

# The Shelter Chronicles

The latest news from RSPCA ACT

July Issue 2022

Cover star

# MEET DORA

## THE EXPLORER.

Dora made her way to us in one of the most extraordinary circumstances. Our inspectors received a report of a kitten stuck in a wall from an elderly member of our community. When our Inspectorate team reached the property, they began to look around to see if they could locate the kitten.

Listening carefully for meows, and systematically sweeping the area, our Inspectors continued to diligently search. It was only when Inspector Drew crawled under the house, that he was able to confirm the location of the kitten. The kitten was behind the wall of the laundry!

Inspectors began to work on cutting a hole in the wall. Unfortunately, Dora was still out of reach, she was too scared and nervous to come any closer. Our Inspectors devised another plan, and placed food close to the opening in the wall, hoping to coax her out into the cordoned off area.

Upon their return the next day, Inspectors were able to rescue Dora from under the laundry sink. Dora was brought into the shelter, and once she received a clean bill of health from our veterinarians, she was sent into foster care with one of our vet nurses. We are so grateful for the initial call that sparked Dora's rescue. Thankfully this little explorer found her forever home soon after she was available for adoption. Now known as Periwinkle, she is loved and cherished.

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# From The CEO Michelle Robertson

It is with thanks and great appreciation to you, our generous supporters, philanthropists, Foundations and Grant Makers that we have been able to make some much needed upgrades to the shelter.

Our facilities are not fit for purpose, and outdated. It will still take a few years before our planned new facility in Pialligo is complete, and until such time, with your help, I will endeavour to do what we can to ensure quality husbandry, best practice care and as safe as possible working environment for our team.

I am thrilled with what we were able to achieve the past 12 months.

You will find more details on these improvements and their value to our animals on pages 4 and 5.

## Social media

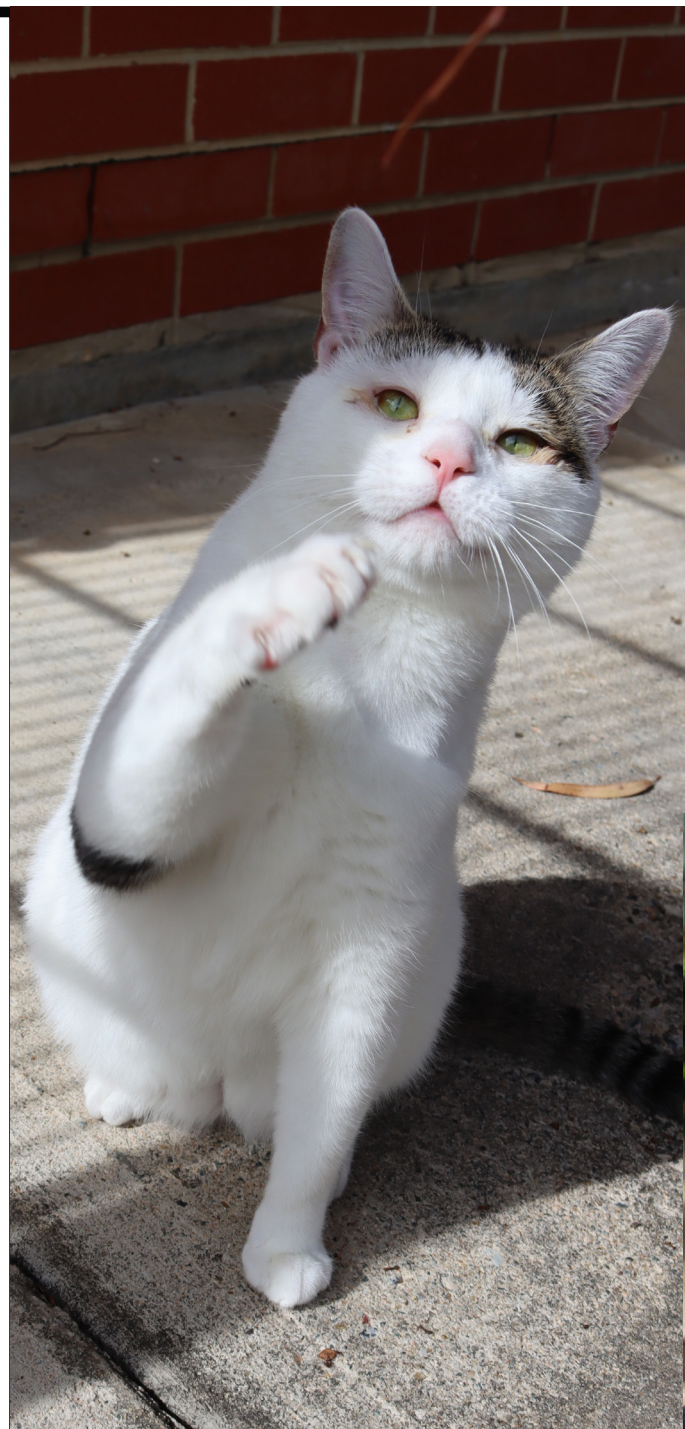
can be a great tool and achieve great results. However, it can also be a darker more sinister platform where honesty, good manners and respect sometimes seems forgotten. It pains me to share with you that in recent months there has been some comments on social media about RSPCA ACT that have been half-truths, untrue or simply malicious. It is deeply upsetting for our staff and our volunteers.

In some instances, staff members have told me that they experience high anxiety over some of the hurtful and untrue comments and felt compelled to close their social media accounts or take an extended break as it all became too much.

I assume that for many of our supporters who frequent the Canberra Notice Boards, that these comments are distressing for you too.

People who work at, volunteer and support at RSPCA ACT, love animals.

I see, and share, the tears for the ones we couldn't save, the hard work and dedication to the ones we can. I see the love for animals, and I am very proud and humbled by our team of staff and volunteers who show up every day to look after animals in need and by our supporters who enable us to do this.



## I hope the dot points below provide helpful information around difficult and sensitive topics you may come across.

- RSPCA ACT is not a Government Agency, nor a Government Funded Agency. We receive less than 13% of our total revenue from ACT Government. We don't receive any Federal Government funding. The funding we do receive is under a Service Funding Agreement and it contributes towards costs for running our Inspectorate, assisting with the care of stray dogs and assisting with the care of stray cats. We Fundraise and offer Fees for Services to cover the remaining 87% required to do our work.
- RSPCA ACT does not euthanise dogs after they have exhausted a certain period of time without being adopted. This is a dated concept. The same applies to cats and any other animals at our shelter.
- In this 2022 Financial Year alone, we adopted 671 unsocialised, stray, homeless and unowned kittens and cats into loving homes. A further 89 stray kittens and cats were reunited with their owners, and at the time of writing this update, we still had 91 homeless and unowned cats and kittens in our care. These homeless cats and kittens were either trapped by our own team or were rescued and brought into us by caring members of the public. Our Volunteer Foster team plays a critical role in socialising and helping us to safely rehome these homeless cats and kittens. Over and above homeless cats and kittens, we also take in owned kittens and cats whose owners are no longer able to care for them and who are surrendered to us to rehome.
- We support the tenets of Socially Conscious sheltering. Euthanasia is a last resort. Only animals who are so unwell, in pain, a danger to themselves or others, or suffering (mentally or physically) beyond our abilities to help, will be considered for euthanasia. These decisions weigh heavily on our team and is always made with input from our Vet Clinic.
- RSPCA ACT did not make the laws about Cat Registration and Cat Containment. We are not lawmakers, and we are not the Government.
- RSPCA ACT does support cat containment and we support policy which works towards having cats looked after in homes. Frequently we see suffering, ill and near dying cats being brought in who live rough on the streets, injured from cars, attacks by other animals, worn down by disease. There are no simple solutions, but we support education and awareness as key pillars to responsible pet ownership. This includes more education on cat containment, effective control of dogs, socialisation and training, microchipping and desexing.
- We will continue to promote cat containment strategies, tools and tips on how to safely contain your cat at home, especially as the new cat registration and containment laws came into effect on 1 July 2022.
- Cats born before 1 July 2022 and who are not in designated cat containment areas, can still roam free. We also understand that people who placed cats born before 1 July 2022 back on the streets to live in colonies, would be able to continue to support those cats they placed on the streets, should they choose to do so.



**If** you hear, or see any comments that you still have questions about, or which trouble you, please get in touch with us by emailing [rspca@rspca-act.org.au](mailto:rspca@rspca-act.org.au)

**If** you see, or hear, anything that you know to be untrue, and you are able to, please help us set the record straight in the kindest possible way. We are bound together by love of animals and our intent is not to alienate or to get into arguments.

Enclosed with this update you will find our annual supporter survey. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes, but by doing so, you will help us improve our communication, our services, learn what is important to you and how better we can serve the community. Thank you in advance for your participation and your input. We value both your time and your views.

## New Cat Condo's



**THE IMPACT YOU CREATED.**

We do not lack in love and this is showered upon the animals in our care, however, our facilities and infrastructure makes it challenging to provide the quality husbandry and best practice we strive for. Thanks to you, our generous supporters, we have been able to make some much needed upgrades to the shelter.

Recently we removed a row of metal cages in our Cattery. These metal cages not only conjured up images of cats being in prison, it was very impractical as it is difficult for humans to climb into these cages to help socialise our timid kitties. We replaced the metal cages with more easily accessible, light and airy cat condos. We're incredibly grateful that we were able to give a comfortable new space to our cats to keep them happier and healthier before they are adopted out.

After an urgent call out earlier in the year we were able

to renovate multiple kennels. In this renovation project we expanded 3 of our kennels to make larger spaces for our bigger dogs. Sadly, many of our bigger sized dogs remain in our care for longer as finding the right home for them is challenging. During this extended stay, doggos can become stressed and can hurt their tails if the spaces they are housed in is too narrow. With the extra space our larger dogs have more room to play and stretch out in between their daily walks and outside play time, reducing their stress levels significantly

Late last year we updated you on a new canine emergency boarding area which falls under our Project: SAFE program, which was made possible by a generous donation. It was imperative that we built a dedicated space for these animals to feel settled and protected while they are in our care. The emergency boarding area allowed us to have our kennels free to continue to help continuous flow of animals coming into our care. We needed additional funds to complete this project, and we



**Wombat Yard**



**Larger kennels**

were able to secure these funds.

Partnerships with other Animal Groups are important to us. With advice and in consultation with Wombat Rescue and ACT Wildlife about how we could support them, we upgraded one of our enclosures to assist with short term accommodation for injured or sick Wombats. Working closely with Wombat Rescue, we were able to provide a safe-haven for Billy the Wombat, suffering from mange. Billy was able to recover and heal while a permanent location was sought to release him. Billy is now living his best wombat life on pristine land where he was subsequently released.

## New canine emergency boarding area



Our veterinary team provide care and advice for over 2,000 animals each year. We look forward to the day we move into our new Facility in Pialligo where we will have a purpose built and spacious Vet Clinic and Hospital, but until such time, we continue to do what we can to provide best patient care within our limited resources, supplementing where we can with funds raised from donations.

Recently, we purchased three Mistral Patient Air Warmers, which is a welcome addition to the Clinic. Maintaining an animal's body temperature is critical in a veterinary clinic setting and our patient warmers are used all day, every day, whether it be in surgery, keeping a litter of neonate kittens warm or stabilising hypothermic patients. Patient warmers are a key piece of equipment, and we are grateful that we were able to obtain them.



**Mistral Patient Air Warmers (Vet Equipment)**

# ENSURING THE FUTURE OF RSPCA ACT

We suspect, that like so many of us at RSPCA ACT, special pets have enriched your life. Pets affect so many facets of our life. They are a faithful friend, a gentle support during tough times, and always beloved members of your family.

You may have considered including or have already left a gift in your Will to RSPCA ACT to help animals.

We want to tell you a bit more about what that help means for us. A gift in your Will is a meaningful way your love for animals can live on, and help create a better, kinder world for animals.

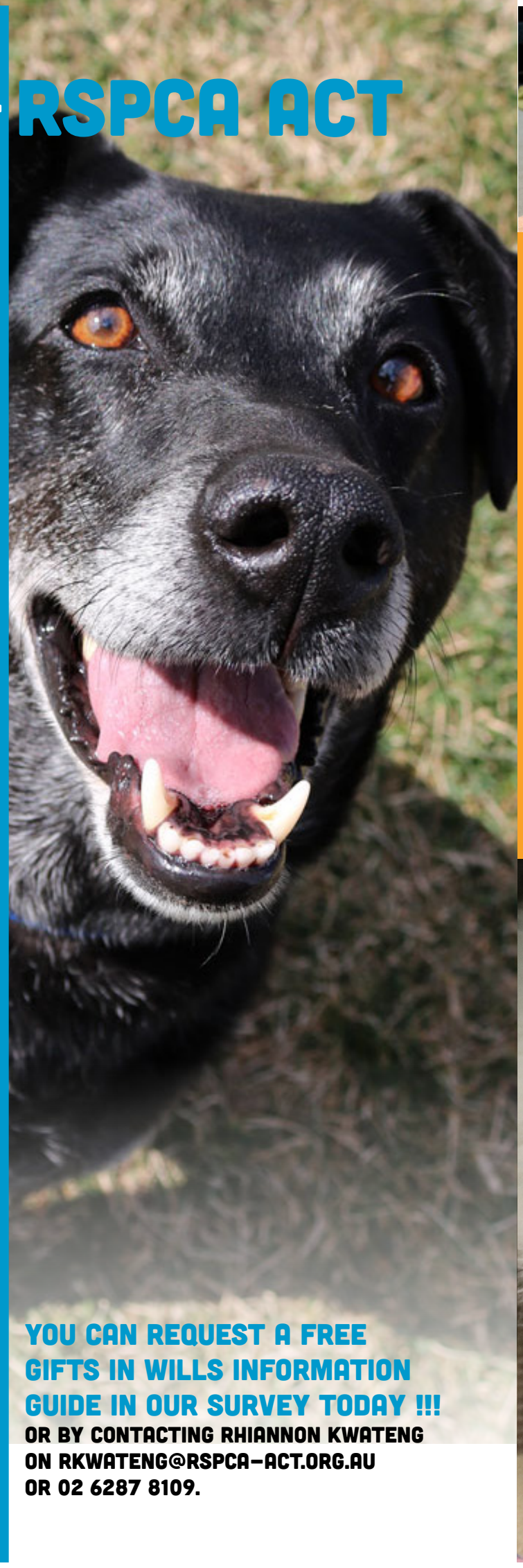
Gifts in Wills are vital to RSPCA ACT being able to protect vulnerable animals, prevent animal cruelty and care for every animal that needs us in our shelter. The truth is, we couldn't do what we do without these generous gifts.

We have been protecting, rescuing and caring for animals in the ACT since 1955. Gifts in wills are essential to keeping our shelter doors open and ensuring good animal welfare outcomes across the ACT.

Gifts in Wills help fund the operations of our Inspectorate, Pet Adoption Centre and Veterinary Clinic. Gifts in Wills also help us pay for equipment, consumables and after-hours health care required by our foster cares. Our Foster program provides traumatised animals and those recovering from surgery time to heal in a low stress environment before finding a new home through our adoption program.

By leaving a gift in your Will, you're also supporting important initiatives such as education and animal advocacy work. Already, this work has improved the lives of thousands of animals across the ACT, but there's still much more to do. With your help, we'll keep working with governments for better legislation, pushing for higher animal welfare standards and hopefully in the not too distant future make animal cruelty a thing of the past.

Now more than ever we want you to become an enduring and fundamental part of a future we all want, one in which no animal experiences cruelty, abuse or neglect at the hands of human beings.



**YOU CAN REQUEST A FREE  
GIFTS IN WILLS INFORMATION  
GUIDE IN OUR SURVEY TODAY !!!  
OR BY CONTACTING RHIANNON KWATENG  
ON [RKWATENG@RSPCA-ACT.ORG.AU](mailto:RKWATENG@RSPCA-ACT.ORG.AU)  
OR 02 6287 8109.**



## You saved **Dorothy, Frankie and Tito.**

Dorothy the cat was surrendered to us with three other cats. She came into us matted and in urgent need of our care. She had several medical issues that need tending to, including a severe eye issue that required treatment at the specialist eye hospital in Sydney. One of our lovely volunteers drove her up to her appointment and back. Dorothy's medical issues are common for a cat with her background, breed and age. The lovely foster carer who tended to Dorothy did a wonderful job taking care of her. Dorothy has since been adopted and we are delighted for her.

Frankie came into our care in May 2021, transferred from an interstate shelter. She had many medical issues that needed attending to, and on top of that, she had some behavioural issues that our dedicated kennels team worked on with her. Darling Frankie waited a long time before she was adopted, but we never gave up hope. In fact, she spent over 290 days in our care before finding her pawfect match.

Tito came to us in a bad way, he was severely injured after he fell off the back of an open tray Ute, as he was not restrained properly. His owners surrendered him as they could not afford the vet care. His leg was so badly injured that we had to do a full amputation on him. The good news is that over time and with lots of TLC, he healed nicely and has found a new home.



# Happy Tails Updates

We are always thrilled when people share their happy adoption updates with us. We love nothing more than hearing about our animals happily enjoying their new homes and living their best lives.



## **Xena's update:**

Xena (formally Arya) was one of our A-Team puppies. The Graham family fell in love with her immediately and decided to adopt her.

When they first brought her home they sat down with their kids and had lots of conversations about how to pat and play with her. Xena loved being with her new family, but with all the excitement she fell asleep and had big snooze.

Isis the resident 16-year-old cat met Xena from afar, Isis was fine with Xena's presence and introductions will happen slowly over time.

Xena has settled in her home wonderfully and has started going out, playing in the park, and having play dates with other dogs. Safe to say the Graham family love having Xena in their life and she is a welcome addition to their family.



## **Buffy's update:**

Ebony had never owned a rabbit before and went into see Buffy on a whim.

"She was so teeny and she immediately came up to my hand which I did not realise was a big deal, but I was just in love from day one."

Buffy was so excited to be in her new home, after they let her out to explore her new home she was binkying everywhere, air kicking off surfaces like the air kick Queen, so naturally, they decided to name her Buffy.

Ebony loves having Buffy in her life. They couldn't imagine a day without her.



## **Eric's update:**

Eric was adopted from the RSPCA ACT a few months ago. We were lucky enough to get an update from his new owners.

Eric has settled into his new home wonderfully, Eric was nervous and anxious initially, but it didn't take long for him to enjoy his new home and his new family. Eric loves a good chin scratch and lazing around the house with his family.



## **SCAN THE QR CODE**

**Find out how you can become a regular monthly donor and create change for animals in need all year round.**



Royal Canin is the Official National Nutritional Partner of the RSPCA.

RSPCA ACT recommend and feed Royal Canin pet food for all the animals that we care for within our shelter.