



**BESTPRACTICE**  
New Zealand Veterinary Association  
ACCREDITED CLINIC

# pawprints

NEWSLETTER – August 2023



## Our Path to *BestPractice*

This is a tribute to the amazing Team at Vets on Waiheke and all the clients who believe in us!

We arrived on Waiheke now nearly 10 years ago. Full of dreams and following the words of the ad in the Vet script: Live and work by the sea! Our biggest supporters were our parents who trusted we could make this work and take the leap of faith to owing our own vet practice.

Reality hit us fast and owing your own business has its challenges to say the least.

From a 2 nurse- 1 vet clinic to now 10 years later 4 vets and 7 support staff Vet clinic. From an average countryside vet practice to being accredited *BestPractice* in terms of Animal, client and staff care. What an achievement! Change and growth (fast) are the only certainty still to this point.

**“You don’t spell love”, said Winnie the Poo, “-you feel it!”**

Did you know there are only a handful of practices in New Zealand which are *BestPractice* accredited? How exciting that Waiheke is one of them and what this means for the Waiheke community and their pets! We are so excited!

*What does it actually mean for your animal?* Each of our patients has a 2 vet 2 nurses ratio which looks after them on the day of the surgical procedure. Everything is done in the safest and most caring way for your pet. Our fundamental interest, and close to hearts, is to provide the best possible care to our 4-legged friends; **Because it gives your pets the best chance of having a successful outcome, not just in the high- stakes situations of anaesthesia and surgery, but also in the everyday activities of veterinary practice.**

We hope to deliver the highest standards to our clients. This includes educating and explaining the value of the treatment provided. We like to be transparent and able to provide precise estimates before all procedures.

*What does this mean for our staff?* We have training programs put into place, systems, protocols and policies which help everyone to be the best version of themselves. We try and turn weaknesses into strength.

**“We have seen many people come and go- some we just had to part ways as they were not the right fit!”**

There has been a lot of setbacks over the years from a staffing perspective. Some just weren't the right team fit, others couldn't deal with Euthanasia and others again either couldn't find a place to rent on Waiheke or hated the commute. Many interviews, and much soul-searching later, we now have an invested, Waiheke only, based team of vets, veterinary nurses and veterinary trainee nurses, who are here because they want to help you and your pet. We support them to develop and grow within themselves and this team and see the rewards every day.

**Some might remember the Mycoplasma outbreak- “this too, shall pass.”**

“Life has happened for us, not too us”. We have met some amazing people to help us put all the puzzle pieces together over the years. And it always fell into place. We weren't shy to put our hand up when life became difficult. This too, shall pass!

When the Mycoplasma outbreak happened, we were in the fire line by no fault of our own. Simply through a long existing client of ours where farm Mycoplasma was found. We made headlines on the front page of the Herald for all the wrong reasons. What never got reported was that we were completely exonerated by MPI. It just came to show how easy it must seem to the outside world to judge and find a scape goat to try and explain something New Zealand never thought it would have to experience- the appearance of an exotic disease.

This period of our lives was painful and challenging to say the least. It lasted for over 4 years with little to no support at all.

I had to be strong, realising for the first time that this was not one of those times I could disappear. I had to stay present, I had to stay in my body, I had to face this and find a way through it, I had a 2-year-old boy to worry about.



### **“Our business coaches are our rock”**

It was time to change our story. The old one became one of too much pain and devastation. We now know- if there is black in the world, there is white. If there is a problem- the answer to the problem is already out there. Sometimes it only takes time to be found and sometimes you need to make your problem the problem of someone else's, in our case a lawyer.

But the change had to start within us. Our new story needed to be created in our heads.

We invested in ourselves, our business, and our team. We slowly shifted the focus. We did what felt right for our own mental health and for our team. We made different lifestyle choices, we lost weight, we looked after ourselves. We feel healthier and more balanced. There is more to life than this business. One of the biggest rewards is that I have staff members now joining the same gym classes as us on a Wednesday evening.

We have been endlessly working on systemising the vet practice and the workflow and aiming for a 10/10 customer care experience.

The last year we took on board 2 amazing new graduates who gave the *BestPractice* idea the last push it needed. Fresh from Uni they remember the niggly little details more than what I do after over 20 years of working in the veterinary industry. Lots of paperwork and some changes on the building were required to meet the *Bestpractice* standards.

### **“From the Ashes rises the Phoenix”**

March 2020 Covid hits and something happens the world never anticipated to happen- everything comes to a standstill. As vets we all continued to work under the most difficult circumstances: animals are taken off their Owners to be examined, pets couldn't be put to sleep surrounded by their families. Anxieties going through the roof. The world becomes a cold, lonely, stressful and unfriendly place.

Our only benefit: we were able to remodel the clinic as no one was allowed in the building at the time. We turned the dream of a boutique vet clinic into reality, to make your trip to the vet more a 5-star hotel experience than anything else. Coffee on the house! Extra complimentary nurse care appointments, new client care packages, treats for your dog or your cat and a lot of fuss over your pet on your arrival.

The attention to detail is for me still astonishing. Although we have created this on our own, I still walk into my own clinic and love the artwork on the wall, the wallpaper carefully selected, the new and improved logo on our new uniforms, the nametags, the seating, the coffee machine, the way it smells and how it feels when you walk through those front doors. It's a place I want to come to work.

### **“Which much gratitude to the builders who made the extension happen during lockdown.”**

Much gratitude goes to our builders Peter, Reg and Steve who made this happen and project managed it so well. We continued to work throughout the renovations and didn't have to close a single day. Painting was done on weekends, computers shifted and moved on a Sunday afternoon. The floors were laid at 9 o'clock in the evening till the early mornings. Whatever we could recycle we did and although the reception desk looks different now, it is the exact same one from 10 years ago. *BestPractice* also means, sustainability.

The cost of Veterinary care: Good systems and protocols give us a better chance of getting the diagnosis right first time. An accurate diagnosis means the best treatment can be chosen. Your pet can get better quicker and with less pain and inconvenience. **That is usually more cost effective too. This is *BestPractice* too.**

We are here to help making decisions to keep Veterinary care as affordable as possible. Pet insurance and or Wellness plans have to be a crucial part of your animals health care. Decisions are made based on Best Standards of Care and not based on dollar values.

We are committed however to get our service to you better and better all the time.

**“Change your thoughts, will change your life.”**

**With much gratitude to everyone and to us- how we got here, where we are right now and the excitement about what will be in the future.**