

JANUARY 2020

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RSPCA
ACT



GOLDEN HEARTS WITH FUR TO MATCH

Arturo, Costello and Churchill have not had the easiest start to life. These three boys were surrendered into our care two days before Christmas when their owner was unable to care for them. Our Inspectors had attended their home in previous days to find their owner housing too many cats while failing to provide appropriate living conditions and medical treatment. Our Inspectors arrived at the house but were refused entry. As they stood outside the property waiting for the owner to contain the three cats, the smell of urine lingered in the air.

These three boys were just a few of the many cats living inside the small home. Cramped together under the same roof, sharing an owner with other cats made it difficult to receive the love and attention they dearly craved. Arturo, Costello and Churchill were brought back to the Shelter to start the journey to a new life. Our team began vet checks and behavioural assessments.

The three boys were all not desexed and each suffering from different levels of dental disease which will require future treatment. Life at the Shelter has been a slow transition for Arturo, Costello and Churchill. The boys have had to learn many new behaviours like using the litter tray, playing with toys and accepting love and affection from people who care.

Arturo, Costello and Churchill arrived at the Shelter as shy and timid cats, suggesting they had limited socialisation during their lives. With time, patience and love these boys have begun to blossom into affectionate, yet sassy, cats who will soon become loving members of new families.



FROM THE CEO

MICHELLE ROBERSTON



been heartbreaking. Thank you for helping others during their time of need, but also for continuing to support us.

As you read through our first newsletter of 2020, I hope you take a moment to see the many faces and stories of animals whose lives have been changed. Your ongoing support, whether it be financial donations, volunteering, participation at events or sharing our message is crucial to giving them the best chance in life.

We look forward to the new decade and the challenges it will bring, the achievements we will celebrate and the people like you, who along the way will be there helping us champion the importance of animal welfare in the ACT.

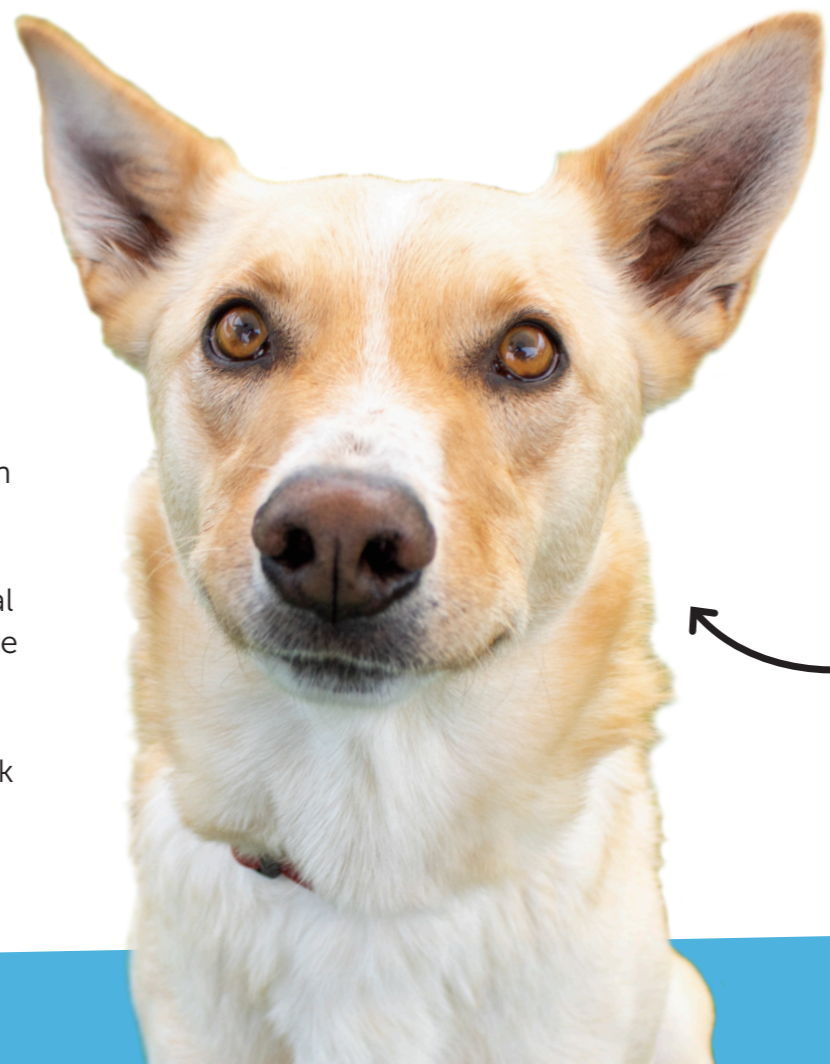
The start of a new decade is certainly an apt time to reflect on where we have been as an organisation, to embrace opportunities for present learning, to be open to productive change, and of course to look towards the future.

RSPCA ACT is proud of our history and that we have been a part of many significant changes to animal welfare in the ACT.

As an organisation we have great ambitions for what the next decade will bring. We plan to campaign for a much needed purpose-built facility that will enable our staff and volunteers to more effectively conduct our crucial work to prevent cruelty and improve the lives of animals in the ACT.

Our vision is for this facility to foster a modern space for our community to connect with animal welfare, for us to continue to create awareness and education around good animal welfare standards and to be able to uphold the highest levels of animal care in the ACT.

In the present, I would very much like to thank our supporters who have opened up their hearts and resources to the bushfire affected areas. The devastation across the border has



HAPPY TAILS

Each year thousands of animals come through our Shelter doors looking to find their second chance. Here are just a few of the animals that found happily furever afters in 2019.



SASSY

Sassy, in care for over 485 days found herself at the Shelter after being rescued by our Inspectors. She found her paw-fect match in October last year!

PRINCE

Prince was surrendered into our care due to his owners ill-health. This handsome guy was a purebred Bengal and took no time to find a new forever home.

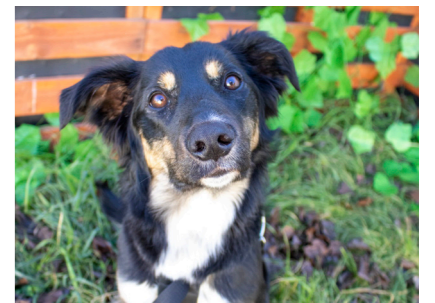


TODD

Todd after two stints at the RSPCA has found a new family to call his own. Todd was brought to the Shelter after not getting along with the other family cat. After almost two months in care, Todd found a new home in August.

CLEO

Cleo was surrendered into our care after showing destructive behaviour. With some time in care we decided Cleo would suit a lovely rural home with other friendly dogs to play with. She now lives out of town and loves her life!



ALLY

Ally came to the Shelter as her owner had too many animals. Life here wasn't easy for Ally but with some time in foster care she was a completely changed cat and soon found a new family.

JAY

Jay the golden Kelpie came to the Shelter as a stray and after 5 months in care found a forever family. Jay is currently in training to become a *mindDog* where he will be an assistance animal to his new family. Jay will help someone with mental illness have a new lease on life, allowing them to travel on public transport, access public places and take part in social activities that may have been difficult for them to achieve previously.

A DECADE IN REVIEW

The start of a new decade calls upon reflection of the last 10 years. Here are some of our major highlights for our Shelter and animal welfare in the ACT.



OVER 58,000 ANIMALS

Between 2010 and 2019, over 58,000 animals have come through the doors of RSPCA ACT in need of our help. 58,483 to be exact! Each and every one of these animals has a story, whether it was lost, surrendered, stray, seized or injured. Cats and kittens have been the most common animals to come into our shelter with more than 21,000 spending time in our cattery, followed by dogs and puppies with nearly 13,000 staying in our kennels.



NO ANIMAL EUTHANISED FOR SPACE

RSPCA ACT are proud to say that during the past decade (and longer!) that no animal has been euthanised for space.



IN CARE FOR 859 DAYS!

Meet Sonny! Sonny is just one of the thousands of animals RSPCA ACT have cared for over the past decade. This handsome American Staffy was left tied overnight to our main gate when his previous owners could no longer keep him. With some slight medical issues which needed to be resolved he spent some time in foster care. Sonny was in the care of RSPCA ACT for a total of 859 days until he found his perfect match.



BUILDING OUR KITTEN FOSTER NETWORK

In 2011/2012 our small Foster Care network was predominately staff and existing volunteers. To help with the socialisation of young and sick kittens outside of the Shelter environment, we saw the need to recruit more carers. Recruitment was hugely successful and we now have 106 registered foster carers. This amazing group of people help care for hundreds of kittens and other animals each year. Giving each animal important socialisation and care until they are ready for adoption.



THE BIRTH OF TANGO'S CAT BOARDING

Since building our strong network of dedicated foster carers, there was no longer a need to keep kittens onsite in our Kittery while they wait to go up for adoption. This left us with an empty building. Thanks to generous donations from one of our supporters, we converted the once dark Kittery into the bright and beautiful Tango's Cat Boarding, named after the generous donors beloved cat. Tango's Place is the RSPCA ACT's Five Star cat boarding facility providing a safe and welcoming environment to all felines. All funds raised from booking fees goes straight back to the shelter helping animals in need.



DESEXING PROGRAM

For the last 3 years RSPCA ACT have ran various feline desexing programs. In 2017 we launched 'Frisky Tom' with a generous grant from the Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation. This grant allowed us to desex over 366 felines in collaboration with a number of local veterinary clinics. In 2018 and 2019 we ran a similar program named 'Fix Your Feline'. This was funded by another grant as well as funding from the ACT Government. Again working with local veterinary clinics, we have desexed 369 felines at a discounted price, making desexing affordable for low income earners.



KIDS N KRITTERS

Kids N' Kritters was launched in March 2015 to help educate children on responsible pet ownership. These fun, interactive education sessions are run over school holidays for children interested in learning more about animals and how to care for them.



GREYHOUND RACING BAN

In 2017 the ACT Government announced planned legislation to end Greyhound Racing in the ACT. RSPCA ACT was pleased by this decision after working closing with Government since 2015 after Four Corners aired an investigative report into cruelty and live baiting within the industry. During this time, the ACT Government repealed the enforcement of Breed Specific Legislation of greyhounds in the ACT. Previously by law, Greyhounds were required to be muzzled when in public unless going through a special assessment program.



Project: SAFE

RSPCA ACT has offered an emergency boarding program for over 10 years in the Canberra community. Clients in this program are victims of domestic violence, patients in hospital and others who desperately need emergency short-term care for their animals. Funding this program became difficult in 2018 resulting in the launch of Project: SAFE. Project: SAFE aimed to raise funds to provide emergency care for animals to ensure they could return to their families after times of need. Project: SAFE will continue to run in 2020. We hope to continue to help more families and pets, where possible.



AMENDMENTS TO THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT

In September 2019, RSPCA ACT welcomed the passing of the Animal Welfare Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. RSPCA ACT is in favour of many amendments in the bill, including:

- 🐾 Animals being recognised as sentient beings.
- 🐾 Interim ownership bans being improved and permanent prohibition on animal ownership being introduced.
- 🐾 New offences and offence categories being included, in particular a clean and hygienic environment.
- 🐾 A framework for regulating pet businesses being introduced.
- 🐾 A range of strict liability offences being introduced.
- 🐾 Increases in maximum penalties, for example the Aggravated Cruelty offences.



MEET THE TEAM VETERINARY NURSE

Adriana is one of RSPCA ACT's Veterinary Nurses. In this interview, we discuss some of the challenges and rewards of working to make a difference in the lives of abandoned, abused and neglected animals in the ACT.

What does a typical day for the Veterinary Team look like in the clinic?

This month, we've got anywhere between 15-20 surgeries happening per day. It's important to be organised and ensure all patients are well enough to undergo surgery. Once surgery is complete, we provide pain relief for the animals and prepare them to go back home with their owner or return to their kennel at the Shelter. We provide many services such as desexing and dental practice, including administering pain relief and antibiotics. It's important for us to stay on top of this and make sure the animals' physical and mental health are also really good. A lot of our patients can be with us for a while, so we don't want their mental health to deteriorate.

What are the most challenging and enjoyable aspects of your job?

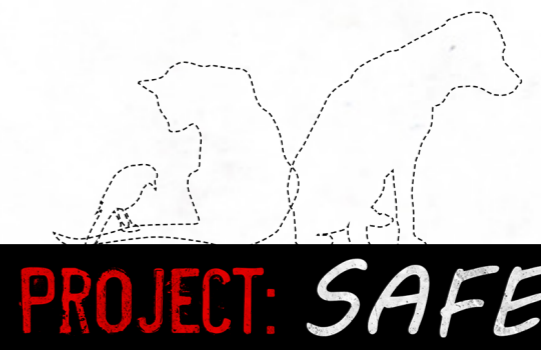
The most challenging part of this job is making sure every aspect works well because surgeries can be unpredictable. This can be difficult if animals are scared or aggressive because they are frightened. These animals can be a challenge but we still need to give them the best care we can. The most enjoyable part of my job is seeing animals come out of their surgery, especially if they've experienced some form of trauma like neglect or abuse. Seeing the change in each animal is the best part.

What is the main difference between a vet and a vet nurse?

A vet is the person who will go and perform surgery on the animal. Just like a human doctor, they will physically inspect the animal and determine the best treatment. A vet nurse will support the vet and provide ongoing patient care and the husbandry side of animal care. Vets are really busy and don't have the time to nurse the animals back to good health. I like having that interaction with the animals, making sure they are eating and mentally doing well. There are always funny things that happen as a vet nurse too. Animals come out of anaesthetic groggy and I have been pooped on, had them wee on me and burp in my face! Everyday something happens that makes us all giggle.

Why do you choose to work at RSPCA ACT?

I choose to work at the RSPCA because it makes me feel good. I think I'm very lucky, I don't know any people who really love their job. I enjoy coming here, doing my job and leaving with a smile on my face. Even on a bad day I still leave in high spirits knowing we've made a difference in an animal's life. This job is really rewarding and I feel lucky to see a side of animals that not many people get to see. To notice the transformation from the moment they arrive to their adoption is so rewarding.



Emergency Boarding for members of the Canberra community continues to be a strong requirement for pets in crisis. Project: SAFE is proudly RSPCA ACT's free program to assist victims of domestic violence, patients in hospital and incarcerated individuals. It ensures that their pets are cared for in times when they are often forgotten or left behind.

As fires have continued to affect the ACT and surrounds we have helped accommodate a number of animals who have had to evacuate their homes. With nowhere to go, these animals have received loving care to keep them fit, healthy and active while their owners dealt with crisis at home. Since the start of the financial year RSPCA ACT has helped 34 animals during their time of need.

Kids N' Kritters

EDUCATION SESSIONS

Last financial year our Education Team saw over 332 Kids N Kritters participants, visited 9 schools and 7 community groups. To successfully achieve our mission of the prevention of cruelty to animals we strive to be proactive in educating the next generation of pet owners about the importance of animal care and understanding animal behaviour.

These young children spend time creating enrichment activities for the animals in our care while learning important information about how to handle animals, understanding their needs, the importance of vet care and how animals change as they grow.





MILLION PAWS WALK

Join us for Canberra's favourite dog event. Held at Patrick White Lawns alongside the beautiful Lake Burley Griffin, you will enjoy a leisurely stroll along the waterfront. In the main area there will be plenty of activities including dog games, stalls, live music and more. Keep an eye out for our Barking Mad Sale with 50% off tickets in early February!

millionpawswalk.com.au



5 FREEDOMS CHALLENGE

Are you up for the Challenge? RSPCA ACT are looking for businesses and individuals to get involved in the 5 Freedoms Challenge. We rely on the support of the Canberra community to continue to provide care for the thousands of animals that come through our doors.

Not only will you be raising money for animals in need, you will be educating the community on animal welfare and the 5 freedoms to be considered for all creatures great and small. More information can be found online.

rspca-act.org.au/5freedomchallenge

DOG TRAINING SCHOOL

RSPCA ACT Dog Training School classes are catered towards dogs and puppies of all different ages and abilities. Classes are limited to 8 dogs per session to allow participants to receive more individual attention by our experienced instructors.

Our aim is to give your dog the required skills to have a happy, well-adjusted life with their family, using positive reinforcement. Training focuses on manners, impulse control, how to sit, drop, walk nicely on lead and how to introduce dogs to each other in a safe manner. To enrol or find more information please visit our website.

rspca-act.org.au/services/dog-training

READY TO GO

This Summer has brought weather with dangerous fire conditions all across Australia. It is important for members of the public to be prepared in case of an emergency. In the event of an evacuation, it is important to consider your pets as part of your emergency plan.

RSPCA ACT has developed a comprehensive kit that will assist you so you are ready to go in case of an emergency.

This FREE kit will provide you with information and ideas on how to plan an evacuation with your pets. To receive your free kit please visit the website below and register.

rspca-act.org.au/ready-to-go-evacuation

