

Thursday, 16 June 2022

## ENSURING EVERY PET COUNTS IN POUNDS AND SHELTERS

The Andrews Labor Government is introducing mandatory reporting and collection of key data to improve transparency and promote responsible rehoming of animals in shelters and pounds.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas visited the Geelong Animal Welfare Society to announce nation leading changes to the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds (the Code).

It will be compulsory for shelters and pounds to report a variety of data on the dogs and cats that come into their care including the data on the number of animals euthanised. This also includes if the animal is reclaimed by its owner, enters foster care or is rehomed.

If an animal is euthanised, the reasons for euthanasia will also need to be reported.

Victoria will be the first state to collect and publish such comprehensive data, which will be made available via an online, state-wide report.

This builds on existing measures in the Code, which sets a minimum standard of care and record keeping for animals in shelters and pounds. While the existing Code requires records to be collected and kept for five years, it previously did not require shelters or pounds to report to government or publish any data recorded.

The data received will be used to better understand the volume of activity and challenges faced by shelters and pounds.

In recognition of its quality services, the Geelong Animal Welfare Society recently received \$41,000 through the Labor Government's *Animal Welfare Fund Grant Program* to improve accommodation at its cat shelter.

Animal welfare is a priority of the Labor Government, with a record \$18.6 million package to support animal care and protection in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*. In addition to the new Code, the Government will increase transparency in the rehoming sector in response to recommendations from the Taskforce on Rehoming Pets.

Victoria's first Pet Census will also gather information to ensure pets and their owners have the support and services they need.

More information about the Code can be found at [agriculture.vic.gov.au](https://agriculture.vic.gov.au)

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

*"These changes to the Code of Practice will be a positive step for our state – giving the community the confidence that Victoria's much-loved cats and dogs are receiving the care they deserve."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

*"We know how important pets are to the lives of many Victorians – this is why we are supporting the care and rehoming of animals in shelters and pounds."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

*"GAWS do a wonderful job looking after domestic animals, as do all animal shelters and pounds across the state. These changes will improve animal welfare throughout Victoria."*

### Quote attributable to Geelong Animal Welfare Society CEO Helen Cocks

*"At GAWS we are passionate about animal welfare and we strongly support any changes that will improve outcomes for animals."*

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