

# petpro

Professional • Diverse • Different

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

## The Pet Professionals

Tony Viganò , Michelle Harrison & Melanie Criddle. Veterinary Surgeons

# AUTUMN 2021

## GUARDIAN DOGS



## Inside this issue

Road Test The Maremma Sheepdog	Page 2-3
Swanbourne Dashboard	Page 4-5
Football Tipping Competition Online Booking	Page 5
Dog Training: What You Need To Know	Page 5
Autumn Issues	Page 9
Team Profiles	Page 9
Kids Corner	Page 10

### 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)



*The one-stop pet shop*



## ROAD TEST

### THE MAREMMA SHEEPDOG: (PRONOUNCED MAR-EMMA)



The Italian or Maremma sheepdog is one of the world's notable flock guarding dogs and can be traced back in its native Italy over 2000 years. He is known as the guardian angel of sheep and goat flocks and their shepherds in that country.

Considered two different breeds the Maremmano and Abruzzese because the regions of Maremma and Abruzzo claimed the dog as their own, the breeds were united as one in the 1950's. A classic wolf slayer the dog was a guardian of the flock and the shepherds for centuries.

#### Characteristics and examples of Guarding Dogs:

Livestock guarding dogs have been used all around the world for centuries to fend off predators and protect various farm animals. They do so in three primary ways:

1. **Marking their territory:** These boundaries are recognized by wolves, coyotes, and dingos and wild dogs in Australia and are less likely to attack the livestock
2. **Disruption:** Bark or engage in other activities to deter predators coming back
3. **Confrontation:** Physically confront the predator

They are mostly large, strong dogs that are comfortable living outdoors though they should have a dog house or shelter.

They usually bond strongly with the livestock from an early age, have a peaceful demeanour unless provoked and they love to work and need a job to stay properly occupied.

Some have extremely fluffy coats which may help facilitate the dog-livestock bonding process. Just some of the examples of guarding dogs are:

- Anatolian Shepherds...originate in Turkey and are strong and rugged
- Komondor.... are shaggy sheepdogs from Hungary
  - Tibetan Mastiff...huge fluffy dog
  - Kuvasz...a huge Hungarian dog
  - Pyrenean Mastiff...a large gentle breed

and only protect when provoked

- Akbash...originally from Turkey
- Polish Tatra Sheepdog...used in the Tatra Mountains in Southern Poland
- Spanish Mastiff...a huge breed weighing anything up to 100 kgs.

#### History:

This breed is probably a close descendant of the Great White Eastern Sheepdogs that spread across Europe 1000 years ago.

The Karabash and Akbash sheepdogs of Turkey, the Kuvac of Slovakia, the Kuvasz and Komondor of Hungary and the Pyrenean Mountain Dog of France are all included in the bloodline of the Maremma.

They are still a rare dog outside Italy although here in Western Australia there has been some interest over the years and a small breeding program has been going on in the South-West for some years and was featured on TV not that long ago.

#### Appearance:

A massive and noble dog with a bear like head the Maremma has small V shaped ears, a low set, well feathered tail and a deep well rounded rib cage.

It has a long, harsh and very abundant coat which is slightly wavy with a dense undercoat. They are not unlike a large version of our popular retrievers.



## ROAD TEST

### THE MAREMMA SHEEPDOG: (PRONOUNCED MAR-EMMA)

Colours include white with markings of ivory, light yellow, or pale orange on the ears.

They are 60-73 cm tall and weigh 30-45 kg living to between 11-14 years.

#### Characteristics:

These dogs are generally friendly, well balanced, sober and dignified.

They are loyal and brave, tending sheep and goats in their native Italy, and even protecting them in the absence of the shepherd.

They are excellent watch and guard dogs and can be barkers, and whilst they are affectionate to their human family, they are an independent dog.

Highly intelligent they require consistent handling and need to be carefully socialized and obedience trained if you are intending to keep them as pets as they can reach over 40 kg before they are 8 months old!

They are good with other dogs and other pets though can be reserved with strangers.

They possess great strength and endurance and love to work, thriving in snow and mountainous terrain.

#### Who Should Have One:

These are excellent guard and watch dogs and are good with children. They are not recommended for apartment life and need considerable exercise, though if this is

satisfied they will be quiet indoors.

They possess an all weather coat which allows them to live and sleep outdoors though they are not well suited to Perth's hot weather.

The coat needs regular combing and grooming particularly when they are shedding which happens year round in Perth.

They are territorial and protective of children and so socialization is essential in the suburban environment.

#### Veterinary Problems:

Generally a hardy breed they do suffer from hip dysplasia (an hereditary condition of the hips causing premature arthritis) and also have a few eye problems.

In summary the Maremma is an interesting breed as it represents a group of ancient flock guarding dogs in Europe which go back centuries.

They are not ideal for Perth's climate but are notable due to the breeding program that is going on in the South West of the state and as veterinarians we see them here in Perth from time to time.

A quintessential guard dog which, with proper socialization and obedience training can be a very successful and loyal pet.

Tony Vigano



# SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD

## SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD AUTUMN 2021

As the Covid vaccination is rolled out we can start to see what 2021 will look like after we achieve full vaccination by October.

Already borders are currently relaxed and the daily count of new Covid cases dwindles to a trickle, primarily from overseas arrivals.

After a false start in early February when no further cases resulted from a positive in a hotel security guard, things have gradually been trending back to normal.

Further into this newsletter in the Staff Profiles you will meet Dr Beth Thompson who joined the Veterinary Team in January and then Kiah Van Vlijmen who joined the staff as a Student nurse (Cert 4 at TAFE).

Congratulations to both of them and we look forward to a long and fruitful association with Swanbourne Veterinary Centre.

After a dry couple of months in December and January we well and truly caught up with our yearly rainfall in February and into March as I write this, but sadly bush fires ravaged the areas north of Perth with severe losses to property and stock.

On the veterinary scene though the arrival of a new tick born disease into Northern Australia is an unwelcome visitor and unfortunately will be an endemic disease now as it becomes entrenched in the native tick population.

Working dogs in the Northern Territory and the North of Western Australia should be on the high alert for signs of a deadly canine disease new to Australia.

The bacterium Ehrlichia canis is carried by the brown dog tick and causes a disease called Canine

Monocytic Ehrlichiosis. It is only a matter of time before infections will be seen in other location across Australia, mainly in warmer, wetter tropical and subtropical regions, but also in some temperate areas.

Effective, long and fast acting tick prevention is the best way to prevent the disease in dogs once it arrives in your local area. Rest assured we will keep you informed as more information comes to hand.

The bacteria affect blood cells, and often progress to be fatal. Signs of the infection are non specific to this disease and are quite variable but are worth investigating early to increase the chance of successful treatment. While some dogs will live with the disease, they will not do well, which is not ideal in working dogs.

Diagnosis is made by testing to identify changes in the blood and to find evidence of the bacteria.

This is a notifiable disease in Australia and there is no vaccine so the onus is on dog owners to prevent brown dog ticks from attaching to their dogs, even for a few hours.

The Seresto collar and Advantix spot-on are the only currently available products that are effective in the control of Ehrlichia canis but these should never be used in cats though there is no evidence to point to cats being affected by this disease.

Dog Obedience Classes continue to be popular with the next classes being held on April 24th at the David Cruickshank oval at 7pm (Wednesdays) and April 28th (Saturday mornings) at the Claremont Dog Reserve off Lakeway in Claremont at 9.30am

Both of these are already half full with some 6 places still available in both classes but these will quickly fill up.



## SWANBOURNE DASHBOARD

Neri may well start a staggered class at 10.30am at Claremont on May 15th so watch this space (on line and by ringing the practice) with further classes in June.

Our Puppy Preschool and Management classes are run as an 8 week course {2 part combined course} here at the practice on Sunday mornings. A new class commences every 2 weeks and can be booked on line at [www.swanbournevet.com/puppypreschool](http://www.swanbournevet.com/puppypreschool)

Just an update on Laura and her baby which was born late January, a beautiful little girl {Elizabeth Grace ... Billie for short} with mum and the babe thriving. Laura who is currently on maternity leave visited the practice this week with father Ian to show her off....

well done Laura!

As the restrictions continue to be rolled back and we hold our breath for the onset of the AFL season be sure to join our practice tipping competition soon to be launched. All details available on the web site

Lets hope it is not curtailed or restricted too much.

In the meantime we remain cautious and still practice distancing at the practice and have installed a Safe WA app for your safety although your presence at the practice is recorded and saved via our daily schedule.

Tony Vigano

## SWANBOURNE FOOTBALL TIPPING COMPETITION (ESPNFootytips)

It's that time of the year again!

After an interrupted year in 2020 fingers crossed that Covid is on the wane

Only \$10 to enter. Please pay your \$10 entry fee prior to the start of round 4, in order to be eligible for the end of season prize!

Do a bank transfer into the Swanbourne Footy Tipping account, or simply pop into the clinic and make your payment :)

Just a reminder of the bank account details:

BSB: 086 131

Account Number: 77 508 6890

Account Name: Swanbourne Veterinary Hospital

Thanks everyone and happy tipping!!

Login to ESPNfootytips to reply to this message

Mel Criddle

## ONLINE BOOKINGS

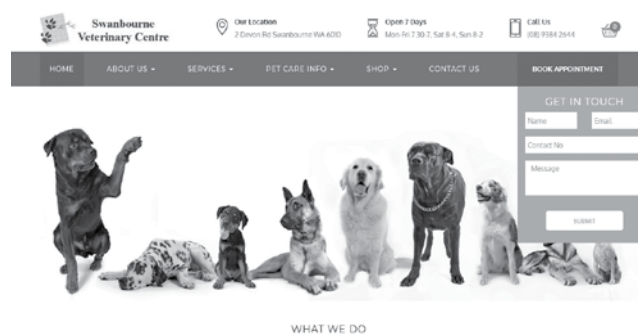
We have introduced the functionality to enable our clients to book their own appointments through a secure link on our website. Appointment times are available 7 days a week. You select the service - vaccination, general check, dental check or senior health check - then choose the day and time that suits, and book your pet in! When you complete your booking, you will receive an email with confirmation of the booking details.

If you wish to book an appointment with a specific vet or cannot find a suitable appointment time, please don't hesitate to give us a call.

Always remember that if you have immediate concerns about your pet, please call us! As always, our friendly team are here to help by calling 9384 2644.

Booking is easy - simply visit

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



# GOOD CITIZEN PROGRAM DOG TRAINING : WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Good Citizen Program

Our good citizen program consists of 3 courses that aim to turn your best friend into an upstanding member of society.

Dog training and communication helps build your bond with your dog and improve their behaviour. Our classes are run by Neri and Lisa from Dog Whispering and are unique to our practice.

### What is new?

As the new year proceeds, we have two courses confirmed for the end of April. As I write this, the Saturday course has six spaces left and the Wednesday course, 6 spaces.

The next Wednesday and Saturday courses will be on the website once confirmed, so it's best to get in quick! Keep an eye on our social media and website for future dates.

For those who repeat Obedience courses and whose dogs go from strength to strength, we are hoping to run another invite only advanced course in 2021.

Basic Obedience courses run for 6 weeks and can now be booked online at

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

### The confirmed dates are:

Wednesday 7 pm at David Cruikshank Reserve starting 28th April, Saturday 9.30 am at Lake Claremont Reserve starting 24th April.

Our Puppy Preschool and Management classes are run as an 8-week, 2-part course. A new class starts every 2 weeks and can now be booked online at

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



# AUTUMN ISSUES

## AUTUMN ISSUES 2021

This year has been quite wet after a very dry December and January. Then we had good rains in February and the start of March putting us well ahead of the yearly average. Climate Change does seem to be a reality and the bush fires Western Australia endured are proof of that with thankfully nothing on the Eastern seaboard of note this year thus far. We have experienced a hot Summer here in the West, with Autumn now upon us, but we all know how the sting in the tail can occur in late March.

Regarding our pets though, Autumn embraces several festive seasons, the tail end of Christmas and then New Year, Australia Day, Valentines Day and finally Easter! A plethora of occasions when your pet can over indulge if left to its own devices, and in truth they can often be overlooked in the mayhem! So, what does all this mean for our pets?

A season to be aware of all the nasties and believe me there are many.

1. The festive season overload is a real curse and chocolate can run from Christmas right through to Easter! Caffeine and theobromine are the toxic components with dark chocolate the worst. Vomiting, diarrhoea, restlessness (just like human kids!) can occur and lead to seizures and death in dogs. If you must give the family dog a treat give carob instead but better still a healthy treat made for pets! Also beware of sweeteners as xylitol can be very toxic in our pets so beware of human toothpaste, many human snacks and sugar alternatives across the board.

2. Also be aware of tooth picks in savory food, onions in hamburgers and at BBQ's, but fat associated with ham and turkey and indeed any meat can be hazardous to pets. Very old school but how many times have you heard older family members say "save the off cuts and fat for the dog!"

3. The blurring of the seasons in Autumn often catches us off guard in that it can still be warm on the one hand and we can forget issues such as heat stroke, and on the other it can be cooler and things like deworming, flea control and heartworm can be neglected or forgotten, which is never the case in Perth with its moderate climate all year around.

4. So, flea control, heartworm awareness and even flies can be of concern and neglected. Any temperature over 25 degrees C is too hot to leave the pets (or most certainly children) in a locked car even for 5 minutes so don't be caught off guard.

5. Flies can be a problem with wet coats, smelly ears, and open wounds such as grass seed abscesses. Fly strike is a not uncommon problem in domestic pets. If in doubt check it out with your local

veterinarian.

6. Hot pavements (try walking from the beach yourself bare footed!), and there is a plethora of really good dog boots for animals that are working animals or subject to grass seeds in rural and unkempt areas. Long haired dogs particularly, are at risk when they are on vacation in the country so plan for this.

7. Water availability (a shaded area and with ice blocks) is essential for hydration all year round and of course access to a fan or an air conditioner is very important.

8. Snail bait poisoning is on the agenda whenever the rain brings out the snails and hence the snail bait. Don't overuse this product and try to keep it away from the prying eyes of our pets by using ornamental snail traps, wide necked jars buried in the garden and conduit pegged to the ground. The snails are attracted to it just like our pets! On the subject of herbicides and pesticides be sure to use pet safe eco-friendly products at all time for the sake of our frogs, birds and reptiles.

9. Routine procedures such as annual health checks, vaccination boosters and the like are always important but more so when pets go to boarding establishments during the breaks so keep these current.

10. On the other side of the coin ailments like arthritis creep in at this time of the year so ensure you cater for the older pets by keeping them off the ground, in sheltered areas (if not inside) particularly at night, South of Perth and inland when the nights are cooler. Nutraceuticals such as 4 Cyte and the new Epitalis forte are worth using to ward off the pain of arthritis as are injections of cartrophen (a joint conditioner) and even non steroidal anti-inflammatories in advanced cases.

11. On the topic of the garden ensure you plant varieties that enhance the presence of our native species of birds, frogs and reptiles. Please stay away from Lillies, Sago palms, Oleanders, Amaryllis, Kalanchoe, Yew, Wandering Jew and English Ivy just to name a few toxic species harming our dogs and cats.

12. When walking your best friend and on the way to the park in the dwindling light that Autumn brings (and doesn't it creep up on us quickly!), be aware of cars and ensure your dog has been well trained off lead so he/she answers the recall cues so important when training your dog. Good doggy manners and caution should be encouraged crossing roads and so on. A bright collar, even with a light attached or fluoro strips alerts drivers of their presence. A full complement of puppy school and dog obedience classes is so important to maximise your enjoyment of each other but also so essential with the current Council crack-down on unruly public



## AUTUMN ISSUES (continued)

behaviour under the new Dog Act. This includes territorial behaviour of other dogs at the park, particularly avoiding fights over toys and balls all of which can end up in a fight with their owners as well!

13. The beach can be a hazard as well in Autumn with fish heads left by careless anglers full of hooks, blowfish, jelly fish and other ocean debris

14. Exercising your dog creates another layer of danger when owners continue to use squash balls, sticks (the native variety are very troublesome as they splinter easily) and the like instead of tennis balls and frizzbies.

15. Particularly be aware when you throw the ball using a ball thrower. Dogs like staffies are not built to twist and turn in the air as much as they try! My own dog suffered a potentially serious back injury at the beginning of Summer two years ago so please take care. Remember run the ball along the ground for most dogs. Leave the athletic jumps in the air to Collies and Kelpies!

16. Also when walking avoid patches of sand that the neighbourhood cats use as a toilet as "cat truffles" (cat poo) seems to be a canine delicacy and many a bout of gastro is caused by this activity, often recurrent, as dogs (my dog!) continually go back to the same place on each walk and some people claim they only have a short term memory!

17. Finally, remember the 10 commandments:

a) Feed an adequate balanced diet, preferably one of the premium diets such as our locally produced Delicate Care and ease off the quantity as Winter approaches, the sedentary season! Also recently we have been reminded that raw chicken is a haven for bacteria so all that stuff about raw chicken necks being good for their teeth etc is not worth the risk

b) Supply clean, cool water at all times. Preferably in the shade and several bowls ... add iceblocks if it is hot!

c) Provide a cosy, dry sleeping area, out of the wind and off the ground (preferably inside!?)

d) Provide your best friend with regular exercise and allow he/she regular family contact...include them in all your activities wherever possible ... they are part of the family so don't exclude them

e) Protect their health at all times with a regular wellness program including vaccination, deworming, heartworm, flea and tick control

f) Register both dogs and cats with the local Council and ensure the tag, and owner's details are easily identifiable and legible. Microchipping is now compulsory and a no brainer, and recently a

new system of attaching the animal's medical history to the microchip has expanded its value!

g) Keep your dog confined on the property at all times, and cats should always be kept in at night

h) Consider the neighbours and ensure your dog is well trained (proper socialisation at puppy class and obedience classes is essential), doesn't bark in your absence and is polite to everyone on walks

i) All domestic dogs and cats should be neutered if not used for breeding. It does them no harm and in fact helps eliminate mammary cancer in bitches and prostate disease in the males ... another no brainer

j) Consider their welfare when planning a holiday and book them in early to local boarding kennels or better still organise a live-in minder!

18. And definitely finally(!) ... always have in the back of your mind that an animal's behavioural health and welfare must be protected in all phases of its life by adhering to the Five Freedoms:

- (a) Freedom from hunger and thirst
- (b) Freedom from discomfort
- (c) Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- (d) Freedom to express its normal behaviour
- (e) Freedom from fear and distress

19. And of course there is Covid still loitering but hopefully the vaccine roll out will herald the end of lockdowns though as I write this McGowan seems to have other ideas but I think he will find that very unpopular!

Tony Vigano

PS: We have a new tick born threat now in the top end of Australia. Not thought to be a threat in the Southern areas as yet is caused by a bacterium called Ehrlichia canis. Known as Ehrlichiosis (and which causes a disease called Canine Monocytic Ehrlichiosis), it is a tick born disease.

Wherever the brown dog tick is found, Ehrlichia canis will eventually follow and long-acting, effective tick prevention is required to prevent this dreadful disease in dogs. The disease is new to Australia but now it is in the native tick population eradication is considered impossible. All effective tick preventatives will reduce the incidence of this disease at a community level but fast acting tick prevention is the best way to prevent the disease in dogs once it arrives in your local area. We will advise you as soon as it has been recorded in areas other than the top end. (Advantix squeeze on flea and tick prevention and the Seresto collar are thought to be the best preventatives to use if you are travelling North).

Watch this space.





## TEAM PROFILES

### Bethany Thompson:

Beth joined the practice as a member of the Veterinary Team in January 2021 having graduated from Murdoch University Veterinary School with the cohort of students at the end of 2020.

She has however been a regular face in the practice as an undergraduate for two and a half years prior to graduation and acquitted herself admirably, primarily as a receptionist on weekends, but also filling in as her course would allow.

As soon as I met Beth I realized she was a top student and have watched her progression carefully with an eye to a future position.

From Gisborne in New Zealand (in the North Island and known for its wineries and surf beaches) she was dux of her high school and came to Perth to study Veterinary Science after first acquiring a Biomedical Science degree at the Auckland University.

She excelled throughout the course here in Perth and her attainment of a Distinction Degree is testimony to this, and we are so pleased she has chosen Swanbourne to start her career as a Veterinarian.

She spends her spare time at the beach, and reading a good book, but also runs half marathons which seems to be a family trait, and one that is shared by partner Dusan who is a Production Engineer in Perth.

Leaving home means saying goodbye to pets and her mum has taken over the care of her beloved Lab cross Ruby but she is looking out for a new one here in Perth.

Beth has an enquiring mind and with an interest in both surgery and medicine I can see a pathway in one of these fields evolving although she has taken to the hurly burly of practice like a duck to water and I wish her a long and happy stay with us here at Swanbourne. Her unmistakable accent will draw you to her, so say high to Beth when next you visit the practice.



### Kiah Van Vlijmen:

Every now and then we have team members joining the practice with very diverse and interesting backgrounds.

Kiah is no exception having attained a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and Drama from Murdoch University, a field in which she worked for some time before her love of animals, including working as a pet sitter, directed her towards Veterinary Nursing.

Born and bred in Perth she is currently building a house with partner Cameron in Mandurah which they will share with Juniper their 3 year old Black adopt a cat (I love black cats!).

She has completed Cert 3 in Companion Animal Services and is currently doing Cert 4 in Veterinary Nursing at TAFE, and hence her position with us.

She so impressed the team with her diligence as a work experience student that she was offered the job when it came up. We invariably employ a Nursing student in her position and we were very happy when she accepted.

Her aim is to complete her sea change by working in the Veterinary industry with the intent of furthering her studies in the field of Animal Behaviour.

Good luck Kiah and welcome to the practice for what I hope will be a long and fruitful partnership

Tony Vigano



# 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 **30 June 2021** 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.:



docuprint 9335 2255  
com.au

SWANBOURNE VETERINARY CENTRE

Professional • Diverse • Different

*Good Luck!*