



press clip

# The pet detective

**Richard Noone**

IT is the “Great Dane Robbery”. A beloved four-year-old pet last seen being bundled into a car, a dognapping that has left her owners searching for clues.

But a month after Ellie was snatched from Lisarow, Jane Berkery and Kynan Gwyn still have no answers despite a \$1000 reward, flyers, newspaper ads — even a cyber search via Facebook. “It’s incredibly distressing,”

Ms Berkery said, telling how their other dog, Gus the miniature fox terrier cross, had taken to whining at a picture of Ellie. “They were inseparable and we treat them like

they’re our babies.”

With fears Ellie may have been smuggled overseas, her owners have called in a professional — Lee Jefferies, the real-life *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*.

Set up 17 years ago, Ms Jefferies’ Pet Search Australia has looked for more than 26,000 dogs, cats,

birds including a \$10,000 macaw — even reptiles.

“We have a strike rate of about 85 per cent for dogs and cats,” she said. “With birds it’s about 40 per cent. They’re harder obviously.”

Ms Jefferies said the bulk of the sleuthing involved “joining pieces of the puzzle” by matching sightings and recovered animals again-

st a database of missing pets.

Ms Jefferies said breeders were sometimes targeted but most thefts were “opportunistic” and

often involved well-meaning people who believed they were giving a lost animal a home.

“There’s a lack of publicity that it is illegal to hold on to someone else’s dog,” she said.

As Ms Jefferies searches, all Ellie’s owners can do is wait — and hope. “It is urgent that she gets home because she suffers from bloat,” Ms Berkery said.

“So she needs to be taken to the vet if she shows signs of excessive sleeping, panting or is hot.”



Where’s my big mate: Gus helps pet detective Lee Jefferies in her search for Ellie the great dane (right)





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**Pet of Interest:** Ollie the cockatiel

**Report:** Disappeared from his Glebe home on January 1. No leads until a tip

off from a Drum-moyne woman about a bird with a unique singing ability. Bird was then confirmed to be the POI. Reunited with owners on March 2

**CLOSED**



**POI:** Castro the German spitz

**Report:** Disappeared from his Surry Hills home on December 7.

2009. After a complaint about a barking dog, Castro was recovered from a Bankstown address on January 18. Bankstown man claims "he followed me home". Checks reveal the man worked in Surry Hills.

**CLOSED**



**POI:** Bella the pug

**Report:** Went missing from Lansvale home on January 19. Last recorded sighted of

the seven-month-old POI was when she was being carried by children in the Lansvale area. Considered stolen

**UNSOLVED**



**POI:** Charlie the quaker parrot

**Report:** Escaped from his Cammeray home on February 2 after a door was accidentally left open by a visitor. Identifying

features include an orange band around right leg and his two phrases "hello" and "what what what".

**UNSOLVED**



**POI:** Tom the tabby cat

**Report:** Reported missing from his Carlingbah home on September

16. Pet detectives received a tip on Wednesday of several sightings in a nearby area. However, Tom remains elusive. Plan to set a trap tonight to bring him home.

**PENDING**