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## Maverick 'pet diet' vet sent to the dog house

By ALEX MITCHELL  
STATE POLITICAL EDITOR

VETERINARIAN Tom Lonsdale, a maverick in the world of dog care, has paid the price for promoting his unorthodox views on canine diets and criticising his professional colleagues.

He has been drummed out of the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) after a bitter debate over his book *Raw Meaty Bones*, which argued that dogs should not be fed exclusively on canned food.

They need a few juicy bones in their diet as well, he said.

Dr Lonsdale declared in the book's preface: "If you own a dog or a cat which you feed with processed food from the supermarket or corner store, you will probably find this book deeply disturbing."

His central claim was that pet owners who gave their dogs exclusive meals of processed food were inadvertently causing them ill health.

After his book was published in 2001, Dr Lonsdale sought to have it reviewed in *The Veterinarian*, a respected professional journal.

This provoked almost two years of email correspondence but no review ever appeared and the magazine decided not to publish an interview with him.

In exasperation, he sent an email in July last year to the Veterinary Surgeons Board of NSW and state MPs under the heading "Excuses and falsehoods".

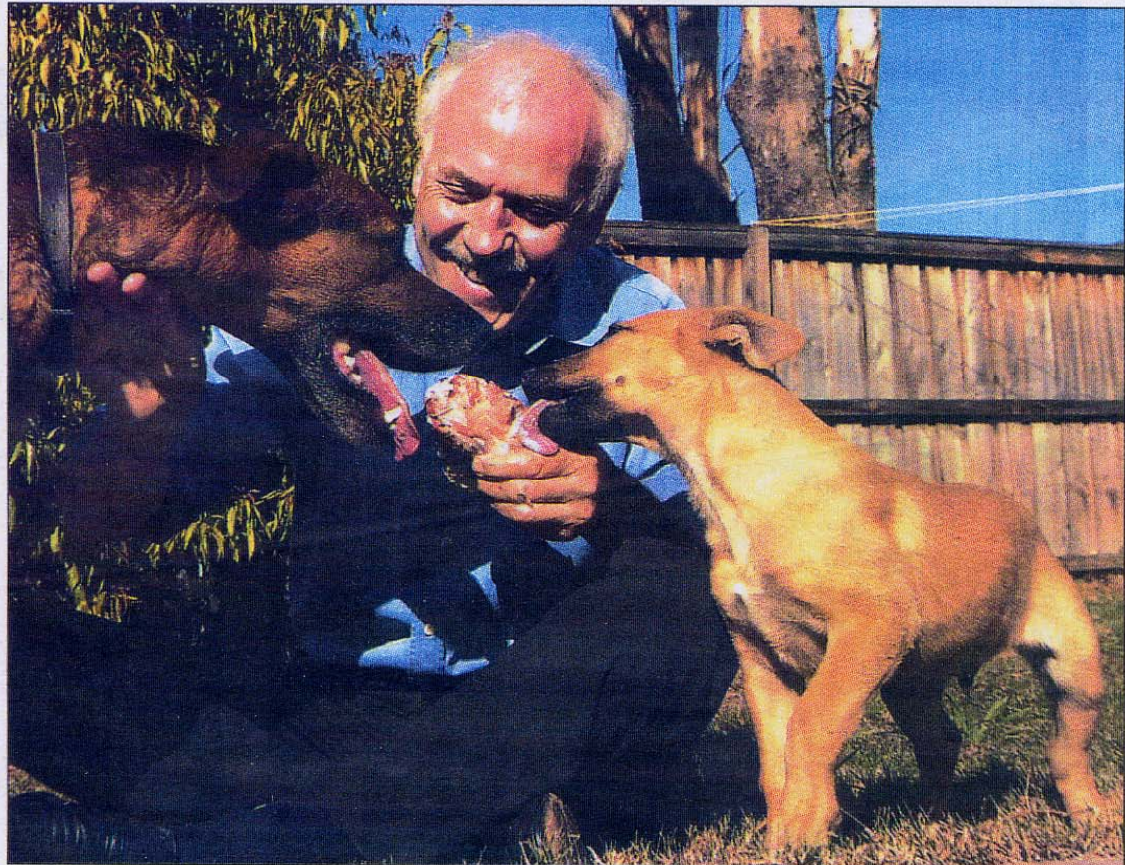
Dr Lonsdale yesterday condemned the AVA's action against him saying: "I have been denigrated. This is an attempt to silence me.

"I would like the decision overturned but that is very difficult to achieve. It will be hugely expensive and time-consuming for me to try to restore the balance.

"I just hope other vets will speak out."

In State Parliament last week, Paul Lynch, Labor MP for Liverpool, told MPs the email found its way to the AVA, prompting an investigation into Dr Lonsdale's professional conduct.

Mr Lynch said the offending email included this statement: "Any right-



PAID PRICE: Veterinarian Tom Lonsdale, who recommends feeding animals fresh meat on the bone, yesterday.

Picture: ADAM HOLLINGWORTH

thinking person knows that the slow poisoning of the nation's pets by junk food manufacturers, aided by veterinarians, is against the interests of pets, pet owners and the wider community.

"The AVA has financial ties to pet food companies. For 10 years the AVA has sought to stifle news of the scandal."

In March, after a complaints committee hearing, the AVA cancelled Dr Lonsdale's membership on the ground that his actions were calculated to bring the association into disrepute.

But Mr Lynch said Dr Lonsdale had not been allowed to be legally represented at the hearing and had never been told the identity of the complainant.

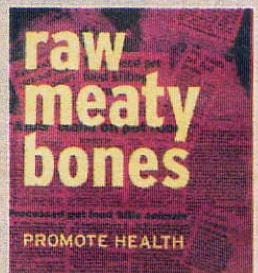
"The practical implication of Tom Lonsdale's expulsion is to silence dissenting voices," Mr Lynch told parliament.

"The whistleblower was punished. This is the action of a kangaroo court. It is a disgrace."

He said Dr Lonsdale had paid the price for upsetting the multinational companies that mass-produce pet food and the veterinarians who oppose his views.

Calling on Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation Minister Ian Macdonald to investigate, Mr Lynch said Dr Lonsdale had regularly run in AVA elections, getting about 10 per cent of the vote fairly consistently.

"Now he cannot run in elections," Mr Lynch said, "and he is prevented from participating in AVA group discussions."



Tom Lonsdale's book *Raw Meaty Bones* says dogs and cats weren't designed to eat prepared foods. Tearing and chewing are important for health. Making animals' teeth, jaws and digestive systems work as nature intended can reduce vet visits, he said.