



OPEN SHELTER POLICY

We are an open shelter, which means we do not turn animals away purely because of their size, breed, temperament or health. We also receive council seized dogs, who may have already shown aggression. We do not have the privilege of picking and choosing which animals come into our care. As such, we receive many very difficult cases often with privacy requirements attached. It is our policy therefore, not to comment on individual dogs.

RESCUE GROUPS

We work with over 90 incredible rescue groups. We will not work with rescue organisations who demand that we operate in a way that is counter to what the community expects of us and trusts us to do, however we have many excellent animal welfare partners who generously make their services available to us when we have animals who may not be coping well in a shelter environment, in the event that we do not have a foster family available. A list of our partners can be found here <https://bit.ly/3apRHG7>

FOSTER CARE

The majority of our animals requiring long-term care are placed with our 600 approved and active foster carers. We have a further thousand prospective foster carers on our books. Our foster families provide tremendous support for us to be able to take the time needed to nurse animals back to health or work extensively with them to address any behaviour issues.

EUTHANSIA

Unfortunately there are circumstances when it is kindest or safest to humanely euthanise. We do not undertake this responsibility lightly and it is always an incredibly difficult decision that has to be made by our professionally qualified to do so staff. All our dogs undergo thorough medical and health checks by our veterinary professionals and lengthy behaviour assessments by our accredited behaviour team leaders. The huge majority – we rehome and reunite 92% of all dogs that come into our care – are able to be treated and/or behaviour modified by our qualified teams of vets and animal behaviourists.

However, there will always be animals whose quality of life is extremely poor and simply cannot be maintained, or dogs with entrenched behaviour that is either clearly aggressive, or unable to be modified to a point where we can be confident that the safety of the community and their pets are not at risk. These decisions are carefully made both from an ethical standpoint and in line with government regulations. These regulations are in place both to protect the welfare of the animals but to also, as already stated, safeguard the safety of the community and their pets.

FUNDING

Just to keep the shelter running costs us nearly \$18million annually. This is before any additional expenses are incurred, such as the refurbishments to the shelter areas and structures. It is also vital that we retain enough reserves to ride out times of crisis so a surplus is always planned for. We are not fully funded through our Council contracts. We mainly rely on the generosity of our donors to be able to keep the shelter running and to carry out necessary updates and refurbishments and expand our public education and service programs. We do not receive any state or federal government funding.

ARE WE GOVERNED BY REGULATIONS?

As a registered charity and animal welfare organisation we are regulated by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC), The Department of Agriculture and Melbourne City Council.

The Department of Agriculture oversees our performance against code and Melbourne City Council carries out regular inspections. There are many checks and balances in place to ensure we are adhering to the Code of Practice. We are required to report annually to the ACNC on our governance. We are also required to publish a full set of financials annually on the ACNC web portal. We voluntarily publicly report on our operational performance in an annual report which is published on our website.

ARE WE DOING A PERFECT JOB?

No, but we are consistently improving. There is still and always will be room for advancements to be made and this is why, under the leadership of our CEO and Director of Operations we have clear targets set for improvements in raising the numbers of adoptions and reclaims, and reducing euthanasia rates. This is especially true for cats where we are addressing the main source of the problem in educating on responsible pet ownership, encouraging microchipping and embedding a culture of de-sexing through our 'Mobile Animal De-sexing Initiative' (MADI). We have plans to increase activities in all these areas and especially in increasing the capacity of our MADI operations. As previously stated, we rely on the generosity of our donors and achieving surplus funds to expand our activities in these areas.

OUR JOURNEY

We are on an important journey; the measures and targets we have in place are already starting to show results. This year to date (2020), not including any spikes due to COVID-19, adoptions are up by an average of 10% from our previous year. Animals going into foster is up by 30%. Euthanasia rates are down by an average of 13% from last year. But we still have further to travel and continue to plan and lay foundations to be able to do this. The Lost Dogs' Home has a 110-year history of animal welfare. Every staff member who works here does so because we are animal lovers and we care about what happens to every single animal that comes into our care.

Our mission is to compassionately care for the State's most vulnerable, lost and abandoned animals. We acknowledge the selfless dedication of our staff and the generous support of our donors, animal welfare partners and foster-carers for the essential roles they play.



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Since our official opening in 1913, we have been a voice for animals without owners caring for thousands of cats and dogs each year. Pioneers for fair animal laws, we continue to work on the front line to reduce the number of lost, abandoned and stray cats and dogs.

We rely on public support to run services and programs, including: proactive adoption, foster care, behaviour rehabilitation, low cost desexing and microchipping, and the promotion of better pet ownership through education.