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COUNCIL CHEWS OVER DOG PARK LOCATIONS

The Barossa Council is pushing ahead with its plan to establish two dog parks in the area, but the finer details are still being worked out.

Last month (June 2019), the Council approved extra funding to increase the size of the proposed northern Nuriootpa park, while at the same time it has deferred investment in the southern, Williamstown based park, while it looks for an alternative, larger location, possibly at Doug Lane Reserve.

But last month's Council decision was quickly in doubt, with Barossa Mayor Bim Lange apparently contacting Councillors with a plan to rescind the motion to seek an alternative site for the southern, Williamstown park.

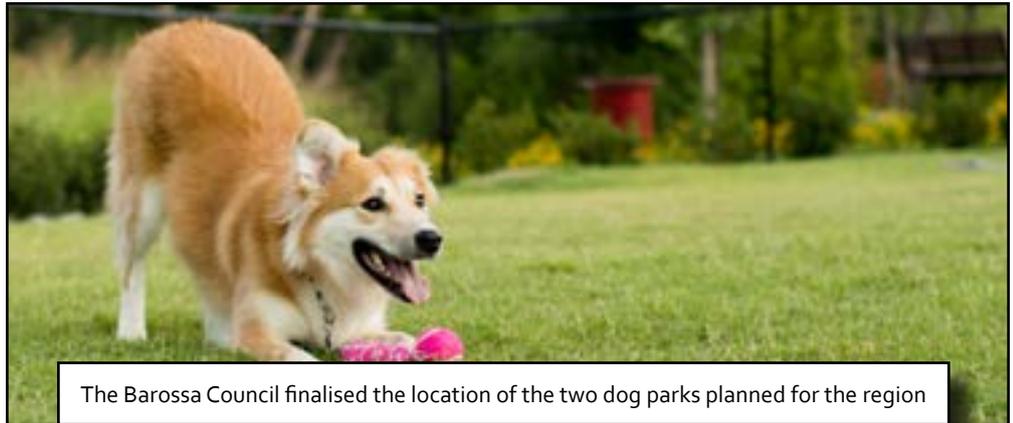
Mayor Lange argued the Doug Lane Reserve was "inappropriate" because it lacks formal parking and water connections - and at this stage the land is still owned by the State Government rather than the Council, which the Mayor fears may lead to additional "unbudgeted" costs.

But the Williamstown Action Group (WAG) disagrees with the Mayor. The group, who worked to produce a plan and costings for a dog park in 2017, but missed out on funding through the previous Government's "Fund my Neighbourhood" scheme, are worried that the proposed location - at Queen Victoria Jubilee Park - will not be large enough, and will be outside the view of passing tourists.

WAG maintained that Doug Lane Reserve is the best location in Williamstown and threw their support behind this location.

However, at this week's meeting the Council voted to push forward with the Jubilee Park location.

With such overwhelming support from public consultation, the Barossa Council



The Barossa Council finalised the location of the two dog parks planned for the region

has pushed to ensure the region gets its very own dog parks.

The case for Barossa dog parks began back in August 2018, when, based on overwhelming endorsement from the public feedback process, the Council threw its support behind the establishment of two dog parks in the Barossa region.

The Council had circulated a short survey with questions about potential community costs and benefits, as well as a dog park wish-list. Of the 435 responses received over 90% indicated "they believe the Barossa Community will benefit from dog park/s in our region", while a mere 7% believed dog parks brought no benefit for the community.

The pro-park case was boosted with the current Minister for Planning and Member for Schubert, Stephan Knoll, delivering on his election promise to deliver \$100,000 in funding for the parks' establishment.

In December last year the Council endorsed two park locations - a northern dog park to be located on Penrice Road, opposite the Nuriootpa High School Oval, while a southern dog park was proposed for Williamstown at the Queen Victoria Jubilee Park.

It was planned that both parks will include fencing, water sources, a drinking fountain, double gates with self-closing locks, bins and signage, and were expected to cost approximately \$55,000 each to establish.

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OUR FEAR-FREE STARR

Dr Michelle Starr has become the first of our vets to attain their Fear-Free qualification.

Already a very accomplished and experienced vet, Dr Michelle has been keen to broaden her skill set and embrace the Fear-Free philosophy that has begun to change the way animal health is being conducted around the world.

The fear-free initiative was started in the US by veterinarian Dr Marty Becker, who has been a passionate advocate for pets and the people who love them and aims to make visits to the veterinarian a happy event for owners and their furry family.

The Fear-Free approach is a combination of organisation, brand, certification program and philosophy which combine to form one of the biggest waves of change across the veterinary industry in the last 50 years.



According to founder Dr Becker, 25 to 30 per cent of pets currently visiting the vet need sedation, which puts their health at risk - particularly in the case of elderly pets, while leaving stressed pets unsedated can lead to difficulty both diagnosing and treating them, as they are more likely to suppress their symptoms.

By taking Dr Becker's Fear-Free approach the aim of the veterinarian or pet professional is to reduce the fear animals feel during visits by focusing on spending time adapting the animal's environment and responding to its behaviour.

Reducing and minimising the patient animal's fear is better for the animal's emotional health, while less fear means calmer pets less likely to resist treatment, meaning the physical work of holding or restraining a pet is reduced.

All this combines to help the veterinarian

make better diagnoses and leads to much better outcomes for the pet patients.

To gain her Fear-Free qualifications Dr Starr had to complete an 8-module certification program, commit to a minimum level of continued professional development and pay an annual fee which contributes to the Fear-Free Research Program.

In return, Dr Starr gains access to the most current Fear-Free research and ideas, elective learning modules, and mentoring opportunities to enhance and advance her skills.

Dr Starr's Fear-free accreditation allows her to not just enhance her own skills, but also to pass her new knowledge to colleagues as well.

Dr Starr sees many benefits in adopting the Fear-free program.

"Using Fear-Free techniques that reduce stress and anxiety works out better for everyone," says Dr Starr.

"The pet is less stressed, which helps me get a more accurate diagnosis, but another bonus is that with less stress for the animal there is less stress for the owners, and vet visits can become a calm and accepted part of your pets' routines."

Dr Starr is most looking forward to using some of her newly learned techniques on our smallest customers. During her time at GVS Dr Michelle has developed an interest in the more 'unusual' pets - rabbits, ferrets, mice, rats, and guinea pigs - and native Australian mammals including kangaroos and possums.



Dr Michelle Starr - our first Fear-Free qualified vet is looking forward to using her new skills on her favourite patients - pocket pets!

Unlike cats and dogs, who are generally more used to being handled, many of these "pocket pets" have an extra fear of being handled, and Dr Michelle's new techniques are ideally suited to reducing their stress.

Here at GVS we're very proud of the way Dr Michelle has taken the steps to expand her skills and lead the way to a Fear-Free practice.

We know that for many of our staff it's a career and a passion, not just a job, and Dr Starr's commitment to making vet visits easier for you and your pet is just another reason why we're the vets your pets would choose!



Using her Fear-free techniques Dr Starr creates an atmosphere that helps keep pets calm and relaxed for physical examination, which helps her make more complete and informed diagnoses

THE KITTEN KABOODLE WITH HUGO

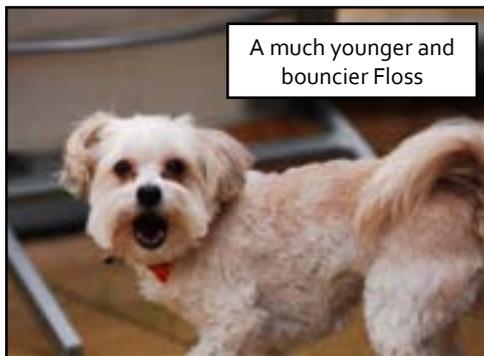
This month the effects of periodontal disease hit home for Hugo, so he's set his human staff a challenge for August's Animal Dental Health Month!

Next month is Animal Dental Health Month and I've set my humans a challenge. In August I want to do more free dental health checks on more animals than we've ever done before!

For this aging kitty the problems caused by periodontal disease really hit home this month.

Years ago, in my sleek feline youth, I shared a house with an adorable little puppy called Floss – all cuteness and bounce. But this month my bouncy little mate went to run around in that big back yard in the sky – and the reason was periodontal disease.

Periodontal disease, affecting the mouth, teeth and gums, is much more than just bad breath. It is a gradual buildup of plaque, tartar and bacteria that can get into your pets' bloodstream leading to complications in their liver or kidneys and have negative effects on their heart, general health and lifespan.



A much younger and bouncier Floss

So now I want to turn the tables on this nasty condition and to save as many of my furred brothers and sisters from the same fate as my friend Floss.

This August, during Animal Dental Health Month, I want to take up the fight to prevent periodontal disease and do more dental checks on more animals than we've ever done before!

So, what is periodontal disease, and why is it so bad?

The simplest way to think about periodontal disease in cats and dogs is to think about it in terms of your own mouth; after all – cat, dog or human – they're all teeth.

Imagine not brushing your teeth for a week.

It'd probably feel pretty awful, right? Bits between your teeth, bacteria beginning to build up – your breath would probably start to smell too.

Let's go another month without brushing

your teeth. How are they feeling now? I bet by now you're really starting to feel the plaque and tartar building up. How's the breath smelling now?

Imagine how your mouth, teeth and gums would feel without brushing for a year, 2 years, 10 years!

This is where periodontal disease in animals comes from.

In times gone by we didn't tend to worry too much about our pets' dental hygiene, past dropping a bit of parsley on their food for fresher breath. But now we recognise that periodontal disease doesn't just cause problems in your pets' mouth - the health of your pets' mouth can have a big effect on their general healthiness and overall lifespan.

As periodontal disease continued to progress in Floss the options for treatment became riskier and more expensive. As an older dog (around 16) any dental surgery involving a long period under anaesthesia posed a risk, and the amount of work that was required in terms of cleaning, teeth removal and remedial surgery meant that the surgery would be long and expensive.

And sadly, Floss was not alone in her situation. Studies in the US and Australia have estimated that 4 out of 5 dogs over the age of 6 have periodontal disease, and the best way to fight back against it is to prevent its spread through early intervention.

Prevention methods can be as simple as feeding your pet more dental sticks or adding mouth-cleaning additives to their water. Periodontal disease that is recognised before it becomes established can be treated with regular brushing of puss or pup's choppers.

For slightly more advanced cases a scale and clean can bring the teeth back to health



and make these prevention methods effective again.

And this is where our August Dental Health Month challenge comes in. The earlier periodontal disease is recognised, the easier (and cheaper) it is to treat, and we want to help as many owners as we can recognise the signs of periodontal disease and to help them to adopt cheaper, preventative measures before the disease progresses to the point where it needs surgical intervention.

At all our clinics you can book in for a complimentary, no-obligation dental health check, where my humans can assess your pets' mouth, teeth and gums, and let you know if periodontal disease is present, how advanced it is, and what options there are for prevention or treatment.

We know how much your pets mean to you, and we want to make sure they stay by your side for as long as possible, and one way we can do that is to help you recognise the signs of periodontal disease, to help you understand what your options are, and to make sure you know that prevention is easier and cheaper than a cure.

Give your nearest clinic a call and book your complimentary, no-obligation dental health check today, and help us take another small step in stamping out periodontal disease.



Without intervention plaque and tartar builds up on your pets' teeth and gums, which, aside from giving them a painful mouth, can also contribute to liver and kidney issues, especially in cats

STAFF PETS OF THE MONTH: RILEY ATYEO

Our Fear-Free Starr, Dr Michelle, remembers a litter of puppies running around the back of the old Bright St surgery when she first arrived at GVS for a job interview.

Gawler Veterinary Services Principal Vet and Owner, Tony Atyeo, owned Riley's Mum, so when the litter appeared Dr Tony got first choice, and Riley struck gold, becoming a vet pet.

As a vet pet, Riley can sometimes get a bit spoiled.

"He's a sook really," says Dr Tony, "especially during thunderstorms when he gets a bit scared and cuddles up close."

"He's not quite as active as he once was, but he still enjoys his walks. Really though, his favourite hobby these days is curling up in a soft, warm spot. Oh, and he loves his visits from Jagger."

Jagger is Dr Tony's step-daughter's dog.

"He's a bit of a favourite grandson," says Dr Tony, "and he does spend a fair bit of time here."

Riley and Jagger get along really well, "unless you feed one and not the other," quips Dr Tony.



Above: a thoughtful looking Riley Atyeo
Right: Favourite grandson Jagger!

CORRECT USE OF CITRONELLA BARK COLLARS

One of our clients, Chad, sent us this story of a few problems he had with citronella bark collars that we thought needed to be shared.

"So, the neighbours have been complaining that our dog has been barking non-stop. I hate the electric zapping bark collar, so I purchased a humane citronella collar. When a dog barks, it shoots a blast of citronella under their nose and apparently, they don't like it.

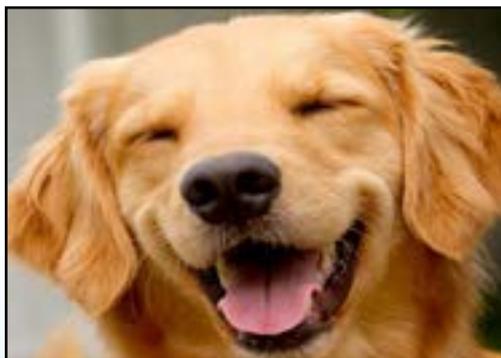
This morning I was getting the collar ready and filled it with the citronella liquid. And that's where my morning should have ended. But no, it's me, and I begin to become curious as to "how" the collars actually work.

So, I'm standing by my back door "barking" at my dog's collar. Nothing happens. I make sure it's turned on, check the fill level, and go through the "getting started" check list one more time. Again, I bark. Nothing happens. Now I'm not quite sure, why I had this next thought, but I did...I put the collar on. I seriously extended the band and fit the growl box against my throat and barked. Apparently, the collar only works if it feels vibrations, because I

immediately received a blast of citronella to the face.

I began coughing, which only caused the damn collar to continue spraying over me and into my nasal cavity. I'm now on my hands and knees in my back yard, trying to breathe, and to make matters worse, the damn dog is barking. So, between coughing and yelling at him to shut up, I've emptied over a dozen blasts of citronella to my face. During all of this ruckus, I'm trying to undo the clasp of the collar, which has somehow managed to weld shut during this whole fiasco.

I finally get the collar off and threw, yes, I threw that inhumane thing across the yard, and lay in the grass sucking in the cool morning air. In the middle of thinking



Actual picture of Chad's dog watching proceedings

this is probably the dumbest thing I've done in a while, I hear laughter. MY NEIGHBOR SAW THE WHOLE THING! He was laughing so damn hard he couldn't breathe. Between gasps, he tells me, "I was gonna come help, but every time I started to come over you'd set it off again and then I would start laughing and couldn't make it." So now, not only are my eyes red, but my face and ears are too. After checking to make sure I was ok, we parted ways and I went in to shower so I wouldn't smell like ode de' Tiki Torch.

Lesson learned: next time (yes, there will always be a next time with me) make sure that:

1. Don't fill the collar before trying to set it off.
2. Remember your neighbour is not a good source of help in a comedy crisis situation.

On the plus side, I won't have a mosquito problem for a few days!

Even though this does sound like something I'd do, I hate to break the news that it's a copied story that gave me a good laugh so feel free to do the same. I was dying y'all! "

Please note: Gawler Veterinary Services does not endorse the use of citronella bark collars, which we regard as an ineffective and cruel form of bark control.