

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016



midwestcatshelter@gmail.com

www.midwestcatshelter.com

P.O Box 4016, Rangeway WA 6530

Phone: 0487 193 244

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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.

Address from the Chairperson

Well another year has passed and we have now been operating for three years. Of all the businesses started in Australia, only half make it past the first 3 years, so we are doing well. (yes essentially we are a business – just a ‘not for profit’ business)

We have reached 800 cats rescued from the pound and from inevitable euthanasia, and are continuing to re-home them successfully. All these beautiful animals would either be dead, or still roaming the streets creating the next generation of unwanted kittens. All of those rescued have been sterilised and a further (almost) 400 have been sterilised under our Sterilisation Subsidy program for low income earners. This program is now complete and all funds have been allocated. Unfortunately the government is not opening another round of funding.

We are continuing to nurture strong partnerships in our community including with our local Rangers, Tafe, GDR, RSPCA, our local vets and pet shops as well as other rescue groups in Perth. We have had reason to call on 9 Lives Cat Rescue in Perth when we had an overload of cats in the pound and no foster carers available to take them. A ‘mass exodus’ was organised and they were all shipped down to Perth to find their new homes via 9 Lives.

Place Road Pets are a great help, taking some of our cats and kittens so the public can meet them and of course adopt them.

A huge thank you to Suellen and the Tafe students who have largely taken on the pound runs and assessing the cats for their potential for adoption. And of course a huge thank you to Ali, Sam and the team at Sanford vets for their amazing contribution to the cause.

Probably the biggest change we have seen this financial year is the implementation of our new management system ‘Shelter Manager’. This is a cloud based system that manages all of our records and accounts. It has eliminated the need for paper records and does not make the mistakes that humans make. Furthermore it has allowed us to be much more accurate, accountable and transparent.

Along with putting nearly all of our adoption proceeds through Eftpos we have eliminated most situations where we may lose funds thru accident, human error or temptation.

As well as this year’s Financial Report, we have included, a revised Profit & Loss from the last financial year 2014 -2015. The reason for this is that in setting up the new ‘Shelter Manager’ system in late 2015, it became apparent that there were major discrepancies in our finances, that have resulted in charges being laid on an individual followed by a court case and conviction. We believe there is still an ongoing investigation into the remainder of

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the missing funds. We have included this information in the interest of complete disclosure and transparency.

But at the end of this financial year we are in a much healthier financial position than we have ever been. That, I put down to good financial management – thank you Annette and hard work - thank you to Nicole, Casey, Rebecca, and the marketing team that worked late into the night until their fingers were bare, making beautiful craft items to sell at the markets. The treasurer's report will give a clearer account of our current financial status.

Of course none of this would be possible without our dedicated volunteers and Foster carers who take in these beautiful, yet sometimes frustrating and sometimes heartbreaking, cats, love them and care for them, all the while being prepared to give them up when an adopting family comes along.

The following report includes some of our original models and diagrams relating to the purpose and structure of the organisation, with some adjustments as needed. Three years on it is still both exciting and satisfying to see those systems working and achieving the desired results .

Thank you all so very much for your contribution big or small, to make this happen.

Jodie Leigh

Founder and Acting Chair

Mid West Cat Shelter Inc.

Current state of Cat Welfare –

This hasn't changed significantly since the first annual report but for those who have not read that report it is repeated here:

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 and containment of owned cats and sterilisation and management of homeless or 'community' cats.

Current Legislation & Regulations that determine our operation

Legislation that relates to the industry includes the

- Animal Welfare Act 2002
- WA Cat Act 2011.

We are also governed by the

- Charities Act 2013
- Associations Incorporation Act 2016

For guidance we might refer to

- RSPCA have 'Codes of practice' for Shelters and

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- International Shelter Vets Association have a code of practice and standards for shelter facilities.

Purpose of the Organisation

Mid West Cat Shelter's main objectives continue to be

- to rescue and re-home lost, abandoned or mistreated cats,
- educate the community,
- support and promote responsible pet ownership and
- increase overall sterilisation rates in the region.

Community Partnerships

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

- Local Government Rangers department
- Sanford Veterinary clinic
- Durack TAFE Veterinary Nursing & Animal Care departments
- Place Road Pets
- RSPCA
- Geraldton Dog rescue
- S.A.F.E , 9 Lives Cat Rescue and other rescue organisations within WA

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- community members/volunteers
- many local business that allow us to have our donation tins on their front counters

Our Partnership Model

Our model has changed little from its original form, however even with some minor changes the integrity of the model remains and is functioning well and achieving the desired results.

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.

Environmental Sustainability

By sterilising and encouraging containment of owned cats we reduce the overall impact of cats on the environment including local wildlife

Social Sustainability

An important aspect of the organisation is our people, without whom there is no activity or results. Our volunteers and partnerships are key to the success of the organisation.

Succession Policies and guidelines have been developed and continue to be developed as the organisation grows.

Economic Sustainability

Our finances are looking healthier than they ever have been, and while we are relying on foster carers to house our rescued cats the cost of caring for them is low and sustainable.

MARKETING STRATEGY

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

- Raise awareness of the organisation, within the wider community

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- 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%

Key selling messages

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

Visibility

We have a Facebook page and web page.

While the web page includes all the association information, membership forms, policies and contact details, the Facebook page is used for regular updates and communication.

In 2015 our Marketing team had regular Sunday morning stall at the Railway Markets.

We attended and had an information stall at the Mid West Pet Fair 2016.

We have had one Super Adoption Saturday in 2016 – which was an amazing success

An “available for adoption” board is back in City Farmers store at the homemaker centre.

Ongoing Promotion

Local paper - press releases and advertising has been and will continue to be used to promote activities,

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

Community events such as Mid West Pet Fair – to promote all aspects of the organisation

RESCUE/REHOME OUTCOMES

We mainly 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.

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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.

Occasionally cats/kittens are abandoned at one of the local vets.

CAT RESCUE STATISTICS FY JULY 2015- JUNE 2016

Rescued	395
Adopted	371
Cats still in Care as at 30/6/16	23
Euthanized	32
Deceased	2

Sterilisation & Microchipping

In order to ensure all rescued cats meet the requirement of the Cat Act 2011, all rescued adult cats are sterilised immediately. Female kittens are sterilised at 12 weeks. Male kittens are provided with a sterilisation voucher.

All rescued cats are now micro-chipped and the adopting family need to transfer the details.

New owners sign an agreement to register their cat with City of Greater Geraldton as required by law. CGG are forwarded details of adoptions so that they can follow up registrations.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Membership

We currently have 26 members of which all are active volunteers. Volunteers include foster carers, shelter carers, co-ordinators, transportation, donation collection, board members, 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.

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.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES – where does the money come from

Donations

Donations can be made via our PayPal account on our web site, cash donations collected in the donation tins, monthly direct debits, 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

Membership fees are an important part of our income and help to cover our required insurances.

Adoption Fees

Adoption fees vary from \$100 for “Cat of the Week” \$150 for adult cats and \$200 for kittens. Double adoptions are discounted accordingly

Where does it go?

The largest portion of our expenses is in veterinary work, this year around \$ 15,500 with a further \$5000 in other expenses, including telephone, insurances, food, postage, stationary and advertising. More details in the financial report.

How do we manage it?

We have introduced a new accounting and management system called Shelter Manager. It is a cloud based system that can be accessed from any computer therefore we can have key people using and entering data remotely. It has been set up to manage adoptions, vaccination reminders and key dates, as well as manage all financial data, email receipts and various reports .

Shelter manager has made a significant difference to our capacity to manage data and be accountable and transparent.

We now promote Eftpos as our preferred method of payment, so our volunteers are not carrying large amounts of cash with them. It is also convenient for most people so very few are still paying in cash.

Financial report attached.

Sterilisation Subsidy - completed

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Grant Funds of \$31,500 were received in January 2014.

All grant funds have now been distributed in the form of sterilisation subsidies for low income earners in the Midwest region. An amount of \$1500 was included in grant funds to allow for audit fees.

An audit of the project was completed in November 2015 and excess audit funds have been redistributed back to our account.

The Treasurers Report is attached and forms part of this Report

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

Facility

Part of our original plan was to eventually build a shelter facility. This has not changed but it is still some years into the future. Geraldton City Council will be building their new Animal Management Facility in the coming financial year but we have not been offered any land to build our facility. City council suggested we could talk to Geraldton Dog rescue to share their allocated lot, but at only 1400 square meters this is not very practical. Nor will it allow us to apply for grant funds to build with as we wouldn't have any security.

We will continue to communicate with CGG in a timely manner and when we are in a position to consider developing a facility, follow up with a request for the a long term lease on of a plot of land, so that we can apply for grant funding to build. We would need the security of at least a ten year lease for an application to be considered. We will also need to be able to demonstrate that we will be financially viable and can support the operational costs of the facility once built.