

MID WEST CAT SHELTER Inc

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



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# MID WEST CAT SHELTER Inc

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## **MID WEST CAT SHELTER Inc**

### **Vision Statement**

*“that cats are regarded as a welcome and valued part of Australian society  
and cared for by their community”.*

### **Mission Statement**

*“Our mission is to rescue and re-home, lost, abandoned and mistreated cats in the region, to ensure the humane treatment and wellbeing of cats and to promote community education and responsible cat management.”*

### **Values Statement**

*Cats are part of a group of animals known in Australia as Companion Animals and play an important role in Australian society*

*There are known and documented health benefits to individuals and the community, from owning a companion animal.*

*Cats have the right to be treated humanely, and have their health and welfare needs met by their ‘owners’*

*Lost and abandoned cats deserve to be cared for by the community at large and re-homed to a caring and responsible guardian*

*Controlled cat populations in public places or ‘community cats,’ have a role to play in the management of pests such as mice and rats, therefore reducing the threat to public health.*

*Sterilisation is essential for all adult cats, for the welfare of the cat itself, disease control and the management of cat populations*

*Homelessness is not a good enough reason to be put to death.*

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## MID WEST CAT SHELTER Inc

### Letter from the Chair

As this document is the very first Annual Report of Mid West Cat Shelter Inc, I believe a bit of history and back round information may be useful.

Being in the Animal Care industry for a number of years, I heard many cries for help around lost, found and abandoned & mistreated cats. There was no help at hand and nowhere for them to go.

I also heard the taunts about how cats 'kill all the wildlife', which I believed to be an unfair exaggeration. The research after all shows that it is humans that are responsible for the massive losses of native species in this country and indeed around the world, firstly with our bulldozers clearing hundreds of thousands of acres of native habitat, then with our cars. But there is an element of truth of this statement also. Sensitive conservation areas and habitat that supports small native mammals are at risk from the feral cat, as well as from feral dogs and foxes. Feral cats are essentially domestic cats that due to the irresponsible actions of people, have been breeding in the wild, have adapted to their new environment and have become a danger to threatened native species.

The purpose of the new WA CAT ACT 2011 is 'to manage and control cats' and to 'promote responsible cat ownership', not to ensure the welfare of cats. Concerned that the implementation of the new law was going to mean many lost & abandoned cats and unwanted kittens, through no fault of their own, would be trapped and euthanized, I started to develop some ideas around a concept of a rescue organisation. Its purpose would be to, not only save cats from euthanasia and re-home them; but to promote responsible cat ownership, to educate the community, to promote sterilisation of all owned cats reducing the number of unwanted kittens every spring and therefore also the impact on what is left of our native wildlife in urban and sub urban areas.

I began making connections with a number of smaller rescue groups around the state as well as Cat Haven in Perth, Cat Alliance of Australia and RSPCA Perth & Melbourne offices to get advice, Best Practice information and resources.

In mid 2011 having made those connections I watched as a number of smaller rescue groups battled with all sorts of obstacles including lack of funds, lack of people, resistance from other more established groups and conflict with their Local Government department. Having a background in Community Development, I was already of the opinion that developing strong partnerships with the community and community based organisations, other groups and Local Government would improve the likelihood that the organisation would succeed in making a difference to either the welfare of cats, or their impact on the environment.

I started sharing the concept design in its early form with a number of interested local people – go it alone rescuers, local veterinarians, RSPCA representative, and basically anyone that would listen.

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November 2012 – I presented the “Integrated Community Model” in its early form to CGG Community Law & Safety and began developing the relationship between MWCS and the Rangers department.

I was invited by CGG Manager of Community Law and Safety to present the model to a group of representatives from other LG’s in February 2013 who mostly commented that while the concept was “interesting’ - a good idea – they didn’t think it was do-able.

Continuing work on developing the likely structure of the organisation, vision, values, mission and purpose, talking to stakeholders and future partners, making connections and fine tuning the model, I asked a few key people to join me in establishing a Steering Committee and Mid West Cat Shelter was born. These people became some of the founding members you see on the Board today.

In May 2013 we were ‘pushed’ by some of the other rescue groups to go public via Facebook, to get support for the concept, while we developed and ratified our constitution, applied for incorporation, registered our name, register with the ATO for an ABN. At the time I felt the process was taking forever as we had to wait for approval of one step before we could take the next.

We celebrated loudly when we received confirmation that our constitution had been approved and on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 we were officially an Incorporated body. We could then apply for registration with ACNC and the Australian Taxation Office as a Charity in Australia, and lastly apply for the ATO Deductible Gift Recipient endorsement. This was essential if we ever hoped to get corporate sponsorship.

A new logo, some insurances, our first web site and we started both assisting people to re-home their cats via our Facebook page, and accepting cats into foster care where necessary. Our first few re-homes were achieved with much excitement. I don’t think that has changed at all. Every re-home is exciting and satisfying. People came forward to become volunteer foster carers and the organisation began to grow in ‘people’ numbers.

Along with the new Cat Laws, the State Government made grant funds available to Local Government’s for a Sterilisation subsidy to help low income earners with the cost of meeting the new laws. We were not a LG and had no prior history of funds management, we were a brand new organisation but when CGG told us they would not be applying for these funds for the benefit of our community - we decided we would. CGG and all three local vets wrote us letters of support and we argued strongly using local census data and socio-economic factors, to be allowed to provide the sterilisation subsidy to Geraldton. We also fought for approval to provide a \$100 subsidy for female cats instead of the stated \$50 per cat limit.

We shouted very loudly once again when we heard we had been approved for the grant and so had our \$100 female subsidy.

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With much negotiation (they really do want to help us!) CGG allowed us the use of our first shelter facility, the old dog pound at Davies rd. In March we started work to make it secure and we moved in. There have been many, many hours gone into setting up the facility and caring for the cats, thanks to the generosity of our volunteers.

Today you will hear some of the results of our first year's work.

The following report includes some of our original diagrams relating to the purpose and structure of the organisation, with some adjustments as needed. It is exciting and satisfying to see those systems working. This is what we have achieved in the past 12 months.

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### Current state of Cat Welfare

Domestic pets are known to have a positive effect on people's lives, in particular children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Some 26% of households in Australia own at least one cat. Although they are highly valued and loved as a pet, cats are also predators by nature and if allowed to roam sensitive conservation areas, can hunt and kill endangered wildlife. Territorial animals, they can also be a nuisance to neighbours by spraying, howling during mating season and fighting with other cats.

In towns and cities, lost, abandoned and homeless cats frequent the garbage of restaurants and fast food outlets in small colonies, as well as other areas where there is a food source. Unsterilised cats, both 'owned' and homeless, continually add to the population by producing litters of unwanted kittens. An adult female cat can produce 150 kittens in her lifetime, while an adult male cat can impregnate hundreds of unsterilized females.

It's not all bad news. These small colonies of cats keep the rat and mice populations in check, a plague of which could pose a health and safety issue for a restaurant operator or cause major health problems for a community.

The solution to the problem is largely found in sterilisation rates of 'owned' and 'partially owned' cats. Current 'best practice' amongst shelters and animal rescue groups world wide, include community education in responsible pet management, in particular sterilisation & containment of owned cats and sterilisation and management of homeless or 'community' cats.

Under the new laws, our local City Council, through their Rangers, now have the authority and obligation to pursue local complaints around stray and nuisance cats as well as receive cats surrendered by their owners for various reasons. They have had to establish a local cat pound to impound lost or trapped cats for a minimum of 3 working days, to give owners an opportunity to locate a missing cat, after which time the unclaimed cat would be 'disposed of'. MWCS attends the cat pound on Tuesdays and Thursdays to assess and rescue unclaimed domestic cats to save them from euthanasia.

### Legislation

Legislation that relates to the industry includes the Animal Welfare Act and the CAT ACT 2011 which came into effect on the 1st November 2013. The purpose of the act is to control and manage cat populations and improve cat welfare. RSPCA have written 'Codes of practice' for Shelters and also refer to the Shelter Vets Association Standards.

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### Purpose of the Organisation

It takes much more than creating a new law, to reduce 'feral' and stray cat numbers, improve cat welfare or change the behaviour of cat owners. It will require a community wide, integrated approach to cat management that includes implementing the Law, wide ranging community education programs and effective cat management strategies.



Mid West Cat Shelter's main objectives are to establish a facility to rescue and re-home lost, abandoned or mistreated cats, educate the community, support & promote responsible pet ownership and increase overall sterilisation rates in the region.

### Effective Cat management strategies

The development of our first Cat Shelter in the region is a unique opportunity to offer the community a service that takes into account current community expectations around animal welfare, addresses aspects of sustainability and has social, economic and environmental benefits.

The main management strategies will include;

- rescuing unclaimed cats from certain death, sterilising and re-homing to responsible homes

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- supporting owners to find alternative solutions to surrendering their cat
- providing subsidised sterilisation to low income earners

While our first objective is to rescue and re-home lost, abandoned and homeless cats to responsible homes, one of our main objectives to improving cat welfare is to achieve above 90% sterilisation rates of 'owned' and 'partially owned' cats in the region. This will inhibit the flow of unwanted and abandoned kittens into city streets and sensitive conservation areas.

### Community Education & Partnerships

Mid West Cat Shelter have developed partnerships with a variety of organisations/services that combined, can help to provide this integrated approach to cat management including:

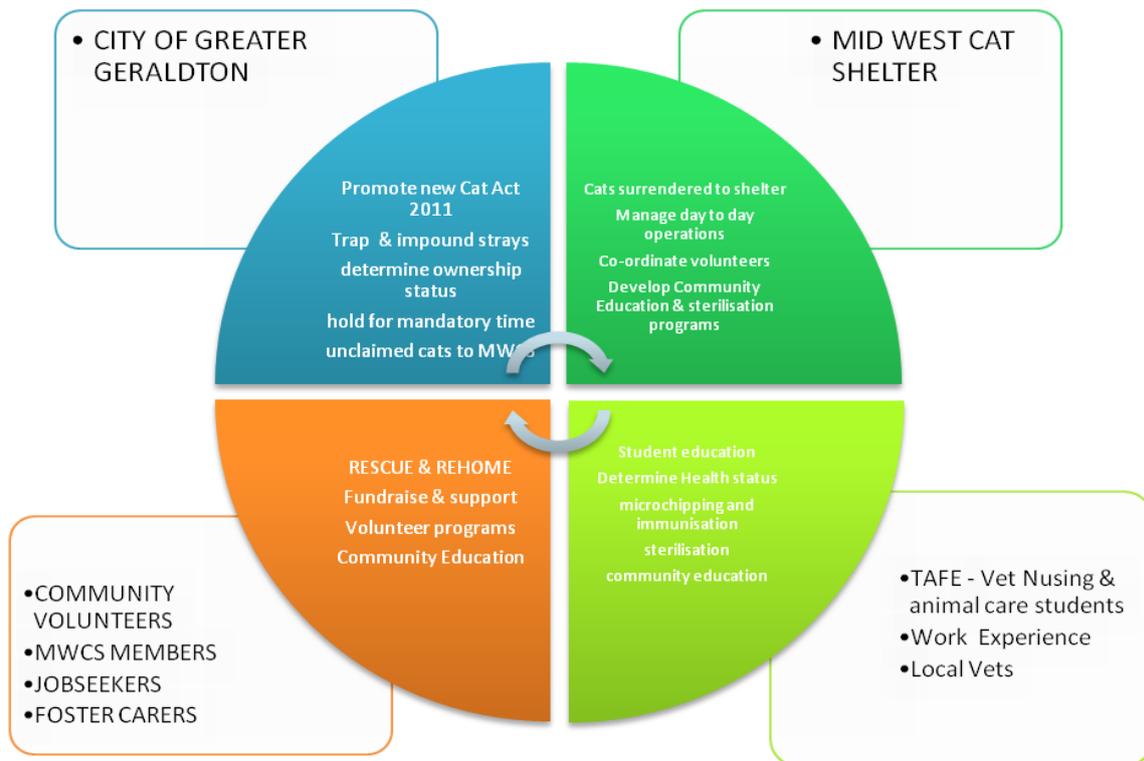
- Local Government
- Local Veterinarians
- Durack TAFE Veterinary Nursing & Animal Care departments
- Interested community members/volunteers
- Cat Alliance of Australia Inc, S.A.F.E , 9 Lives Cat Rescue and other rescue organisations within WA who have supported us and offered information & advice

Our intention is to work with individuals, local community groups, agencies and services, to get our responsible pet ownership message to the public, assist the community to meet the new cat laws while increasing awareness of cat welfare.

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## INTEGRATED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP MODEL



Our model has changed slightly from its original form. In earlier models, MWCS was hoping to win a contract with CGG to care for their impounded cats for the required 3 – 7 days, providing a regular income for the organisation and allowing us to have at least one paid employee. This however was not the outcome as CGG decided to employ staff to undertake this work. However even with these small changes the integrity of the model remains.

This integrated approach to cat management is working towards creating the following outcomes;

- sanction the known health benefits of pet ownership
- increase community awareness of Animal Welfare issues
- educate the community in responsible pet ownership
- increase community participation and volunteer rates, offer opportunities for work experience to TAFE students
- Increase sterilisation rates of owned and partially owned cats
- monitor and control 'street cat' populations
- help reduce the overall cost to the environment in lost wildlife by reducing the flow of abandoned cats to wilderness areas

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## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Association is made up of the Board of Management, Volunteers and Financial Members.



The Board of Management consists of eight members, including Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and four other members, two of which must be Animal Welfare Specialists. Furthermore all board members are encouraged to take on a portfolio of responsibility. These may vary according to need and stage of development of the organisation.

We have also recently established an advisory group made up of the founding board members, or 'Elders' of the organisation. This group has been named the 'Values Trust' and is entrusted with ensuring the organisation's objectives, as stated in the Constitution, as well as the Vision, Mission and Values, are upheld in the long term. Their recommendations are to be held in very high regard by the Board in their decision making.

Association membership is open to anyone prepared to uphold the Vision, Values and Mission of MWCS and interested in supporting animal welfare in the Mid West. Member volunteers are involved in all aspects of the organisation, including coordinating rescue and re-home, foster carers, marketing & fundraising, and are entitled to nominate as office holders, attend and vote at Special General and Annual General Meetings.

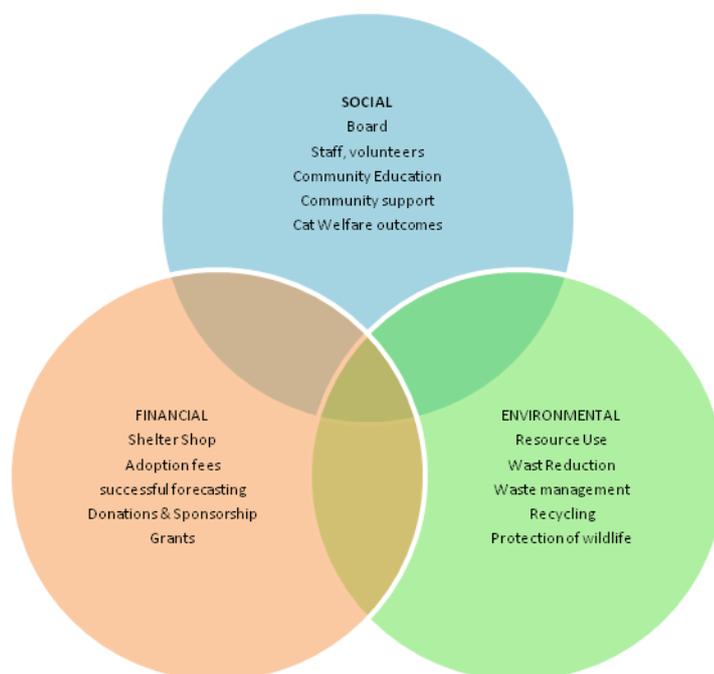
Volunteers from Durack's Veterinary Nursing and Animal Care courses join us under the auspice of another organisation therefore do not have membership rights unless they choose to become financial members.

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## SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ORGANISATION

MWCS has developed a Sustainability Plan that takes into account and is measured against the 'triple bottom line' of Social, Financial and Environmental objectives, which is accepted as current best practice for business.



### Economic Sustainability

While many Animal Welfare Groups around the world are largely dependent upon grants and donations, MWCS has planned a structure that decreases that dependence and allows the organisation to be more financially sustainable over the long term including;

- Adoption fees
- Membership fees
- Donations and sponsorships - Individual and corporate
- Future Shelter Shop – retailing essential cat products

### Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability has not been a high priority in this industry although more recently there have been some improvements in the availability of environmentally responsible pet litters using wheat or recycled paper. Sustainability will be considered when building the purpose built facility and aspects such as passive solar building principles of orientation, insulation and ventilation will be utilised where possible. The new facility will be well ventilated with large roller doors and

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ridge cap vents, making use of cooling westerly breezes and have the ability to be closed down completely to avoid cold wind in cooler months. This has the effect of minimising energy use for heating and cooling, as well as reducing the risk of disease.

The key areas of resource use for the shelter are food, litter, water and power.

Where possible, biodegradable litter will be used.

### Social Sustainability

Another important aspect of the organisation is our people. Succession Policies and guidelines have been developed and continue to be developed as the organisation grows that include board members and volunteers at all levels.

The key strategies for attracting and retaining our people include; their passion for cat welfare, ongoing support and up-skilling, acknowledging and celebrating achievements, providing educational opportunities and meaningful work for students and community members.

Our activities in the wider community will continue to include promoting and supporting responsible pet ownership, providing subsidised sterilisation, and increasing the capacity of low income earners to keep their pet cat safe and in good health.

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## MARKETING STRATEGY

MWCS has developed a marketing strategy which aims to meet the following objectives;

- Raise awareness of the organisation, within the wider community
- Promote the choice of an adopted cat over a pet shop or specific breed of cat
- Raise sterilisation rates of owned cats to over 90%

## Competitive Environment

Due to the Cat Act being implemented, pet shops will now be required to microchip and provide a sterilisation voucher for all cats/kittens sold. The only Pet Shop in the area has recently stopped 'selling' kittens, and has been accepting MWCS cats and kittens to re-home. Local vets sometimes have kittens for adoption in their clinics, but this is due to having no-where else to send them and not wanting to resort to euthanasia.

There are a few registered cat breeders in the area. Specific breed cats cost somewhere upward of \$400 before medical expenses (sterilisation, micro-chipping, immunisation) which are estimated at a further \$250 - \$300. Due to subsidised rates offered by our local vet, Sanford Veterinary Clinic, we can offer adoption including all necessary vet work to meet the legislation, for around \$150.

The Cat Act 2011 implemented as of November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 means it is now illegal to breed or keep an unsterilised cat unless a person is a registered breeder. This should help long term to reduce the number of backyard breeders and accidental matings, therefore reducing the number of kittens needing homes and improving the chances of adult cats of being re-homed.

## Key selling messages

- Cats make great companions and wonderful pets
- Rescued cat are lost and abandoned pets that need a loving home to go to
- Adult cats have already been sterilised, vaccinated, micro-chipped and house/toilet trained
- Kittens have been immunised, micro-chipped and includes sterilisation in the price once they reach the required age

## Branding

Logo – a distinct logo has been designed and is being used on all promotional material, Facebook site, web site, signage and documentation

Promotional Banner – has been designed and made for promotional events and activities

T shirts &/or Aprons for purchase by members and volunteers

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### Visibility

We have set up a Facebook page and web page. While the web page will include all the association information, membership forms, policies and contact details, the Facebook page will be used for regular updates and communication, publishing interesting articles and activities from around the country, photos of cats for adoption and discussions of relevant topics. Reciprocal arrangements are also in place with various rescue groups and animal interest groups around the state.

Attendance at local lions markets, G Fest 2013 and Mid West Pet Fair 2014.

Super Adoption Sunday – once a month.

An “available for adoption” board set up in Better Pets and Gardens store.

A letterbox drop has been undertaken to over 6000 households in the area, promoting our Sterilisation subsidy program, “De-sexin’ the kitty”

### Ongoing Promotion

Local paper - press releases and advertising has been, and will continue to be used, to promote activities, Cat of the Week and information about sterilisation subsidies

Word of mouth - Local vets, the RSPCA Inspector and volunteers share their knowledge of and experience of the shelter, to make the public aware of the facility and services, promote activities and events

Market days stall – Information and promotional material available to the public. Photos, details of cats for adoption, about the organisation, volunteering and membership (Annual)

Community events – such as Gfest, Goodness festival, Pet Fair – to promote all aspects of the organisation

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### SOURCE OF RESCUED CATS – Where do they come from?

Prior to the 1st of November 2013 we would accept cats from people who had 'found' them. We would advertise the cat on our Facebook page and on other local Facebook pages to try and locate an owner. If the cat was not claimed we would then try to re-home them.

In some cases people needing to re-home their cats for a variety of reasons would request that we take the cat. As we had limited foster carers, wherever possible we would assist a person to re-home their cats via advice and advertising on our Facebook page, rather than take the cat into care, overload foster carers and increase our costs. However once CGG opened their cat pound we no longer accepted cats directly from the public.

We now rescue directly from CGG Cat Management Facility or via our local RSPCA Inspector. The cats in the CMF are usually lost or abandoned cats and are often picked up or trapped by members of the public or CGG Rangers. Some of the cats have been surrendered to CGG Rangers.

Cats coming in through RSPCA have often come from situations where they have not been cared for properly, or removed due to a variety of circumstances.

### RESCUE/REHOME OUTCOMES

#### CAT RESCUE STATISTICS FY JULY 2013- JUNE 2014

	Rescued	Re-homed
July	2	1
August	2	1
September	2	3
October	26	5
November	34	3
December	55	29
January	48	39
February	42	25
March	25	31
April	25	33
May	21	21
June	12	15
Sub TOTALS	294	206
Cats still in Care as at 30/6/14		68
Euthanized		16
Deceased		4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>294</b>

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### Euthanasia

There have been 3 cases of FIV + cats that have been euthanized and 4 cases of FeLV +.

2 adult cats were considered not safe to re-home and were euthanized for aggressive behaviour.

Other cats were euthanized for various health reasons.

One FIV+ adult female, otherwise in good health, was not euthanized and was subsequently rehomed. All of her kittens tested, were clear of FIV.

### Sterilisation & Micro-chipping

In order to ensure all rescued cats meet the requirement of the Cat Act 2011, all rescued cats are either sterilised immediately or, if too young, they are provided with a sterilisation voucher to be used when they reach 6 months of age.

All rescued cats are now provided with a micro-chip voucher to be used by the new owner.

New owners sign an agreement to register their cat with City of Greater Geraldton, as required by law.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Membership

We currently have 64 members of which 58 are active volunteers. Volunteers include foster carers, shelter carers, co-ordinators, transportation, donation collection, board members, data entry, web and Facebook facilitators. These wonderful people have put in hundreds of unpaid hours, and are a highly valued resource to the organisation without whom, we could not continue to operate at our current level.

Memberships		
Single	Family	Concession
49	7	8

TAFE animal care and vet nursing student numbers are estimated between 6 and 10 at any one time. TAFE students are not counted in the membership figures as they are not financial members unless they personally choose to become members and be involved with the association outside of their TAFE role.

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<b>Volunteers</b>			
Foster Carers	Shelter Carers	Multiple Roles	Other
21	21	12	4

### Pro Bono Professional Services

Consisting of the development and hosting of a web page, design and production of our logo, written Business, Marketing and Strategic Plans, grant writing, photography, professional flyers, our members and supporters have been forthcoming and generous with professional support in the form of 'pro bono' hours.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

#### SUMMARY 30th June 2014

	c/fwd	\$ 135.00
<b>Income</b>		
	Membership	1,235.96
	Donations	1,776.90
	Adoptions	25,490.25
	Bank (interest)	57.42
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>28,560.53</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
	Veterinary	14,363.56
	Administration	1,255.68
	Equipment/consumables	2200.00
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17,819.24</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Profit/(loss)</b>	<b>\$ 10,876.29</b>

**Bank Account Balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

10,876.29  
0.00

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### Donations

Donations can be made via our PayPal account on our web site, cash donations collected in the donation tins, monthly direct deposits, and cash donations are paid directly to our Veterinary account. Other donations not accounted for in our financials are the public donations of cat food, cat litter, toys, towers, towels and blankets. Foster carers also provide food and litter for their foster cats.

### Membership fees

Our current membership fees now cover the insurances we require to operate, which means moneys received from adoptions go straight back to the cats.

### Adoption Fees

Adoption fees vary between \$100 for “Cat of the Week” and \$150 for other cats and kittens. Double adoptions also are discounted to \$250 for two. Special cases are assessed as they arise.

### Veterinary Fees

Without the Support and heavily discounted prices provided by Sanford Veterinary Clinic, this figure would be substantially higher and we would not be able to keep adoption fees this low. As the kittens are re-homed with a sterilisation voucher, there are still vouchers (costs to us) outstanding on last season’s kittens until around October.

### Sterilisation Subsidy

Not included in the above figures are the Grant Funds of \$31,500 received for ‘De-sexin’ the Kitty’.

Until June 30<sup>th</sup>, \$6600 in grant funds has been distributed in the form of sterilisation subsidies. The Sterilisation Subsidy is available until December 2014 with the possibility of extension if funds have not all been used. An Audit will be required at the completion of the project and allowance of \$1500 has been included in grant funds.

## FUTURE PLANS

The focus for the next 12 months will be to

- strengthen our new Board now that we have established Portfolios and areas of responsibility
- Support our volunteers to feel valued and heard
- Promote the objectives of the organisation further to the public in the Midwest
- Move toward building a permanent shelter facility to meet the needs of the organisation and the welfare of cats in the future

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