

# Vets Choice Partner – Eltham Veterinary Practice



Eltham Veterinary Practice (EVP) in Melbourne's North East has been offering Veterinary Services to the local community for more than 50 years. For the last 20 of them, Dr Steve Pryor and more recently his business partner Dr Gus Braniff have been in the driving seat.

EVP offers a range of routine care that might be expected of a local community Vet, as well as more advanced surgical and diagnostic services.

Dr Steve Pryor has long held the view that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing properly. This attitude has led to EVP offering a thorough and comprehensive approach to Veterinary Care. No matter what a pet is booked in for, they receive a full examination including their ears and teeth (these being common areas that have unidentified disease). While most pet owners appreciate

the thorough and comprehensive approach, not all can afford to pay for it.

Here's what Dr Steve Pryor had to say:

*“Over 10 years ago my partner Gus Braniff and I identified what pet insurance could offer in terms of allowing clients to give their pets the best care. As a result, we put in place an active recommendation process that sees all new pet owners receiving pet insurance advice. Dr Gus Braniff, who came to EVP from an industry role, really opened my eyes as to where the real commitment level of clients was. It was generally quite a bit higher than I had perceived. Any guilt that comes with proposing expensive procedures, which I believe we can all identify with, is effectively mitigated when the pet is insured. It becomes much easier to recommend your preferred option every time.”*

*The interesting thing we've found over time is that we are attracting more and more clients that want premium treatment for their pets rather than the contrary situation of losing customers because our visit fees tend to be on the high side. Almost all vets Australia-wide have seen a significant growth in clients with new pets over the last year due to Covid-19 and the majority of these new owners are pretty engaged in their pet's health. Pet insurance is an important piece of the puzzle in allowing high engagement to translate into veterinary visits and procedures.”*

EVP initially started with encouraging new owners to sign up to the free month's pet insurance as part of their 10-12-week puppy visits.

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This was accompanied with a brochure and a recommendation from the consulting vet about the benefits of pet insurance. The reception staff were able to quickly sign puppies up, making sure there was minimal extra time required. All staff received ongoing training to ensure there was a consistent message from the practice which also ensured no encroachment into the area of “financial advice”.

More recently EVP has switched to Vets Choice Rookie for free puppy cover. Here’s what they had to say about it:

*“Given we are not permitted to recommend a specific insurance, we offer the free 28-day Vets Choice Rookie policy at the clients first Vet visit with their new pet, and suggest clients use that time to compare the market. Vets Choice should be part of that comparison as they are the only pet insurer on the market recommended by the AVA. We also discuss where pet insurance fits in generally regarding pet health expenses and what is worth being covered for, for specific breed.*”

*A lot of Veterinarians fear client repercussions regarding recommending Pet Insurance generally. Vets and staff that have been trained appropriately know they can’t recommend any specific products but there’s no problem talking about insurance generally. This can include the extent to which insurance can cover vet bills, and where it fits in.”*

The key point many Vets miss with Pet Insurance is that pets that are insured receive better care and have improved health outcomes.

Take the example seen at EVP only this week. An 8-year-old Dachshund with sudden onset hindlimb paralysis and absence of deep pain. The owners couldn’t afford the \$7,000 quoted by a Melbourne Specialist Centre for imaging and spinal surgery and instead elected for euthanasia as the dog had made no progress in 48 hours. Maybe “Ally” wouldn’t have recovered with emergency surgery, but insurance would have given her that chance.

Dr Steve Pryor believes that Vets who fear repercussions from clients are overthinking it. Here’s what Dr Steve Pryor had to say about talking to pet owners about pet insurance:

*“We’ve been talking about patient advocacy now for close to 15 years. Most Vets are now comfortable in speaking for the pet’s best interests, even when the owner might see things differently. From the pet’s owner’s viewpoint, they want the Vet to recommend insurance too because data shows insured pets do have better health outcomes. Recommending for the pet has stood our profession in good stead so far, I don’t think this situation is any different. Insurance is good for the welfare of pets.”*

Fortunately, Vets have a very high level of trust in the community too, so clients take Veterinary advice at face value rather than suspecting ulterior motives, and accept Patient Advocacy as part of Veterinary ethos. Steve and Gus have had no issue from clients with their pet insurance approach over the last 10-12 years, and most importantly many patients have benefited from it.



**Join us, and work with Vets Choice insurance for pets to help more pets get the care they deserve by becoming a Vets Choice partner. To learn more visit [vetschoice.net.au](https://vetschoice.net.au) or call 1800 999 738.**

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