

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

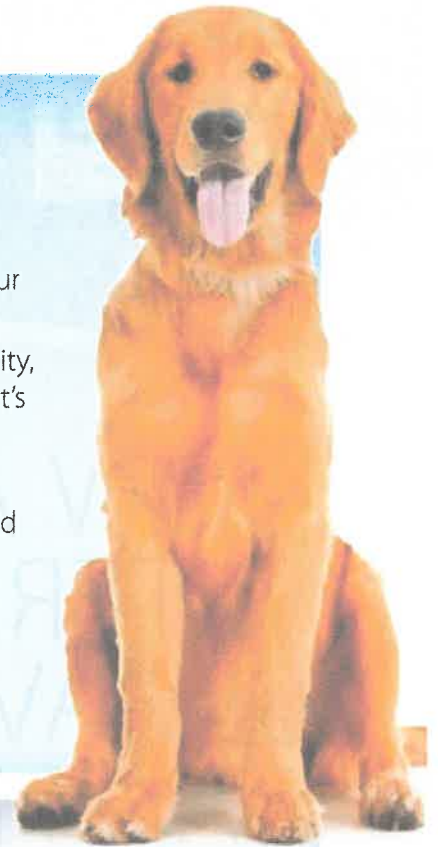
- FANZCVS, or DACVB, or specialist registration in veterinary behaviour. This means they have been assessed through rigorous examination, been supervised by a specialist in hundreds of behaviour consultations and met other criteria indicating a high standard of practice in veterinary behaviour.



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 for advice.

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