

## Gus' story by Donna Baker

Don't ever give up on your dreams.

Gus was housed at YAPS for 18 months, entering the home as a young pup, a mere six weeks old. He did get rehomed but was quickly returned after four months because the family found him difficult to handle; "boisterous" was a popular word used to describe him.

After that, no-one wanted him and his future was looking rather bleak as an older dog, trying to compete against the fun, young pups. He cowered in his kennel and was reluctant to walk with anyone, sitting firmly on the floor, scared of the great outdoors. He didn't have much going for him apart from the support of the girls at YAPS who reassured us he was a "lovely dog" and deserved a break.

We took him home as a trial over the Xmas period so we could find out if we were ready to take on a dog, along with getting to know this scared thing that my partner felt sorry for. It was hard at first because he was scared of everything and I found it stressful finding the extra time to see to his needs. Secretly, I began to enjoy the responsibility and over the next few weeks, we could see glimpses of his personality and it was enough for us to decide we couldn't let him go back. He did deserve a second chance.

Forward two years and we have a funny, big personality boy that more than makes up for his miserable start in life. His is energetic and loves nothing better than exploring in the bush and bounding around, making up for the lost years of confinement. He's pretty independent and likes to do his own thing, so when we go bush, he'll often disappear and come back only on his terms, usually covered in mud from where he's found a billabong to roll in.

I love to run and from the very first day I clipped on his lead to trial him, he jogged by my side with ease and grace. It's hard to explain but I can tell that we both enjoy the silent companionship as we settle into a stride that falls into unison with ease. This is "our time" and my down time. It just works.

He is loving, enthusiastic, pushy, inquisitive and bossy but has grown into a really handsome, caring boy. He gives me the humour I love to have in my life and never fails to make me smile. He is teaching me to take life as it comes, be in the moment and hey, everyday is a new day and who knows what exciting opportunities lie around the corner. Don't ever give up on your dreams.

