

# HOW A VETERINARY BEHAVIOURIST CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR PET



## What is a veterinary behaviourist?

A veterinary behaviourist in Australia is a qualified veterinarian who has undertaken post-graduate studies in veterinary behaviour and can diagnose and treat animal behaviour problems.

There are different qualifications for veterinary behaviourists, reflecting different levels of education.

Some will have a

- MANZCVS qualification which means they are veterinarians with additional training and assessment by examination in veterinary behaviour.

Others will have a

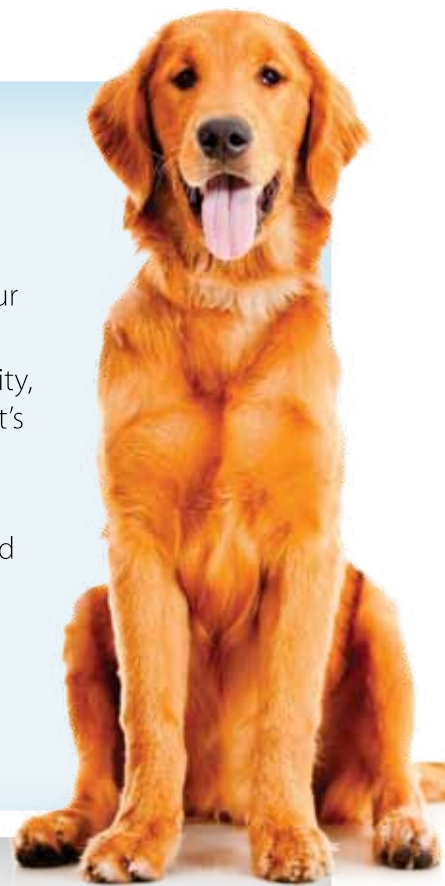
- FANZCVS, or DACVB, or specialist registration in veterinary behaviour. This means they have been assessed through rigorous examination, been supervised by a specialist in hundreds of behaviour consultations and met other criteria indicating a high standard of practice in veterinary behaviour.



## What does a veterinary behaviourist do?

A veterinary behaviourists can:

- assess if there are any medical conditions that may be contributing to your pet's undesirable behaviour
- assess if your pet shows abnormal levels of anxiety, stress, fear, hyperactivity, aggressive reactivity or impulsivity which may be contributing to your pet's behaviour
- explain to you why your pet is behaving the way it does
- develop an effective treatment plan tailored to meet the needs of you and your pet
- provide ongoing support in modifying your pet's behaviour
- supply appropriate medication if indicated
- give you an idea of the chances of improving behaviour.



## How do veterinary behaviourists differ from dog trainers?

Experienced and qualified dog trainers understand how dogs learn and how to teach them. A skilled trainer will understand how to manage and prevent the development of some behaviour problems. However, only a veterinarian is qualified to make a diagnosis, develop an appropriate treatment plan or prescribe and manage drug therapy for pets with abnormal behaviour.

Veterinary behaviourists are skilled in identifying the causes of behaviour problems and developing a treatment plan. Veterinary behaviourists commonly deal with abnormal behaviours. These are conditions based in anxiety and aggression problems. These problems may be a result of genetics, medical conditions, learning experiences or environmental conditions.

In some cases a veterinary behaviourist may work together with a trainer or your regular veterinarian to help get your pet's behaviour back on track.

## Not sure if you and your pet need a veterinary behaviourist?

The best place to start is to ask for advice from your veterinarian. You can also contact the Australian Veterinary Behaviour Interest Group (AVBIG) at [AVBIGSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:AVBIGSecretary@gmail.com) for advice.

Thanks to Dr Gabrielle Carter for her assistance with the content of this flyer.