

## **Buddy's story by Diane Finlay**

Buddy Guy Finlay – to give him his full title – a Staffie cross, came into our lives in January 2012. As a family we'd reached that point where we knew we could give a dog a good home. One son in Brisbane, heartbreak for me every time we had to say goodbye and a feeling a dog would complete our new mix. Youngest son; mid-teens and little did we know how right that would be for Buddy.

Once the decision was made the search began, first at RSPCA kennels in Stratford, then onto YAPS in Smithfield. It felt right to be looking for a rescue dog.

Suddenly there he was. Buddy – the name given to him by the staff at YAPS. It was an instant "knowing". Buddy was curled up in his kennel, a bit sore from his de-sexing which had happened the day before. There was a quick discussion with staff to register our interest, dash home to talk to husband and show him the photo of Buddy on YAPS website. Decision made – phone call to YAPS and a shopping trip to get all we needed to welcome Buddy into our lives. Oh boy it seemed so simple!

Buddy came with big problems and over the coming months they got bigger. It took a lot of time to get inside his head and work out his drives. He has tested my patience to the limit, he has got me into full blown, rolling around the sodden ground of the park, dog fights – I still bear the scars. He is a grub; he is an alpha male on steroids. De-sexing at six months was too late for that boy – it should have been done before he was born.

His early behaviour however gave me some insight into his life before being rescued. I got the broom out to sweep up dog hairs a few days after his arrival – he shot out of the door ran to the far end of the yard and cowered; shivering and shaking – scared to the core. I knew then he had been abused. It took a whole year for him to not shoot from the house when the broom came out. Even now he will move into another room. The scars run deep.

This boy is immune to bribery of any sort. He will not come when called. He will not come for treats even if it is fresh ham or chicken. Consequently I cannot walk him off the lead – not since the dog fight incident. I tried so hard. Every day in the park, every day in the yard going over the same things, lots of praise when he got it right – over and over again for ten whole months. Always believing that it was possible to train this boy, I searched the web. We had someone come to the house – news of the massacre would've been in the Cairns Post if I'd taken him to puppy training. He has a problem with small white fluffy things! It became obvious his attitude was one of attack first. He'd never been taken out on a lead, never had a collar on, never been socialised – he just didn't know what to do. It wasn't his fault so I persisted.

Sometimes now he will walk beside me, sometimes now he will walk past and completely ignore another dog. If he'd been brought into a family with young children he'd have been dangerously unpredictable I think but a household of adults has helped him become part of our tribe and he knows he's safe with us. He's a character – everyone in Stratford knows him. We walk an hour each morning and an hour each evening. He loves to sit at the top of the hill in Jalarra Park and just chill – something I didn't think would ever happen.

In the early days when he still had terrible issues with his gut and used to fart a lot he came into our bedroom one night, lay down beside my husband close to the CPAP, (for sleep apnoea), machine and farted. I leave you with that image of my husband getting a dog fart sucked into the machine and delivered perfectly and precisely right up his nose.

But we love Buddy and I think he quite likes us!

