

# Dogs wanted for dental study

By Roderick Shaw

ARE dog and cat carers poisoning their pets?

Could veterinary research into this help humans too?

Bligh Park vet Tom Lonsdale wants dog owners to help him find out by lending their pets for some research.

He believes many pet foods are causing tooth decay and gum disease in domestic pets.

"Eighty-five per cent of pets warrant some sort of dental surgery," Dr Lonsdale said. "This is a massive epidemic."

He has already written two books on the topic: *Raw Meaty Bones* and *Work Wonders*.

He wants pet owners to feed their animals raw meaty bones: the closest they are likely to get to food in the natural environment.

"A successful carnivore cleans its teeth by eating other animals," Dr Lonsdale said.

"A wolf has dagger-shaped teeth and every one is supposed to do its job, scraping raw bones."

He wants dog owners to let him examine their pets' blood samples over 60 days, after they change to a raw meaty bones diet.

"All blood tests will be performed at no charge," Dr Lonsdale said. "We'll do three lots of tests: at the start; at 30 days; then at 60 days."

"We're not going to know until we've done this research, but I feel this will probably provide



**A little help from little friends:** Vet Tom Lonsdale with patients Sophie, and Molly, hopes his research into dogs' dental health can also help their human carers. Picture: Geoff Jones

important information for human health as well."

He said this was likely because research has already suggested links between gum disease and inflammation in the body, leading to heart disease, cancer and even dementia.

"It starts with bacteria in the mouth which breaks down collagen in the gums with a certain enzyme," Dr Lonsdale said.

"We believe this enzyme then

travels round the rest of the body, dissolving collagen."

He said the advantage in studying animals for this was simply that so many had such poor dental health to begin with.

"So let's look at animals with really bad mouths and see how affected they are," Dr Lonsdale said.

He also said such research ought to be undertaken by universities' veterinary faculties, or

perhaps even by schools of medicine. "This is so important, but it doesn't get the traction it deserves," he said. Dr Lonsdale also said he was willing to advise pet owners concerned about their animals' diets and how to change them.

■ **Details:** 4577 7061, [clinic@rawmeatybones.com](mailto:clinic@rawmeatybones.com) or [blighparkpethealthcentre.com](http://blighparkpethealthcentre.com).