BARRINGTON COAST VETS

# Newsletter - Winter 2026

Welcome to our first newsletter!

We are excited to share with you all our seasonal newsletter, designed to provide you - the animal lovers of the Barrington Coast with tips and advice for all animals - large & small.
We will share the things to look out for, and advice on caring for your animals, as well as clinic updates, seasonal specials and case stories.

if you have any suggestions of content you would appreciate reading about please do let us know by dropping an email to the clinic.

Thank you for your continued support.
The team at Barrington Coast Vets



02 6559 2277
diamondbeach@barringtoncoastvets.com.au
www.barringtoncoastvets.com.au

# Small animal news

## Winter Wellness Checks and Cosy Weather Pet Tips

As the cooler, wetter weather settles in across the Barrington Coast, many of our pets start to feel the change, and not just because they want the warmest spot on the couch! Now can be a great time to make sure your pet is comfortable, healthy and prepared for the season ahead. Winter can bring out issues that may have been quietly brewing, including stiff joints, skin flare-ups, weight gain, dental disease and, with all this wet weather, some rather interesting mould and fungal skin cases.

Our senior citizens can really feel the cold. Arthritis and stiffness may become more obvious in winter, so keep an eye out for pets taking longer to get up, hesitating on stairs, being less keen for walks, or sleeping more than usual. Some cheap and simple changes such as warm bedding, non-slip mats, shorter walks and pain management plans can make a big difference.

Puppies and kittens also need extra care in cooler weather.

They can lose body heat quickly and may need warm, dry bedding, shelter from draughts and regular monitoring when outdoors.

Winter is also a good reminder to check that vaccinations, worming, flea and tick prevention are up to date.

For indoor pets, comfort and enrichment are key.

Rainy days often mean less exercise, so puzzle feeders, indoor games, short training sessions and controlled play can help keep them moving and prevent winter weight gain.
Keep beds off cold floors and away from draughty doors and windows.



For outdoor pets, shelter and hygiene are especially important. Kennels, runs and hutches should be dry, raised where possible, and protected from wind and rain. Bedding should be checked and changed regularly, as damp bedding can quickly become cold, smelly and a perfect environment for skin irritation, mould and fungal problems.

Don't forget our pocket pets either. Rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and mice are very sensitive to cold, damp and sudden temperature changes. Hutches should be weatherproof, well-ventilated but not draughty, and filled with plenty of clean, dry bedding. Damp hay, mouldy bedding and wet flooring can quickly cause health issues, so regular cleaning is a must. Pocket pets still need daily hay, fresh food, clean water and safe exercise time, even in winter.

And while it may feel like tick season should be over, ticks can still appear on those sneaky warm, sunny winter days. Year-round prevention is the safest approach for dogs and cats in our region. Please keep your pet's flea, tick and worming prevention going through winter.

# WINTER HOT TIPS FOR YOUR CATS & DOGS

## Keep them dry



Wet coats, damp bedding and muddy paws can contribute to skin irritation and infections. Towel-dry pets after walks and check paws, bellies and skin folds.

## Watch for skin changes



Redness, itching, hair loss, musty smells, scabs or circular patches can be signs of skin infection, fungal disease or allergy flare-ups.

## Brush reguarly



Grooming helps prevent matting, especially in long-coated pets. Matted fur can trap moisture against the skin and reduce the coat's natural insulation.

## Stay tick aware



Continue tick prevention all year and check your pet after bush walks, beach trips or warm sunny days.

## Support sore joints



Older pets may benefit from ramps, soft bedding, non-slip mats and shorter, more frequent walks.

## Mind the waistline



Less outdoor time can mean weight gain. Adjust treats and portions if activity levels drop.

## Check heating safely



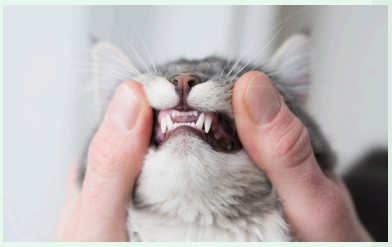
Keep pets away from heaters, fireplaces and heat packs that may burn. Always use pet-safe warming options.

## Maintain hygeine



Wash bedding, clean kennels and hutches, remove damp hay or blankets, and keep food and water bowls fresh.

## Do not forget dental care



Bad breath, drooling, chewing on one side or reluctance to eat can all point to dental pain, which pets often hide well.

Winter is a great time to book a wellness check and make sure your pet is comfortable, healthy and prepared for the season ahead.

A winter check-up at Barrington Coast Vets gives us the chance to assess your pet from nose to tail and includes a thorough examination and focus on;

- weight
- mobility
- skin and coat
- teeth
- nutrition
- parasite prevention
- any changes you may have noticed at home.

A little winter planning can make a big difference to your pet's comfort and health. Contact Barrington Coast Vets to book a winter wellness check and help keep your pets cosy, clean and well this season. T: 02 6559 2277



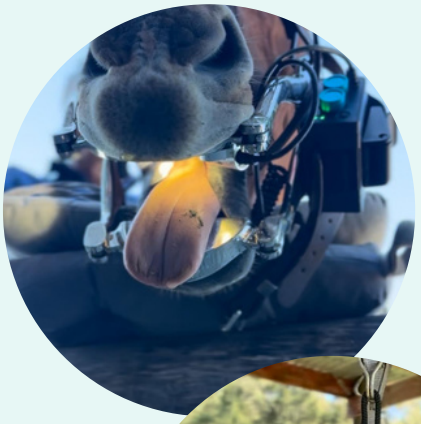

## Dr Emma Swilks

Bachelor & Master qualified in Animal and Veterinary Sciences
Level 3 EVDS Certified Equine Dentist
Member of Equine Veterinarians Australia (EVA)
Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)

# Equine news

## Why regular Dental Care matters for your horses

Looking after your horse's teeth is one of the most important parts of keeping them healthy, comfortable, and performing at their best. Whether your horse is a retired paddock companion or a top-level competition athlete, regular dental care plays a vital role in their overall wellbeing.





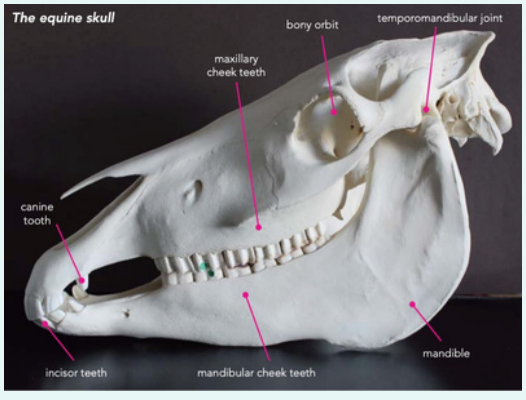
Equine dentistry has come a long way over the past 20 years. Advances in research, technology, equipment, sedation, and pain management have transformed the way dental care is provided. We now have a much better understanding of how a horse's mouth works, how dental problems develop, and how to treat them safely and effectively.

Many equine veterinarians (including our own Dr Emma) have undertaken extensive postgraduate training in dentistry, with some dedicating a large part of their practice to equine dental care. This means horses today have access to a much higher standard of dental treatment than ever before.



## Understanding Your Horse's Teeth

A horse's mouth is perfectly designed for grazing. In the wild, horses spend many hours each day slowly eating grass and forage.
The front teeth, called incisors, are used to grasp and cut feed, while the cheek teeth at the sides of the mouth grind food into smaller pieces before it is swallowed.




Most horses have between 36 and 40 teeth. These include:

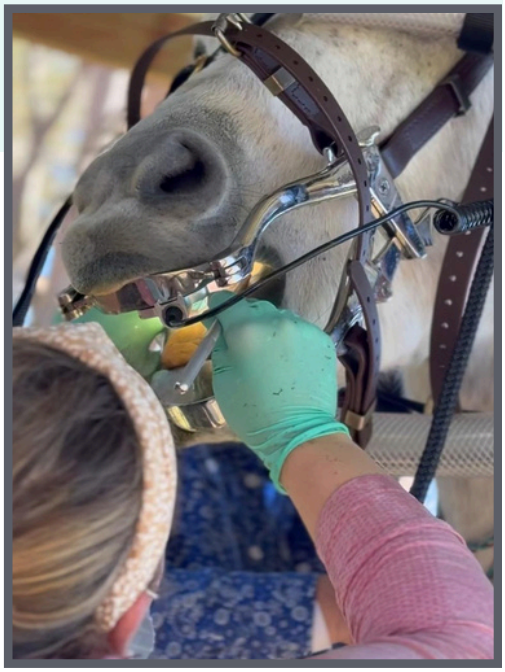
- 12 incisors (6 upper and 6 lower)
- 24 cheek teeth (premolars and molars)
- Sometimes canine teeth and/or wolf teeth

Interestingly, a horse's upper jaw is wider than its lower jaw, which allows the circular chewing motion needed to break down fibrous feeds. Their teeth are also unique because they continue to erupt throughout much of their life, helping to compensate for the constant wear caused by chewing. With proper care, a horse's teeth can remain functional for 20–30 years or more.

Why does my horse need regular dental examinations?
Because the upper and lower jaws don't line up perfectly, sharp edges can develop on the teeth over time. These sharp points can rub against the cheeks or tongue, causing pain and ulcers.

Without regular dental care, small issues can develop into more serious problems such as:
Periodontal (gum) disease
Fractured teeth
Abnormal tooth wear
Tooth root infections
Sinus problems
Difficulty eating or maintaining weight





Dental care isn't just about the teeth themselves. A thorough dental examination assesses the entire mouth and surrounding structures. Conditions such as gum disease, feed impactions, infections, tumours, and foreign bodies can all be detected during a routine examination.

The goal of regular dentistry is simple: to keep your horse comfortable, healthy, and able to eat and work without pain, while identifying potential problems before they become serious.

If you're worried about your horses' teeth, perhaps they are not chewing their food, dropping weight, their breath isn't smelling fresh or they're just 'overdue' a check, give the team a call to book in. Or bring them along to our Dental Stable Days (to save on the travel) at Hallidays Point Caravan Park. With monthly stable days there's bound to be a date that suits you.

**Special offer: 15% Discount on any vaccinations when bringing them to our stable days. Call to book.**

BARRINGTON COAST VETS

# Equine Dental & Health Check Days





**Is your horse...**

- Dropping feed when eating?
- Losing condition?
- Resisting the bit?
- Head tossing?
- Chewing strangely?
- Smelling a little less than fresh?
- or just...not quite right?

**If so, it might be time to look inside their mouth**

---

## Monthly at Halidays Point Caravan Park Stables

Next available dates:
Thursdays 4th & 18th June
Wednesday 8th & 22nd July

---

Included in your appointment is a full health check, sedation, a complete oral examination, dental correction and floating, veterinary dental expertise and a **FREE sheath** clean for geldings.

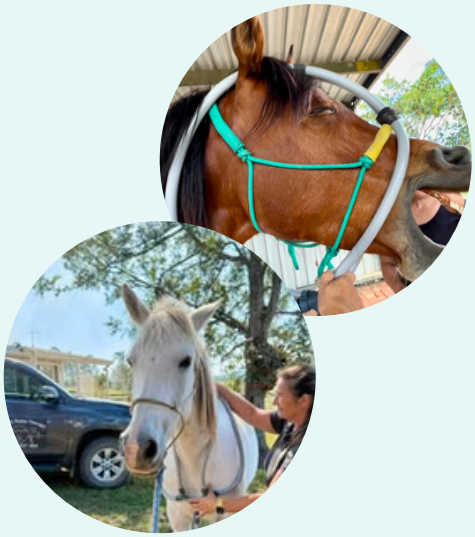
Plus receive **15% off vaccinations** when performed at the same time as the dental appointment.

Barrington Coast Vets - *Supporting you and your horse*
Call now to secure your place **02 6559 2277**

## From the Field with Olga
## Winter PEMF Bodywork Report



As I travel around the Manning Valley visiting horses, cattle, dogs and people for PEMF bodywork, something I notice every winter is that bodies aren't moving as freely as they do in the warmer months. Cooler temperatures often mean less movement, stiffer muscles and joints, and longer periods standing still. In horses, this can show up as taking longer to warm up under saddle, shortened or uneven strides, resistance to bending, swollen legs or feeling "not quite themselves".



Keeping bodies moving is one of the best things we can do during winter. For horses, a few extra minutes of active walking before asking for more demanding work can make a significant difference, particularly for senior horses, those with arthritis or previous injuries, and horses returning to work after a break. Groundwork on non-riding days also helps maintain mobility. I encourage owners to keep an eye on saddle fit too, as changing winter coats and fluctuations in body condition can alter how a saddle fits.

PEMF bodywork uses pulsed electromagnetic fields that are absorbed by the body's cells, working at the cellular level. This gentle, non-invasive therapy can help promote healthy circulation, joint mobility, range of motion and muscle comfort.



Winter doesn't just affect our animals. Many of us spend more time indoors before heading outside to tend to our animals in cold and damp conditions, and our bodies can feel the effects too. Whether I'm providing PEMF bodywork for a campdraft horse, an endurance horse, cattle, a much-loved family dog or their owner, it all comes back to helping bodies move well.



Olga Long - EquiFit Pulse Therapy - 0414 637 354

## From the Farriers Footnotes

## Winter Feet: Keeping Seedy Toe & Thrush at bay

Winter might be a welcome break from the flies, but your horse's feet don't always share the enthusiasm. Wet paddocks, muddy gateways and prolonged moisture create the perfect conditions for two common hoof problems: thrush and seedy toe (white line disease).

Thrush is a bacterial infection that thrives in damp, oxygen-poor environments, affecting the frog and central sulcus. It often starts with a characteristic unpleasant smell before progressing to pain and lameness if left untreated.

Seedy toe occurs when the white line weakens, allowing bacteria and fungi to invade between the hoof wall and underlying structures. Left unchecked, it can lead to hoof wall separation and significant hoof instability.

The good news? Prevention is almost always easier, and far less expensive, than treatment.

A few simple habits can make all the difference:

- Keep horses on a regular farrier schedule (don't stretch those trims over winter!).

- Pick out feet daily, especially after muddy days.

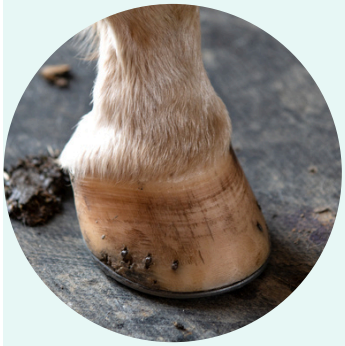
- Improve drainage around feeders, gates and shelters where possible.

- Address any loose or cracked hoof wall early.

- Book a veterinary assessment if you notice a foul smell, black discharge, crumbling frog tissue, hoof wall separation or unexplained lameness.

Healthy hooves are the foundation of a healthy horse. A little extra attention during winter can help keep your horse comfortable, sound and ready to enjoy the warmer months ahead.

If you have any concerns about your horse's feet, the Barrington Coast Vets team is happy to work alongside your farrier to develop the best treatment plan.






# Wildlife news

FAWNA NSW INC.
FOR AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE NEEDING AID

For all our Wildlife Warriors out there, we are delighted to include a wildlife update for our region by Kym Kilpatrick (FAWNA Media Spokesperson). Many thanks to Kym for taking the time to write this exclusively for our Barrington Coast Vet community.




Every year, in Winter, and in Summer our beaches and wetlands across the Barrington Coast become destinations for millions of shorebirds that migrate enormous distances from the far north of the planet, including Siberia, Alaska, and Northern China. These birds are small, typically weighing less than 150 grams, their feathers are not waterproof, and they can't swim. They are the most epic flyers in our world and follow what is known as the East-Asian Australian Flyway which includes Siberia, Alaska, China, Taiwan, Japan, New Zealand and of course, Australia.

Sadly, they also constitute the most endangered group of all species, with loss of habitat, both feeding and nesting grounds, the main driver. They are the migratory shore birds. Included in this group are Bar-tailed Godwits, Beach Stone Curlews, Curlew Sandpipers, Red Knots, and Great Knots. All are considered Endangered or Vulnerable, and all have seen rapid and significant declines in their populations, some up to 80%, over the last decades.

**Some of these birds migrate 11,000 kilometres non-stop throughout the day and night. One tagged godwit 'E7' was tracked flying 11,700 kilometres non-stop from Alaska to NZ in 9 days. Over their lifetimes, all going well, some will have effectively flown the equivalent distance of to the moon and back.**



**Fun Fact: To make these marathon migrations these birds need to put on enough weight to fly days and nights without eating or drinking!**

To do so they need to gorge to such an extent that their hearts and livers change and grow larger whilst their pectoral muscles increase massively. Once they are ready for take off though, their digestive organs, no longer needed during the migration, shrink. When they arrive, they are truly starving and need to rapidly replace their lost calories, and of course, rest. They also need to moult, to replace worn feathers.

Those who arrive in our Winter are not here to breed although some of the Summer arriving species do. Those who do breed on our beaches typically use scrapes in the sand and camouflage of their eggs and chicks as their primary defense, with the result that it is very easy to accidentally run over them.

**These are the fairly non-descript brown and grey birds seen hunting for prey during low-tide on the beaches and mudflats.**

They use their beaks to probe for beach worms, small crustaceans and other invertebrates.


Red necked stint

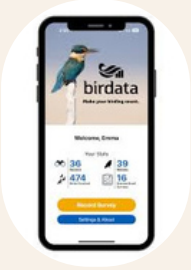
Image supplied with thanks to Ian Bradshaw of SWR Birds



During both foraging and their periods of rest they are vulnerable to disturbance. When forced to fly to escape potential predators or perceived predators (i.e. foxes, humans, vehicles, dogs etc.) it reduces their ability to feed and forage or to rest. Of course, taking flight also consumes a lot of energy. If disturbed often enough, they will abandon high value feeding sites and go elsewhere where their food is more scarce. All impacts their already low energy levels, with the potential of compromising their ability to successfully complete their migrations.

It is really important, therefore, that those of us who love the beach, including beach-driving and taking our dogs to the beach, give these amazing little birds the space they need to recover and refuel.

**And a shout-out – if you too love our birds, consider helping out the citizen scientists' project by contributing to Birdlife Australia via their birdata app for your phone.**



# Marine life news

Is it just us, or is Winter on the beach with its glorious sunny days and crisp mornings just magical?! Add to that the excitement of Whale Watching season and it's a pretty great way to spend the cooler months of the year.

A great tip for anyone keen to watch and track the Whales this year, thanks to our friend Barbara from Diamond Beach -
Member of 'Turtle Watch' and Marine biologist:

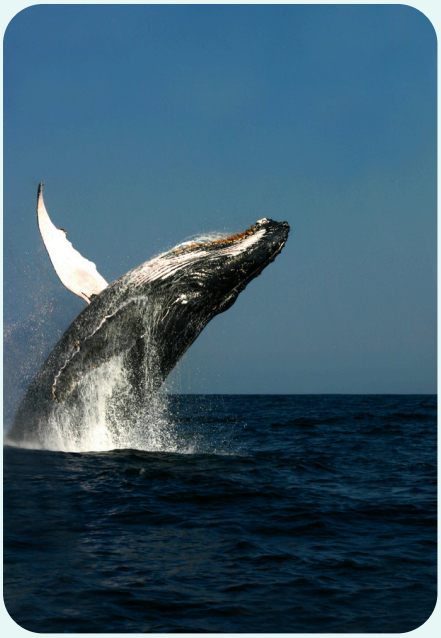
**"Look out at the horizon to spot the whales"**

The whales are currently on their migration North to warmer waters.

To do this they have to swim outside/beyond the East Coast Current as this travels South! So, you will see them further away from shore on the horizon!

In Spring you will see them closer in to the Coastline as they swim with the East coast Current.

We can't wait to learn more from Barbara in our next edition.



We hope you enjoyed reading the first of our newletters.
Thank you for your support, and as always if you have any concern about your animal, don't hesitate to pop in or give us a call.
From our family to yours, sending warmth and well wishes this winter.

Emma



Practice Owner & Veterinarian, Wife, Mum to 3 and owner of Horses - Poco, Rhonda, Juke, Hopi and Regarlo, Dogs - Bootsy Collins, Cooper & Cookie, Cats - Lady Winifred & Sergant Fuzzyboots, a Turtle called Franklin, Fish - Nemo & Raphael, Roosters Kevin, Hans & Steve and the Chickens - Ruby, Wednesday Frenchie & Strawberry