

August, 2017

Introduction

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is the nation's peak animal welfare body with a mission to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection.

RSPCA South Australia's vision is to shape a more compassionate society free of animal cruelty and suffering. To achieve this vision, RSPCA South Australia acknowledges that we cannot alleviate all animal suffering and cruelty on our own as education and collaboration with the community at all levels is key.

In Port Lincoln we will be using the creation of a new Animal Care Centre as the focal point for building the collective animal welfare knowledge, skills and involvement of the whole local community.

The work of RSPCA South Australia

RSPCA South Australia was formed in 1875. As the preeminent animal welfare organisation in this state we have expertise in animal care that has been honed through long term experience of veterinarians, behaviourists, inspectors, rescue officers, scientists, welfare advocates and shelter operations staff over our 142-year history. Last year we cared for nearly ten thousand vulnerable animals across South Australia with thousands successfully reunited with their owners, and thousands more adopted into new homes.



RSPCA Inspector - 1904

We have specialists in animal behaviour, animal handling, and animal care, all with extensive qualifications in animal sciences. Our Lonsdale (Adelaide) Animal Care Centre boasts a team of ten veterinary staff and enjoys close links with the University of Adelaide.

Our team of eight inspectors make RSPCA South Australia the only not-for-profit organisation empowered by the South Australian Government to enforce the State's Animal Welfare Act. They investigated over 4,400 animal cruelty reports last year alone. Our five rescue officers responded to over 2,400 call-outs to assist all types of injured and distressed animals. Our education team works to deliver animal care and welfare programmes across the State.

In Port Lincoln, there is clear demand for an organisation that provides these animal welfare support services and we have heard that the community wants RSPCA to stay. In response RSPCA South Australia wishes to not only just stay but rather grow its presence

by utilising our knowledge and expertise to bring a plan to Port Lincoln that will build an enhanced commitment to, and capability in, animal care throughout the local community.

Core elements of the plan include:

1. Appoint a Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre Manager

RSPCA South Australia is seeking to employ a local manager in a full-time position.

This role will be pivotal to the success of the new Animal Care Centre and RSPCA South Australia's future in Port Lincoln. We are looking for a local resident of Port Lincoln who really knows the town and knows the people. They will be the driving force behind all of the programmes we hope to introduce in Port Lincoln with primary responsibility for operations management, coordination of volunteers and liaison with the community, council and media. All of these functions will be undertaken with ongoing training and support from the Society. We are recruiting for this fulltime position during August, for a September start when training will commence.

2. Establish a new Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre

The impending closure of RSPCA's old shelter on Happy Valley Road has been the catalyst for developing this new plan.

Unfortunately operating a full scale animal shelter had become prohibitively expensive and a new, more efficient animal care concept needed to be developed.

Much of the existing site will

shortly be cleared in preparation for sale - with a view of returning the land to the market in September - during which time a new facility will be established on Windsor Ave opposite the Ravensdale Sports Complex. All proceeds from the sale of the existing shelter property will remain in Port Lincoln and be invested in establishing and operating the new Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre. The current premises on Happy Valley Road will remain open for cat adoptions until the new premises are planned to open in November 2017.



The new Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre is ideally located next to a vet and provides easy public access and maximum exposure with up to 4,000 people visiting the sporting complex most weekends. It will operate as RSPCA South Australia's centre for community engagement with meeting and training rooms, an Op Shop and of course, act as our adoption centre. With regards to the latter, the facility will be configured as a satellite centre supported by our main Lonsdale facility. A small proportion of animals incoming to RSPCA will be retained at the Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre - enough to meet adoption needs from within Port Lincoln based on previous adoption rates - with the rest to be quickly transported to our Lonsdale Animal Care Centre for any necessary veterinary care and re-homing. Historically, less than 40% of the over 400 animals coming into the RSPCA Port Lincoln facility have been adopted in Port

Lincoln with the majority eventually being transferred to our Lonsdale facility in Adelaide for adoption.

The new operating model yields improved outcomes for the animals as the length of stay prior to adoption at our Lonsdale facility is far shorter - historically, on average, less than half an average length of stay of an animal in Port Lincoln.



This hub and satellite model will enable us to provide the best possible welfare outcomes for the animals of Port Lincoln, while still ensuring that as many as possible are rehomed within the local community. In total we plan to have five dog kennels and ten state-of-the-art cat enclosures in Port Lincoln as this will be sufficient to cater for local adoption demand. The design and layout of which will incorporate the latest in animal science, helping to improve the wellbeing of accommodated animals. The cat enclosures will be “Cat Condo” models from specialist manufacturer Therian. These units (pictured) allow cats to exhibit their normal behaviours with separate sleeping, toileting and climbing areas, and importantly are ventilated for maximum hygiene and disease control. These enclosures significantly reduce cat stress levels resulting in far fewer cases of cat flu and overall improved health and behaviour outcomes.



Importantly, as a responsible rehoming organisation, all pets adopted from the RSPCA’s Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre by the local community will be;

- Vet checked
- Vaccinated
- Microchipped
- Desexed
- Behaviour assessed

That is, all will comply with the new requirements of the Dog and Cat Management Act, and be suitable for socially responsible re-homing in the Port Lincoln community.

Furthermore, RSPCA South Australia uses responsible adoption processes and trained staff and volunteers to assess the needs of each animal, and assist adopters in finding a pet that is the perfect match for them.

In choosing to adopt from RSPCA’s Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre, local residents can be certain they are not supporting unscrupulous breeding practices, and are giving a deserving and life-ready pet the loving home they deserve.

3. Engage the Local Community

RSPCA South Australia’s intention is to develop our operation in Port Lincoln to be self-sustaining. We look to engage with the community to see the creation of an “RSPCA

Community Network” with volunteering opportunities in our adoption centre, foster care network, education, training and rescue team, transport network, Op Shops and fundraising activities. In all areas training will be provided to help develop local capability in animal welfare. These programmes will all be progressively introduced over the next two years, subject to demand and support from the people of Port Lincoln.



There are a lot of very committed animal welfare people in Port Lincoln and RSPCA South Australia will look to work with, and support, local animal welfare groups in helping them to deliver even better animal welfare outcomes. Additionally, we look to encourage Adelaide based specialist groups (e.g. native animals and birds) to undertake training and provide support in the town where necessary. In this way we can help facilitate a broad coverage of animal care by connecting Port Lincoln with expertise in all classes of animals.

Of course, this will also be a two-way process with the Society overall hoping to continue learning from, and building our skills with, expertise that exists in Port Lincoln.



A key part of working in the local community will be partnering with the Port Lincoln Council for improved dog and cat management outcomes. This will include providing re-homing services to stray and unidentified animals impounded by council, advice on animal welfare issues and the provision of targeted community education and training programmes. We will also be seeking to organise sponsors for dog and cat microchipping and de-sexing events.

Importantly, all funds raised in Port Lincoln will be used only to support our Port Lincoln operations. This includes the proceeds from the sale of the existing shelter property. A bank account will be established in a local Port Lincoln bank branch with transactions reported to the RSPCA Community Network each year.

Is important to note that the majority of the animal care and rehoming costs for animals taken in from Port Lincoln will be incurred by our Lonsdale Animal Care Centre in Adelaide, due to the fact that 60% of animals are transported there. This cost is estimated at over \$300,000 per annum which will be completely funded by Adelaide based supporters, and will not use any of the Port Lincoln funds. We envisage a self-sustaining model for Port Lincoln where the remaining animals from Port Lincoln that stay in Port Lincoln, are funded by Port Lincoln. Total operating expenses for the self-

sustaining Port Lincoln model are forecast for the next three financial years to be around \$150,000 per annum. This will primarily rely on proceeds from animal adoptions and local fundraising efforts.

4. Delivery of RSPCA animal education programmes to schools and community groups.

As the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, prevention is core to our mission, with education the most powerful tool in achieving that mission. Our education programmes along with RSPCA Animal Welfare Policies are all science and evidence based, and designed to deliver a level of animal care that meets the broad community's expectations.



Again, RSPCA South Australia's intention is to develop our operation in Port Lincoln to be self-sustaining. With support from Adelaide we will be conducting "Train the Trainer" programmes for staff and volunteers keen to join our RSPCA Community Network, who in turn, will deliver those to the Port Lincoln community. This training will include animal care, animal handling, animal behaviour assessments, animal first aid and animal rescue to name a few.

Currently, we have plans to roll out our existing range of Empathy Education Programmes in Port Lincoln kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, helping to teach children about the needs and proper care of dogs, cats and other animals.

In support of good dog and cat management practices, we will also work with the Council to facilitate force-free training for dogs, and education for owners.

5. Establish a Port Lincoln RSPCA Foster Care Network

Even the latest and best designed animal enclosures are still not the best option for accommodating dogs and cats. These are companion animals that are generally happiest and healthiest in a domestic home environment. For this reason, whether in Adelaide or anywhere across the State, RSPCA South Australia aims to place any dogs and cats requiring longer term care into homes with foster carers.

This is not however simply a matter of having someone take an animal home. Responsible foster care involves proper training and ongoing support for the volunteers, with foster carers becoming certified for different types and conditions of animals for which they can care.



During 2018 the Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre will begin developing such a foster care programme for our animals in Port Lincoln. Anyone interested will be encouraged to join the RSPCA Community Network as foster carer to volunteer their assistance.

6. Establish a Port Lincoln Animal Rescue Team

Animal rescue is one of the services for which the RSPCA is possibly best known. Our long-term vision for Port Lincoln includes establishing a volunteer rescue team to service the area. This does however require considerable investment with extensive training and equipment required, and a variety of serious WHS issues to consider. Fortunately, we have a lot of expertise in this area, and if suitable volunteers come forward we would look to establish this programme in 2018/19.

Conclusion

RSPCA South Australia's future in Port Lincoln is focussed on a fresh start with new premises and a plan to significantly grow our programs in the town. We are looking to employ a new full-time manager who is passionate and natural leader, ready to take on the management of a new Port Lincoln Animal Care Centre with a planned opening date of November 2017. They will assist in the development of programs to engage the community in volunteering and education opportunities so that together, we can do the important work towards shaping a society free of animal cruelty and suffering.

With support from the people, businesses and organisations of Port Lincoln, RSPCA South Australia believes this new era will be the start of a bright future for the animals and people of Port Lincoln.