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press clip

Private eyes at hand for pets on the loose

FOUND
India, Templestowe Lower

The six-year-old Bengal went missing while staying with family in Templestowe Lower. Pet detectives used a range of techniques to find her, including using high-impact street signs. She was found about four streets from where she went missing.

STILL MISSING
Fred, Cockatoo

The Alexandrine Parrot went missing from his home in Cockatoo in January. Pet detectives are still searching for the bird, who they say has a distinctive red ring around his right leg. He can also imitate a telephone ringing and can wolf whistle.



press clip

Richard Noone and Katherine Firkin

DESPERATE owners are turning to detectives to help them find their lost doggies, moggies and more exotic pets.

Despite flyers, offers of rewards, newspaper ads — even Facebook pages — animals can be hard to track down. Enter Lee Jefferies, a real-life *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*.

Ms Jefferies set up Pet Search Australia 17 years ago, and has since looked for more than 26,000 dogs, cats and 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 against a database of missing pets.

“People think their animal will be returned because it’s got a microchip but that’s not always true,” she said.

“They were introduced for councils to monitor registrations not for returning lost pets.”

Ms Jefferies said too many owners were failing to fit their pets with collars and tags, which was fuelling a rise in missing and stolen animals.

Ms Jefferies said she had

covered about 700 pet cases in Victoria, with cats the most likely to be reported missing.

“Cats often go missing under people’s houses, under decking, locked in garages, on roofs and in trees,” Ms Jefferies said.

“They can be frightened away by other animals or visitors, or might just get disoriented.”

Ms Jefferies said cats were relatively easy to find, because of their distinct personalities.

“When a cat goes missing the first thing we do is analyse their personality and look for triggers as to why they left,” she said.

