

Annual Report 2020



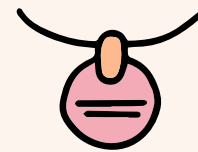
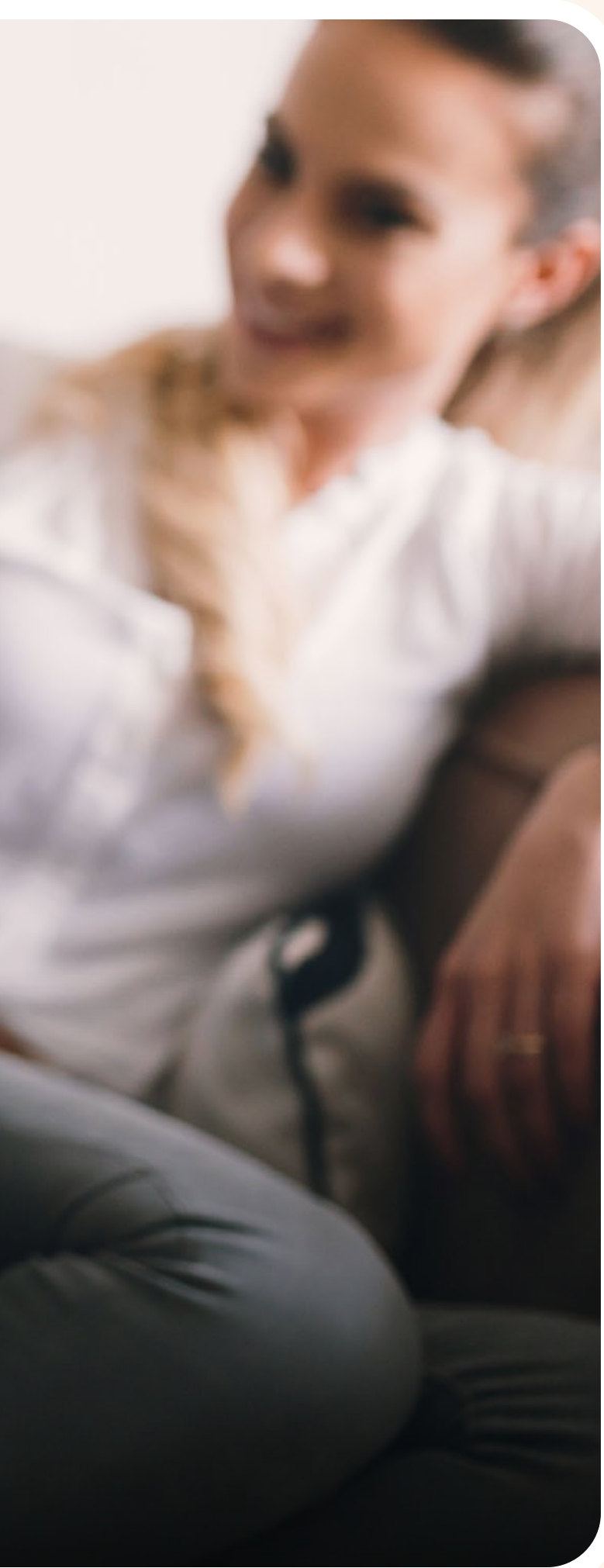
STAY HOME
AND HUG



DID YOU KNOW?

Whether it's a dog wagging their tail and greeting you at the door, a cat or bunny snuggled in your lap or a bird singing to you, pets provide companionship and unconditional affection. The bond you share with a pet can do a lot to support your mental health.

- Beyond Blue



CONTENTS



Vision & Values 3

Our President & CEO 5

Volunteer Program 9

Foster Program 14

Dogs 18

Cats 22

Pocket Pets 24

Shelter Statistics 25

Vet Clinic 27

**Fundraising &
Community Engagement 31**

Our Partners & Supporters 35

Financial Statements 37



GEELONG ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY



Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS) has been providing animal welfare services in the Geelong region for more than 64 years.

GAWS cares for thousands of animals each year reuniting them with their owners or finding new forever homes. The GAWS animal shelter does not receive any government funding and relies one hundred percent on the community to support this important work. We value this opportunity to reflect on our performance and share some highlights with the many stakeholders who support our work and share our vision to give animals a second chance 'because every life is precious.'

MISSION & PURPOSE

We promote the welfare and value of companion animals to improve the health and wellbeing of the wider community.

We do this by:

- Caring for and rehoming lost and relinquished companion animals
- Engaging in research, advocacy and promotion of health and wellbeing through companion animals
- Providing education, services and products that enable responsible animal ownership and improves the wellbeing of both people and their companion animals.

VISION

'because **every** life is precious.'

VALUES

Respect & Integrity:

We treat our colleagues and customers with integrity, respect and care.

Teamwork:

We are open, honest and transparent in our relationships and communications with our employees, volunteers, partnerships and community.

Accountability:

We are accountable for our work and we measure and report regularly on our progress and achievements.

Leadership:

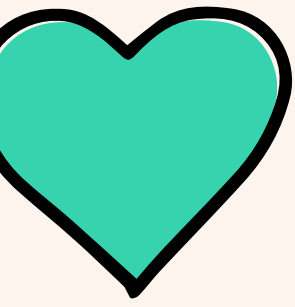
We exercise leadership in our roles to do our best and set a positive example for others.

Learning:

We embrace the need to grow and learn, focus on continuous improvement and evaluate the impact of our work.



We value this opportunity to reflect on our performance and share some highlights with the many stakeholders who support our work and share our vision to give animals a second chance **‘because every life is precious.’**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



2019/20 has certainly not been a typical year! Despite trying circumstances our vision and mission remained at the forefront of everything we do at Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS), and our results speak for themselves.

Our mission of 'because every life is precious' is demonstrated daily by our staff and volunteers who have continued to do a remarkable job of ensuring that every animal is cared for, reunited with their owner as quickly as possible, and animals being rehomed are well matched with a new home. Our incredibly strong foster care program and likeminded rescue group network also contributed to ensuring we continue to maintain an extremely low euthanasia rate.

Since our last Annual General Meeting, we have experienced some of the worst bushfires our country has ever seen. Loss of both human life and land was accompanied by the tragic loss of animals, in particular our wildlife. Such events affect all of us and we all feel the terrible impact on our communities. While GAWS was not thankfully directly threatened, we were certainly impacted. While the community in general showed the generosity of spirit which we see time and again in Australia, donating millions of dollars to bushfire victims, GAWS and many other charities experienced a resultant downturn in donations.

As we began to recover from the fires in early 2020, the global pandemic, COVID-19, exploded around the world and life has not been the same for anyone since. It has been necessary to re-think how our staff interacts with each other and with the public; how people move around the site; how we conduct clinic consultations and adoption interviews.

It has been critical to ensure that all our staff and volunteers are kept safe and have the right level of protective equipment. Our fundraising activity has again been significantly impacted and government support has been essential to maintaining our organisation throughout the pandemic.

The Board's role was to support our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and our staff. Our responsibility was to offer advice where possible and required while ensuring that appropriate actions were taken to keep GAWS afloat and compliant with all the new requirements. COVID-19 overtook other risks as the top priority for the organisation and the Board. Board meetings have been held via Zoom since April with several additional meetings to ensure we were across the situation on-site and the implications for animals, staff and the community. Our staff, led by our CEO, have done an outstanding job in very trying circumstances. As we enter 2020/21, much of the uncertainty remains.

Amid these circumstances, GAWS has been able to move forward, including opening a new Recycled Fashion & Homewares store in Pakington Street, Geelong West in February 2020 and launching a new GAWS website in August last year, greatly improving our online presence.

The Board worked on the development of a Risk Register to fulfil one of our key responsibilities and established a Risk Committee to regularly review the register. A new Whistleblower Policy was also developed and scheduled for implementation so that staff and volunteers feel supported with the appropriate mechanisms to formally lodge any complaints they may have.

Our Board composition has changed dramatically this past year as we farewelled David Willder, Tony Alsop, and Martin Reid. They all made outstanding contributions, David and Tony over a number of years. We sincerely thank them for their time and dedication and wish them all well. Two new Directors have been recruited, Sue Robinson as our new Treasurer and Lauren Solomonson. Both have already had significant input into Board deliberations. Having filled casual vacancies on the Board during the year, both will offer themselves for election by members at the Annual General Meeting.

Our CEO, Helen Cocks, has led her team through exceedingly difficult times which are likely to continue for some time yet. She has done an extraordinary job and deserves special commendation.

I extend a special thank you to Helen, to all our staff and volunteers, to my fellow Directors past and present and most importantly to all our members and supporters. Your ongoing support is what keeps us going.

Finally, thank you to our Auditors and Accountants at Davidsons, all our sponsors and donors, and our partners at the City of Greater Geelong for supporting the work of animal welfare.

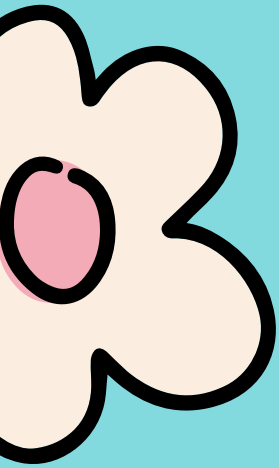
Maria Mercurio

President



Our incredibly strong foster care program and likeminded rescue group network also contributed to ensuring we continue to maintain an extremely low euthanasia rate.





OUR CEO

.....

Many words describe how we might reflect on 2019/20: joyous, challenging, successful, devastating and definitely ‘unprecedented’.

The year started with a clear focus to continue to deliver our high quality services and also to expand in line with our strategic plan. We could never have predicted how quickly our world would change, starting with the devastating bushfires and then a global pandemic. Yet before I focus on the impact of the above mentioned challenges, I'd like to reflect on some of our staff and volunteer achievements before everything as we knew it changed.

In February 2020 we opened our second retail store, located in Pakington St, Geelong West. This new store was immediately well received and supported by members of the Geelong community, but it has, along with many other local charities and businesses experienced the tumultuous impact of COVID-19 forcing it to close just a few weeks after opening.

Initially selling recycled clothing and homewares, this store continues to evolve and grow as we move to make it a destination point for GAWS. We have introduced the sale of alternative items including dog beds and coats, made by our wonderful volunteer sewing group and we will continue to introduce new offerings at the store.

Once again, we held our popular Twilight adoption in March 2020. This is our third Twilight adoption event and we and our community love it! Members of the public can meet with our adoption staff and hopefully make a perfect match with one of our animals available for adoption. Staff and volunteers

offer activities such as face painting, pet-tag engraving and stalls where treats or purchases can be made.

This year we ran our ‘Tricks & Treats for GAWS’ campaign, an online opportunity for members of the community to fundraise and be engaged. Our community could opt to donate a ‘treat’ towards a specific item such as an enrichment toy, or desexing surgery, or alternatively partake in a ‘trick’ such as giving up buying coffee for a week and donating their savings.

While our work that interfaces with the public can easily be highlighted, there is a great amount of work that occurs behind the scenes also. This year included an overhaul and upgrade of our website making it more streamlined and easier for users to navigate; the expansion of our social media through Instagram and we even dipped our toes into Tik-Tok with the aim to engage with a younger audience.

At the beginning of 2020 our world started to hear more and more about a ‘coronavirus’ and shortly after this our world as we knew it changed before our very eyes. Victoria announced a State of Emergency and we found ourselves immersed in unfamiliar territory, not only trying to make sense of it all, but also finding ourselves asking so many questions: What did it mean? What did we need to do? How would the animals cope? Could we continue to open to our community? What did we need to put in place? The questions seemed endless; and while we were asking the questions we were busy putting in place many strategies across the organisation to ensure staff, volunteers and visitors to the site would be safe. We continued to refine our procedures in response to the challenging situation as Victorian restrictions were applied.



The extraordinary events of 2019/20 have impacted on us all; some positive, some negative, some devastating, but all of which will be forever imprinted in our minds.



Our Foster team responded quickly and recruited an additional 128 foster carers specifically in response to the pandemic to ensure we could always accept animals into our service.

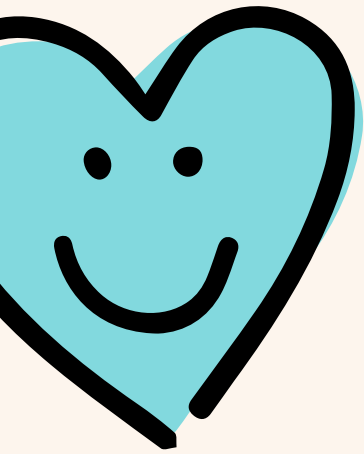
People continue to ask me: how are the animals? How have they coped? All of the animals in our care continued to receive the highest quality one-on-one care that our staff and volunteers are known for.

We encountered some surprising outcomes as well. Our more timid cats became more confident as we moved to an appointment based adoption system. With fewer visitors on-site, these cats ventured out from their 'nooks' and hidden beds to the front of their enclosures and our teams could each spend more one-on-one time with the animals offering additional enrichment, training and socialisation opportunities. The site has been able to accommodate much needed site-works improving the overall amenity.

A special mention must go to our staff and volunteers. While we temporarily lost some of our valued volunteers as a result of the pandemic, we know they will be back and we thank those who stepped in to take on different or even additional roles.

I also remain indebted to our donors, sponsors and partners including the Rescue Groups with whom we work, Deakin University and City of Greater Geelong who have all remained committed to animal welfare throughout what has been an extraordinary year.

The extraordinary events of 2019/20 have impacted on us all; some positive, some negative, some devastating, but all of which will be forever imprinted in our minds. These experiences will inform our way forward. And while we take time to reflect specifically on animal welfare in 2019/20, we know that there is always more that can be done and that there are future opportunities to be explored.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



Volunteers are an integral part of GAWS and volunteer across every single area of our organisation.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated band of over 300 active volunteers who support our mission of 'because every life is precious'.

Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and ages, but all have the same passion for animals as their common thread.

From students studying various animal related courses to retirees who love animals and want to give back and share their knowledge with us, they all contribute a great deal to GAWS and we are very grateful.

The impact of COVID-19 has seen a drop in the overall number of volunteers able to be on-site to assist with care of the animals, to help raise awareness of GAWS at key events and through public fundraising events. In late March, we made the difficult decision to temporarily close our two stores in-line with state government enforced restrictions. We have had to implement new COVID plans to ensure that everyone on-site including volunteers are kept safe. These measures include, imposing people limits on-site and in buildings, ensuring physical distancing is maintained at all times, good hand hygiene is practised and that if anyone is unwell to stay home and get tested. We thank our volunteers for their acceptance of the changes we have had to implement.

We have a number of off-site volunteers who assist in our retail stores week-in and week-out and help drive sales to support the shelter. This dedicated group of volunteers work across our Op Shop in Hamlyn Heights and our new Recycled Fashion & Homewares store in Geelong West. In addition, our amazing volunteer sewing group produce much loved dog coats, pet beds and blankets, raising much needed funds to support our work at GAWS.

Volunteers also assist with events including the Cat Lovers Show, Petstock Adoption Day, Twilight Adoption events and Highway Collections. When we need an extra hand for specific projects volunteers are always the first to pitch in to help and are not afraid to get their hands dirty!

We've continued our partnership with Gordon TAFE Animal Studies, enabling some of their students to undertake the practical components of their course in our Cat Adoption area, with 85 students participating last year.

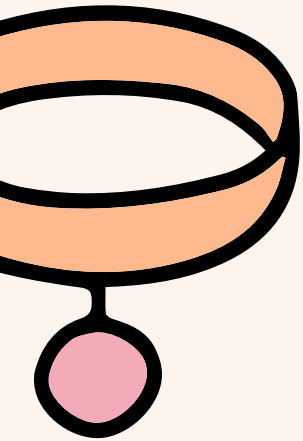
During 2019/20 we had a number of corporate organisations visit the Moolap site to volunteer for the day including WorkSafe and TAC. We continue to host school groups throughout the year, as they seek to learn more about positive animal welfare, responsible pet ownership and gain a greater understanding of the important work that GAWS does.

MILLIE

“Volunteering at GAWS is my favourite part of my week. The happy faces of the animals when they see me make it all worth while.”



We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated band of **over 300** active volunteers who support our mission of **‘because every life is precious’**.



VOLUNTEERS



As we say at GAWS 'couples who volunteer together, stay together'. This has never been more true for Paul & Ruth and Lorraine & Adrian.

PAUL & RUTH

Paul and Ruth began volunteering at GAWS in 2018 after Paul retired from 40 years of service in the military in 2016 and they relocated to Geelong. As a retired couple, they found they had the time and flexibility to devote to a cause close to their hearts and decided to apply at GAWS.

Paul and Ruth assist in our cat adoption area and have been weekly volunteers since commencing with GAWS. They also frequently assist in many other one off projects around the shelter.

When the couple began volunteering, they were surprised by the amount of cats that came into care at GAWS and how not all of them are adopted quickly. They both find it particularly rewarding getting to know the cats individually and seeing their personalities develop. They help to make the cats in the adoption area very comfortable while waiting for their forever home.





RAFF

“Lorraine took such wonderful care of me and gave me a much needed bath when I first came to GAWS”.

LORRAINE & ADRIAN

Adrian and Lorraine began their volunteering journey at GAWS in 2018. They had owned and cared for thoroughbred horses over the years, and when their last horse passed away in 2017 decided that they would like to dedicate some time to volunteering and helping animals.

After serving in the Navy during Vietnam, and working for Ford and General Electric (GE) following the Navy, Adrian retired in 2007. Lorraine worked for many years as a dressmaker in the Rag Trade district in Flinders Lane and then at Yakka. The couple moved to Geelong in 1977.

Both Adrian and Lorraine have a love of dogs and have cared for many breeds from Pekinese to Dalmatians and currently have a much loved and very spoilt Bichon named Angel.

They love interacting with the dogs in care and after undertaking a grooming course, Lorraine loves to give some of the dogs a bit of a makeover if needed. Adrian really enjoys sitting with the dogs, giving them treats to make them feel loved and more at ease with people.

Like all of our volunteers, both couples contribute so much to GAWS and we are so grateful to have them as part of our GAWS community.



FOSTER PROGRAM



Our Foster Care Program has continued to grow year on year and with COVID-19, the program could not be more important. An unprecedented additional 128 foster carers signed up to the program during the beginning of the first Victorian lockdown in March 2020.

With all of the constraints that COVID-19 has brought we have had to re-think the way we onboard and train these new foster carers. We conducted our screening interviews via phone and utilised Zoom to carry out home inspections and training. This change in procedure was facilitated by our dedicated Foster Care Coordinator and a group of trained volunteers.

With 347 active foster carers (218 cat & kitten carers and 129 puppy & dog carers) as at 30 June 2020, we are very well equipped to get every single animal in need of extra TLC into a home setting as soon as possible. With a long upcoming kitten season expected, we are in a great position. However, we will continue to recruit more foster carers to the program to ensure that we can always help an animal in need at a moment's notice.

An incredible 1523 animals passed through the program last year including 505 cats, 858 kittens, 77 dogs, 73 puppies, 5 rodents, 4 fowl and 1 Guinea Pig.


This is an increase of 109 animals on the previous year. Of the 1523 animals that entered foster care there were a total of 2141 instances, meaning many of the animals in the program were admitted on more than one occasion. During the peak of kitten season (Jan/Feb 2020) we recorded 243 animals in care at any one time.

An animal can enter foster care for many different reasons. They may need post-operative recuperation, respite from the shelter environment, mother and offspring, behavioral training, weight gain or weight loss or for another medical reason. Each animal receives all of the time that they need to prepare them for their forever home.

We are so proud of our foster program and how much it has grown and strengthened over the years. Over the past five years the percentage of animals at GAWS entering our foster program has almost doubled. This has significantly contributed to the wonderful positive animal welfare outcomes GAWS continues to achieve, of which none of this would be possible without our dedicated voluntary carers.



An incredible 1523 animals passed through the foster program last year.



"I now have something to smile about".



SAD FACE HOWARD

.....

In January 2020, a very sad cat arrived at GAWS. The only words to describe this boy would be disheveled and depressed.

When a cat is nicknamed 'Sad Face' by staff, you know he is a heart breaker for all the wrong reasons. It was evident that Howard would need a lot of work in foster care as human contact was not something he was familiar with.

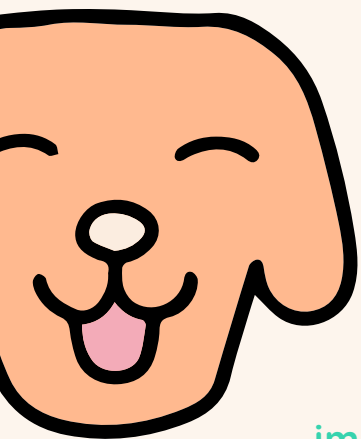
Howard entered foster care with a very experienced carer to establish just how severe his hostility towards humans was. The regular report back to the Foster Care Coordinator was that he needed time, and progress was very slow. Often it was one step forward then three steps back. The hostility was consistent, but so was his carers approach. She saw something in him that she wasn't willing to give up on.

Howard slowly started to progress with the consistent 'timid cat' procedures that were implemented by his carer.

Regular, consistent contact building positive experiences and outcomes to help him learn how to react to human contact.

Taking a cat from the depths of depression to starting to display affection can result in an unbreakable bond, and this is exactly what happened in this case. The carer could not deny the bond that had formed and decided that he had already found his perfect forever home.

Fast forward a number of months and Howard is a loving, affectionate and playful member of the family that has an undeniable bond with his fur-mum.



DOGS



Following a big year last year of change and implementation for the Dogs Department, this year our focus was on discovery and refinement.

After implementing new programs (including our expanded TLC Club and Walking Program) and refining our behaviour assessments this has led to the identification of an array of additional areas to work on, expand and grow. The dog's team has faced many challenges again this year, but with challenge comes great opportunity for positive growth and one which the team has embraced.

We noticed an increase in challenging behavioural concerns over the year with some of the dogs that came into care. With the expanded TLC Club and walking programs established and implemented during the previous year, our ability to identify and work with these behavioural concerns became a focus. Throughout the year these two programs have been further refined and strengthened and again we are seeing incredible results.

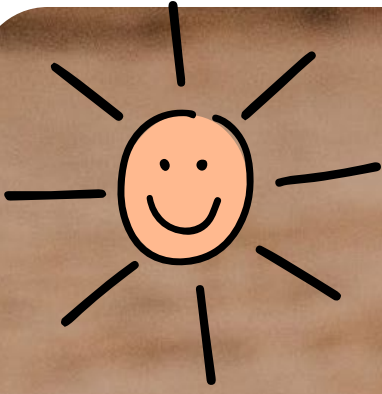
We have slowly increased the use of the GAWS Foster Care Program and have seen some incredibly successful outcomes.

We've been able to strengthen our understanding of a dog's behaviour outside the shelter environment and work on behaviours in a community setting. This increased utilisation of the foster program has increased our ability to achieve rehabilitation levels which we were previously unable to achieve. Our foster carers are always supported by our dedicated Foster Care Coordinator as well as our dogs team and vet team. We plan on further developing this program for dogs and the entire team is very excited to continue to see such positive outcomes.

Our affiliated rescue groups offered a tremendous amount of support to the dogs department again last year. Without them, for some animals their pathway would've been far more challenging to navigate and for this our team and of course the dogs are forever thankful.

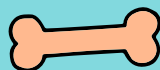
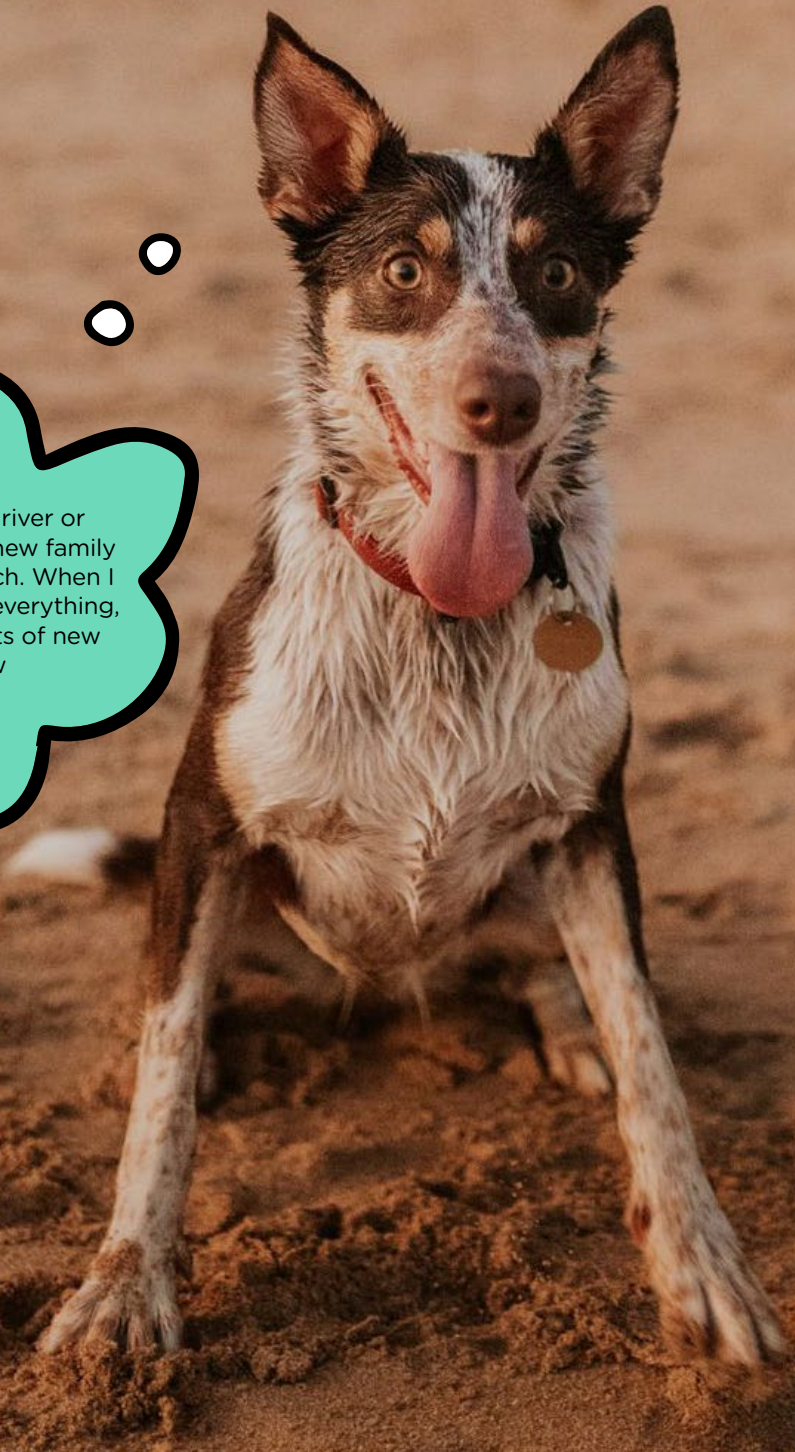
Although COVID-19 has been a trying time, we have adapted well to the need for quick change and worked hard to consider alternative ways of continuing our work. The team has remained positive and adapted quickly to a new online adoption application process that we had been working towards prior to COVID-19. This new online application system has increased our efficacy as more information is collected and assessed prior to scheduling a 'meet and greet'. We have found that this has greatly enhanced our 'meet and greets' and strengthened our very successful adoption rates.

In addition to our new online adoption application process, we have implemented additional follow up calls to check on our GAWS Graduates and their new owners in their new homes. We are always here if they need additional assistance. It has also given staff the opportunity to hear how the work they began in the shelter has achieved such wonderful outcomes.



HI, I AM ELLY

You can find me running around the river or herding waves at the beach. I love my new family so much and love cuddling on the couch. When I was first adopted I was very scared of everything, but now I go out every day and try lots of new things! Thanks to GAWS I now have the best life ever!



The dogs team has faced many challenges this year, but with challenge comes **great opportunity for positive growth** and one which the team has embraced.



**Animals are such agreeable friends
— they ask no questions;
they pass no criticisms**

- George Eliot



MANNIX

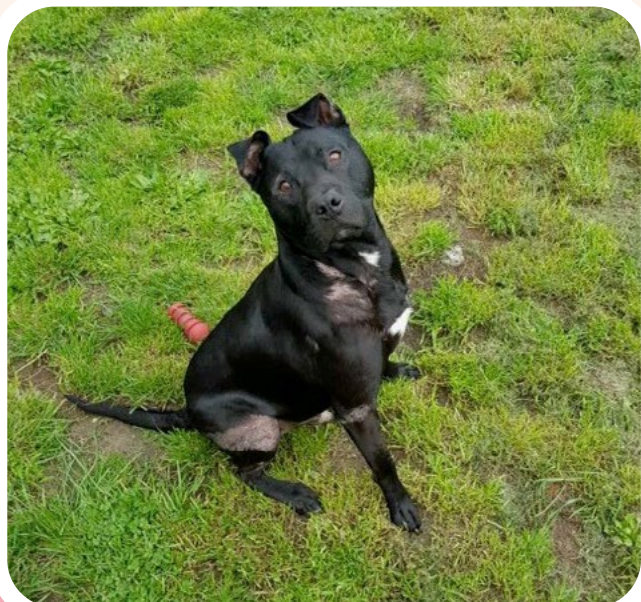
Mannix, the young American Bulldog came to us needing a little additional care. Mannix was below ideal body condition and was not bearing weight on his hind leg.

After some investigation Mannix had his right hind leg amputated and was off to a caring foster home for recovery, rehabilitation and weight gain.

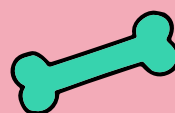
After spending a month with his foster carers, we were delighted to be watching this human dotting bulldog walk his way into his forever home in April 2020. Fast forward a few months and we hear Mannix has transitioned wonderfully to his new home. His humans reported that he is the neighbourhood star and has quite the fan base, which of course Mannix loves!



At times, Mannix is still working on his balance, but he's found a very committed forever home where his humans have helped him every step of the way. And if you didn't think he was a cutie already, he also knows the command 'grab your blanky', which he puts down himself and goes off to sleep.



Bronx is one of our star foster dogs! He came into care with some uncomfortable medical conditions including a bacterial infection (deep pyoderma) and being underweight.



BRONX

After spending three months with one of our very devoted foster carers (a total of four months in our care at GAWS), Bronx found his forever family, that have taken on all of his additional needs.

Bronx has settled in nicely, he even gets a 'special treat' of a potato cake on their weekly walk to the Fish n Chip shop. His humans have also reported that his favorite new activity is helping to mow the lawns, where he walks beside his human the entire time - a match made in heaven!



HI, I AM GRAEME

I am very independent, relaxed and spend my days mostly inside. I like to alternate between cuddling up on my owners knee at night and my blanket on the lounge chair.



1,800 cats found their forever homes
in the past 12 months through
our adoption program.

CATS



Our adoption department team members worked tirelessly to ensure that each animal finds their best possible match and perfect forever home.

Last year saw many challenges and changes, with our most significant challenge being COVID-19. This global pandemic has brought about many changes to GAWS, most notably a move to an appointment based model for all of our services including rehoming animals. The public have been very receptive to this change and we are very grateful for their patience while we have transitioned to this model.

This appointment based system has had a number of benefits to the welfare of the animals in our care including creating a calm and more relaxed environment for the animals to reside while they await their new home, with limited people onsite at any one time. Appointments have enabled staff to better match families with animals as they have more information at their disposal prior to potential owners arriving at the shelter. From an online form being submitted, to an initial discovery call, staff can really gain a better understanding of potential new owners needs and help match them with the perfect cat.

Moving forward we hope to retain this application process to allow us to continue to better match our animals with their perfect family. Our adoptions team will also be working more closely with the Foster Care Coordinator to best utilise our extensive foster program to the benefit of all the animals in our care.

We had over 2,400 cats and kittens arrive in care at GAWS last year and of that total only 172 stray cats/kittens were reclaimed. This figure really highlights the need for further community awareness about the importance of microchipping and registering their pets.

Our incredibly committed team of volunteers have been utilised within the department to assist with daily cleaning, enrichment, grooming and so much more. They have also been heavily involved with other larger projects including, re-sealing animal pens and large scale deep cleans of the facility. We are very grateful for the continued support in what sometimes can be challenging circumstances. They do an outstanding job and we thank them for all this.



HOME SCHOOL HELPER



Vivacious GAWS Graduate Cecil, now lives a life of luxury with constant cuddles often interrupting the work from home and remote learning productivity with constant keyboard walkovers before nestling in.





FOREVER HOME



Pip arrived at GAWS and spent a whopping 415 days in care. We still can't quite understand why it took so long for Pip to find his new forever home however, he was very well loved by all the staff and volunteers in the cats area and even was the star of the GAWS stand at the 2019 Cat Lovers Show.

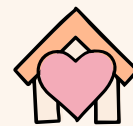
Pip finally found his perfect match after his new mum discovered him on the GAWS website and travelled from Hoppers Crossing to meet him. Pips forever home was definitely worth the wait, he now lives a life of luxury complete with his custom outdoor enclosure, where he can safely sun himself all day long. Pips new fur siblings are two dogs and they all get on really well. Pip's mum said...



"he's a pleasure to have around and has been the best addition to the household. I'm very thankful I had the opportunity to meet and adopt him."



"There's never a dull moment with these two cuties."



FOREVER HOME



Basil and Jenny began their journey with us, unknown to each other they soon became friends. They enjoy indoor fight/play club, grooming each other and snuggling on laps. Basil enjoys stealing chilli chips and sleeping under the covers in between Mum and Dad.

Jenny enjoys running around the house after doing her business and finding the most awkward and uncomfortable position on top of us. There's never a dull moment with these two cuties.



WORKING FROM HOME PA

Hi, my name is Tank. I found my forever home just over a year ago. I love 'helping' with chores around the house and in recent times I have proven to be the perfect work from home assistant making myself known in every video call. My cheeky antics definitely keep my humans on their toes!



Over **2,400** cats and kittens arrived at **GAWS** last year and of that total **only 172** stray cats/kittens were reclaimed.



Arriving at GAWS as a stray, Murray quickly made himself known as the friendliest rabbit. Murray is now living his best life, getting up to mischief with his bunny, cat and dog siblings.



94 rabbits and **57 guinea pigs**, **88 fowl** made their way to GAWS including roosters, chickens and at least one turkey!

POCKET PETS



An array of small animals and birds often come into care at GAWS, either as stray animals or surrendered pets.

Last year 94 rabbits, 57 guinea pigs and 88 fowl (including roosters, chickens and at least one turkey) made their way to GAWS.

During the same period, we have also had 100 other birds in care, including lorikeets, cockatiels and cockatoos. On one occasion our clinic team also acted as babysitters for two tortoises' until they were collected by the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP).

The small animals team are always learning more and more about the care of the many different species the department receives into care and we look forward to caring for them in the future.



FOREVER HOME



Stitch, the tiny ferret found herself at GAWS in early 2020. Unfortunately, Stitch was never reclaimed and spent a number of weeks at GAWS.

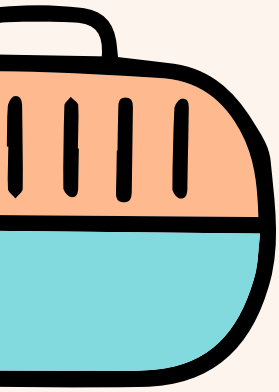
From time to time the small animals area at GAWS can get very busy with animals arriving so it was decided that Stitch would need to enter foster care.

One of our dedicated staff members who already had a ferret at home had grown very fond of Stitch while in the shelter offered to care for her

After a month in care, the plan was to return Stitch to the shelter so she could find her forever home. The problem was Stitch and Bones (the carers other ferret) had bonded and were inseparable. They slept together, played together and she would follow Bones everywhere.



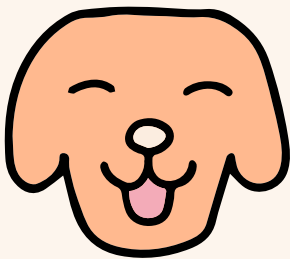
Little Stitch now lives such a happy life with with her partner in crime, Bones and their fur mum and dad.



OUR SHELTER 2019-20



Throughout the year over **4,300** **animals** came into our care at GAWS.

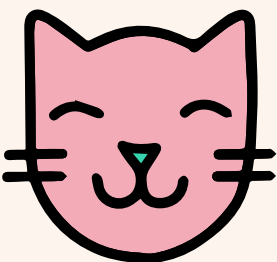


92%

of all dogs were reunited with their owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation.

1% <

Decrease from the previous year.

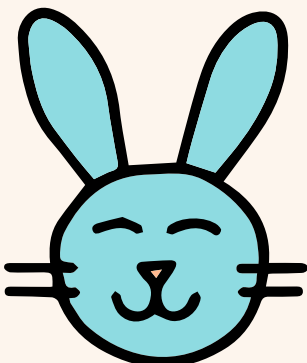


87%

of cats were reunited with owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation.

1% <

Decrease from the previous year.



97%

of rabbits and guinea pigs were reunited with owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation.

0%

Nil change from previous year.

ANIMAL STATISTICS 2019-2020



DOGS & PUPPIES

92% of all dogs were reunited with their owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation (1,366), a 1% decrease from the previous year. The 'one day stay' animals returned to owners on the same day are not included in this data.



	2018-19	%	2019-20	%
Dogs Admitted	1,627		1455	
Reclaimed	748	46%	739	50%
Adopted	701	43%	585	40%
Euthanised	101	6%	114	7%
Other (inc transfer)	57	4%	47	3%



CATS & KITTENS

87% of all cats were reunited with their owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation (2,240), a 1% decrease from the previous year.



	2018-19	%	2019-20	%
Cats Admitted	2,981		2514	
Reclaimed	203	7%	174	6%
Adopted	2,127	71%	1868	74%
Euthanised	342	11%	306	12%
Other (inc transfer)	366	12%	227	9%



RABBITS & GUINEA PIGS

97% of all rabbits and guinea pigs were reunited with their owners, adopted into new homes or transferred to a rescue organisation (146), the same as the previous year.

	2018-19	%	2019-20	%
Rabbits/Guinea Pigs Admitted	214		151	
Reclaimed	13	6%	5	3%
Adopted	120	56%	124	82%
Euthanised	3	1%	3	2%
Other (inc transfer)	89	42%	19	13%

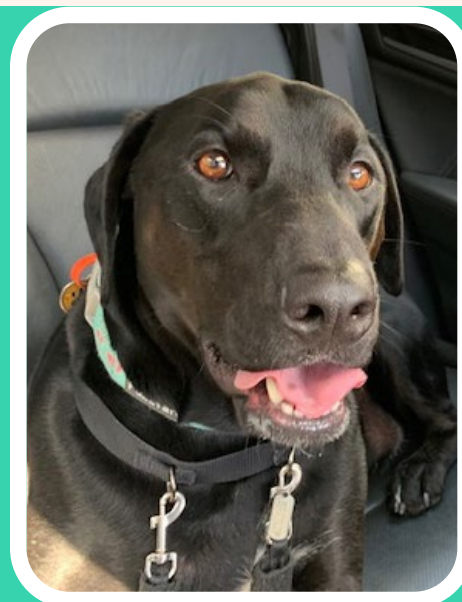
Statistical Note: Incoming animal totals may appear less or greater than outgoing totals due to animals already in care at the beginning or end of the financial year.

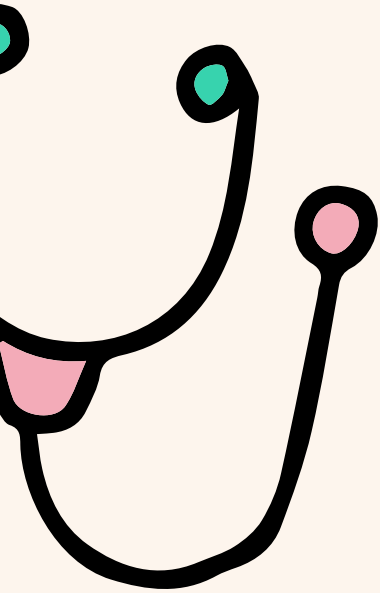


WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Ollie's story was featured in our 2019 Annual Report and we are thrilled to again provide a further update on how Ollie has progressed in his forever home over the past year. Ollie, the sun soaking Labrador was successfully rehomed in June 2019 after spending time resetting his behaviour in care. One year on we'd thought we would share an update on Ollie and how he is loving life in his forever home! After a slow settling in period, Ollie has progressed in leaps and bounds, continuing to display all behaviours in the appropriate way. In our catch up with Ollie's loving family, they expressed their utmost gratitude for the work we had done with him and simply can't imagine life without him.





VET CLINIC



COVID-19 has brought with it some significant challenges for the GAWS Community Vet Clinic.

During the year we welcomed our new Head Veterinarian, Dr Julia Aspinall to the GAWS Community Vet Clinic team. Dr Julia brings a wealth and breadth of experience with large and small animals and has worked across multiple fields in the animal industry. She has embraced her new role and looks forward to helping to further promote positive animal welfare and help grow our community vet clinic.

With the Head Vet role vacant for much of last year, our procedure and consult statistics dropped slightly compared to the previous year. The clinic team however, were still able to further refine their surgical techniques and performed extra training enabling them to continue to uphold our high standards and care.

STATISTICS

	Spey	Neuter	Total
Dog	332	339	671
Cat	827	786	1,613
Rabbit	29	41	70
Rodent	3	2	5
Total	1,191	1,168	2,359

Consultations	Last year	This year
Total	2,414	2,085

Dentals	Last year	This year
Total	534	523

Desex July	Last year	This year
Total	193	119

Procedure - other	Last year	This year
Total	634	616



This year the GAWS Veterinary team desexed a total of **2,359** animals.

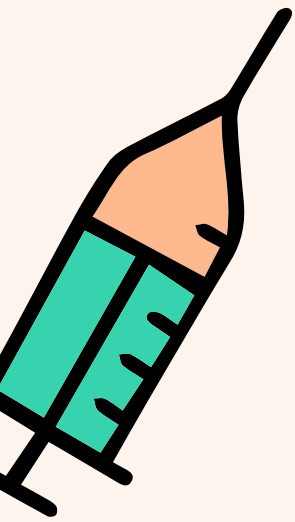


Dr Julia brings a **wealth and breadth of experience** with large and small animals and has worked across multiple fields in the animal industry.

DR JULIA

"I love knowing that my work as a vet makes a positive impact on the lives of the animals I treat in the clinic."





VET CLINIC



GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS

During the year the clinic team undertook further dental training with a specialist. With a significant proportion of animals arriving at GAWS in need of some form of dental procedure, this specialist training has been very beneficial for the team and helps us continue to grow and expand our dental capabilities for both shelter animals and private clients.

Our old rusting clinic recovery cages were in desperate need of replacement. We were incredibly lucky to have a very generous supporter donate the funds needed to enable us to purchase new stainless steel recovery cages. These new cages are safe and secure and allow the team to thoroughly clean the cages and assist in keeping our high standards of infection control.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has brought with it some significant challenges for the GAWS Community Vet Clinic. Through modification of how we consult with our clients to splitting our team into cohorts, the global pandemic has changed the way we work. The clinic has been kept very busy during this time with lots of animals still arriving in care and our private clients still needing our services.

With space limited in the clinic consult room, we needed to change the way we consulted with our clients. We implemented a limited contact consultation method by asking our clients to 'hand over' their animals (if suitable to do so) and return to the reception area, or their car where the vet would call them and consult with the owner over the phone while examining their pet.

In addition to the above changes, we implemented additional cleaning and hygiene techniques and made sanitiser available to all staff and the public. We also split the clinic into three work function sections or cohorts to ensure that if one section or cohort became unwell, the remaining two would not be affected and could continue to deliver services.



We were incredibly lucky to have a very generous supporter donate the funds needed to enable us to purchase new stainless steel recovery cages.



GOOD NEWS STORY



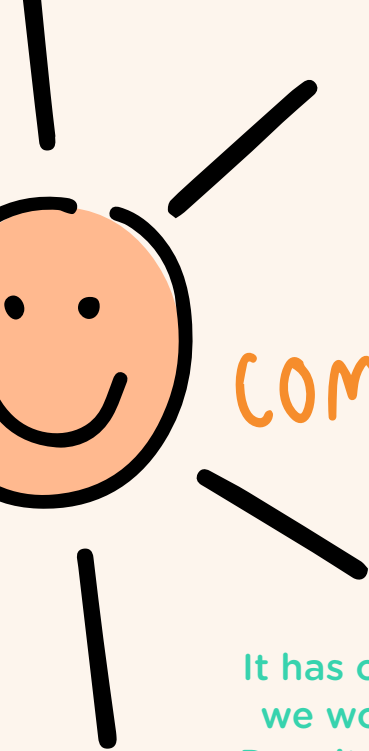
Evie arrived at GAWS in November 2019. As a fully grown German shepherd, when Evie arrived she weighed in at a tiny 16 kg's. She was so emaciated that her rib and hip bones were visible and she was suffering from anemia. Upon arrival, Evie needed to be carried in to the Community Vet Clinic as she was too weak to walk.

After a full assessment was carried out by the vet team, initial blood tests were run and Evie commenced treatment for dehydration. Her blood results showed she was a healthy, young dog but suffering from malnutrition.

Evie spent two weeks in the care of the GAWS Community Vet Clinic and received small regular

puppy meals to help her gain weight in a safe and healthy manner. After her initial two week stay in the clinic, Evie was placed into foster care with one of our vet nurses. Evie and her carer developed such a special bond, it was clear that Evie was to become what we call at GAWS a 'foster fail'. Meaning her carer fell in love and Evie's perfect forever home had been found.

Now, weighing in at an amazing 32 kilograms, Evie loves walks along the beach, hanging out with her family and is absolutely thriving!



FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



It has certainly been an unprecedented year at GAWS. One we would have never expected, nor been able to predict. Despite these challenges, we have continued on, embraced the change and we are optimistic for the future.

Support of our organisation from our local community is vital to our success and we are so grateful to have such support and dedication. We would not be able to care for as many animals as we do each year without this continued support.

Last year, we received \$332,680 in financial donations and fundraising.

This incredible amount is derived from a number of public appeal campaigns, bequests, corporate and individual sponsorship, general donations, events and community fundraising. In addition to financial donations, we receive a huge amount of in kind donations of blankets, towels, enrichment items, food and cosy pet beds. These in kind donations allow us to ensure that the animals that arrive at GAWS have everything they need during their stay.

We are well supported by our local business community who assist us through financial donations, in kind or heavily reduced service rates and support of our appeal campaigns and events. Many of these businesses have a deep love for GAWS and we look forward to further growing and strengthening these partnerships in the future.

As always, there are a number of volunteer or community lead fundraising events and initiatives that assist GAWS greatly and raise vital funds to support the shelter. We can't mention them all but will explain just a few. Our very own GAWS volunteer sewing group - Shelter & Warmth hosts a number of market stalls and makes a tremendous amount of products for events throughout the year. With COVID-19, the group have still managed to sell much of their handmade items through only one stall in June, raising over \$6,000 in one day!

We again had volunteer, Jodie, spearhead our 2020 GAWS Calendar showcasing our very cute shelter animals and managed to sell out in record time! Mrs Pauline Cline is another community member that continues to support GAWS by making and selling beautiful preserves and donating the proceeds to GAWS. Many cafés, schools, community groups and workplaces held fundraising events throughout the year and raised a significant amount of funds in addition to donations of goods.

We are truly grateful for this incredible support and would like to sincerely thank all of our wonderful community for their generosity and support of our mission of 'because every life is precious'



**GAWS volunteer sewing group –
hosts a number of market stalls and makes
a tremendous amount of products for
events throughout the year.**



DID YOU KNOW?



We are incredibly thankful for the ongoing support of our Ambassador Roxie Bennett. Roxie has had a long association with GAWS adopting her first dog from GAWS over 30 years ago.

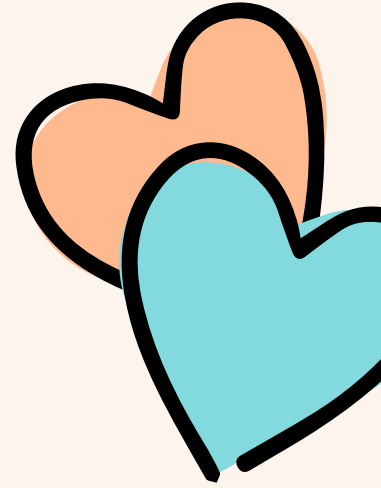
MEDIA

Last year, our relationships with our local media continued to grow with a new partnership forming with local Forte magazine and continued support from other print, radio and online media outlets. This continued support and willingness to assist our organisation, helps GAWS continue to remain top of mind for our community when it comes to adopting a pet and supporting our fundraising initiatives.

We again continued our relationship with Bay FM through our GAWS Ambassador, Roxie Bennett. The regular Pet of the Week segment during the afternoon drive show with Roxie and Daryl continues to help us highlight pets in need of adoption as well as our appeals and campaigns. With COVID-19 this segment looks a little different as our vets are not able to visit the studio however, Roxie and Daryl continue to fly the flag for GAWS carrying on the weekly highlights.



CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY



NEW WEBSITE

In October 2019 we introduced the new GAWS website. The preparation to migrate across to the new website involved many months of work. The move across to the new platform enabled us greater functionality and a better end-user experience, an online store, an ability to create fundraising appeals and campaigns (similar to a go-fund-me page), online form submission and so much more!

We are really pleased with our new website and look forward to continuing to use more of its features in the future.

Our social media channels continue to be one of our most important forms of communication, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These platforms allows us to regularly engage with our community and continue to build our brand awareness. In April 2020 we decided to introduce TikTok as a new channel to engage a new audience.

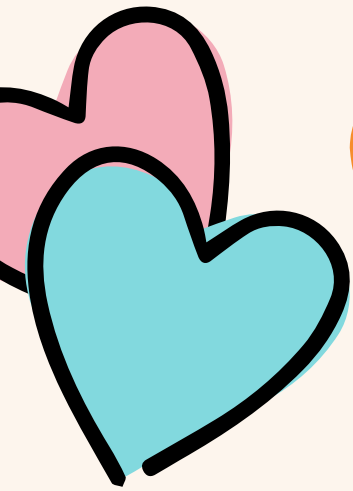
TikTok has proven to be incredibly popular and allows us to really showcase the animals that we have in care. Our most popular TikTok has received over 180k views, 13k likes and 138 comments.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our continued quest for brand consistency, presentation and authenticity has gone from strength to strength over the past year. We also introduced a new position within the Fundraising & Community Engagement department, Fundraising & Marketing Administration Officer. This part time position has enabled us to utilise and strengthen our digital channels, which have become an incredibly important communication channel.



Our most popular TikTok has received over 180k views, 13k likes and 138 comments.



CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY



EVENTS & APPEALS

Events and appeals are such an important part of our awareness and fundraising strategy and one that has been most impacted by the current global pandemic.

Fortunately last year we were able to again attend the 2019 Cat Lovers Show, carry out one Highway Collection, a Twilight adoption night, attend PetStock Adoption day, carry out our Christmas Appeal and introduce a new 'Tricks & Treats for GAWS' appeal. We also participated in new events like Humans in Geelong Expo and the Melbourne Street Eat - Geelong Edition 'Bark in the Park'. The 'Bark in the Park' event was held at Eastern Gardens in October and helped raise awareness and funds for GAWS. Unfortunately, planned events and appeals scheduled during the early part of 2020 such as the Dog Lovers Show, Highway Collections and other awareness events were unable to go ahead significantly reducing our fundraising ability.

In lieu of our usual live events we adjusted our planned fundraising program for the first half of 2020 and managed to raise over \$13,000 through our Emergency Appeal in April/May 2020. Further virtual fundraising initiatives will be crucial to achieving our strategic goals in 2020/2021.

Our Highway Collection event in August 2019 was very successful and managed to raise \$3,326 across two intersections in central Geelong.

This type of event is always a popular one and lots of fun. It is wonderful to get out into the community and chat to the public while raising much needed funds for the shelter.



OP SHOP AND NEW RECYCLED FASHION & HOMEWARES STORES

Our Hamlyn Heights Op Shop has continued to thrive. The incredible daily effort of our wonderful group of dedicated volunteers at the store, make it such a success and an amazing income stream for the organisation. We thank them for their continued commitment to GAWS. With the success of the Hamlyn Heights store, in late 2019 we found the perfect new site for a second GAWS store in Pakington St, Geelong West.

In February 2020, our new GAWS Recycled Fashion & Homewares store opened at 201 Pakington street Geelong West. A slightly different model from our existing store, this new store aims to offer a great range of recycled fashion and homewares in a very popular shopping strip of Geelong.

After an incredibly encouraging opening weekend and first few weeks of trade, unfortunately the store had to close due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the Victorian Government. In June 2020, we were able to reopen the store and again experienced encouraging sales and we are hopeful that this store will flourish just as our other store has over the past seven years.

KATE

"I love interacting with the small animals at GAWS, they really make me smile everyday."





OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



We received an incredible amount of support from a range of corporate partners, local businesses, individual fundraisers, community groups and schools. We thank them for their generosity and continued support.

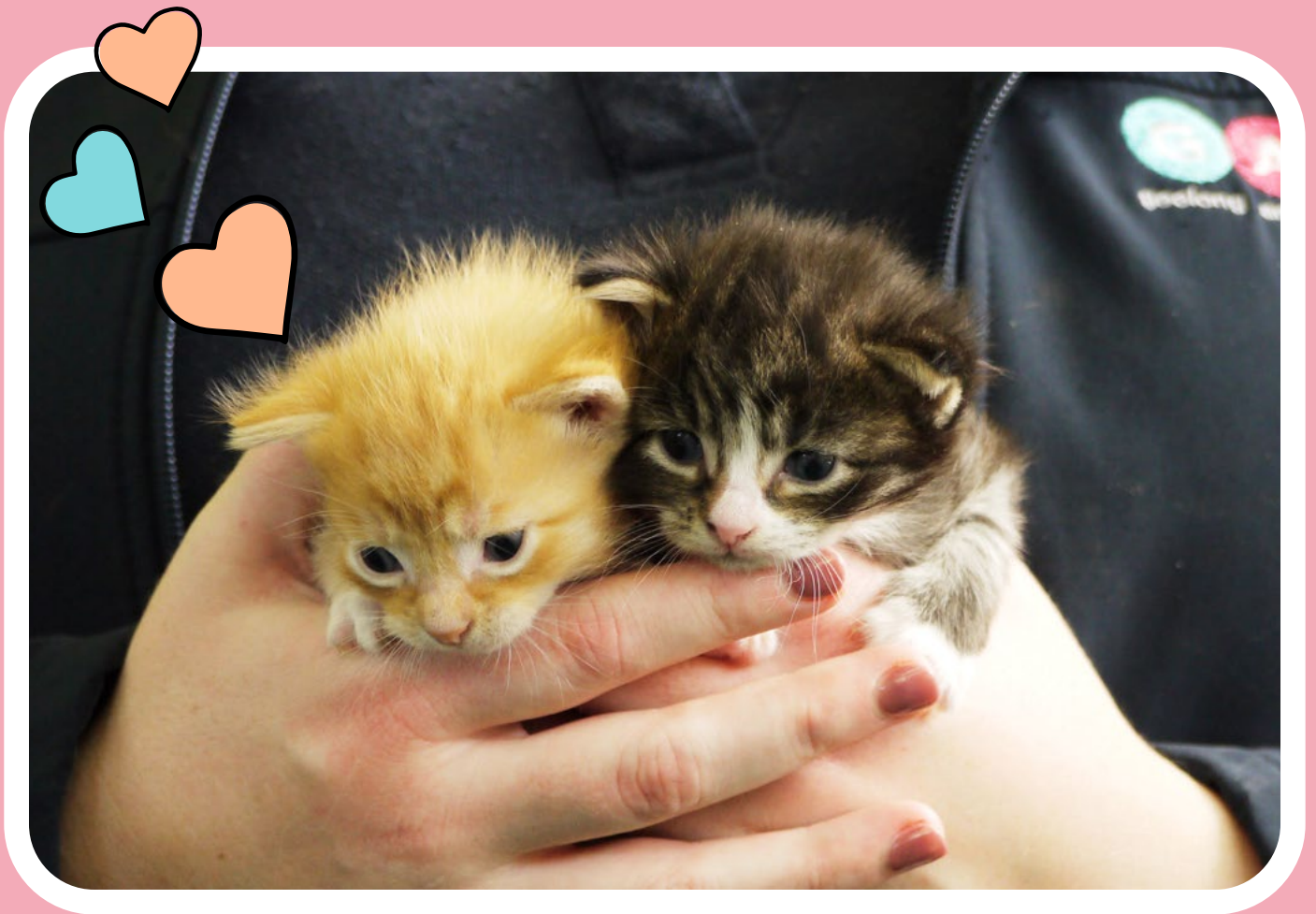
MAJOR SUPPORTERS



MAJOR DONORS AND GRANTS

- Alison Bird
- Best Friends Geelong
- C Baldo
- Catherine Gray
- City of Greater Geelong - Healthy & Connected Communities Grant
- Davidsons
- Easy Waste
- Harley Owner Group
- Karyn Tirrell
- Leopold Primary School
- Margaret Kilby
- Michael & Janet Wellard
- Mr P Kelsey
- Pauline Cline
- PetStock
- Ryan Clover
- Savour Life
- SC Technology Group
- Stella Marshall
- The Lin Huddleston Charitable Foundation
- The Mex Ocean Grove
- The Salty Dog Café
- Tim Simpson
- Torquay Stockfeeds
- Wallington's WRG
- Wright - Goodwin Family Foundation

In addition to the above supporters, we received a very large amount of anonymous donations and continued support from local organisations hosting a GAWS donation collection box. The Community Fundraising program continues to grow each year, thanks to the help of our dedicated volunteers. The community embraces this initiative and we thank them for their continued support.



PEN PALS

Ace Gibson
 Alibastet
 Barbara & Holly
 Barwon Timber & Hardware Pty Ltd
 Barwon Timber Bar-Truss
 Beck's Boarding Retreat
 Charley Lanning
 Geelong Pistol Club Inc.
 genU - Geelong West
 Harley Owners Group
 Helen & Filbert
 Hill's Pet Nutrition
 In Memory - Shirley Joan Murphy
 In memory of - Ken Booth
 Jean McGowan
 Julie & Terrance Sleeth
 Maria & Cody
 Nelson Park School VCAL 11/12
 Shelly Thompson & Susan Johnson
 Sue & Gus
 W.L. Chivers Plumbing Pty Ltd

DONATIONS IN MEMORY

Anne Webb
 Betty Vinters
 Meredith Lindsay
 Elizabeth Joan Hateley
 Otto Bufkosan
 EM Lednar

BEQUESTS

We would like to thank and acknowledge all those who have left a lasting imprint on animal welfare by leaving a gift in their Will. This generous support enables us to continue to deliver our vital work.

John Wilson Anderson
 Paul Gottlieb Stettbacher
 Georgie Kimmel
 Lena Russell
 Jeanette Lillian Smithson
 Del Singh

ANIMALS ARE SUCH
AGREEABLE FRIENDS
-THEY ASK NO QUESTIONS,
THEY PASS NO CRITICISMS



www.gaws.org.au

Designed with love by Paul Kelly Creative.