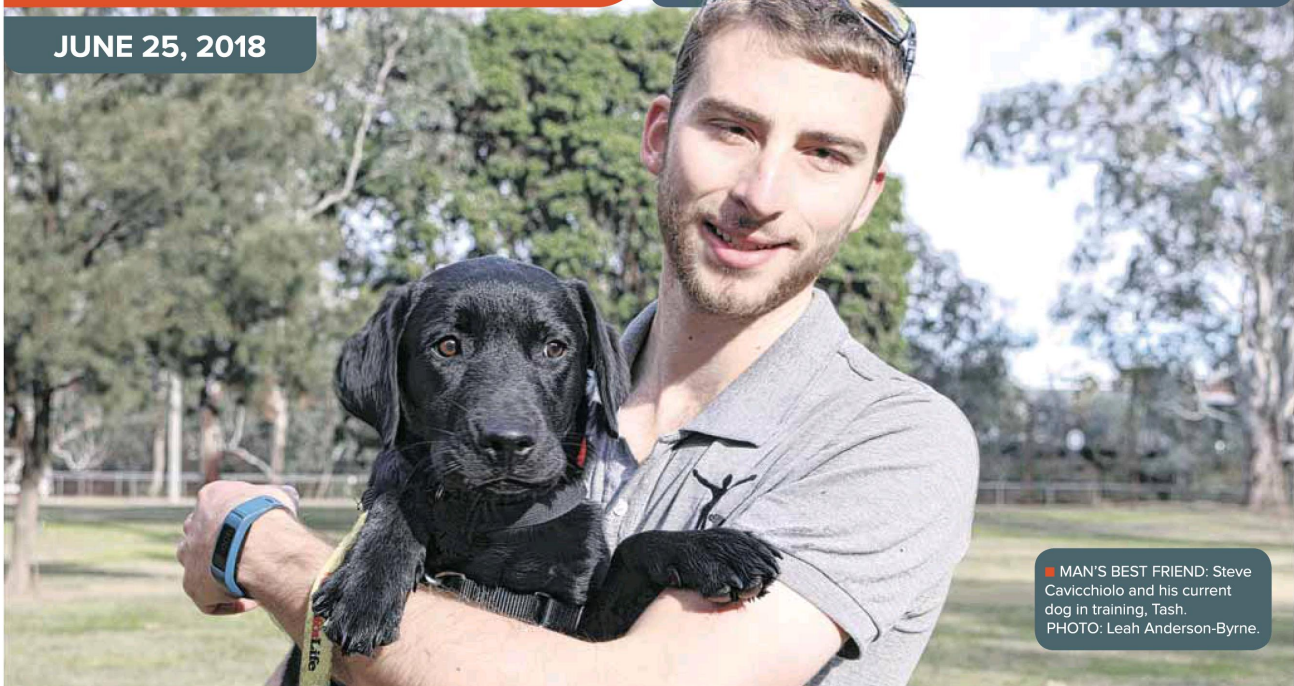


# MONDAY'S People

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JUNE 25, 2018



■ MAN'S BEST FRIEND: Steve Cavicchiolo and his current dog in training, Tash.  
PHOTO: Leah Anderson-Byrne.

## Steve's special soulmates for life

By LEAH ANDERSON-BYRNE

STEVE Cavicchiolo loves dogs. Not only does he love dogs, he gets to spend every single day with them. The 21 year old Oxley resident works for the company 'Dogs for Life' which began in Israel and is used to train dogs in obedience, social skills and general training, for people with disabilities, and even for the Department of Veteran Affairs and veterans suffering with PTSD.

"Part of my dog training role is to train normal pet dogs like puppies, general obedience dogs, aggressive dogs and dogs with behavioural issues," he said, "I also travel around Australia to do hand overs with service dogs that I have trained for people with special needs and disabilities.

"The reason I got to do what I do is because

I was a success from a school program that was run with my class, and I wanted to pursue it as a career as it's my passion to train dogs and to help people and the community to gain a good relationship with their dog."

When Steve was 14 years old, a fellow student was getting a service dog, which led to the passion that Steve now has for these helpful dogs.

"My passion is to train dogs, it stems from when I met the man who's now my boss and I wanted to continue working with him," he said.

"I would visit every week in Melbourne, then I got a business opportunity with Dogs for Life and I've been training service dogs since I was 15/16, and am now up to my 15th dog that I've trained.

"Every dog has to have one to two hours of training per day, learning about socialising, obedience, and being around other dogs and people.

"I communicate very well with dogs and once you learn that, it's very unique and you can train them to do so many things.

"It's so much fun, you are changing people's lives and that's a huge positive about my job.

"We do a hand over where I teach clients how to walk with the dog and do that side of it, we work with clients for up to two years for the follow up so we get to see the impact the dogs have after they've been given to someone.

"It's really important that people aren't scared of dogs and that they're educated.

"Not having a dog, especially when you're in need of a service dog is a huge thing to miss out on."

Steve brought along his current trainee, Tash, who, according to Steve, is going really well with her training.

"Tash is a five and a half month old English

style Labrador, which is the preferred breed as she's a good size to put under seats and on a plane for people with special needs," Steve said.

"Tash and I visited Malcolm Turnbull to show him what we're doing with the dogs, vets who have Post Traumatic Stress and people with special needs, but I can't say much more than that.

"When I first started I didn't know a lot about dogs, but from 14 onwards it was a really intensive learning job."

Since working with the company, Steve had the opportunity to go to Israel to learn more about different kinds of service dogs.

"In Israel, I was able to work with people from the military and the SWAT team, to get a bigger scope of dog training, and different cultures.

For more information on the organisation, go to <http://www.ctsda.com.au/>.

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