

The people and faces that make up the McMaster & Heap Family



Christmas Day in the cattery



Our reception team



Michele and Amy, my Practice Manager



The week just gone was "Vet Nurse Awareness week" in New Zealand. We get to celebrate nationally how hard our nurses work, the skills they possess and how many "hats" they wear each day they turn up for work. Our large team of qualified veterinary nurses, head surgical nurses, hospital nurses, receptionists, cattery staff and practice managers make up the backbone of MMH vet practice, without them all we just couldn't effectively do our job in saving pets lives.

McMaster & Heap vets truly understands the value and power of a vet nurse. Our surgical nurses work very closely with the vets, getting a patient ready for surgery. This will include blood testing prior to anaesthesia, popping on intravenous fluids and checking the patients vitals before any sedative drugs are given. They set up for surgery and become anaesthetists once surgery has started. This includes careful monitoring of a sleeping patient using high tech anaesthetic equipment, ensuring the patient is at the right anaesthetic depth and is coping with the procedure the vet is doing. They use a software programme called "Smartflow" to pop in monitoring data (blood pressures, heart rate, oxygen levels, respiratory rate, temperatures) and critically assess how your pet is doing. Under the guidance of a vet, tweaks may need to be made to anaesthetic depth, medications and fluid levels to ensure a safe, uneventful recovery. There is a lot of knowledge, skill and critical thinking that goes into anaesthetic monitoring and they take this role very seriously. Post operative monitoring is also another of their tasks and some patients (brachycephalic patients after airway surgery) require a nurse in the cage with them checking their oxygen levels and making sure there is no regurgitation in the recovery phase. In fact their job isn't complete until their patient is walking out the door with their human owner, homeward bound. We also have a set hospital nurse each day who is totally responsible for the admitted sick patients, providing recovery nutrition, ensuring medications are given on time, toileting and exercising, not to mention hugs, pats and grooming when needed.

Our head surgical nurses need a big shout out as they co-ordinate efficiently and effectively the vet/nurse team on that day, the flow of the surgical day, they organise all the preanesthetic blood tests and calculate drug dosages and they prioritise sick patients if need be. They make

sure nurses have breaks and provide nurse cover if need be. They keep an eye on recovery patients as well as running in house bloods and urine. They work in the hospitals hub ensuring surgeries are co ordinated and performed in a timely manner, patients are happy and recovering well and they also manage all the staff inflow.

The next group to acknowledge are our hard working receptionists who work tirelessly serving customers, fielding phone calls, dealing with pet queries, performing vet nurse consults, unpacking and restocking supplies, making up prescriptions, cleaning, not forgetting a shoulder to lean on if a client is having a hard time processing a pets illness. They actually do it all effortlessly, with a smile, listening and showing lots of empathy, really trying to help our clients and their pets anyway they can.

Our cattery staff are also very important providing kindness and care to your cats whilst you are enjoying a vacation. These cats are safe, kept in a fastidiously clean environment, fed premium nutrition (or a diet bought in for them) and medicated according to their needs. They are regularly hugged and patted, making them feel happy and secure whilst away from their families.

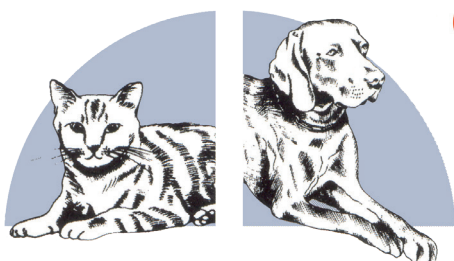
Last but by no means least are our management team who have one of the biggest most important jobs of all..... looking after all of us! Our staff come from all walks of life, have partners, children, pets of their own, businesses, health issues and other outside responsibilities. Periodically they need someone who has the time to listen, who cares about them and can offer some advice. We have a terrific team who have a "doors always open" policy. This team certainly contribute to McMaster & Heap being a happier, healthier workplace, one Steve and I are very proud of.

Dr Michele McMaster BVSC, October 2025

P.S. No article would be complete without a special mention to my dogs Macy and Lola (who sadly passed away in February of this year). They are my constant, loyal "consult companions" and a very important part of who we are and what we stand for. They wander the clinic comforting dogs and their humans alike, occasionally needing to give blood and they just add that "feel good" factor for people entering our clinic. Clients have often said to me how good it feels to be greeted by a black Labrador at reception.



Lola in consult with me



McMASTER & HEAP
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