



southpaws

SPECIALTY SURGERY FOR ANIMALS

3 Roper Street
Moorabbin VIC 3189
www.southpaws.com.au
info@southpaws.com.au
03 9553 1775 (landline)
03 8677 7630 (fax)

Surgical consults are
ALWAYS free-of-charge at
Southpaws

Free surgical consults with
Charles in Castlemaine
27th November.

Call 03 5472 5477 to book.

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

1 NOVEMBER 2013

Client Surveys Show Southpaws is A World Leader

Care, Compassion and
Value at Our Heart
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Chemo vs Radiation ?

What's the difference
and when is each
technique used ?
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Complete Cancer Care

Multidisciplinary
approach leads to high
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We Export Cass and Import Ralph

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Major Milestone

After successfully sitting the American College of Veterinary Surgeons board certification examination in February this year, Dr James Simcock co-owner of Southpaws, is now officially registered as a Specialist in Small Animal Surgery with the Veterinary Practitioners Board of Victoria. This is an amazing achievement and we are all really proud of you James - congratulations.



Free Consults - Continuum of Care

Southpaws free surgical consults are viewed as a continuum of care by the primary care practices who use them.

Some practices which utilise our free surgical consults promote them to their clients as an extension of the team approach that we foster. As a member of your team, we don't feel that your clients should have to pay a second consulting fee just to review treatment of an already diagnosed disease. You can imagine us as a member of your staff, sitting in an adjacent office, just waiting to meet with your clients to discuss options for treatment, with no obligation or fee.

Our Estimates include Hospitalisation

We don't try to compete on price, but on care and value

While Southpaws doesn't try to compete on price, it's important to note that unless stated otherwise, our estimates include overnight hospitalisation. Our overnight care is provided by highly qualified nurses who are **not distracted by incoming emergencies** and don't sleep during their shifts. They are 100% dedicated to the treatment of in-house patients. If an emergency surgery is scheduled, another on-call nurse is called in. Treatments are **NEVER** missed. Patients **ALWAYS** receive prescribed pain relief and are **NEVER** left soiled in urine or faeces. Patients **ALWAYS** have fluffy bedding which is changed as frequently as needed. We feel these are **RIGHTS** of hospitalised patients. Our overnight nurses have worked in other referral centres and know that these are important points of distinction for Southpaws, compared to other Melbourne specialty centres.

Client survey results reflect our dedication to compassion and value



We have recently reviewed our client survey results and are very pleased that they reflect the dedication of our staff. A net promoter score (NPS) is a reflection of customer satisfaction. It is calculated by asking customers on a scale of 1-10, how likely would they

recommend us to a friend or colleague. The percentage of clients giving us a score between 1 and 6 are subtracted from the percentage of clients giving us 9's and 10's. NPS considers the latter to be "Promoters".

The top ten world-leading companies have NPS scores ranging from 70 to 87 and include Apple and Amazon. Southpaws NPS was **89.1 based on 375 surveys** filled out by clients.

On individual categories, we also rated really well - "Compassion of Team Members": 95.2% scored excellent, good to excellent categories 100%. "Standards of Care": 93.5% excellent, 99.7% good to excellent. "Friendliness of Team Members": 94.1% excellent, 100% good to excellent. "Value": 93% good to excellent.

The only consistent complaint that people had was limited parking. We are currently making changes to scheduling to reduce congestion in parking and reception areas.

The difference between radiation therapy and chemotherapy

Radiation therapy is generally used to prevent local recurrence while chemotherapy is used to address systemic metastasis.



There is often confusion between applications of radiation therapy and chemotherapy in cancer patients. Radiation Therapy (RT) is used almost exclusively for prevention of local recurrence in tumours which have not been completely removed. RT is generally very effective for prevention of local recurrence when used on surgical fields that have microscopically dirty margins. Common uses include "cleaning up" dirty margins following incomplete removal of soft tissue sarcomas, mast cell tumours, nasal carcinomas, ceruminous gland adenocarcinomas (ear canal tumours), thyroid carcinomas, and many others.

RT can also be used palliatively when gross tumour remains, but it is less effective. Common applications include oral melanomas, oral epulides, appendicular osteosarcomas, cutaneous squamous cell carcinomas and mast cell tumours. Protocols include only 3-4 treatments.

Chemotherapy is primarily used for preventing or treating systemic metastasis. It is most commonly used for treatment of osteosarcoma, lymphoma, haemangiosarcoma, transitional cell carcinoma, oral melanoma and systemic mast cell disease. Metronomic oral chemotherapy can also be used to prevent local recurrence of incompletely excised soft tissue sarcomas.

There may be some confusion on the part of a major veterinary specialist centre in our market that mistakenly advertises on their website that radiation therapy for animals does not exist in Victoria. Our radiation therapy unit is very effective for the majority of cancer patients referred for radiation therapy.



47% of dogs and 32% of cats die of cancer.

Animal Health Survey. In Companion Animal News, Morris Animal Foundation, Englewood, Colorado, 1998 and 2005

Complete Cancer Care at Southpaws

Cancer is a leading cause of death in companion animals. Cancer is the number one health concern among pet owners at 41%. Heart disease is a distant second at 7%. Pets are elevated to the level of human beings in the eyes of many pet owners. The days of "test and terminate" are long gone. Many cancers are curable if caught and treated aggressively and early. The breadth of knowledge in the treatment of cancer in animals is expanding exponentially. Keeping up with the latest advances in technology and treatment is difficult if not impossible. In order for primary care veterinarians to provide the best possible treatment of animals with cancer, partnering with Southpaws can be helpful.

Why Southpaws?

Experience: Collectively, we have treated thousands of patients with cancer using surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

World-renowned: We have published nearly two hundred peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, proceedings and abstracts.

Published Success: We have published one of the **largest collections** of soft tissue sarcomas in dogs. We have published some of the **lowest recurrence rates** for soft tissue sarcomas in dogs. We have published the **largest collection** of soft tissue sarcomas in cats, operated by a single surgeon. We have published the **lowest recurrence rate** world-wide for injection site sarcomas in cats. We have published one of the **best survival times** for osteosarcomas in dogs. We are currently publishing one of the **best survival times** for nasal tumours in dogs.

Innovation: We set up and currently run the first **deep-radiation therapy unit** for animals in Australia. We invented and patented the **standard limb salvage system** for osteosarcoma which is currently being used world-wide for dogs with bone cancer.

We are pioneers in the use of **3d printing** for surgical planning in Australia. We developed the revolutionary **Platipump™** chemotherapy system for dogs with osteosarcoma.

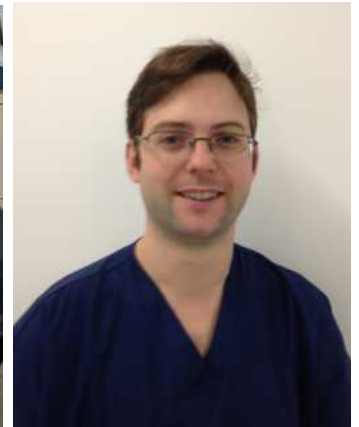
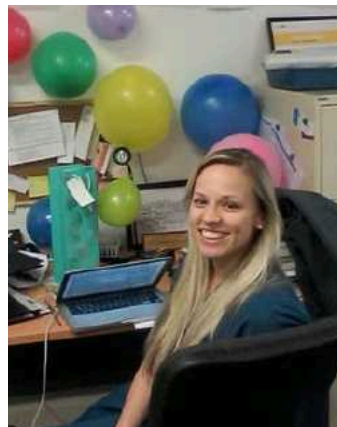
These benefits are supported by outstanding care of hospitalised animals, friendly and compassionate service and free consultations for surgical patients.

We welcome telephone and email consultations from vets all over Australia.

Goodbye Cass, Welcome Ralph

Congratulations to Dr. Cassandra Prpich on completing her surgical residency at Southpaws ! Cass is now studying for her ACVS specialist board examinations in February, 2014; before jetting off to the USA to take up a prestigious one year Surgical Oncology Fellowship at Colorado State University.

Well done Cass, we miss you already but we know we'll see you back in Oz.



We welcome Dr. Ralph Webster to our team. Ralph joins Southpaws from the University of Adelaide Veterinary Centre to complete his residency. Ralph graduated from Massey University, NZ in 2004 and moved to the UK to complete a surgical internship at Davies Veterinary Specialists. Ralph returned to Australia in 2009, as a senior surgical registrar at Sydney University. In 2011, Ralph joined the University of Adelaide to lecture in surgery and to commence his residency in small animal surgery. Ralph is a welcome and experienced addition to the Southpaws surgery team. Ralph is available for consults at Southpaws Monday through Friday and also conducts consults on Saturday mornings for the convenience of our clients.

Why Veterinary Clinics should have Wings

The aviation industry has adopted changes in the past 50 years which have made flying infinitely safer. These changes are slowly permeating the human medical system. While veterinary medicine is generally ahead of human medicine in some of these areas, there are still some things we can learn.

In a five year period (from 2001 to 2006), the US airline industry lost a sum total of ZERO passengers. In the same time period, 250,000 to 500,000 patients died in the US of avoidable medical mistakes. That is the equivalent of 1400 fully loaded 747's crashing with no survivors.



One of the biggest changes in the airline industry is the creation of a "culture of safety." This is based on a common denominator of teamwork which is founded on an open, supportive, mutually reinforcing relationship between team members. The first thing to go was the "maverick captain" who refused to listen to anyone. There are numerous cases, based on cockpit voice recorders, where co-pilots allowed life threatening mistakes rather than raise concerns to a captain for fear of being berated.

In human medicine, the analogy is the prima donna doctor. Subordinate doctors, nurses, administrators, and assistants, must be depended upon to catch and voice potential mistakes in an environment where contributions are rewarded, and not met by defensiveness. Collaboration is key. No decisions are made in a vacuum. Valuable team members of ALL job descriptions are consulted for ideas on patient care. An individual, no matter how professional and experienced can NEVER be as reliable as a team. The objective is Barrierless Communication where subordinates are encouraged to speak up. It has been said that since human infallibility is impossible, the only chance of reducing human errors is by creating a safe culture wherein interactive team members can catch and neutralise one another's mistakes.

Why are doctors resistant to adopting changes that increase safety? Because, unlike pilots, the doctors don't go down with the ship.

Let's Talk Turkey (\$)

As part of our seamless partnership with our primary care veterinarians - consults for surgery at Southpaws are free. Clients can consult with Southpaws surgeons comfortable in the knowledge that they can make their own decision about the best treatment for their loved family members without obligation.



During the consultation a fee estimate is provided to the client. The treatment and the risks involved are explained, including the mortality risks of each step. Estimates are typically within 20% of the final figure. Prices can vary when imaging or laboratory testing dictate a change in strategy, diagnosis or medication.

Once patients have undergone surgery at Southpaws, recheck appointments are also free of charge - the professional time spent during the surgery recheck appointment is at no cost. Additional costs do occur however such as bandage changes, X-rays, additional blood tests and medications and these are due and payable at the time of the recheck.

Consultations and rechecks for Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology are on a fee paying basis. A complete physical examination of the patient, detailed discussion of the owners' and referring vets' primary concerns and review of the patient's history are included. These often lengthy consults include review of the spectrum of diagnostic and treatment options available and are integral to obtaining an accurate diagnosis and to the successful management of each case.

Please remind referred clients that payments at Southpaws are due at the time of discharge. Multiple payment options exist including Gem Visa which allows 6 months interest free terms to repay the amount due. Note that payment via Gem Visa must be arranged prior to committing to treatment.

Increasingly clients have adopted pet insurance and this can be effective in minimising expenses. Only one pet insurance provider - Petplan, will pay approved veterinary expenses immediately. Other insurers require the client to pay for the procedures first and then present their settled account for reimbursement. Clients should maintain proof of current insurance and bring this to a specialty centre when they are referred. A little preparation avoids unnecessary inconvenience when visiting a specialty centre.