



ISSUE 125 | DECEMBER 2023

CLICK!

BUILDING BETTER TRAINERS THROUGH EDUCATION

PUBLIC RELEASE

MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PET DOG TRAINERS AUSTRALIA INC.

ABN 85 088 866 522 | ABRN 088 866 522



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Click! is the magazine of the
Association of Pet Dog Trainers Australia Inc.

ABN 85 088 866 522 | ARBN 088 866 522

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Printing: Abian Press, Milperra NSW 2214

Disclaimer

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Cover Dog

This edition's cover dog is Django, owned by Melanie Norgate.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback is originally from in Southern Africa. Its forebears can be traced to the semi-domesticated ridged hunting and guardian dogs of the Khoikhoi. These were interbred with European dogs by the early colonists to assist with hunting of lions.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback at present is the only registered breed indigenous to mainland Southern Africa and displays characteristics of a sighthound, scent hound and mastiff.



Editor's message

The big news since our last edition was the successful return to the APDT Conference in the beautiful Hunter Valley, NSW. You'll find a selection of member reviews and photographs highlighting the event's proceedings. Congratulations to the organising committee and the APDT Trainer of the Year Award winner. Please note that there were no nominations for the Susan Wilkins Award.

If you're like me, you have experienced life with a senior dog and seen first-hand the challenges they encounter. Have you thought about how to best help your dog navigate this period?

It's a fact of life that your dog will enter its senior years between the ages of 8 and 10. While this can be seen as a sad time, I would like you to consider this period of your dog's life as a time to begin their training anew.

As your dog ages, they may lose their sight or hearing, find navigating familiar environments difficult, and demonstrate different emotional responses. They may become frustrated and pessimistic or change their toileting habits. This is the time for you to step up and become your dog's support human!

Recent research has discovered that many elderly dogs are not diagnosed with cognitive decline or that owners are unsure of how they can best help their dogs. Inside, you'll find out how supplements,

exercise and training can help reduce the onset of cognitive decline and help those dogs already diagnosed.

Understanding aging in dogs and how you can assist with this transition is another way you can add value to your role as a primary dog carer, trainer, groomer or pet professional.

Until next time, that's all from me. Enjoy this edition and the summer ahead.

Tom Heeren

Dear reader,

This edition of the APDT Australia Inc. Click! Magazine is a public-release preview of our much larger publication available to financial APDT Australia Inc. members.

Each members-only edition is filled with science-based training articles from around the world and other APDT information. The front cover features a member's dog, and the magazine is published in both hard and soft copy three times a year.

If you wish to access the full edition of this magazine and all of our other publications, consider joining APDT Australia Inc. at www.apdt.org.au.

APDT merchandise

Support and promote your APDT by purchasing dog training related merchandise with the APDT logo from the APDT website. Go to **Member Area > Online Store** – you will need to login first.

Please note some older items have the older APDT logo printed on them.



Spring hinge treat pouch – \$15.00



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Soft iClicker

Clickers – \$4.00 each

President's message



The 2023 APDT Conference

was held in October and was a triumphant return to face-to-face learning and networking. This year, the event was held in the beautiful Hunter Valley at the Oaks Cypress Lakes

Resort. While the number of participants was down from previous years, those who attended learnt so much from our unique panel of local and international speakers. This year, we also introduced the ability to purchase recordings of the proceedings. You can find out more on page 8 of this issue.

On the evening of Friday, 13 October, the APDT conducted their AGM. The meeting saw the reinstatement of the current committee and a discussion about introducing CEUs. You can find a summary of the AGM on page 19.

Since our last issue, the APDT Committee is now closer to introducing a new membership web-based program. You may remember that the membership process is not quite working, so the APDT is moving to a new web-based system that has come highly recommended and should make our administrative functions run smoothly for existing and new members alike.

The new Membership 360 system will streamline new membership applications and existing membership renewals. To ensure you are a financial member – log into the APDT Website and see if your membership is current. If not, you will need to contact the membership officer membership@apdt.com.au to renew and keep receiving the APDT membership benefits, such as discounts on the APDT conference and other events both in person and online, including the APDT USA conference, *Click!* magazine, e-newsletters, APDT Awards and APDT merchandise. The membership database will be accurate once the new system is complete. Remember, only financial members will continue to receive the benefits of being an APDT member. So check your financial status today.

The committee is also finalising membership levels and making changes to reflect our members' needs so that

the new system is more effective at meeting the needs of those who apply or already have a membership with APDT Australia. As a reminder, before the change that was voted on at the 2019 APDT conference AGM, our trainers' directory contained trainers from all walks of life and people who worked in other areas of the dog world. Our membership gave feedback that there was a lack of confidence in the trainers' directory as a source of professional, qualified, skilled and knowledgeable positive reinforcement dog trainers. The APDT listened to the concerns and, in 2018, presented its proposal for new membership levels at the AGM. This was formalised in 2019 when members overwhelmingly voted in the majority at the AGM. The committee continuously reassesses the application process to ensure members can access the higher membership levels. Still, we stand firm that the trainers' directory will only be populated by Professional and Accredited force-free dog trainers. APDT Australia also stands firm that dog training has no place for aversive methods.

As an animal professional who has worked in the animal care industry for 33 years and has been a professional and accredited dog trainer for 13 years, I applaud APDT Australia's and the members' stance that helped to drive this direction. Using aversives to train dogs is unnecessary. A host of scientific papers clearly show a dog's welfare is compromised when these methods are used.

The APDT's mission is to ensure all dog trainers, no matter where they are in their force-free training journey, are given access to a safe space to be guided, supported and mentored. One of our main priorities is to enhance the human-dog relationship by educating trainers and the broader community. This is why APDT Australia offers membership levels to give all individuals a safe space to learn and evolve.

If ever you have questions or concerns about any membership issue or a concern about a member, please reach out to me at president@apdt.com.au or our secretary at secretary@apdt.com.au. We are here to assist and listen.

Please enjoy the rest of this edition of *Click!* magazine and, as always, happy training.

Your president,

Louise Ginman

2023 Conference review: Aussie presenters and shorts



Alisa Sannikova

At this year's APDT Conference, I had the pleasure of accompanying the recipient of an APDT scholarship – a talented young trainer with an impressive almost 2000 hours of R+ handling, training and behaviour modification experience – who was able to attend her first-ever conference. Meeting with like-minded trainers from different backgrounds, specialisations and learning information and experiences generously shared is affirming. It was a delight to be part of someone's first experience of that network of camaraderie and support that the APDT provides.

I found some of the APDT shorts to be some of the most engaging and intriguing talks of the weekend, and I look forward to longer-form presentations from those speakers in the future. Special mention to **Alisa Sannikova** for her hilarious short on *"Hidden implications in dog training language"*. The graphics and highlighting of words we often use perceived by a non-trainer perspective were succinctly and hilariously exemplified. **Jess McNamara-Rice's** *"Working with greyhounds"* rung true to those of us who have worked with greyhounds who may arrive in



Jess McNamara-Rice

companion animal homes from a different background to your typical 'rescue', while the video demonstration of flirt-pole-to-snuffle-mat arousal transitions from **Laura Ryder** were something I was eager to go home and practice.

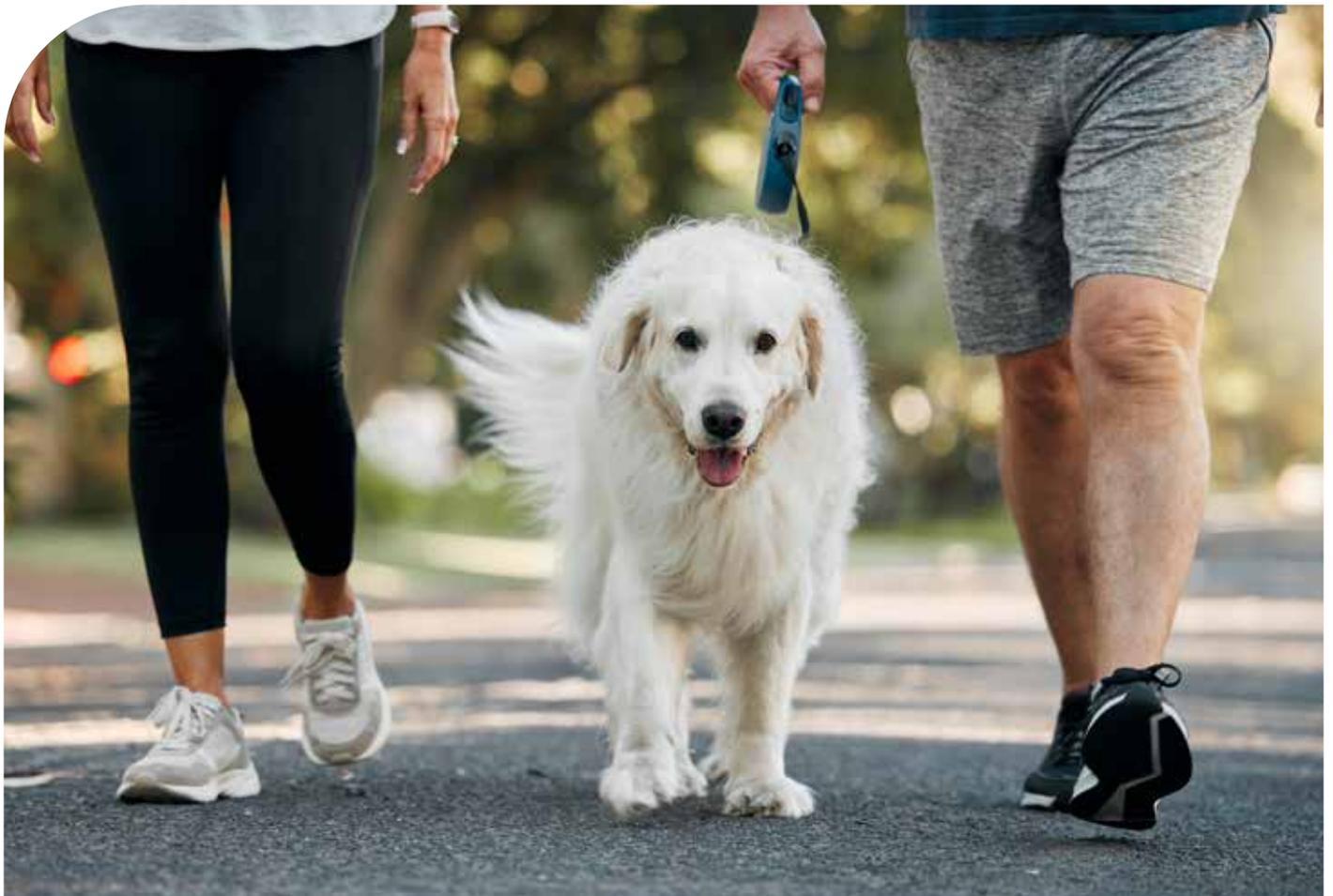
Another personal highlight was *"Actions and habits: Two routes to Instrumental Behaviour"* by **Natalie Rogers**. It was scientific, fascinating and engagingly delivered; barriers to engaging executive function gave me new areas to explore and discuss with owners (staying within my lane) with a highly complex human aggression case I am working on. **Jade Fountain's** talk on the *"Benefits of scent work for companion dogs"* had me eagerly awaiting her upcoming research results, alongside her engagingly delivered, quick-fire review of current literature. I thoroughly enjoyed her explanation around where literature sample sizes may not have particular relevance to the companion dogs we so often work with, for example, populations of 'working dogs' as in military or police applications, or where sample groups did not have persuasive control such as varied breeds, ages or application of scent work.



Laura Ryder

As always, I find the most significant value in conference attendance to be the ability to network and connect with like-minded trainers, behaviour consultants and veterinary service providers across Australia and the opportunity to catch up with those we may see more frequently. Learning and talking about our canine companions for hours at a resort location sounds like an ideal weekend to me!

Laura, NSW member



Dogs can get dementia, but lots of walks may lower the risk

Dogs get dementia, too. But it's often difficult to spot, and canine research describes how common it is, especially in dogs over ten years old. However, regular walks could lower the risk.

WHAT IS DOGGY DEMENTIA?

Doggy dementia, or canine cognitive dysfunction, is similar to Alzheimer's disease in humans, a progressive brain disease that comes with behavioural, cognitive and other changes. The condition is generally seen in dogs over eight years old but can occur in dogs as young as six.

Pet owners may dismiss many behavioural changes in their dogs as normal aging. So it's probably more common than most people realise.

Veterinarians can also find it challenging to diagnose. There is no accurate, non-invasive test for it. Also, senior dogs will likely have several other health issues that complicate diagnosis.

DOES MY DOG HAVE DEMENTIA?

Dogs with dementia can often get lost in their backyard or home. They can get stuck behind furniture or in corners of the room because they forget they have reverse gear. Or they walk towards the hinge side of a door when trying to go through.

Dogs' interactions with people and other pets can change. They may seek less or more affection from their owners than before or start to get grumpy with the other dog in the home

where once they were happy housemates. They may even forget familiar faces.

They also tend to sleep more during the day and be up more at night. They may pace, whine or bark, seemingly without purpose. Comfort does not often soothe them; even if the behaviour is interrupted, it usually resumes quickly.

Sometimes, caring for a senior dog with dementia is like having a puppy again, as they can start to toilet inside even though they are house-trained. It also becomes difficult for them to remember some of those basic behaviours they have known all their lives and even more difficult to learn new ones.

Their activity levels can change, too, from pacing all day, non-stop, to barely getting out of bed.

Lastly, you may also notice an increased level of anxiety. Your dog may not cope with being left alone any more, follow you from room to room, or get easily spooked by things that never bothered them before.

I THINK MY DOG HAS DEMENTIA; NOW WHAT?

Some medications can help your dog with doggy dementia to improve their quality of life and make caring for them a little easier. So, if you think your dog is affected, consult your veterinarian.

Scientists are planning research into some non-drug treatments. This includes investigating whether exercise and training may help these dogs. But it's early days yet.

Unfortunately, there is no cure. The best bet is to reduce the risk of getting the disease. This latest study suggests exercise might be key.

WHAT DID THE LATEST STUDY FIND?

Research published in 2022 gathered data from more than 15,000 dogs as part of the Dog Aging Project – dogagingproject.org.

Researchers asked pet dog owners to complete two surveys. The first about their dog's health and physical activity. The second assessed cognitive function.

Some 1.4% of the dogs were thought to have canine cognitive dysfunction.

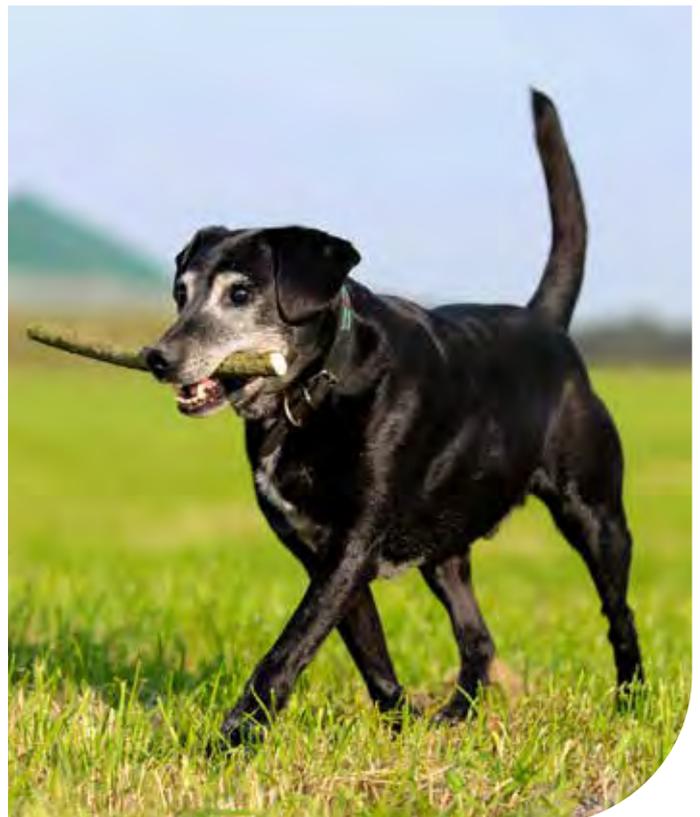
For dogs over ten years old, every extra year of life increased the risk of developing dementia by more than 50%. Less-active dogs were almost 6.5 times more likely to have dementia than very active dogs.

While this might suggest regular exercise could protect dogs against dementia, the researchers can't be sure from this type of study. Dogs with dementia or with early signs of dementia may be less likely to exercise.

However, medical science does know that exercise can reduce the risk of dementia in people. So, walking our dogs may help them, and us, reduce the risk of dementia.

REFERENCE

Yarborough, S, Fitzpatrick, A, Schwartz, SM *et al.* (2022) *Evaluation of cognitive function in the Dog Aging Project: Associations with baseline canine characteristics.* **Sci Rep** 12:13316. doi: [10.1038/s41598-022-15837-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-15837-9)





New members

Please welcome our newest members to the association. We can't wait for you to make your mark within the APDT community in 2023. Do remember to take advantage of all we offer – webinars, the annual conference, client handouts and special member discounts!

If you want to join the APDT visit our website.

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Social media

Public Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/APDTAustralia

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The APDT Code of Ethics

All APDT Dog Trainers and members have agreed to follow our code of conduct, including:

- Perform services to the best of their ability within this Code of Ethics guidelines
- Employ only humane, dog-friendly techniques in the training of dogs
- Actively reject the use of harsh, physical, psychological, coercive and aversive methods in the training of dogs, including the use of electric shock collars, correction, pinch or pronged collars
- Make the welfare of the dog of primary importance
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Treat all dogs with respect
- Do no harm
- Promote responsible dog guardianship
- Actively pursue ongoing education to provide a service based upon sound scientific principles and current best practices
- Promote a positive human/canine relationship between guardian and dog
- Work at developing and applying positive methods of dog training
- Provide a service of the highest standard within the limit of their skill, knowledge and ability
- Respect the confidentiality and privacy of clients
- Not advertise themselves as a member of APDT Australia Inc. without prior approval of the Association
- Not represent themselves as a spokesperson for APDT Australia Inc. without prior approval of the Association.

