

Examples of articles reporting on parvovirus outbreaks and vaccination in the Australian media during the period December 2009 – April 2010

compiled by
Elizabeth Hart

Quotes from the following media articles illustrate a range of inconsistent, confusing and misleading messages regarding companion animal vaccination being directed at pet owners in Australia.

Coast dogs in danger of parvo (Gold Coast News, 30 April 2010)

http://www.goldcoast.com.au/article/2010/04/30/213235_gold-coast-news.html

- DOG owners are being warned to vaccinate their pets as the worst parvovirus epidemic in the past five years starts to be felt on the Gold Coast.
- Dr Lawrie said there was a higher trend this year, especially in southeast Queensland, due to the moist and hot climate.
- All puppies should receive a parvovirus vaccination as part of their vaccine regime, **and then get yearly boosters**. (My emphasis.)

More dogs hit by deadly parvo bug (The Queensland Times, 22 April 2010)

<http://www.qt.com.au/story/2010/04/22/more-dogs-hit-by-deadly-parvovirus-bug/>

- IPSWICH vets are warning dog owners to ensure their pets are vaccinated after reporting an outbreak of the deadly Parvovirus in the city.
- Puppies can take three vaccinations from six to eight weeks, 10-12 weeks and 14-16 weeks, **with booster shots for each following year**. (My emphasis.)

Vaccinate your dog against Parvovirus (The Courier, 9 April 2010)

<http://www.thecourier.com.au/news/local/news/general/vaccinate-your-dog-against-parvovirus/1799054.aspx>

- DOG owners have been urged to vaccinate their dogs after an upsurge in cases of the deadly parvovirus.
- Bacchus Marsh vet Dr Alastair MacLennan said the centre normally treated one or two cases a month. In recent months that number had increased to between two and four cases a week.
- Dr MacLennan urged owners to have their dogs vaccinated.

Virus outbreak strikes dogs in Bacchus Marsh, Ballan (Moorabool Leader, 9 April 2010)

<http://moorabool-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/virus-outbreak-strikes-dogs-in-bacchus-marsh-ballan/>

- DOG owners in the Bacchus Marsh and Ballan areas have been warned to ensure their pets are adequately vaccinated after an outbreak of the deadly parvovirus.
- Cr Toohey said the best method of protecting a dog against parvovirus was by vaccinating the dog.
- “All puppies should be vaccinated as part of their vaccine program **and all adult dogs should receive a booster vaccine annually**,” he said. (My emphasis.)
- “If you are a breeder it is important to give bitches a booster before mating in order to transfer protective antibodies to their puppies.”

Family forced to put pet to sleep (The Daily Advertiser, 6 April 2010)

<http://www.dailyadvertiser.com.au/news/local/news/general/family-forced-to-put-pet-to-sleep/1794928.aspx>

- PET owners have been reminded of the importance of vaccinating puppies after a Wagga family was forced to put down their new puppy after it was diagnosed with parvovirus.

- Lisa Green purchased the female staffordshire-mastiff cross from a Wagga animal shelter, believing she was doing the right thing by buying a dog which had been microchipped **and vaccinated**. (My emphasis.)
- A media spokesperson for the animal shelter said that it was more than likely the dog had contracted the disease prior to arriving at the shelter and it is sometimes difficult to make clear assessments of an animal's condition due to the lengthy incubation period of the disease.

Dog owners warned about parvovirus (Liverpool Leader, 12 March 2010)

<http://liverpool-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/owners-warned-to-vaccinate-dogs-against-parvo-virus/>

- Pet owners are being warned to vaccinate their dogs after an outbreak of the highly contagious parvovirus
- Cam Nguyen from Ashcroft Veterinary Surgeons said the recent spate of wet weather had exacerbated the outbreak.
- "It's part of being a responsible animal owner to make sure dogs are fully vaccinated and **have a booster once a year**." (My emphasis)

Warning: It's dog's life on Tweed (Tweed Daily News, 10 March 2010)

<http://www.tweednews.com.au/story/2010/03/10/warning-its-dogs-life-on-tweed/>

- "We haven't seen much parvovirus here this year, but it's a good time to remind dog owners **to ensure vaccinations are up to date**," Dr Fury said. (My emphasis.)

Vaccinate your dog and defeat Parvovirus (Blacktown Advocate, 10 March 2010)

<http://blacktown-advocate.whereilive.com.au/your-news/story/vaccinate-your-dog-beware-of-parvovirus/>

There has been a more than usual number of cases of parvovirus reported recently. My vet has had 9 cases in 2 weeks. Please be extra careful **and ensure your puppy or dog is up to date with all vaccines**. (My emphasis.)

Deadly dog virus hits local district (Narromine News, 10 March 2010)

<http://www.narrominenewsonline.com.au/news/local/news/general/deadly-dog-virus-hits-local-district/1772703.aspx>

- Local veterinarian Jill Kelly is warning dog and puppy owners to make sure their pets are up to date with their vaccinations as a wave of the deadly parvovirus spreads through the region.
- Dogs that are particularly susceptible to parvovirus are young puppies and dogs that have not had their vaccinations.
- Dr Rod Starr, President of the NSW Division of the Australian Veterinary Association said, "**adult dogs don't necessarily need a booster if they have already had their shots**, however, it is critical that puppies are vaccinated". (My emphasis.)
- Ms Kelly has one important message for dog and puppy owners in the shire. "Make sure you vaccinate your puppies, and if you have a dog at home who hasn't been vaccinated, make sure you get them done too".
- For further information about the most suitable vaccination program for your dog you should contact your veterinarian.

Puppies at risk of deadly parvovirus (Nyngan Observer, 10 March 2010)

<http://www.nynganobserver.com.au/news/local/news/general/puppies-at-risk-of-deadly-parvovirus/1772781.aspx>

- Vets are warning dog and puppy owners to make sure their pets are **up to date with their vaccinations** as a wave of deadly parvovirus spreads through the eastern states. (My emphasis.)
- "**Adult dogs don't necessarily need a booster if they have already had their shots**, however, it is critical that puppies are vaccinated", according to vet Dr Starr. (My emphasis.)

Parvovirus strikes Cambridge Park litter (Penrith Press, 9 March 2010)

<http://penrith-press.whereilive.com.au/news/story/parvovirus-strikes-cambridge-park-litter/>

- Penrith dogs are being struck down by parvovirus, with a vet from a major local practice believing an increase in flies due to the new bin system could be the cause.
- “Unless someone runs a special study on it, we can’t be sure if it’s true.”
- (Dr Yap) said it was essential for all dogs to get vaccinated and have follow-up booster shots, starting from six to eight weeks.
- Vets have warned dog owners to ensure their pet’s vaccinations are **up to date** as a wave of deadly parvovirus spreads. (My emphasis.)
- Dr Starr said “**Adult dogs don’t necessarily need a booster if they have already had their shots**, however, it is critical that puppies are vaccinated.” (My emphasis.)

Deadly virus prompts urgent vaccination call (Moonee Valley Community News, 9 March 2010)

<http://www.mymooneevalley.com.au/news/local/news/general/deadly-virus-prompts-urgent-vaccination-call/1769556.aspx>

- Vets are warning pet owners to **make sure pets are up to date with vaccinations** as a new wave of deadly parvovirus spreads through Australia. (My emphasis.)
- “**Adult dogs don’t necessarily need a booster if they have already had their shots**. However it is critical that puppies are vaccinated” Australian Veterinary Association president Dr Rod Starr said. (My emphasis.)

Dog virus warning for Whittlesea (Wittlesea Leader, 9 March 2010)

<http://whittlesea-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/dog-virus-warning-for-whittlesea/>

- Pet owners are being urged to make sure dogs have been vaccinated against the deadly parvovirus following outbreaks in Victoria.
- Dogs that are particularly susceptible to parvovirus are young puppies and dogs that have not had their vaccinations.
- “**Adult dogs don’t necessarily need a booster if they have already had their shots**, however, it is critical that puppies are vaccinated” Dr Starr said. (My emphasis.)
- Dr Hyndman said it was frustrating to see dogs dying from the disease because owners **put off vaccinations** or chose not to vaccinate them at all. (My emphasis.)

Parvo virus alert for pooches (Daily Mercury, 8 March 2010)

<http://www.dailymercury.com.au/story/2010/03/08/parvo-virus-alert-pooches/>

- Veterinary surgeons are urging pet owners to look out for warning signs and **have their dogs vaccinated** after a recent increase in the number of canines with Parvo Virus. (My emphasis.)
- “**Adult dogs should have one vaccination booster a year. There is also a three-year booster system. This needs to continue throughout the dog’s life.**” (My emphasis.)

Be aware of parvovirus: vet (Bega District News, 5 March 2010)

<http://www.begadistrictnews.com.au/news/local/news/general/be-aware-of-parvovirus-vet/1768308.aspx>

- Parvovirus is sweeping across NSW but the disease hasn’t been too prominent in the Bega Valley, according to Bega and Cobargo Veterinary Hospitals owner Dr Jane Woolcott.
- “The best way to prevent parvovirus is vaccination particularly for puppies,” she said.

Parvo outbreak prompts puppy vaccination call in Macarthur region (Macarthur Chronicle, 5 March 2010)

<http://macarthur-chronicle-camden.whereilive.com.au/news/story/parvo-outbreak-prompts-puppy-vaccination-call-in-macarthur-region/>

- Macarthur dogs owners are **being urged to vaccinate their pets** after an outbreak of deadly parvovirus. (My emphasis.)

- Australian Veterinary Association NSW president, Rod Starr, said **adult dogs did not need boosters if they had already had their shots**, but vaccinating puppies was critical. (My emphasis.)
- All puppies should be vaccinated, starting at six weeks of age, with a final vaccination at 16 weeks and a booster 12 months later.

Deadly dog virus brought on by wet weather (Australian Veterinary Association Media Release, 3 March 2010)

<http://avacms.eseries.hengsystems.com.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=20104&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=16463>

- Vets are warning dog and puppy owners to make sure their pets are up to date with their vaccinations as a wave of deadly parvovirus spreads through the eastern states.
- Dr Jodie Wilson, President Elect of the Queensland Division of the Australian Veterinary Association, said “We have seen a significant increase in dogs with canine parvovirus being brought into veterinary surgeries in recent weeks.
- Dogs that are particularly susceptible to parvovirus are young puppies and dogs that have not had their vaccinations.
- **“Adult dogs may need a booster and you can get advice on this from your local vet,** however, it is critical that puppies are vaccinated,” said Dr Wilson. (My emphasis.)
- For further information about the most suitable vaccination program for your dog you should contact your local veterinarian.

Dog virus brought on by wet weather (Weekly Times Now, 3 March 2010)

http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2010/03/03/163311_latest-news.html

- Vets are warning pet owners to make sure their pets are **up to date with their vaccinations** as a wave of deadly parvovirus spreads through the eastern states. (My emphasis.)
- Dr Jodie Wilson, President Elect of the Queensland Division of the Australian Veterinary Association, said there had been a significant increase in dogs with canine parvovirus being brought into veterinary surgeries in recent weeks.
- Dogs that are particularly susceptible to parvovirus are young puppies and dogs that have not had their vaccinations.
- **“Adult dogs may need a booster and you can get advice on this from your local vet,** however it is critical that puppies are vaccinated,” said Dr Wilson. (My emphasis.)
- Detailed information about parvovirus outbreaks also came from the Disease WatchDog, an online database of companion animal diseases, launched by Virbac Animal Health last month.

Dog virus sparks vaccination call (Northern Star, 3 March 2010)

<http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2010/03/03/dog-virus-sparks-vaccination-call/>

- An outbreak of deadly parvovirus has hit the Northern Rivers, **prompting one local vet to urge residents to vaccinate their dogs.** (My emphasis.)
- Dr Jones urged residents to ensure their dogs have had their six to eight week parvovirus vaccination and a booster shot at 10 to 14 weeks. **Dogs should continue to get inoculated every year after that.** (My emphasis.)

Parvovirus alert for dog owners (The Cairns Post, 3 March 2010)

http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2010/03/03/96985_local-news.html

- An outbreak of the potentially deadly canine parvovirus in Cairns has forced animal shelters into a quarantine lockdown.
- All vets recommend dogs are vaccinated against parvovirus at six weeks of age **with annual boosters throughout their lives.** (My emphasis.)

Deadly dog virus threat (The Manly Daily, 3 March 2010)

<http://manly-daily.wherelive.com.au/news/story/deadly-dog-virus-threat/>

- Dog owners are being warned of a deadly virus that is highly contagious and can kill up to 80 per cent of unvaccinated puppies.

- Mr Kalil said most cases were in puppies that had been bought in other parts of Sydney or where dogs had been infected by mixing with others in a kennel while their owners were on holiday.
- “If the dog has only had one vaccination, it doesn’t protect them,” he said. “They need a second vaccination.”
- Mr Starr said puppies need two vaccinations to ensure they don’t get infected.

Pet owners warned to brace for deadly virus (ABC News, 2 March 2010)

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/02/2833876.htm>

- A far north Queensland vet is warning pet owners to be prepared for another possible outbreak of the deadly parvovirus.
- Dr Robertson says pet owners need to vaccinate their animals against the virus, to protect them against another possible outbreak. “Until they’re fully vaccinated, dogs shouldn’t be taken out into public areas,” Dr Robertson said.

Vets warn of deadly parvovirus (Coffs Coast News, 2 March 2010)

<http://www.coffscostadvocate.com.au/story/2010/03/02/vets-warn-of-deadly-parvovirus/>

- The RSPCA is warning Coffs Coast dog owners to keep an eye on their pets as a deadly virus runs rampant throughout the State.
- The best way to protect your puppy from this deadly disease is through vaccination. The RSPCA recommends that puppies stay away from public outdoor areas until the entire series of puppy vaccination is complete.
- “We urge that anyone with an unvaccinated dog of any age visit their veterinarian asap.”

Parvovirus hits dog population (The Observer, 11 February 2010)

<http://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/story/2010/02/11/parvovirus-hits-dog-population/>

- Gladstone is in the midst of a parvovirus epidemic.
- “Parvovirus is not typical of normal virus as it stays in the environment for up to a year and every year when we get our first rains we seem to have a run of parvovirus, but this year we seem to have a particularly virulent strain. **We have had some dogs that have even been vaccinated that got the parvovirus.** They have survived as it was mild, however, puppies we really can’t save.” (My emphasis.)
- Parvovirus may affect dogs of all ages, but is most common in dogs less than one year old.
- “Vaccination is the only thing to stop it,” Dr Dahl said. “It is best to get vaccinations for puppies at six weeks and then again at 12 weeks, for distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus and kennel cough.”
- Most dogs with parvovirus recover if aggressive treatment is used.

Parvovirus cases detected in Ipswich (ABC Brisbane, 3 February 2010)

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/02/03/2809144.htm>

- An increase in incidences of parvovirus has staff in the Booval Veterinary Hospital on alert, after they treated four cases in the last three weeks – the same number they would normally treat in a year.
- **It’s possible the increased incidence of the virus may be linked to pet owners deciding against vaccinat(ing) their pets annually.** (My emphasis.)
- “The big fear at the moment is in high risk areas, which Ipswich traditionally is – that comes with a bit more risk.”
- If parvovirus is known to have been in an area before, chances are it will reappear, if animals aren’t being vaccinated.
- “It’s a virus that stays in the environment for a very long time – it doesn’t break down and degrade,” says Dr Campbell.
- “I guess because it’s traditionally been a lower socio-economic area, **we’ve had people who haven’t vaccinated quite as regularly** and it has been in the environment.” (My emphasis.)

- **He's recommending annual boosters for dogs in the Ipswich area, "because of the increased risk**, and also just to cover against things like kennel cough where the vaccine doesn't last longer than that twelve months". (My emphasis.)
- "If you're in an area where there's less risk, you certainly can stretch that – there's some people talking about doing it every three years – **but it's not something we'd recommend if you're in an area where there's more risk**". (My emphasis.)
- Dr Campbell also recommends vaccinating puppies. "When they're puppies, we recommend a full course of three vaccinations out here and certainly if you're going into an environment where you know parvovirus has been previously, **you may even want to increase on that**". (My emphasis.)

Warning to pet owners (The Western Weekender, 11 January 2010)

http://www.westernweekender.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1408&Itemid=50

- Local dog owners should keep a keen eye on their furry friends, with vets reporting a rise in the number of cases of parvovirus (parvo).
- "There have been quite a lot of cases (of parvo) in the last three to four weeks, mostly coming out of the St Marys and Mt Druitt area" said Tony Karolis of the Nepean Animal Hospital.
- Tony said all Nepean Animal Hospital clients' dogs were vaccinated for parvo, however puppies were most susceptible to contamination as they are often protected by antibodies from their mother's milk up to around 12 weeks of age, which could counteract the vaccine.
- "We can't guarantee protection in puppies, which is why we recommend keeping puppies inside for 12 weeks until they've had their second vaccine," he said.
- **Many vets recommend dogs to be boosted at least once a year** after the initial series of vaccinations when the dog is a puppy. (My emphasis.)

Plea to protect pets (In My Community, 5 January 2010)

<http://www.inmycommunity.com.au/news-and-views/local-news/Plea-to-protect-pets/7545267/>

- Dog owners are being urged to protect their dogs against an outbreak of the deadly parvovirus in Armadale.
- Mrs Jones said **it was imperative dog owners kept their dog's vaccinations up to date**. (My emphasis.)
- "Any dog that is not vaccinated is at high risk, but particularly young dogs," she said.
- Affected dogs have a high risk of dying from the parvovirus.
- Mrs Jones said dogs should get their first vaccination between six to eight weeks of age, then their first adult course at 12 to 14 weeks, followed by a booster four weeks later. **Boosters should then be given annually**. (My emphasis.)

Gastric virus taking toll on Illawarra dogs (Illawarra Mercury, 31 December 2010)

<http://www.illawarramercury.com.au/news/local/news/general/gastric-virus-taking-toll-on-illawarra-dogs/1716048.aspx>

- Wollongong Veterinary Hospital's Dr Luke Michel has seen an unprecedented number of dogs with the disease.
- "When I first started practising six years ago, I would have only seen maybe two cases a year...in the last month we've seen six confirmed cases and scores of suspected cases," Dr Michel said.
- Cannon and Ball vet Matt O'Donnell had also seen an upsurge in cases.
- "Usually it happens in areas where there are unvaccinated dogs...a lot of victims seem to be coming from the Bellambi area, he said.
- There is no treatment for the virus. Victims must be quarantined and many owners choose to euthanase.

New strain of parvovirus (Warwick Daily News, 22 December 2009)

<http://www.warwickdailynews.com.au/story/2009/12/22/new-strain-of-parvovirus/>

- Recently there has been a dramatic increase in the number of parvovirus cases being treated by the Allora and Warwick veterinary clinics.
 - Tests performed by the University of Queensland have shown that **there is a new emerging strain called the CPV-2b strain in the area.** (My emphasis.)
 - To reduce the number of cases we are treating, **we are encouraging people to vaccinate their dogs against parvovirus by offering vaccinations at a discounted rate...** (My emphasis.)
 - **We are recommending to all of our clients to check that their pets' boosters are up-to-date and even to consider getting a booster done again sooner than the anniversary date to ensure pets are protected against this newer strain of virus over the summer.** (My emphasis.)
 - Younger animals are at a greater risk than older ones **but we still advise people to get their older animals vaccinated.** (My emphasis.)
- * This story was also reported in The Allora Advertiser, 17 December 2009, under the title **Canine parvovirus outbreak – new strain emerging** – link not available.

Be wary of mystery virus (Roxby Downs Sun, 22 December 2009)

<http://www.roxbydownssun.com.au/news/local/news/general/be-wary-of-mystery-virus/1711752.aspx>

- A mysterious and sometimes fatal virus with symptoms similar to parvovirus has been appearing in dogs in Adelaide's northern suburbs, according to the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA).
- To date, 30 cases of the virus, which is characterized by lethargy, fever, vomiting and diarrhoea, have been recorded.
- Dr Anderson joined the AVA in calling on pet owners to **make sure their pet's vaccinations were up to date** as the busy holiday season approached. (My emphasis.)

Canine deaths mystery (Messenger, 15 December 2010)

<http://news-review-messenger.wherelive.com.au/news/story/canine-deaths-mystery/>

- A mystery disease has caused the agonizing deaths of more than a dozen northern suburbs dogs in the past month.
- More than 30 dogs have caught the disease, which attacks the gastrointestinal system and causes vomiting, diarrhoea and internal bleeding.
- Complicating the matter is the fact the northern suburbs is in the midst of a parvovirus epidemic.
- More than 200 parvovirus cases were reported across the north in November, killing about 70 per cent of canine victims.
- Australian Veterinary Association SA president Warren Foreman said the disease struck different breeds and **many of the victims were immunised against parvovirus.** (My emphasis.)
- Animalia Vet Clinic veterinarian Rebekah French said her Gawler-based clinic had ruled out parvovirus in three sick dogs in the past month. Two of the dogs, **one of which was immunised against parvovirus,** died. (My emphasis.)
- "I started ringing around to other vets in the area and found that there were other cases cropping up where tests were showing parvovirus was not the cause," Dr French said.
- Gary Stevens, from Adelaide Northern Veterinary Group's Elizabeth Park clinic, said he had not encountered the mystery disease but had treated more than 60 dogs for parvovirus in November most of which had died or had to be put down.
- He said parvovirus was at its worst since a 2006 outbreak and **all owners should immunise their dogs, at a cost of \$60-\$90, even if the animal was vaccinated last year.** (My emphasis.)