



THE NEWSLETTER OF SWANBOURNE VETERINARY CENTRE



# petpro

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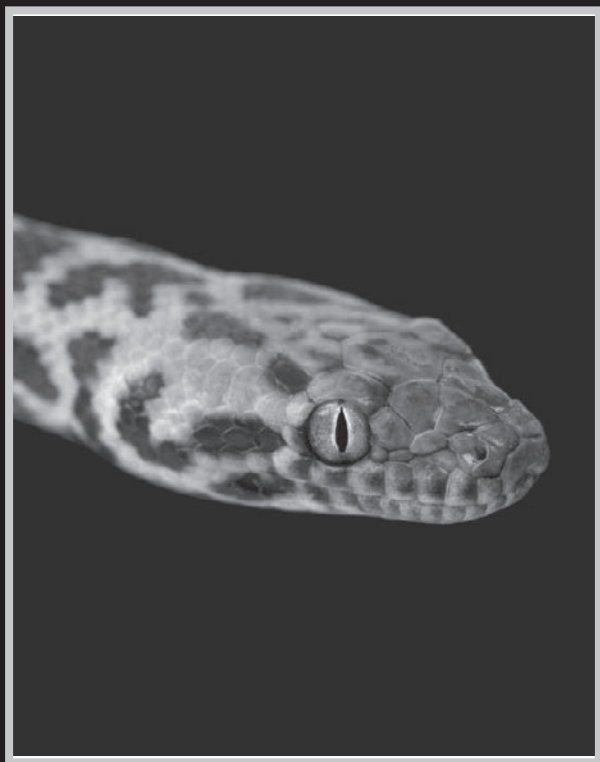
[www.swanbournevet.com](http://www.swanbournevet.com)

## The Pet Professionals

Tony Viganò , Michelle Harrison &  
Melanie Criddle. Veterinary Surgeons

## WINTER 2018

### THE CHILDREN'S PYTHON



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### Swanbourne Veterinary Centre

2 Devon Road, Swanbourne WA 6010  
Tel: (08) 9384 2644 ♦ Fax: (08) 9383 2846

Monday to Friday: 7.30am to 7.00pm  
Saturday: 8.00am to 4.00pm  
Sunday: 8.00am to 2.00pm  
Public Holidays: 8.00am to 12.00pm



Visit our website:  
[swanbournevet.com](http://swanbournevet.com)  
E-mail us at:  
[tony@petpro.com.au](mailto:tony@petpro.com.au)



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## ROAD TEST: THE CHILDREN'S PYTHON



Named after the scientist John George Children, who first described them, The Children's Python is the common name given to four native Australian pythons of the genus *Antaresia*. *A. childreni* can be found in the wild across much of northern Australia while *A. maculosa* is seen along the northern half of the east coast of Australia. They are not tree dwellers but prefer crevices or burrows, whilst other carpet pythons generally live in trees. All pythons are non venomous but can bite.

### Appearance:

Smaller than other python species, they are brown in colouration with chocolate markings that are band like in shape. They have a blue sheen over the scales and they grow to just over a meter in length. The *A. maculosa* is lighter with chocolate splotches and grow to over 1.5 meters. Colour does vary depending on the area they come from.

### Temperament:

Snakes do not form relationships with people though Children's pythons are generally placid. There are some aggressive individuals and they can bite but are non venomous. They can live in solitude or in a colony but must be fed separately or they will develop competitive behaviour.

### Handling:

It is most important they are handled correctly. Hold them under the belly, approach gently making sure the snake is aware of your presence before picking it up and ensure you don't smell of other animals. Individuals can be aggressive but generally they are placid.

### Terrarium/Set up:

They must be kept indoors in a climate controlled terrarium. A good set up or terrarium as they

are called will cost upwards of \$1000 and should be timber with a glass front and secure lid. A thermostatically controlled heat lamp and a daylight cycle using a UV light are essential along with rocks, drinking water, and branches for climbing. A substrate of recycled paper kitty litter can be used as it holds the heat well and is absorbent.

### Maintenance:

Once established maintenance costs are low and good pet stores generally stock food. The number of feeds depends on the season and the snake's level of activity and they are fed on pinkies (baby hairless mice), then go up to adult mice and even small rats. Breeders recommend pythons eat frozen food that has been thawed and various vitamins added. Fresh water and clean substrate with keep the snake healthy and happy. Meals should be offered weekly or fortnightly.

### Obtaining your snake:

Breeders are not permitted to advertise. It is best to join a herpetologist society for breeder details or seek the advice of a pet shop specialising in reptiles

### Veterinary Problems:

Carpet snakes live for 25-30 years and there are few issues but some can develop bacterial and fungal diseases of the mouth etc. Occasionally they may require assistance when the skin is sloughing (shedding). Seek the assistance of a veterinarian who specialises in reptiles.

### Who should have one:

Most people either love or hate snakes though certainly not recommended as a surprise gift as they are not for the squeamish. They have become more popular since the licensing laws have been relaxed. Not recommended for children under 10.

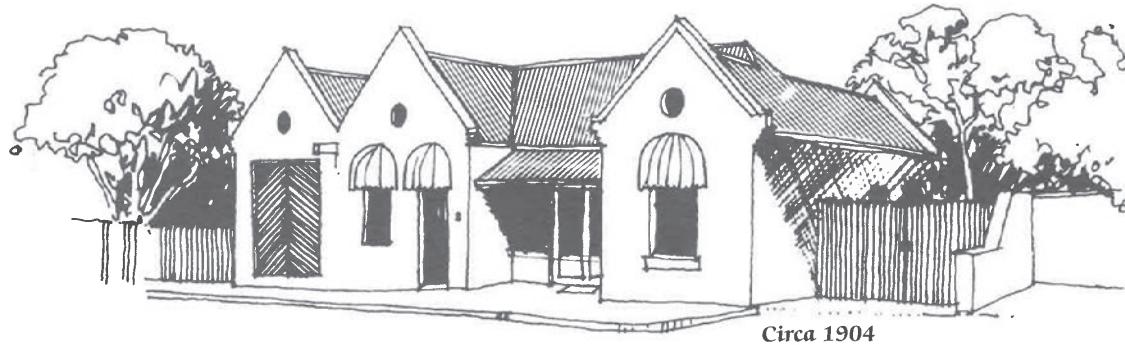
In general one for the enthusiast and must rate with stick insects and spiders as pets in that they are non responsive to humans and untrainable. Certainly a different pet.

As of March 2003 it became possible for West Australians to keep reptiles and amphibians as pets after a licence has been granted but it is advised to check with the Department of Environment and Conservation as these schedules are under review all the time.

Tony Vigano



# SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD



Circa 1904

Winter has certainly hit Perth this last week or so with temperatures being the lowest in Australia one day last week!

As the Winter Warmers indicate it can be a depressing time for pets over the next 3 months particularly with less stimulation such as walks in the park as owners settle into more sedentary activities such as watching the football (and why not with the Eagles carrying all before them!).

Spare a thought for pets as they are forced into this change and all the other issues they face in the Winter months.

For those that are motivated, that early morning walk in the park is still possible albeit made more difficult particularly finding and picking up doggie doings, but also keeping a track of them in the pitch black (a flashing light on their collar is a great idea plus the light in your smart phone!). All that time spent at Dog Obedience classes comes to the fore in being able to recall them even when you can't see them!

On a brighter note Naomi is about to take maternity leave as she and Brad prepare for their first child. Great news and we look forward to Naomi's return in 6 months or so. A good time to welcome Alexa a locum nurse who will be doing a stint with us filling in for Naomi during this time and also to welcome Olivia a new part time nurse soon to spend a couple of days a week with us. This plus the appointment of Kristy (our current office manager) to a new role (in fact her former role as she has been with us for 20 years!) as nursing coordinator overseeing the daily activity in the surgery as well as her office duties. Well done Kristy a multitasking guru!

For the next 6 weeks we will be without Neri our iconic Dog Trainer but Lisa her partner in Dog Whispering will still be here looking after the Puppy school and Puppy Management on Sundays plus the Dog Obedience classes held off site.

Neri is on her annual pilgrimage to England to spend time with Kim and Sean Ellis the wolf behaviourists. On the premise that all dog behavior can be mapped on the wolf pack model (being the

precursor to the modern dog), Neri has formulated a very effective dog training program which firstly determines where your new puppy fits into the pack, then formulating a training program to fit whilst giving you the insight into why your dog behaves the way it does, so valuable and a tool you can use throughout its life. Really fascinating stuff and her classes are amazing in their content and energy.

Our weekend service has highlighted the need for a full compliment of veterinary services particularly on Saturdays when we now have two vets and a nurse plus the receptionist on duty until 4pm. Equally Sundays which is our Puppy school day, has also been augmented by two veterinarians on duty most of the day with a nurse to back them up commencing at 8.30am and until 2pm.

Public holidays now see the Clinic open from 9am and until 12pm with a nurse on duty as well. Remember to ring beforehand to make an appointment with the office open at 7.30am on Saturdays and 8am on Sundays and Public Holidays

Our DIY Dog Wash operates both days for those who like to bath their own dog whilst the serviced dogwash is open from 9am until 2pm Saturdays and 9am until 12pm Sundays. Best to ring for an appointment beforehand.

During the Football (AFL) season our Saturday commitment on 6PR goes into recess but Thursday sees Mel and Tony alternating on the Vet segment with Simon Beaumont at 1pm each week.

Finally an online booking service is soon to be developed for those people who's work precludes a phone call on weekdays. Being able to book on line out of hours has become popular in many professional areas so watch this space.

Winter is my favourite season and a break from the long hot summer days.

Tony Vigano





# DOG TRAINING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Good Citizen Program

Understanding what your pup needs at this stage is very important and why they are doing the behaviours that we may find unpleasant. They are going through the first circle of development which requires patience, trust and understanding.



You may encounter certain behaviours with your pup. Understand they need to learn how to fit into our world and what our rules are. Teaching them the right before the wrong is crucial to developing a well-rounded puppy.

The puppy classes we have on offer here are unique to this practice. Here you will learn how to emotionally regulate your pup, another important lesson in your pups development. Other things you will learn how to teach your pup include basic leadership commands such as lay down, stay, heel, and recall and provide an initial level of socialising.

To this end we have 3 steps in our canine education program:

### PUPPY CLASSES (Steps 1 & 2)

Puppy Classes are held on site at Swanbourne Veterinary Centre on Sunday mornings. Puppies must be between 8-12 weeks old when they start their first class and have had at least their first

vaccination and be de-wormed.

Puppy Preschool is the first instalment of your dog's training. We have a 9am and an 11 am class each Sunday. Puppy Management is the second phase of training which builds on and enhances the training learnt in preschool. This is held at 10am and 12pm on Sundays.

As each group is at a different stage of the 4 week program, we recommend joining one and coming at the same time every week. This also means that the puppies will go through their training together and will be the best of friends by the end!

**DOG OBEDIENCE-** For puppies and dogs over 6 months old

Basic Dog Obedience is the natural progression from Puppy School and Management.

These classes are designed to:

- \* Socialise the young dog
- \* Brief owners on dog behaviour, communication and obedience training techniques
- \* Demonstrate how to discipline the young dog

These classes are held Saturday mornings at 9:30am at Swanbourne Oval and Wednesday evenings at College Park.

Please call us on 9384 2644 for more comprehensive information, start dates or to book your spot!

Tony Viganò



## WINTER ISSUES

Winter Warmers....what we need to consider to make our pets happy and safe in the colder months

Winter in Perth is nothing like the Northern Hemisphere or even in the Southern States on the Eastern Seaboard here in Australia. Nevertheless we still need to look after the inner needs of your pet, the older members of the pet community and those issues that are not a problem elsewhere but here in Perth with our temperate climate remain a problem 12 months of the year.

1. Depression in Winter is a very real problem for all of us. The lack of stimulation brought on by shorter or discontinued walks in the park to meet their friends means our pets can become more introverted. As a consequence they tend to eat more and put on weight. Remember that they still need exercise (and you do too!) so try to get out for an early morning walk no matter the weather and ensure that in the gloom they are wearing fluorescent coats, a flashing light on their collar or are on the lead. Cars become way more hazardous as stopping times in the wet are much greater. Identification becomes more important as well so collars with clearly read ID are essential as are microchips.

2. Whilst on the subject of depression, make sure you pamper them even more by brushing them regularly, and engage them in other forms of activity such as games, regular treats and inside activities as the "inner" animal needs to be cared for as well as their physical needs

3. Just as we desire "comfort food" in the winter so do our pets. Warm their food and think of winter warmer recipes to keep them interested, just as giving them ice blocks and cold treats in the heat of the summer.

4. On the topic of comfort food ensure they don't get into your stash....things like grapes, raisins, macadamia nuts, chocolate, tea, cola and cocoa beans, as well as garlic and onions. In other words hazard proof your home when they stay inside in your absence!

5. Arthritis is more painful in the cold so keep their beds off concrete floors (a wooden pallet is idea for this, or a hammock bed) and out of the wind. We have a handout on this subject so ask for it next time you visit or we can email it. Watch for the subtle signs of discomfort in the early stages and keep their weight down with gentle and regular exercise.

6. Some breeds are more susceptible to the cold. Greyhounds, whippets and Dachshunds have a high surface area to body weight and are short haired so they have more difficulty regulating their temperature on those cold nights than larger woolly dogs

7. On the other hand heavy coated dogs may need to have their coats trimmed as the temperature of the house is elevated particularly at night, and these types of dogs in particular may need to be bathed more regularly as their coats will start to

smell when they get wet, and then come inside.

8. Some breeds will need coats as they come in and out of the house and their systems struggle to regulate the transition between extremes (as we do). Equally when getting those regular winter haircuts make sure you get our "Woolly Winter Clip" (just the face, feet and bum) for those breeds requiring regular attention such as poodles and white fluffies.

9. Using the hydrobath at Swanbourne is a great idea during the winter as we have the facility with warm water to do the job thoroughly and dry them off well or blow dry them. Equally you can do it yourself with our DIY service for just \$12

10. Heating pads and hot water bottles are a great comfort to older pets in bed but ensure they are safe and will not burst and also ensure they don't get too close to an open fire or heater!

11. Those people that have "crate trained" their dogs from an early age will find this all very easy as the dogs will have no issue curling up in the crate which can be shifted to a warmer area during the winter.

12. Remember to hazard proof their external surroundings as well. The car is not a good place to curl up in and then be forgotten. Heat stroke is still a hazard in a locked car during the winter, snail bait can still be attractive during the winter if you misuse it, and when walking on the beach watch out for fish heads with gangs of hooks still attached abandoned by careless fisherman, blowfish and sea hares (Nudibranch). This issue of Sea Hares has reared its ugly head already with reports of dogs affected up and down the coast. Like all these issues you should consult your local veterinarian immediately if you think your dog has been in contact with any sort of toxin.

Remember also to cover the pool or lock the gate as dogs have difficulty climbing out particularly when they are older.

13. Finally and because our climate is so temperate all the parasite control (heartworm, fleas etc) must still be kept in place unlike colder climates when these disappear from the landscape in winter.

14. In fact a thorough checkup is very important at the onset of Winter to ensure vaccinations are up to date as during stressful times respiratory diseases in cats and canine cough in dogs become more prevalent

Remember that even in Perth, Winter can be a depressing time with activities centred around sedentary activities like watching TV (the football) so the pets are often excluded. Also remember that the nights can be cold so spare a thought for the pets of the family and include them as much as possible when warming the house.

Tony Vigano





## TEAM PROFILES

Naomi Davis will be on maternity leave commencing at the end of June and until January 2019 (notional) and in her absence we have two casuals who come with great credentials and we welcome them to the practice. Naomi is a much valued member of the team both as a surgical nurse and on reception so her replacements will have big shoes to fill! Best wishes Naomi and Brad, we all wait in anticipation of a beautiful healthy baby.

### Alexa van Leeuwen

Alexa, a Perth girl, finished her schooling at MLC. She initially graduated in Zoology from UWA and then did her Certificate 4 in animal nursing at the South Metro TAFE. From there she spent 2 years in USA doing an Associate of Science in Exotic Animal Training and Management in California.

On arriving back in 2017 she has started her own Training business as well as Veterinary Locum positions at Doubleview and now Swanbourne Vet Centres.



### Olivia Harrison

Another Perthite, Olivia finished her secondary schooling at Hollywood High School and spent 2 years overseas in Berkshire (UK) working with horses. On returning she started work at the Dunsborough Vet Clinic. From there she completed the Certificate 4 nursing course at Subiaco and was there for 7 years. After this she spent two years in NSW returning in 2014.



Married to David and with two children Ella and Oscar, she is now back in the work force doing two days at Swanbourne.

We welcome both of them to the practice.

## ACTIVE PET REHAB



Active Pet Rehabilitation - A new rehabilitation therapy referral business available to small animal practitioners in Western Australia.

Established by Carmel Keylock RVN (W.A.), MNAVP (U.K.), employed within the veterinary profession since 1984 and now involved in the rehabilitation field, Active Pet Rehabilitation provides an independent service, working in conjunction with veterinary professionals, for canine rehabilitation following injury or disease.

Carmel has been working alongside orthopaedic and neurological referral specialists in the U.K. since 1996 and is also studying towards her Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner status with the University of Tennessee.

Active Pet Rehabilitation is currently running the only aqua treadmill for pets in Western Australia, a huge step forward in controlled, targeted rehabilitation, providing better recovery, faster. With a unit designed specifically for canine rehabilitation, the aqua treadmill allows dogs to begin the treatment process earlier than normal. Using the natural properties of water, the treadmill creates a low-impact workout that helps the animal to increase muscle strength and endurance, as well as benefiting nerve function and gait re-education.

Patients that benefit from rehabilitation services include those with back pain (from muscle problems to spinal problems), arthritis (both young dogs and old), and post orthopaedic surgery patients (from road traffic accidents to joint surgeries). Not to mention young dogs dealing with growth abnormalities including hip dysplasia, luxating patella and Legge Perthes disease.

Other therapies provided for veterinary practice patients include, therapeutic ultrasound, phototherapy laser, neuromuscular stimulation, as well as active and passive exercise programs customised for each patient. Carmel works on a referral basis and can see your pet at Swanbourne, or at her premises in the Mosman Park Veterinary Hospital at 588 Stirling Highway Mosman Park where the aquatreadmill is housed.



## ASK THE VET

### Question:

*Paul from Swanbourne asks "My Maltese X dog is 9 years old. I know he is getting older – how do I help him to stay happy and healthy for as long as possible?"*

### Answer:

With the advances in veterinary care and improved diets, our pets are now living longer than they ever have before. It is probably of no surprise that a senior pet has different care requirements to that of a younger one, and they will develop a new set of age-related needs.

Generally speaking, a dog is considered senior from 8 years of age, and senior pets can develop many of the same health issues that are seen in older people including:

- Vision and Hearing problems
- Arthritis
- Dental disease
- Obesity
- Liver and kidney diseases
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Behavioural changes, often related to the above medical conditions, or senility.

Given that dogs and cats do age faster than we do, some of these health concerns can seemingly develop very quickly. The key to maintaining a comfortable lifestyle and ensuring that your pet is around for as long as possible is early detection and intervention.

Some general recommendations are:

- Regular veterinary check-ups

A dog visiting a vet once a year is equivalent to a human visiting the doctor once every 7 years! Once your pet is in his or her senior years, we recommend twice yearly veterinary check-ups at least. There are many ways we can treat and manage senior health conditions, and you can look out for changes in your pet and bring them to our attention as soon as possible. Things to observe include any changes in appetite or thirst, any new lumps or bumps, presence of bad breath, any changes in vision or hearing, changes in behaviour (for example sleeping pattern, barking, interaction with family members), changes in activity levels, and if there are any signs of pain.

- Dietary adjustment

Feed a high-quality diet that is specifically for senior pets – one that is suitable for your dog's age and lifestyle. There are many diets available now that are specifically formulated to not only provide adequate nutritional support, but also help to manage many health conditions seen in older animals. These include joint support supplementation to assist with

arthritis; weight management to reduce the incidence of diabetes, heart disease, skin disease, and even cancer; as well as diets that are specifically indicated in the presence of many systemic diseases such as liver disease and kidney disease.

- Dental care

Keeping your dog's mouth healthy is so important in a senior pet, to reduce the incidence of widespread bacterial infection and pain. If you cannot brush your dog's teeth, consider dental treats and toys to try and help to keep the teeth clean. We offer complementary dental checks at Swanbourne at any time, so come in and chat about options for keeping your dog's teeth sparkling white!

- Exercise

Keeping active is always important in every life-stage of your pet, but especially in your pet's senior years. Not only does it provide physical stimulation, your pet also benefits from the mental stimulation of getting out of the house and catching up with some of their mates! However, you may need to make some changes to the frequency and intensity of your pet's exercise regime, to suit their individual requirements and capabilities. Generally, frequent short walks are a better way to maintain the condition of your dog's joints and muscles, rather than one long one every now and then. Swimming is also a great way to keep your older dog in shape and maintain weight, because it is low-impact and easy on their weakening joints and muscles. Continuing to exercise your pet if they are limping and in pain, can cause further damage. It is so important to speak to one of our vets for the best exercise program for your senior pet

- Environmental considerations

Making some small changes around the home can really improve the comfort and wellbeing of your pet. Make sure your pet has a warm place to sleep in the winter, and a bed with extra padding/blankets will help protect sore joints. A ramp will also provide easier access up a set of stairs or into the car, for weary legs. Rugs over hard-surface flooring will assist your pet in getting traction on the floor and make it easier for them to get around. Try not to shift around too much furniture in your home if your pet's vision is deteriorating – they will have your entire house mapped in their head and will quickly be able to learn a safe route around your house without bumping into too many walls or furnishings. Stimulating your pet with interactions will help to keep your pet mentally active. Food puzzles and toys are great entertainment.

You can play an important role in the senior years of your pet, and we're also here to help ensure that they live out their golden years in happiness and health. For more information, or to chat to one of our friendly vets about your pet, please give us a call.

Mel Criddle





# Kids★ Corner

Children up to 12 years old are invited to enter our colouring-in competition.  
Please post or return your entry to Swanbourne Veterinary Centre by  
Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2018 for your chance to WIN a year's supply of Flea Control  
products for your pet, plus a pet toy for your best friend.



Name:

Age:

Address:

Contact No.:



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*Good Luck!*

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