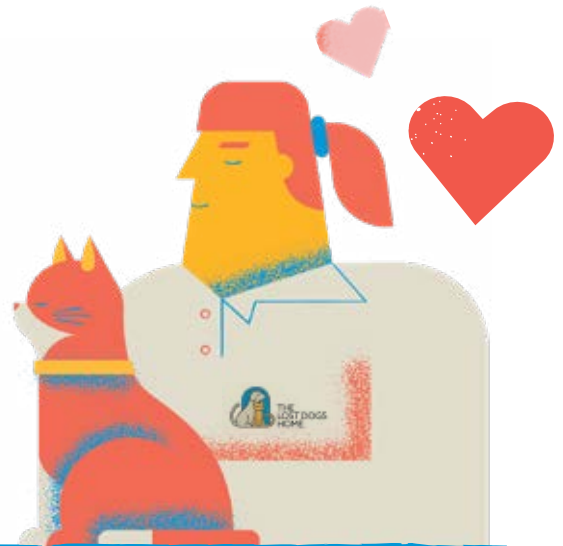


2023-2024

## Stage I

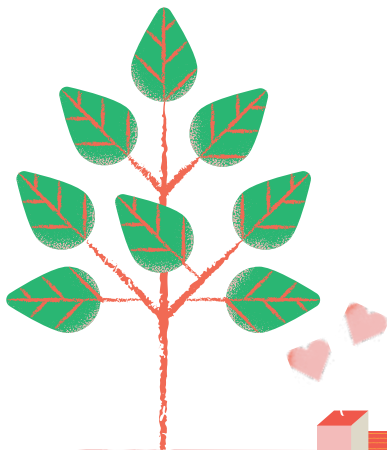


Upgrading essential infrastructure, the foundations needed to be able to undertake renovation work.



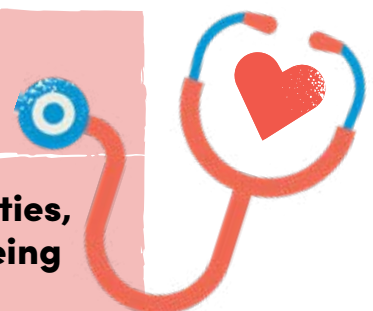
## Stage II

Improving disability access for members of the community wishing to adopt or reclaim their lost animals.



## Stage III

Renovation of our working environments and facilities, making sure our staff are properly supported in being able to provide the very best care to our animals.



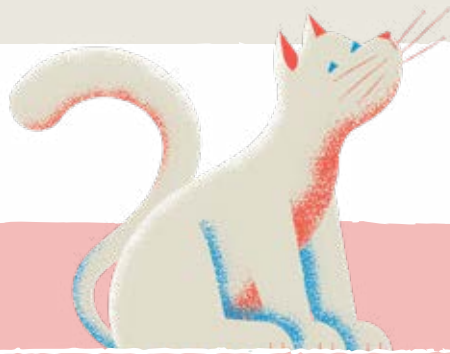
# in Cranbourne

**C**ranbourne is a fast-expanding community. We are investing in modernising our shelter facility over the coming years. This will make sure animals coming to the shelter receive the finest care possible until they can be returned to their families or find their new forever homes.

In 2023 we received a wonderful and very special gift from long-term supporter and animal-lover Joy Christensen (right). Her thoughtful legacy has been put into action and will make sure our shelter is a welcoming place for families to find their new best friend.



## 2024-2025



### Stage IV

**Improvements to the existing kennels and catteries, making sure we stay ahead of animal care code regulations and provide comfortable temporary homes for our animals.**



### Stage V

**A new adoption centre with the creation of welcoming and functional indoor/outdoor adoption spaces. We want to encourage more members of the Cranbourne and surrounding communities to visit our beautiful animals who are ready for adoption.**

Intake in 2021

**4,707**

Intake in 2023

**6,376**

**Percentage increases from 2021 to 2023 for cats, kittens, dogs and puppies**

Adoptions

**80% increase**



Reunions

**14% increase**

Intake

**35% increase**

# Sheldon finds his confidence... And his forever home!

**Sweet Sheldon arrived at the Home after a tough start to life. He was dealing with the challenges of being deaf, which only made him feel more anxious in an unfamiliar environment.**

**K**nowing Sheldon would need a little extra help learning to trust and feel confident in the big world, we were thrilled when Chloe and Matt put up their hands to be Sheldon's foster carers.

Chloe shared:

"We had been foster-carers for about 12 months, and Sheldon was our fourth foster dog. He came into our care after feeling stressed in the shelter environment and to work on his anxiety."

Chloe and Matt worked with Olivia from the Home's Behaviour Team to build Sheldon's trust and independence. With the patient and gentle support of Chloe, Matt and Olivia, Sheldon's confidence grew by the day.

We are so pleased to share the wonderful news that Chloe and Matt decided to become Sheldon's forever family!

"We had fallen in love with Sheldon, his cuddles on the couch, his snoring, and zoomies around the house.

It was pretty clear to us that we were meant to be his forever family."

Chloe and Matt recently shared an update on what Sheldon's life looks like now in his forever home.

"A typical day for Sheldon is a long walk or a 'sniffari' as we call it. He naps on the couch, bed or any other soft surface he can find, with his humans close by. He loves a game of tug and a chewy treat."

“

**We spoil Sheldon, a lot! After a rough start to life, we think he deserves the world."**

*— Chloe, Sheldon's new mum*





# Pets are such a special part of our lives

**We love any chance to speak with the generous animal lovers who make our work possible. What a joy it was to speak with Alison, who told us about the cats in her life and her incredibly thoughtful decision to remember The Lost Dogs' Home in her Will.**

**“M**y first cat arrived when I was just four years old, and since then I've shared my life with 12 cats, including several I've adopted from the Home. Over the years, they've all worked their way into my heart.

You are never alone if you share your life with a pet. My cats have brought companionship, affection, and real unconditional love into my life. I do not think I would have coped with the COVID lockdowns without their constant presence and, most of all, their affectionate purring. Never underestimate the therapeutic value of a purring cat!

Without my cats, my life would be incredibly empty. I would really miss their love and companionship.

As my way of repaying the Home for the joy my cats have given me over the years, I decided to include a gift to the Home in my Will.



I also really want to help more animals find the love and care they deserve.

I've chosen to leave a percentage of the residue of my estate to the Home, because it ensures the lasting value of my contribution over time. I want to help the Home continue offering special care to the many abandoned animals from the moment they arrive through their doors."

Alison's kindness will ensure so many lost and abandoned animals receive love and care from the Home for generations to come. Alison is also giving more people like her the opportunity to experience the unforgettable joy of loving and being loved by an animal. Thank you, Alison!

“

**Without the Home, so many people would not know the joy and love that comes with a rescue pet."**

*— Alison, Gifts in Wills donor*

If you feel inspired to consider remembering the Home in your own Will, Ross and Charli in our friendly Gifts in Wills Team would love to hear from you.

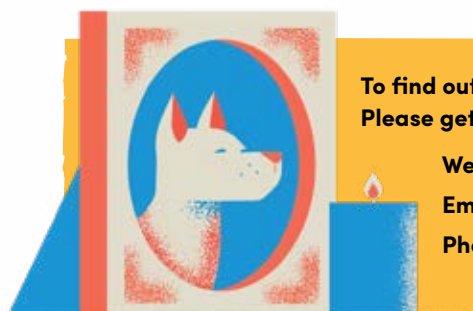
**To find out more, our friendly Gifts in Wills team would love to hear from you. Please get in touch to discover how you can create your own kind legacy for animals:**

**Website:** [www.dogshome.com/wills](http://www.dogshome.com/wills)

**Email:** [wills@dogshome.com](mailto:wills@dogshome.com)

**Phone:** (03) 8379 4496

Did you know you can write your Will for free online through our partner **Gathered Here**? To find out just how easy it is to leave a legacy, visit [www.dogshome.com/freewill](http://www.dogshome.com/freewill)



# Chunks, Nico and Winnie find love after a tough start to life

**In the last year alone, the Home has seen a staggering increase in puppies arriving at our doorstep.**

**W**e know the pandemic fuelled the creation of puppy farms. The cost of living crisis has reduced the numbers of people willing or able to pay for puppies and demand has fallen.

The impact can be heartbreaking.

Puppies like Chunks and his littermates, Nico and Winnie, ended up at the Home in desperate need of care. Not only was it clear that Chunks, Nico and Winnie needed vital veterinary care, but these poor little pups were also so frightened and timid.

Our dedicated team will always welcome animals with open arms, no matter what their situation. Chunks, Nico, and Winnie underwent thorough health checks, with Chunks being treated for a painful ear infection. They were also desexed and had ultrasounds to listen to their hearts. Sadly, little Winnie was diagnosed with a serious heart murmur that would affect her lifespan.

All three puppies were placed in foster care so they could gain confidence while experiencing the love and socialisation of a home life that they had been missing.

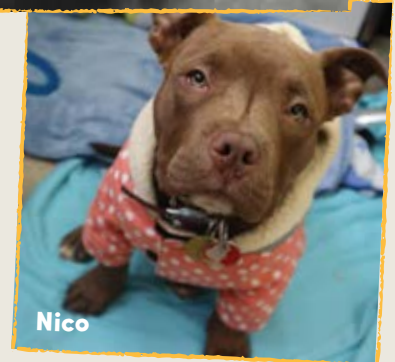
We're so pleased to share that Chunks, Nico and Winnie each found their forever homes! Their loving new families have committed to continuing regular check-ups to monitor the puppies' conditions, for their best chance at a happy life.

**Nico can look forward to a happy life in his new forever home as he grows into a confident puppy.**

**Winnie's wonderful family knows she may not have many more days because of her condition, but they're determined to give her all the love she needs, no matter how long they have together.**



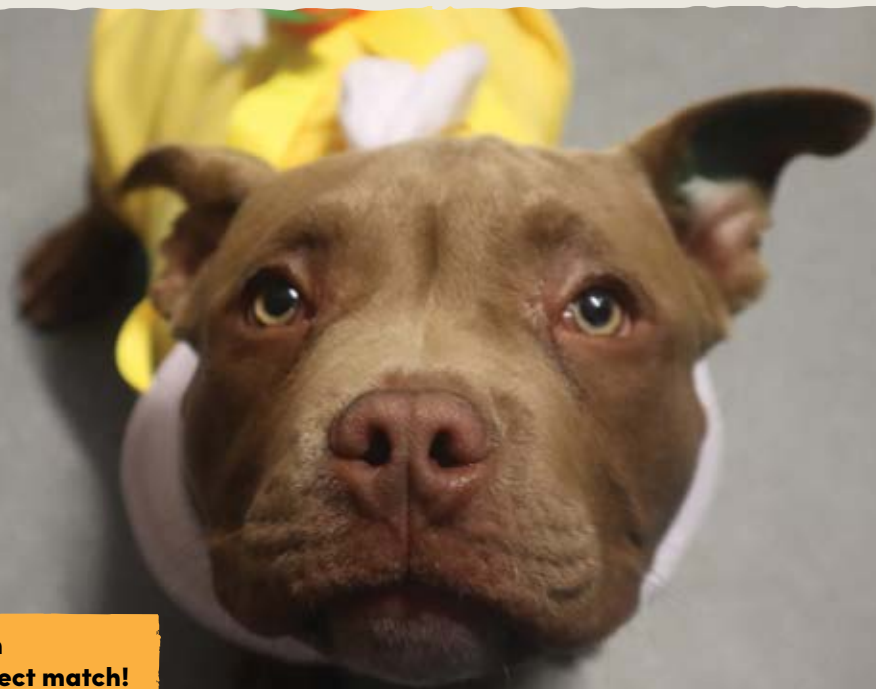
Winnie



Nico



**Chunks was adopted by the Home's very own veterinarian, Dr Ashtin Frank. They're a perfect match!**



# Forever homes for the young and young-at-heart this kitten season

**With warmer and longer days upon us, kitten season is in full swing. That means a huge influx of kittens arriving on the Home's doorstep, often by the litter.**

**E**ach year, we brace ourselves for the pressures of kitten season, not only to care for adorable new kittens, but also to continue caring for the many other animals who depend on us.

Senior pets can be the most loyal companions you'll ever have. But sadly, our older cats are especially overlooked during busy periods. So, to find as many loving homes as

possible for our senior sweethearts before the peak of kitten season, we held our 'Cuddle a Cat' promotion. We're delighted to share that we found 319 cats their forever homes during the month of October.

As kitten season continues over the next few months, we'll keep working around the clock to help kittens and cats find love and safety in their forever homes.

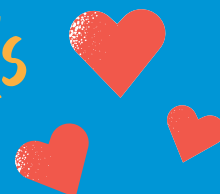


## How you can help during kitten season

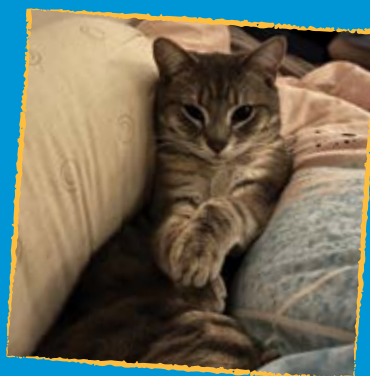
- 1. Make sure your cat is desexed (cats can breed from as young as four months old)**
- 2. Adopt a kitten or adult cat**
- 3. Become a foster carer for kittens too young for adoption**



## Meet some of our older feline friends who found their forever homes



**Mila** is a sweet girl who came to the Home when her family could no longer care for her. Mila is FIV+ and needed a non-cat household or a home with FIV+ siblings. After 76 days, we finally found Mila her forever home with Gabriela, who tells us that she's officially the smoochiest girl in the world.



**Percy** tended to be overlooked for adoption because he was shy. We didn't give up on him and we're delighted to share that his perfect family came along. Now that Percy is happy and comfortable in his forever home, his shyness has been replaced with confidence and cheekiness!

Six-year-old **Peppa** was found wandering the streets, alone and scared. After two months of cuddles and care at the Home, she found her forever home. Peppa's new family loves her so much and say she's the sweetest, happiest girl!



Dr Ton Tancharoen, Lead Veterinary Surgeon, provides exceptional care to our most vulnerable North Melbourne four legged shelter residents as well as to our Frank Samways veterinary clinic's furry clients.

The clinic offers consultations and surgeries to the public with all proceeds going straight back to funding the shelter.



Frank Samways  
Veterinary Clinic



**D**r Ton joined the Home shortly after graduating from the University of Melbourne in 2010 and says he loves his work and can't think of a more fulfilling job.

In addition to the Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic, the Home also has a shelter hospital that provides veterinary care exclusively to our shelter animals.

Dr Ton explains: "Clinical exams, behaviour assessments and routine diagnostics are done at the shelter before surgery is performed on an animal. More complex soft-tissue procedures and orthopaedics, such as

cruciate ligament repairs, are done at the Frank Samways Veterinary Clinic."

Working across both the shelter and Clinic it is no surprise that Dr Ton is happy, challenged and fulfilled by his work!

Dr Ton and the Frank Samways team are always delighted to welcome new clients. Most especially because every new client not only signs up to receive exceptional health services for their pet, but by doing so, they 'pay it forward' and provide the very same exceptional care for our beautiful shelter animals too.

The good work of Dr Ton was recently featured in Vet Practice magazine.



To book your consultation or surgery call the clinic on (03) 8379 4498 or email an enquiry to [vetcclinic@dogshome.com](mailto:vetcclinic@dogshome.com).



Contact us:

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