

Jolene H. Attard
Address withheld

2nd March 2010

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jolene H. Attard and I hold a Bachelors degree in Veterinary Science, which I obtained from The University of Melbourne in December 2006. I became a registered Veterinary Practitioner in the State of Victoria on the 2nd December 2006 and I held this registration until the 31st January 2010, when I left Australia to pursue work opportunities overseas.

I worked as an associate veterinarian at the St Kilda Veterinary Clinic, located at 117 Chapel Street, St Kilda, Victoria between late November 2007 and early January 2010.

On the 5th January 2010, while working at the clinic, Ms Patricia Mark and Ms Debra Tranter, presented three canines and requested that a veterinary examination be performed. Ms Mark was known as a regular client of the clinic. I performed a complete clinical examination on the dogs as described below:

'Matilda' an entire female Miniature Poodle, weight 5.81kg.

'Waldo' an entire male Miniature Poodle cross Maltese Terrier, weight 5.36kg.

'Chai' an entire male Silky Terrier, weight 2.11kg.

My findings were as follows.

1. All three dogs were in extremely poor body condition. Their average body condition score, at the time of my examination, was approximately 1-1.5 out of 5. 'Chai' was the most severely underweight and had wood chips embedded in his scrotal skin.
2. The dogs' coats were in an unkempt state and sticks, burrs, grass seeds and faeces were present in the matted hair on each dog. I was able to clip a little of the matted hair on the dogs, revealing prominent rib cages due to the lack of subcutaneous fat covering their ribs. I was unable to clip much of the overgrown hair due to the extensive matting.
3. All three dogs had infections of the external ear canals (otitis externa) and their ear canals were filled with excessive wax and a black yeast like discharge.
4. All three dogs suffered from dental disease, including excess tartar build up and gingivitis.

I advised Ms Mark and Ms Tranter that each dog required dental work, ear cleaning and a full body clip. In the absence of prompt attention to the dental problems, these dogs were at risk of cardiac and renal infections. Left untreated, the grass seeds embedded in their matted hair were likely to penetrate the skin resulting in infections with a fibrous response to the grass seeds, leading to the possible development of tracts, sinuses and abscess formation.

I advised neutering the dogs, in line with standard clinic policy, to help control the unwanted dog population and promote responsible pet ownership. This was particularly appropriate in 'Matilda's' case (the female) as underweight bitches are not fit to carry litters due to the extra strain imposed on the body by the pregnancy.

In my professional opinion, the matted and unhygienic state of the coats, the very low body condition scores and the appearance of the dogs' teeth indicated neglect on the part of the person or persons responsible for their care. It is also my opinion that without attention to improved care, the health of these three dogs would have been seriously compromised in the foreseeable future.

Jolene H. Attard
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