

# Seeds of discontent

By **ELYSIA TSANGARIDES**

WHILE walking your dog can be a great form of exercise, it does pose a hazard. Pet owners have been warned to watch that grass seeds don't hop on for the ride.

Dianella dog behaviour consultant Kathy Kopellis McLeod is all too familiar with the problem after her siberian husky, Chilli, got a grass seed stuck in his nose in 2004.

"Chilli was sniffing around a light post and inhaled a grass seed," she said.

"I realised when we got home and he couldn't stop sneezing. He was obviously distressed and there was a little bit of blood coming out in his sneezes."

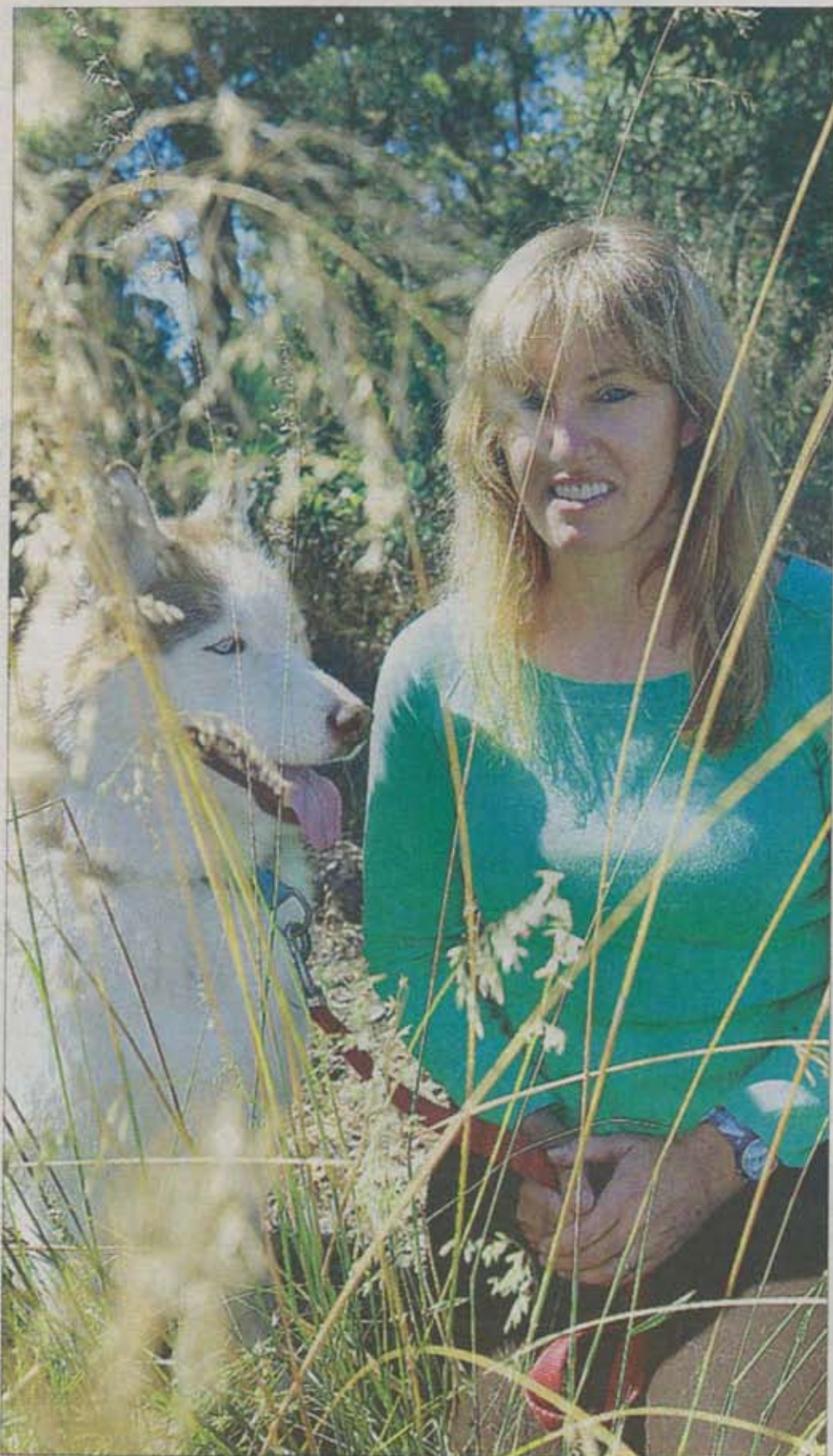
Grass seeds are found in areas where winter grass has overgrown along verges and natural bushland. Because they are small and sharp they can easily lodge beneath a dog's skin and cause infection.

Ms Kopellis McLeod, a former RSPCA instructor who owns four siberian huskys, was worried about the seemingly low community awareness of grass seed infections.

"It can often go unnoticed until the wound becomes infected," Ms Kopellis McLeod said.

She suggested dog owners check their dogs regularly, especially after walks.

"It doesn't take too long and spending that short amount of time could prevent the further pain of seeds getting lodged in their skin," she said.



**Kathy Kopellis McLeod with friend Bullet.** *Picture: Dominique Menegaldo*