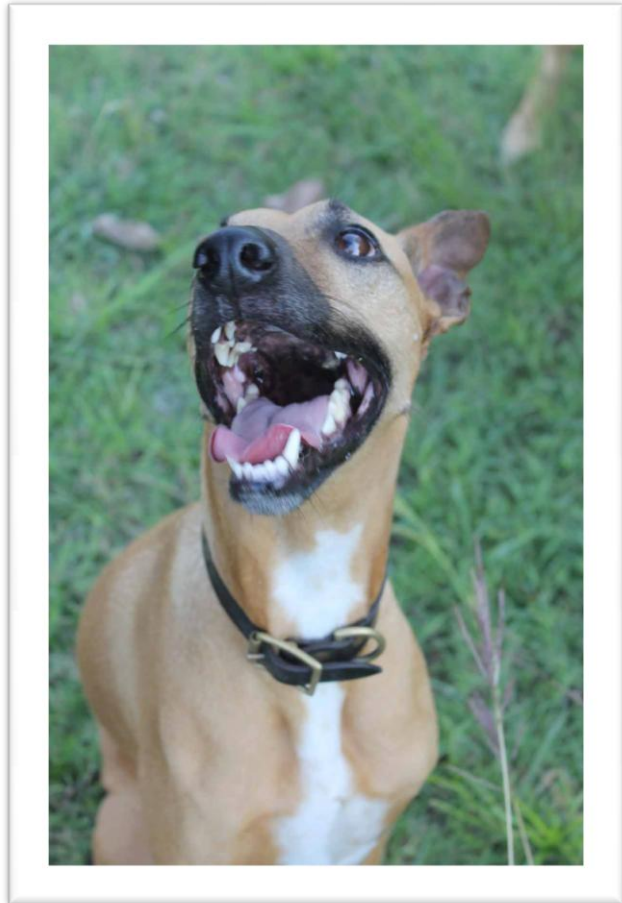


Astro's story by Caroline Hill-Murray

He is my love dog. He came into our lives from YAPS as a rescue puppy at 8 weeks of age. He was a dump story with his four other brothers in the litter. We had lost our old dog Gypsy at 13 years just prior to my husband, Nick went through throat cancer treatment in 2010. As Nick was recovering at home post treatment, we decided after five months of being dogless we would adopt a rescue dog. I had previously had Whippets and loved the breed. Our old girl was a purebred English Staffie so when we found him at YAPS we felt it was meant to be. He was the smallest, being the runt of the litter and I always have caved into the runts.

He has taught me lots about dogs and our relationships with them. He's the first dog I've ever gone past puppy class at dog training. We are members of the Cairns



City Kennel Club and with Astro we have built a team as we both enjoy competing in dog sports. Astro's love is agility and he's very talented in this department. Unfortunately he has me as his handler; he's way too fast for me to keep up with. He can smell a dead fish on a sand bar 350m off shore at Yorkeys Knob, swim out to it, eat it and swim back. He will do anything for food. This dates back to him being a starved puppy. If it's dead and smelly he will find it and eat it.

He is also a Delta Therapy Dog and has participated with kids from Woree State School in 2014 as a Classroom Canine. Kids who had problems reading had a visit from Astro and then read a story to him. This breaks down barriers that kids have and they love it. Unfortunately the pilot program only lasted one term. Astro loved it and so did the kids, the change in them over a term was great to see. He love cuddles but on his terms. He will come for snuggles but only when it suits him.

I love this little man heaps.

Freya's story by Caroline Hill-Murray

Aust Ch Belgenbeau RuBon Valkyrie RN aka Freya is my quirky, loveable Belgian Shepherd Malinois. Freya was born in April 2013. I fell in love with her the moment I met here. I had first pick from her litter. My little Maligator came home to us at eight weeks and our house was complete. She gives Astro heaps but they are the best of friends and love each other. She is the first dog ever that has owned us totally and completely. She's very intense but also the quirkiest and funniest dog I've ever had.

As a puppy going through her second fear period she had a terrible experience. We were walking with some good friends with their dogs when some young teenage idiots, (no other words I could use), decided to come up to us on purpose in their green V8 Ute and revved it very loud. It totally freaked Freya out whereby she wrapped herself round the closest lamppost to get away burning her paw pads down to raw in fright. She is now noise phobic; in particular loud throbbing engines freak her out. This being so we have worked on helping her to recover from this. Also she has been attacked five times by dogs and luckily only to have ever had a small puncture wound on her chest. Bad luck seems to follow her one way or another but we strive to overcome them.

I was never going to show her as I got her to do obedience and agility but fell into it. Freya has gone from a very cheeky puppy in the ring to recently take out a Statebred in Show recently which is very rare for a Belgian Malinois to do. I love this quirky, cuddle monster that will happily be a lapdog if given the opportunity. But she's very selective of who she likes or dislikes. She would lay down her life for the people she's owns.

