

Elmo: Karen Hendriks

Sometimes new beginnings are forced upon you.

When the time came I knew I'd make the decision to honour our little Elmo in the best possible way. Silently, I promised Elmo he wouldn't suffer or be alone.

Elmo lived for our walks. On this particular day, we were going away so I wanted our morning to be special. The sun sparkled over the ocean, always together we walked the beach. Recently, we'd stopping going on longer walks as Elmo was getting frail. We splashed in the waves, Elmo stayed close to me all the way to the end of the beach and back. 'Are you okay Ely boy?' I asked. Elmo smiled and we both looked at each other with love. I said, 'Ely, I'm going to have a quick dip.' He waited patiently at the shore never taking his eyes off me. He was so darn cute and loyal and loving. I called back, 'I'm coming Elmo.' That image is forever imprinted in my memory.

After my swim we headed past the pool to the harbour to a grassy spot. We sat close together and watched the waves. My girlfriend joined us and Elmo took turns sitting snuggled near us receiving pats.

Later at home, I said, 'Rest little mate.' I had errands to do at the shops. I am so grateful that I had taken the time to spend the whole morning with Elmo. This ended up being our last beach day.

When I close my eyes I can see Elmo waiting for me with so much love on the shore. I'm grateful for this precious memory of our perfect beach morning. That evening, Elmo ate dinner and lay beside me on the lounge. We snuggled for a long time.

Later that evening, I dropped Elmo to Aunty Jo's to stay. He didn't want me to leave him, I promised I'd be back soon.

That night he suffered a stroke. I raced there that morning to take Elmo to the vet. I held him tight and didn't let go. We both knew it was time. I promised to be with him no matter what. I held Elmo close. It was one of the hardest but most beautiful things I have ever had to do.

Changes come and do change us forever but I think it's how we react to them that is what matters most of all.