

Sunday, 27 March 2022

PET DESEXING BOOST FOR VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting councils and not-for-profit organisations to desex thousands of dogs and cats to improve animal welfare outcomes and reduce the number of unwanted pets.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited Westside Community Desexing in Sunshine to open applications for a new round of Pet Desexing Grants, funded through the Labor Government's *Animal Welfare Fund (AWF)*.

The new grant round includes \$500,000 to support local councils and not-for-profit organisations to improve the quality of domestic dog and cat welfare across Victoria by purchasing equipment and expanding free or low-cost pet desexing services.

Westside Community Desexing is helping to address cat overpopulation in the Western Metropolitan region through accessible desexing, microchipping and pet wellness services.

The organisation received \$150,000 in March last year from Round 1 of the Pet Desexing grants to establish a high volume, low cost desexing clinic which is now open. Since the new clinic opened in December last year, they have desexed almost 500 cats.

There has been a significant increase in demand for new pets and adoptions across Victoria. The proportion of pet-owning households in Australia has increased significantly from 61 per cent to 69 per cent in just over two years.

On average, cats start breeding at four months and can have up to three litters a year. If left un-desexed, one female and her offspring could produce thousands of kittens in just a few years.

Applications have also opened for \$471,500 in Equine Rehabilitation Grants to support organisations that rescue, rehabilitate and rehome horses to purchase equipment or services and upgrade their facilities.

Since the Labor Government was elected in 2014, \$4.3 million has already been awarded for not-for-profit animal shelters, foster care organisations and community vet clinics to directly improve the welfare of pets and other animals in Victoria.

In total, almost \$1 million is available in Round Two of the Pet Desexing and Equine Rehabilitation and Rehoming Grants. Applications are open until Sunday 1 May 2022. For more information visit animalwelfare.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"We know how important pets are to all Victorians. This funding will support councils and not-for-profit organisations provide crucial desexing services and improve animal welfare outcomes for all."

Quote attributable to Westside Community Desexing Director Dr Penny Hocking

"Established local programs prove that communities committed to supporting low cost desexing provide the most cost effective solution to cat over population"

Quote attributable to Member for St Albans Natalie Suleyman

"These grants make desexing more accessible for all members of our community and also recognise the important role local not-for-profit organisations like Westside Community Desexing play in delivering these critical services."

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