



The Lost Dogs' Home

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# Strategic Plan

## Jan 2024-Dec 2026

## Our vision

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**Giving animals the  
best chance of a  
happy and healthy life**

## Our purpose

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We care for lost dogs, cats and other companion animals. We reunite lost pets with their families, find new homes for others, and always seek the best possible outcomes for all animals that come into our care.



Who we are

## Building on our rich history

**As the oldest charitable animal shelter in Victoria, we have a deep connection to our communities.**

We operate at the grassroots level to look after lost and abandoned animals. We work directly with pet owners, community groups, government and supporters to educate, advocate and provide services focussed on all aspects of animal welfare and care.

Pets can be the heart of a family's home. We drive the conversation around responsible pet ownership and animal welfare, so that pets are happy and thriving in their homes. We also offer a range of information and services, including veterinary services and behaviour programs, to support pets and their owners.

We have a highly experienced, caring and passionate staff and volunteer workforce. Our people show care and compassion for every animal that comes through our doors. As an organisation, we strive to continuously adapt and innovate, and to provide a safe and healthy environment for our animals, employees and volunteers.



We fell in love with Sheldon. It was pretty clear to us that we were meant to be his forever family.



## Our drivers for change

### We are committed to tackling the unique challenges we face head on, and to embracing the exciting opportunities in our sector.

The Lost Dogs' Home operates in a busy, competitive and fast changing environment. We recognise that, in order to provide the best possible outcomes for animals, pet owners and our people, we need to plan, prepare for and respond effectively to our changing environment and operating landscape.

Our drivers for change present both challenges and opportunities for our organisation. Over the next four years, we will tackle these challenges head on and harness the exciting opportunities in our environment.

#### Changing community needs and preferences

Caring for animals can be truly rewarding, and the bond between humans and animal is something very special. With increased levels of pet ownership in Victoria, there is an opportunity to better educate owners, the community and businesses on pet ownership and animal welfare.

#### Importance of animals in people's lives

Animals can play an important role in a person's health and wellbeing. Spending time with animals has shown to have many benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Nurturing social connections, resilience and mental health is more important than ever. There is an opportunity to carve out our unique role in promoting and elevating the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

#### An evolving animal welfare ecosystem

The animal welfare landscape, its regulatory environment and the organisations in it, have evolved significantly since we first opened our doors. Keeping up with the pace of change, and remaining competitive and innovative are challenges facing many organisations like ours in the animal welfare ecosystem.

#### Stakeholder expectations are changing

Like other charities and not-for-profits, our stakeholders and supporters are holding us to a higher degree of responsibility. Our customers, donors and supporters want to better understand how their investments and donations contribute to positive animal welfare outcomes.

#### Shifting government priorities

Government funding priorities, regulations in the animal welfare sector and socioeconomic policies can change rapidly. As a modern charity, we need to ensure we anticipate and effectively respond to the direct and indirect impacts of these changes.

#### Evolving economic environment

Global and local economic conditions will likely have lasting impacts on Victorian communities, businesses and charities. Increased costs of living and increased competition for donations and bequests will no doubt have flow on impacts on animal welfare organisations like ours.

#### Resilience and wellbeing of our people

Our staff and volunteers are highly skilled, passionate about animal welfare and love caring for animals. But the work can be tough at times. It can be challenging, physically and mentally.

#### Ageing infrastructure

We want to be a modern and agile not-for-profit organisation. But our infrastructure is ageing, which creates challenges for the way we deliver our services and the welfare of our animals and staff.



## Our strategic pillars

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We have identified five strategic pillars (our areas of focus) to respond to our drivers of change over the next four years.

**1** Compassionate care  
for our animals

**2** A trusted, modern  
and sustainable  
charity

**3** Contemporary,  
future-proof and fit-  
for-purpose facilities

**4** An employer  
of choice

**5** A fierce advocate for the  
welfare of companion  
animals

In the next section we describe the key strategic priorities for each pillar, and what success will look like in four years' time.

## Pillar 1

# Compassionate care for our animals

**We provide high-quality, compassionate care for our animals and deliver the best possible animal welfare outcomes.**

### Our priorities

**1a. Provide exceptional care for lost and stray animals**

We will strengthen how we deliver care for every animal that comes to the Home.

**1b. Ensure animals have the best chance of being adopted**

We will strengthen and improve our behaviour modification and adoption programs so that more animals find new homes.

**1c. Keep pets and their families together when it is the best outcome for both**

We will provide solutions and support during times of crisis that may otherwise force a pet's surrender into our care.

### What success looks like

- We sensitively, empathetically and professionally manage the reunification and surrender of animals.
- We offer the highest standard of care for every animal that comes to us.
- We create a safe environment for animals that have been displaced, find homes for pets so they can thrive and work to keep people and pets together through times of crisis.
- Every animal that is capable of being adopted finds a new home.
- Cats that come into our care have the best possible outcomes.

## Pillar 2

# A trusted, modern and sustainable charity

We will grow a modern and agile charitable organisation that supports our purpose-driven work.

### Our priorities

#### 2a. Achieve long-term financial sustainability

We will re-examine our financial model, review our current services and commercial contracts and build new and diverse revenue streams to strengthen our long-term financial stability and sustainability.

#### 2b. Deepen engagement with our supporters

We will strengthen our connection with supporters so they can easily understand the impact of their contribution.

#### 2c. Strengthen our governance and management model

We will strengthen our decision-making processes, financial management and oversight arrangements.

#### 2d. Enhance our systems and processes

We will enhance our internal systems and processes to work effectively and efficiently as a high performing organisation.

#### 2e. Use digital technology to support our mission

We will use digital technology to support our mission and improve our operational efficiency.

#### 2f. Build and collaborative relationships

We will identify and establish partnerships with like-minded organisations to deliver innovative and enhanced programs and services.

### What success looks like

- We are a financially sustainable charitable organisation.
- We have growing diverse revenue streams that support the services we aspire to provide.
- Our supporters feel valued and connected to our organisation.
- We have practical, robust, and transparent governance and management.
- We have streamlined, fit-for-purpose processes that balance efficiency and positive animal welfare outcomes.
- We have a comprehensive view, understanding of and relationship with our stakeholders.
- Our systems, policies and procedures will protect the privacy and data of our staff and stakeholders.

## Pillar 3

# Contemporary, future-proof and fit-for-purpose facilities

**We will work in a spirit of partnership with our supporters, the community, government, businesses and other not-for-profits to deliver positive and ethical animal welfare outcomes.**

### Our priorities

#### 1. k #

We will # dated infrastructure and installing new and expanded facilities.

#### 3b. k or replace our North Melbourne shelter

We will work with the Victorian Government's Arden Project to relocate our North Melbourne Shelter. If that project does not proceed or is delayed, we will have a plan to redevelop our current shelter.

#### 3c. k use our ecological footprint

We will proactively identify and incorporate opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint in our redevelopment projects and current operations.

### What success looks like

- Our facilities will ensure exceptional animal welfare and care now and into the future and support our objective to be an employer of choice.
- Our Cranbourne upgrade plan is complete, and a plan for relocating or redeveloping North Melbourne will be in place by 2025.
- We have reduced our net carbon use by 20% and plan to achieve net zero when North Melbourne is relocated or redeveloped.



## Pillar 4

# An employer of choice

**We will grow a cohesive and resilient workplace culture that supports our skilled and passionate workforce and volunteers.**

### Our strategic priorities

#### 4a. Provide a safe environment for our people

We will continue to provide a safe environment for our people by upgrading our facilities, strengthening our safety initiatives, promoting mental health and wellbeing services and providing peer support.

#### 4b. Promote a cohesive workplace culture

We will grow a cohesive and positive workplace culture based on shared values and a passion for animal welfare.

#### 4c. Training and development

We will ensure our people have the capacity, skills and training to deliver the best possible animal welfare outcomes.

#### 4d. Refine our volunteer strategy

We will expand and motivate our volunteer workforce. We will focus on volunteer recruitment, retention, engagement, development and recognition.

### What success looks like

- We continue to provide a safe and effective work environment.
- We have a cohesive and resilient workplace culture.
- We attract and retain great people who are passionate about animal welfare.
- We have an improved volunteer program and outcomes.

## Pillar 5

# A fierce advocate for animal welfare

**We will be fierce advocates for the welfare of pets and their owners.**

### Our strategic priorities

#### 5a. Educate the community on responsible pet ownership

We will educate pet owners and the broader community about best practice animal welfare approaches and the quality-of-life benefits of caring for animals responsibly.

#### 5b. Be a strong voice for companion animals

We will be a consistent and visible advocate for animal welfare by implementing our advocacy framework and strengthening and expanding our media and other communications activities.

#### 5c. Improve outcomes for cats

We will work with other purpose-driven organisations and advocate with regulators and the government to change people's attitudes and behaviours towards cats.

#### 5d. Expand our thought leadership

We will build our presence and reputation as a thought leader and shape the conversation about animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.

#### 5e. Mobilise animal welfare change via partnership and collaboration

We will deepen our relationships with state and local government and with purpose-driven organisations to drive tangible improvements in animal welfare. We will have a stronger voice to raise awareness and influence policy regarding critical animal welfare issues.

### What success looks like

- We are recognised and highly regarded for informing and educating the public on responsible pet ownership and for our role as a fierce animal welfare advocate.
- We are respected as an organisation shifting the dial on cat management in the community.
- We have strong and productive relationships with government, universities/researchers, other animal welfare organisations, and businesses to support our advocacy and thought leadership.
- We celebrate and unleash the power of the human-animal bond for the good of both pets and people.