

# BLOCKHOUSE BAY VETERINARY CENTRE NEWSLETTER



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Dear Clients,

By the time you are reading this newsletter, the finishing touches will hopefully be underway on the building extension to the clinic. For those of you not aware, over the last eighteen months we have gone through council approvals and subsequent renovations to expand the clinic into the house situated immediately behind the main clinic building. This renovation will give us much needed additional space, including new kennelling, an up-dated surgery suite, and an additional consult room.

Over the next month we will be welcoming two new vets to the Blockhouse Bay Vets team. Dr Fiona Tritton comes to us having worked in Te Atatu for a number of years and Dr Caroline Elvy joins us from Kumeu. Both are experienced vets and will work in with Geoff, Miki and Rebecca here at the clinic. If you are wanting to see a particular vet then please let the staff member taking the appointment booking aware of this at the time you make the appointment.

Geoff, Miki, Rebecca, Fiona, Caroline, Fi, Vanessa, Ashleigh, Anouska, Rachel and Hannah.

## Fleas and the cooler weather



Did you know that we often see flea related problems with pets over the winter. The cooler weather often sees proactive flea control drop off by owners as they assume that the fleas stop being a problem. Don't stop treating just because the weather gets cooler. The fleas won't stop breeding.

## Photo Competition Winner

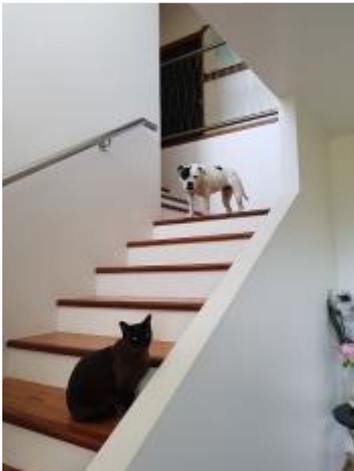
It is very obvious from the numbers of entries and the photos submitted that many of your pets have had an eventful and interesting summer. Plenty of beach shots, adventure pics, epic sunsets and the occasional dress-up event! Despite the lack of rain over the summer, many also managed to locate a good amount of mud to add to the fun.

The winning picture for 2019 is of BeeBee taken by Elspeth Frascatore. The photo was a firm favourite amongst all at the clinic due to its composition, lighting and of course, that face. BeeBee wins a years worth of **ADVANTAGE** flea control kindly donated by **BAYER**.

Additional photos from other finalists are displayed throughout the rest of this newsletter and will be uploaded on the website in due course.



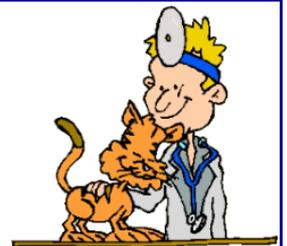
Clockwise from right:  
London and her babies, Kelly, Bertie, cats Mila and Tom, Millie and Charlie enjoying the sunset, Baxter, a standoff between Gus and Irene, and some random dog called Breeze digging a hole at Piha.



### What is a Veterinary Specialist?

We are lucky in Auckland to have within our city boundary a number of veterinary specialists. But what is a veterinary specialist?

A specialist veterinarian has not only completed their veterinary degree but has gone on to do additional years of advanced training in a particular field of veterinary science. They are required to sit specialist examinations, to gain both additional qualifications and expertise in that field. Within Auckland we have veterinary specialists in Surgery, Internal Medicine, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Radiology, Behaviour, and Pathology.

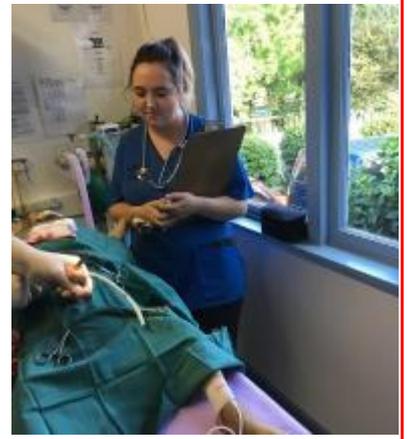


General practice vets, like Blockhouse Bay Vets, refer cases to specialists when we think the pet requires additional expertise in case management, treatment or diagnostics, or where these aspects require access to tools and equipment beyond the scope of a normal GP practice to have. Specialists are also used for second opinions in cases so as to give the client and their pet the chance to get best and most up to date options currently available for their pet's condition and its treatment or ongoing management. Cases are referred when we believe it is in the best interest of that pet and its care to do so. Despite what some people believe, the referring vet receives no financial return for referring cases to a specialist.

The term specialist is a protected title and unless a veterinarian has passed all the requirements to be a specialist, they cannot use that term. There is also, despite what people may see on the internet, no such thing as a breed specialist (eg "Pug specialist") in New Zealand.

## Veterinary Nurses

At the clinic we have a team of six veterinary nurses and assistants. They play a critical part in the running of the clinic from performing the simple (yet highly important) tasks like cleaning and laundry, through to more complicated and skilled tasks such as anaesthetic monitoring and being scrubbed in as a surgical assistant during surgery. They are also involved in the day to day care of our hospitalised patients and the timed treatments and medicating that they may require. They assist with laboratory testing of blood and urine samples, monitor fluid therapy patients and help hold pets for the vet to allow any number of procedures to safely occur. The Blockhouse Bay Vet nursing team are Fiona, Ashleigh, Anouska, Rachel, Hannah and Vanessa.



The nurses are also the front-line team that the clients meet when they first come to the clinic. This is a diverse role that includes taking phone enquiries through to assisting with medication dispensing and the discharging of surgery patients.



Throughout the last 10 years we have had a number of veterinary nursing student studying with us here at the clinic, completing their practical work experience as part of their tertiary studies. Some have carried on and become employees at Blockhouse Bay Vets, while others have taken roles at other clinics around New Zealand. This work experience is a vital part of the training process, taking the theoretical knowledge that they learn in class into the clinic environment.

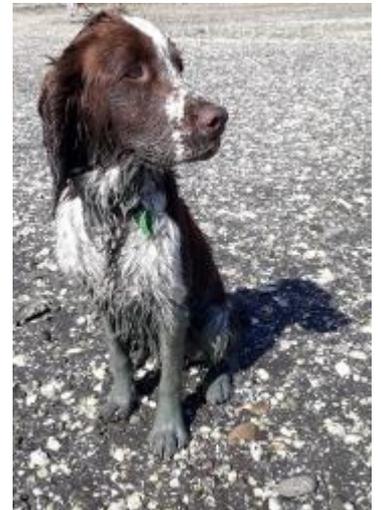
The path to becoming a diploma qualified veterinary nurse now involves completion of at least a two-year tertiary study program with one of a number of providers around New Zealand. Even after this study, the learning for a nurse does not stop. The veterinary profession is a constantly evolving entity and they have to stay up to play with the latest in all aspects of the profession just like the vets have to.



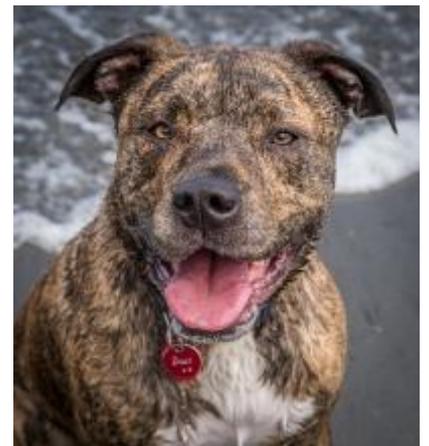
Oscar (above) with Nemo and Pip enjoying the view



Eli (above) and Toto (below)



Ollie (above) and Bruce getting dirty



## All creatures great and small

By now most clients will be aware that for a couple of weeks of the year I take annual leave and head up to Tonga to work with South Pacific Animal Welfare (SPAW) to be the on-island veterinary services for the country.

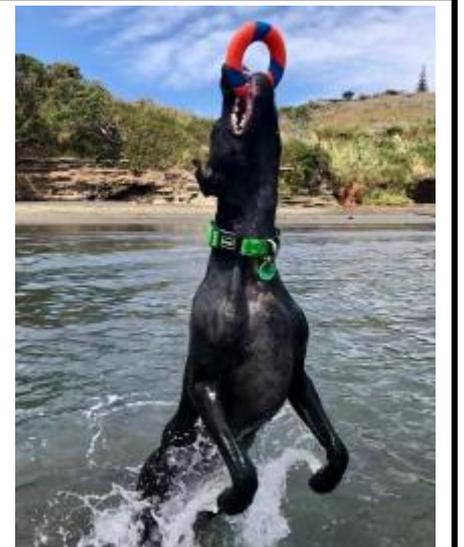
What many of you may not be aware of is that several of the current and past veterinary nurses here at Blockhouse Bay Vets have also come along on these trips, getting an in-depth, hands-on experience, while contributing to the overall success of the clinics. My most recent trip to Tongatapu, in December 2018, included our new vet nurse, Hannah Jull (bottom right pictures), as part of the team.

The other thing that most people are not aware of is that it is not just dogs and cats that I end up seeing on these trips. The clinics that SPAW run in Tonga (and other islands) are full service clinics, seeing animals of all shapes and sizes.

This most recent trip included doing horse castrations, a caesarian on a cow (in a paddock, under a coconut tree), spaying and neutering 190 dogs and cats, castrating pigs, dehorning cows and field anaesthetizing over a ton of Beefmaster bull (top right) in order to remove his deformed testicle.

Some clients follow these trips on Facebook to see what we get up to and others have generously donated items for these clinics. Watch out for the 2019 clinics which are already underway ([www.facebook.com/SouthPacificAnimalWelfare](http://www.facebook.com/SouthPacificAnimalWelfare)).

Geoff



Clockwise from upper left:  
Zeus playing dress-up, Arlo, Jack  
playing catch at the beach, Laval in  
the shadows and Kaiza checking  
out the grass.