

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Acting Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Acting Minister for Trade

Acting Minister for Business Precincts

Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Acting Minister for Racing

Acting Minister for Employment

Acting Minister for Innovation, Medical Research, and the Digital Economy

Acting Minister for Small Business



Thursday, 23 December 2021

## A FUREVER HOME: PETS ARE MORE THAN JUST A CHRISTMAS GIFT

With only a few more sleeps until Santa arrives, Victorians are being urged to remember that dogs, cats and rabbits are for life – not just a present under the tree this Christmas.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today highlighted the important role animal care organisations such as the Australian Animal Protection Society (AAPS) in Keysborough play in helping abandoned pets find their forever homes.

Thousands of pets are taken to Victorian animal shelters each year – often in the months following the festive season – with owners unable to meet the needs of their animals.

While rehoming organisations do their best to find new homes for these pets, it can take time to find the right family and for the animals, living in a shelter can place unnecessary stress on them.

The *Animal Welfare Fund (AWF) Grant Program* is supporting the improvement of companion animal welfare in the Victorian community.

Since the AWF Grants program began, almost \$4.2 million in funding has been awarded to 102 organisations to boost animal welfare outcomes and support the rehoming of pets.

In addition, more than 200 *Individual Pet Rehoming Grants* totalling more than \$520,000 have been provided, contributing to the rehoming costs of over 700 dogs and 1500 cats.

AAPS received a \$200,000 grant through the Animal Welfare Fund to establish a new veterinary clinic and small pet facility that has enabled it to improve the level of care it can offer to animals in need.

The Labor Government has also appointed a *Taskforce on Rehoming Pets* in March this year to ensure more pets get the loving homes they deserve. The Taskforce has been investigating and considering how to improve and better support rehoming pathways for dogs and cats in Victoria, including those used in research.

For more information visit the [Animal Welfare Victoria website](#).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

*“Getting a pet is exciting for the whole family but it is important to remind Victorians that owning a dog, cat or rabbit is a lifetime responsibility.”*

*“Our pets give us so much and we all need to understand what it means to be a responsible pet owner.”*

### Quotes attributable to Australian Animal Protection Society General Manager Megan Secull

*“Too often we see animals surrendered when the realisation of how much time and money is needed to care for a pet. When you commit to owning a pet it is a pledge that must last its lifetime.”*

*“Please do your research and avoid impulse buying so animals get the best and right home first time around.”*

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