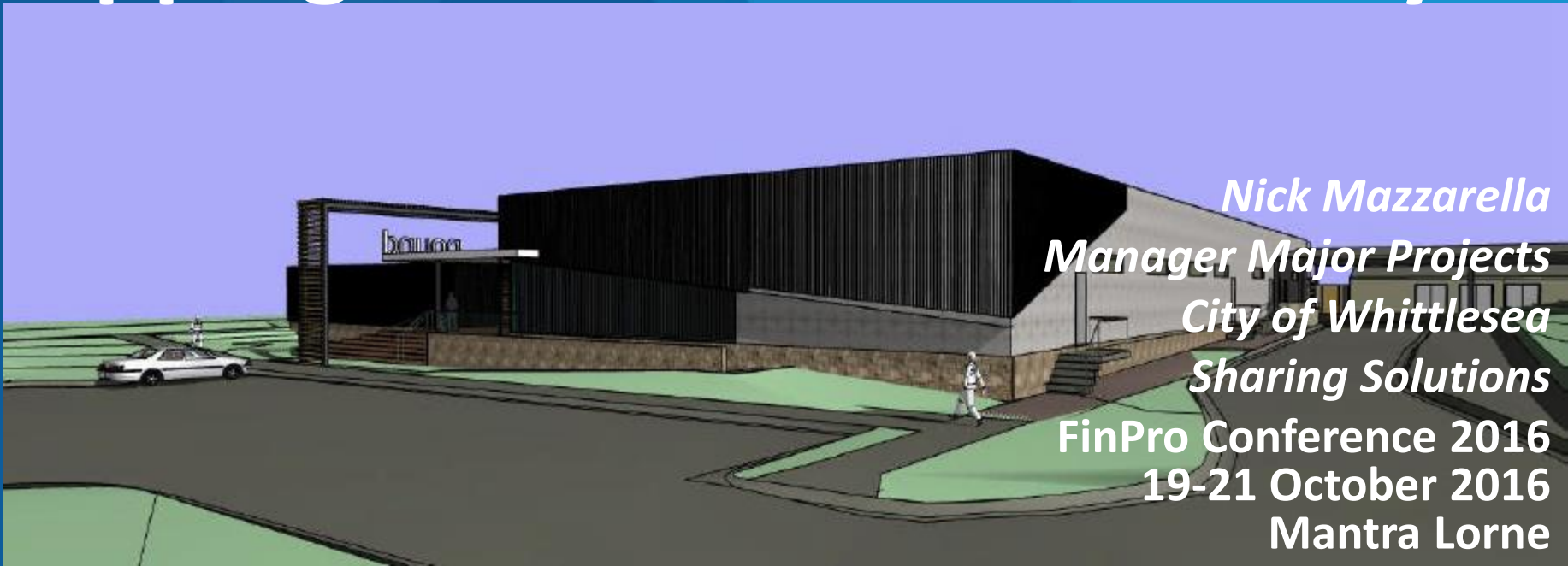


How much is that doggy in the window?

Shared Services / Facilities- Epping Animal Welfare Facility



*Nick Mazarella
Manager Major Projects
City of Whittlesea
Sharing Solutions
FinPro Conference 2016
19-21 October 2016
Mantra Lorne*

Purpose of domestic animals?

- Companionship
- Support
- Health & social benefits of pet ownership
- Responsible pet ownership (education)
- Competition
- Sport
- Recreation & leisure
- Business
- Food



Type of Animals

- Companion Animals
 - Dogs (39% of households*)
 - Cats (29% of households*)
 - Puppies / Kittens < 16 weeks
 - Small Animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, etc)
- Livestock
- Excludes Wildlife

* Pet Ownership in Australia, 2013

Legislative Requirements

- Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)
- Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)
 - Obligation for councils to provide a range of animal management and welfare services
 - Code of Practice for the Operation of Shelters and Pounds, June 2011 (Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources)
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1993 (Vic)
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (Vic)
- General Municipal Laws

Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)

- Councils have a legislative responsibility to manage stray, abandoned and unwanted animals within the municipality.
- An animal pound is provided primarily for enforcement, while the shelter serves as an animal welfare facility.
- Prepare Domestic Animal Management Plan every 4 years.

Code of Practice 2011

- **Minimum standards** of occupation, management, handling, treatment, transport & care for physical & behavioural needs of dogs & cats
- **Quarantine** – all animals vaccinated and serve up to the statutory 8 days quarantine before rehoming
- **Isolation** – for animals suspected of having infectious diseases
- **Animal housing** – natural light, fire protection, ventilation & fresh air, 15 – 27 degrees C in enclosed areas, backup & alarm system.
- **Surrendered & seized** animals
- **Transition period** for rehoming or euthanasation
- **Rehoming** – all animals microchipped, wormed, desexed and vaccinated. 7 day guarantee. 75% refund within 3 days for any other reason
- **Enrichment** – exercise, play, grooming, socialisation (daily for long term animals)
- **Inspection & Cleaning** – at least once per day
- **Education** – Responsive Pet Ownership
- **Staff** health provisions
- **Record management**

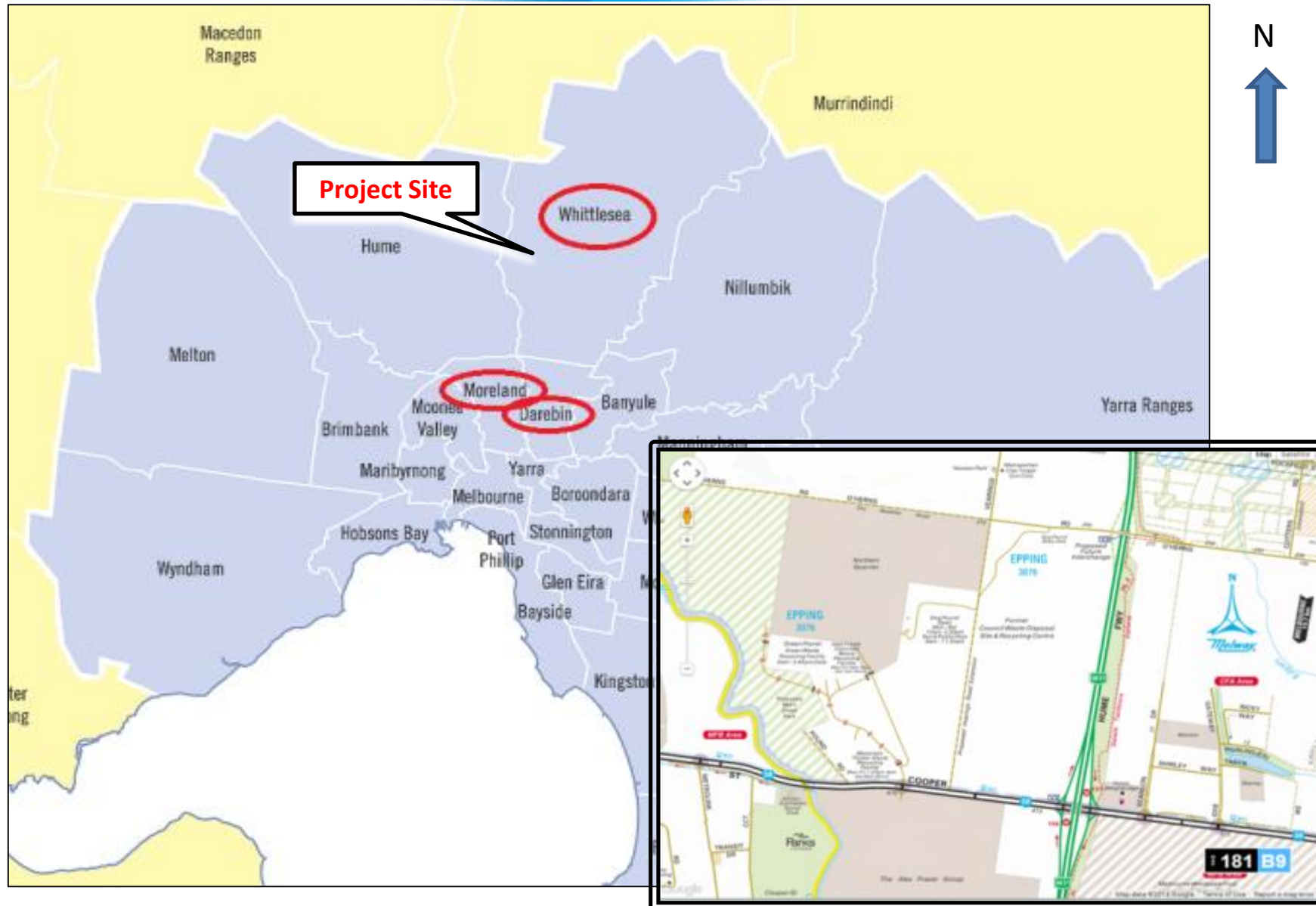


- Animal Shelter:
 - an establishment that takes in and cares for lost, injured, stray or unowned dogs and cats.
 - most commonly owned and managed by animal welfare organisations (eg RSPCA, Cat Protection Society, The Lost Dogs' Home, Lort Smith Animal Hospital and Animal Aid Victoria).
- Pound:
 - an establishment that impounds and cares for lost, injured, stray and unowned dogs and cats.
 - either operated by councils or by a contractor on behalf of council

Project Objectives

- Provide a new Regional Animal Welfare Facility that will:
 - cater for animal management services for Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland
 - employ modern practices for effective disease management
 - enable a high quality of animal care
 - be easily accessible by the community
 - meet the requirements of the '*Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds*' (2011);
 - increase reclaims and adoption of animals and minimise euthanasia rates;
 - be cost effective;
 - employ a high level of sustainability measures in the design, construction and operation of the new facility.
 - meet community expectations

Regional Partnership



Existing Situation

- Whittlesea:
 - Existing Pound & Shelter in Epping inadequate & poor access
 - Service contracted to RSPCA - Burwood
 - Returned collections in-house in 2016
 - Fees increased from \$138K to \$400K p.a. in last 12 months
- Darebin:
 - Day holding facility – Reservoir (6 Dog kennels & 9 Cat cages) inadequate & residential interface issues
 - Service contracted to Lost Dogs Home (including after hours collection) – North Melbourne
 - Collection during business hours – council staff
- Moreland:
 - No facility
 - Service contracted to Lost Dogs Home (including after hours collection) – North Melbourne
 - Collection during business hours – council staff

- Service Delivery Options
- Market Analysis / Benchmarking
- Demand Analysis / Forecast
- Spatial Requirements
- Layout Plan
- Shared Services Agreement / Legal Framework
- Funding
- Project Governance

Service Delivery Options

OPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Option 1 – Outsource Pound, Shelter & Collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditionally high level of service for relatively low cost. Low level of council staff involvement. Operators are well renowned NFPs that specialise in animal services. Operators have network of shelters to manage overflow periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NFP Operators rely on donations and volunteers. No operational skills transfer to councils. Limited market operators affects competitive pricing.
Option 2 -Outsource Pound & Shelter. In-house Collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council staff have some experience with collections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of additional staff. Purchase of vehicles and specialist equipment.
Option 3 – In-house Pound & Shelter. Outsource Collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council gain of additional animal management expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of volunteer assistance that NFPs have.
Option 4 – In-house Pound & Shelter. Outsource Collections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Option 1 & 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of network of shelters to manage overflow periods. Council has greater exposure to animal activists lobby groups. Potential lack of alignment of council operational requirements. Productivity will be loss

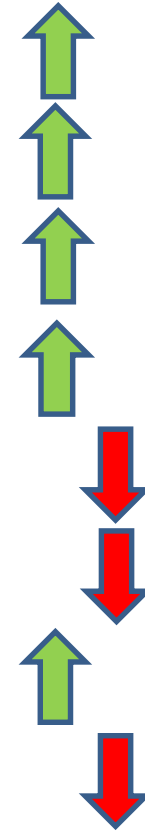
Multi-Criteria Analysis

Options Evaluation Criteria Category	Weighting of Importance (%)
1. Facility satisfies council's operational / service requirements (Provide a modern standard of office and workspace amenity that satisfies Council's operational and service model requirements)	25%
2. Economic Impacts (Capital and recurrent cost of facility provision; cost effective use of council resources, economic benefit)	35%
3. Social / Community Impacts and Benefits (Facility easily and safely accessed by residents and other users)	15%
4. Regulatory / Strategic Policy compliance (Facility that is compliant with the ' <i>Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds</i> ' (2011); Council Domestic Animal Management Plan, Community Plan)	25%
Total	100%

- RSPCA:
 - Australia's longest serving animal welfare organisation
 - 130,000 animals each year in Australia in 40 shelters (2013/14)
 - 28,000 animals each year in Victoria in 11 shelters (2013/14)
- Lost Dogs Home:
 - Largest provider of animal services in Victoria
 - Australia's largest shelter
 - 30,000 Dogs & Cats each year in Victoria
- Geelong Animal Pound:
 - Operated by Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS)
 - 6,000 animals each year (2013/14)
 - Resettle 90% Dogs & 70% Cats

- Benchmark against best practice models:
 - Nillumbik
 - Hanrob Tullamarine
 - Brisbane Kennels
 - Stonington Animal Shelter (includes Boroondara)

- Demand drivers to establish capacity:
 - Demographic change (where)
 - Population trends (who)
 - Pet ownership rates (how many)
 - Registration trends (how much)
 - Animal impoundment rates
 - Ferrel population control
 - Rehoming rate
 - Euthanasia rate



Forecast Assumptions

- Dogs:
 - Pound period of 8 days
 - Shelter period of 18 days
 - Reclaim rate of 50% & Rehome rate of 40%
 - Euthanasia Rate of 10%
- Cats:
 - Pound period of 8 days
 - Shelter period of 28 days
 - Reclaim Rate of 50% & Rehome rate of 40%
 - Euthanasia Rate of 10%

Dog – *Canis Lupis*

No. Pens

- 2014 – 47 No.
- 2021 – 69 No.
- 2026 – 113 No.



Cat – *Felis Catis*

No. Pens

- 2014 – 79 No.
- 2021 – 94 No.
- 2026 – 150 No.



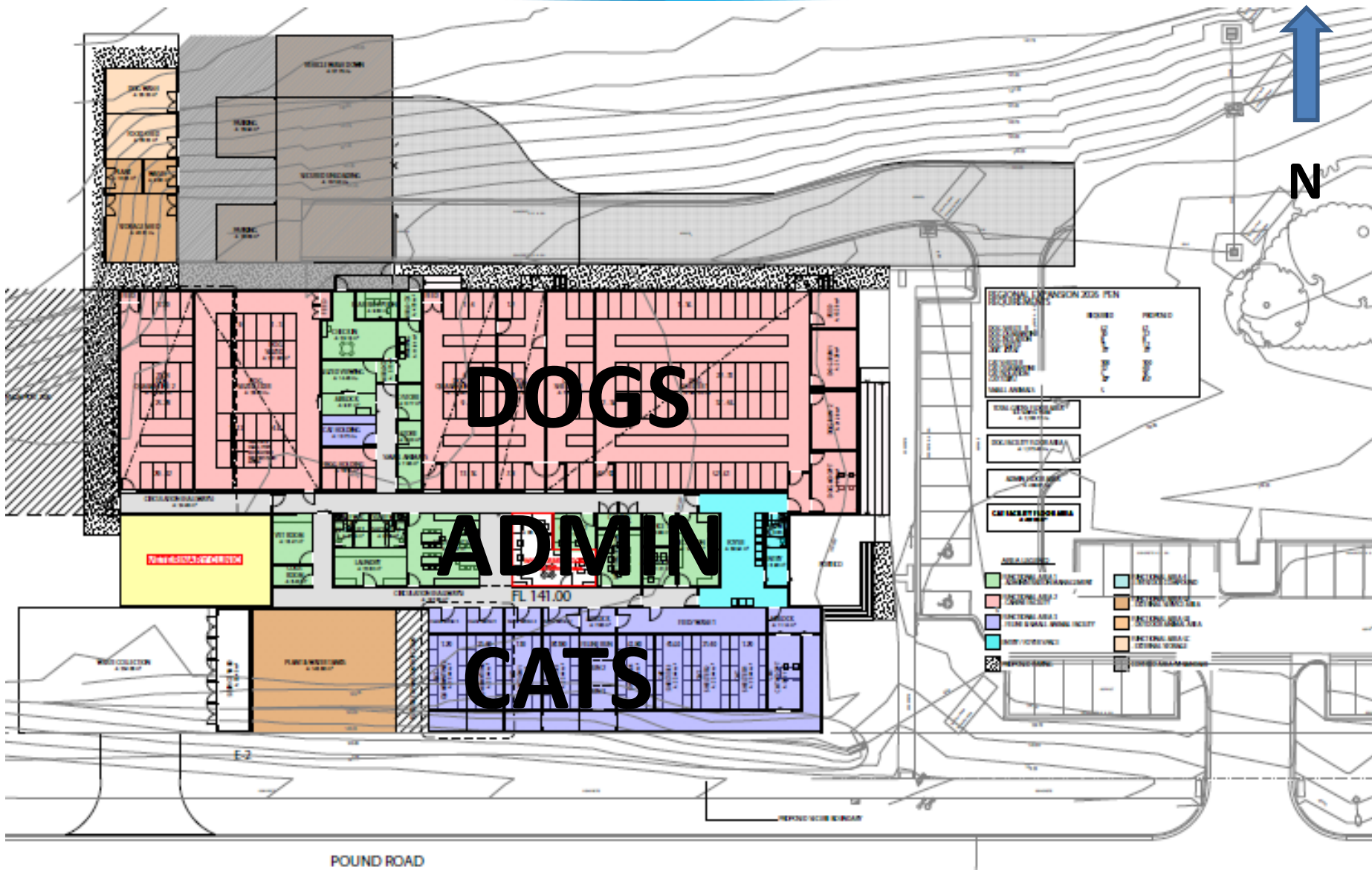
Livestock Compound



Spatial Requirements

- Building (2,250 sqm):
 - Admin area – 200 sqm (integrated facility)
 - Storage – 30 sqm (integrated facility)
 - 20% allowance for post 2026 growth
 - 25% allowance for value-added services (vet, retail, additional offices, etc)
- Outdoor:
 - Fenced Dog exercise area – 50 sqm (integrated facility)
 - Fenced Cat exercise area – 20 sqm (integrated facility)
 - Dog exercise track – 700 sqm (integrated facility)
 - Service yard / unloading area – 140 sqm (integrated facility)
 - Car parking – 40 spaces (integrated facility).

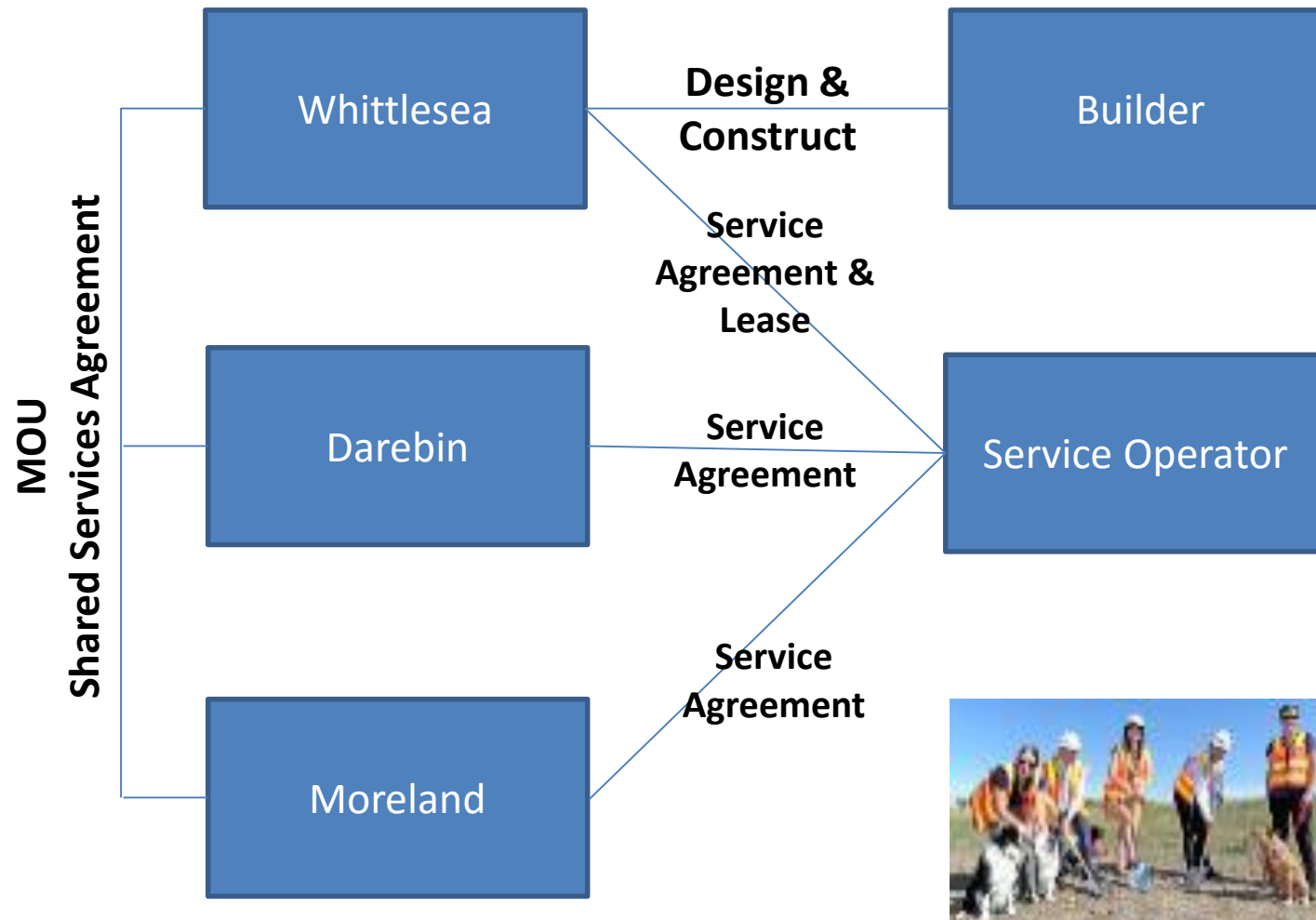
Layout Plan



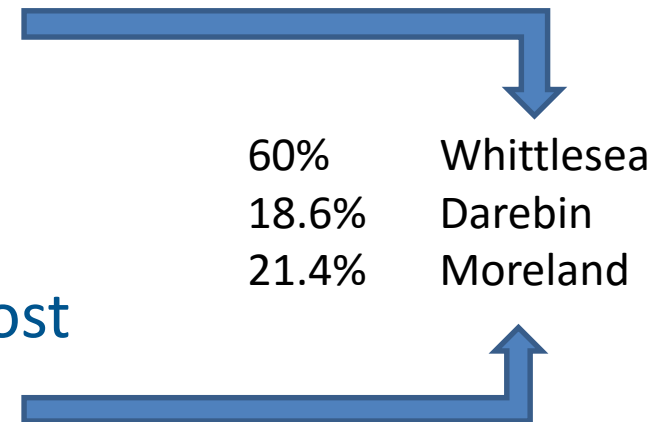
Shared Services Agreement

- 2014 - MOU signed by Whittlesea, Darebin & Moreland
- 2015 - Shared Services Agreement executed
- 2016 - Design & Construction Contract awarded by Whittlesea
- 2017
 - Service Operation Contract to be awarded by Whittlesea, Darebin & Moreland (10 + 5 + 5 years)
 - Lease of land & buildings to be executed between Whittlesea & common Service Provider (10 + 5 + 5 years)
- Disclosure agreement!

Legal Frameworks



- Total Project Capital Cost - \$13.36M
 - Public Realm \$2.30M
 - Building Works \$11.06M
- Operating Costs
 - Maintenance – 2% of Building Cost
 - Land Rental – ROI on \$4M
- Service Costs
 - Subject to Tender
 - Apportioned on utilisation



Project Governance

- Project Board (Sponsor & Delivery Executive)
- Project Control Group (Management Representatives)
- Project Working Group – representatives from:
 - Governance Department (Local Laws Unit) - Sponsor
 - Major Projects Department – Delivery Management & ESD advice
 - Business Improvement Department – Service Planning
 - Infrastructure Department – Facilities Maintenance & Waste Management
 - Development Assessment Department – Planning Permit
 - Strategic Planning – Urban Design advice
 - Parks & Open Space Department – surrounding reserve
 - Valuations & Property Department – Lease development
 - Finance Department – financial analysis
 - Procurement Unit – tendering
 - Engineering & Transport – construction of road and car park
 - Civic Administration – Council reporting
 - Building Department (pre-application only)
 - Communications Department (communications plan)

Benefits

- Financial:
 - Economies of scale / cost efficiencies (up to 40%)
 - Reduced capital investment
 - Shared operational cost
- Economic Benefit:
 - Short term – 59 jobs FTE (construction) with a total economic impact of \$17.5M to local region
 - Long term – 16 jobs FTE with a long term economic impact of \$2M to local region
- Community / Social:
 - Cater for future demand
 - Improved access
 - Improved animal health
 - Responsible pet ownership (education)
 - Decrease in euthanasia rates (increase in capacity & holding period)
- Environment:
 - Reduced feral and nuisance dogs and cats
 - Reduced travel times
 - High level of Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) of facility

- Modular / Scalable Facility (future expansion)
- Landfill Site (Methane Gas Barrier & Extraction)
- Vacuum Ducted System (reduced labour cost)
- Prefabricated Steel Kennels (ex US)
- Security Controls / Management
- Acoustic treatments
- Financial Modelling - apportioned on utilisation
- ESD:
 - Passive Solar Design
 - 23kW Solar PV (90 panels)
 - Rainwater tanks
 - Fresh air ventilation

Opportunities

- Value-added services:
 - Veterinary Services
 - Merchandising
 - Council Animal Management Officers co-located
- Future clustering of services:
 - Grooming
 - Community Vet Clinic
 - Dog training / animal care education
 - Animal boarding / kennel
 - Funerals / memorials
 - Pet supplies



“No Kill” Lobby

- “No Kill” – Best Practice:
 - 90% Resettled
 - 10% dangerous breeds, sick, injured, aggressive or ferrel
- Animal Welfare Lobby:
 - Reduce euthanasia
 - 22% of dogs and 40% of cats are euthanasia (RSVP national stats)
 - Maneki Nero Cat Rescue
 - Darebin Domestic Animal Management Reference Group
 - Getting Towards Zero Program
 - German Shepherd Rescue Victoria Inc
 - The Animal Rehoming Service
 - Pound Reform Alliance Australia Inc
 - Save Darebin Pets
 - Paws of Love Animal Rescue
- Ethics committee?
 - Consider policy issues such as euthanasia (ie similar to Lort Smith Animal Hospital)



DAREBIN

PRESTON LEADER

28/1/14

Pet deaths cause concern

Julia Irwin

ANIMAL WELFARE LOBBY URGES COUNCIL TO START SHELTER

ANIMAL welfare groups have slammed Darebin Council for renewing its contract with the Lost Dogs' Home, saying the decision will unnecessarily condemn pets to death.

Kathleen Chapman from local lobby group Save Our Pets, one of a host of residents to contact the *Leader*, called on the council to establish its own shelter.

She said Darebin's decision to use the Lost Dogs'

Home for three more years was a backward step in reducing kill rates.

Last year Darebin Council pledged to reduce the number of cats and dogs put to death within four years and Ms Chapman said if Darebin ran its own pound in partnership with rescue groups, the community would take more responsibility for saving healthy pets from an untimely death.

According to council records, 85 per cent of cats and 16 per cent of dogs from Darebin impounded at the Lost Dogs Home were euthanised in 2012, the most recent figures available.

Lost Dogs' Home spokeswoman Kate Hoelter did not dispute the percentages, but defended practises at the shelter, which has contracts with 20 councils in metropolitan Melbourne. She said

the service shared Darebin's goal in striving for lower euthanasia rates, but also considered the implications adopting unsuitable pets in the community could have.

"Unlike many animal welfare organisations that promote the 'no-kill' message, we are an open-door shelter – meaning we take in every animal that comes to us," Ms Hoelter said. "This means we (can) receive extremely

aggressive dogs that cannot be rehomed."

She said most cats from Darebin were feral or wild and could not be rehomed (about 900 cats from Darebin were euthanised in 2012).

Deputy Mayor Julie Williams said the Lost Dogs' Home won the tender because it was 100 per cent compliant with Darebin's animal-management policy.

Under the contract, the

Lost Dogs' Home will add an extra 24-48 hours to the eight-day statutory holding period so rescue groups can rehouse animals.

The council also plans to hold a pet expo, discounted microchipping and a registration amnesty as well as continuing with its Facebook page aimed at linking lost pets with owners.

Greens Cr Trent McCarthy said he would push the council to investigate starting its own shelter.

Letters, p13.

COUNCIL TIP-OFFS SAVE PETS

DAREBIN

Community animal rescue groups in the northern suburbs are receiving tip-offs from Darebin council staff to help them claim dogs and cats from council pounds that might otherwise be euthanised. The tips given by staff relate to animals scheduled to be put down due to poor health or bad behaviour.

The North Melbourne Lost Dogs Home, which is used by the council to deal with strays in the municipality, has a policy of euthanising animals that cannot be rehomed due to illness or retrained as a suitable pet.

Noah's Bark Dog Rescue president Matt Aitken said his small team of volunteers was in regular contact with council staff to organise pick-ups of animals.

"Most times we will take the animals; it's often medical issues that are certainly treatable," he said.

Mr Aitken added there was no reason the home couldn't rehabilitate the animals in question. "They're putting animals down that they don't need to."

Spokeswoman for the Lost Dogs Home Kate Hoelter told *TWR* that its staff worked in co-operation with council staff to discuss the suitability of animals being transferred to rescue groups.



The home came under fire last year after *TWR* revealed the kill rate of animals in its care was up to 30 per cent higher than similar operations, including the RSPCA.

Darebin renewed its contract with the home in December, just five months after the council announced it would aim to drastically reduce the number of dogs and cats euthanised at its animal shelters and was aiming to become a "no-kill" municipality.

In February, councillors voted to investigate the option of opening a council-run facility.

ALANA SCHETZER

DAREBIN

Call for councils to get behind 'no kill' animal pound

Preston Leader 6/5/14

Julia Irwin

DAREBIN Council is calling on neighbouring councils to collaborate in establishing a local, "no kill" animal shelter as an alternative to the Lost Dogs' Home.

Darebin Mayor Gaetano

Greco also agreed to write to mayors and councillors in neighbouring municipalities to invite them to participate and invest in the proposal.

Rucker Ward Greens councillor Trent McCarthy said Moreland Council had

already indicated it would back the plan.

The council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-17 aims to reduce the number of dogs and cats killed by 10 per cent and 50 per cent respectively within four years.

Cr McCarthy said that Darebin had already made a significant impact on reducing the kill rate through its third-chance initiative, saving more than 100 pets since the council began making lost and stray pets that otherwise might be eutha-

nised available to rescue groups.

The council has also set up a lost pets Facebook page.

Pet foster carer Sam Johnson, who is looking after staffy cross Quincy - rescued by rescue group Unforgettable Creatures via the

third-chance program - said this was the best way for his student household to have a pet without the long-term commitment.

Should Darebin set up its own animal shelter? Email preston@leadernewspapers.com.au

PET RESCUERS COUNT COST OF SAVING LIVES

ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal lobbyists are calling on Darebin Council to help fund pet rescue groups that save cats and dogs from death row.

The council revealed euthanasia rates among cats and dogs had "reduced considerably" in the past six months, following its decision to start releasing unwanted or lost pets to rescue organisations from the beginning of the year.

The council impounded 359 dogs and 379 cats, with 18 dogs and 128 cats sent to rescue organisations and 13 dogs and 97 cats euthanised between January and June 2.

The kill rate for the six-month period was 4 per cent for dogs and 26 per cent for cats; the rates for the year 2012-13 were

16 per cent and 85 per cent respectively.

Twenty-two rescue organisations currently work with the council under the new agreement outlined in Darebin's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-17, but resident action group Save Darebin Pets said financial support was needed to help foot the costs of caring for salvaged cats and dogs.

Save Darebin Pets member Kathleen Chapman has called on the council to provide a subsidy towards the costs of vaccinating, microchipping, desexing and providing flea and worm treatments to the animals, which equates to \$50 dog and \$30 a cat.

"At any given time there will be groups that can't take animals in because they haven't got the funding," Ms Chapman said.

The group's request for money to be

allocated in the council's 2014-15 budget was denied, because the council said funding would need to be considered through its Community Support Program, which provides grants of up to \$6000.

Darebin Council's assets and business services director Steve Hamilton said kill rates had reduced considerably as a result of the rescue organisations, the Lost Dogs Home and the council working together. He said three of the registered rescue organisations had received \$3250 combined through the Community Support Program so far.

At a meeting on July 7, the council voted to look into creating a potentially cost-neutral program to reimburse costs incurred by pet rescue organisations working in partnership with the council. **LISA HIGGINSON**

JULY 16, 2014 \ THE WEEKLY REVIEW 7



Maneki Neko Cat Rescue founder Samantha McKernan.

Picture: STUART PELLIGAN

Pet rescues urge council to ease cost

DOG AND CAT LIVES AT RISK

Julia Irwin

KILL rates will soar unless Darebin Council provides cash to animal rescue organisations to continue helping pets on death row, say local groups.

Save Darebin Pets spokeswoman Kathleen Chapman said rescue groups had saved more than 300 unclaimed impounded cats, dogs and rabbits during the past year, but the not-for-profit organisations could no longer meet demand in Darebin without funding.

Last year, the council voted to move towards a "no kill" model in its 2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan, setting new targets of saving 90 per cent of unclaimed impounded dogs and 60 per cent of cats.

Under the previous plan, about 90 per cent of cats and 60 per cent of dogs were euthanised.

Ms Chapman said while Darebin's decision to make surrendered or unclaimed pets available to rescue groups saved hundreds of animals' lives, this was unsustainable without cash.

"These not-for-profit animal rescue groups are working tirelessly to save the lives of animals from Darebin who would otherwise be killed by the council's pound contractor," Ms Chapman said.

"Council should stop exploiting these volunteer-run rescue groups and provide them with funding for their vitally important work they are doing in saving our community's animals."

rejected Save Darebin Pets' 2014-15 budget submission for \$30 per rescued cat and \$60 per dog.

The group recently called for a report into alternative ways of funding animal rescue, which the council is expected to consider later in October.

Founder Samantha McKernan said Maneki Neko Cat Rescue group had saved and rehoused 54 cats and kittens in the past year, but had put further rescues on hold due to funding pressure.

"We are pleased to support the council's move towards a no-kill model of animal management, but without council providing some funding assistance, we simply cannot continue to bear the costs of rescuing so many of the municipality's animals," Ms McKernan said.

"About 60 per cent of the cats we get need to be desexed and microchipped and to have de-fleaing and worming treatments, which adds up to about \$200."

Forever Friends Animal Rescue president Saskia Adams said the group saved 70 cats and nine dogs.

"We have built up a network of local foster carers dedicated to saving lives, but without ongoing funding to subsidise vet work, we will struggle to cope with the upcoming kitten season," she said.

Darebin Council's acting assets and business services director Chris Meulblok said he could not comment on the issue as a report would be considered by council this month.

14 NEWS

Uproar for pets

Home in euthanasia row

ELISSA DOHERTY

A WIDOW'S beloved pet, Fonzie, was put down by The Lost Dogs' Home a day after a call was made to claim him.

The mix-up occurred as the shelter fights a social media backlash over the rate at which it euthanises cats and dogs.

Existing and former staff say it does not try hard enough to rehome healthy animals.

Fonzie had been missing since January 2, after fleeing his home during a storm.

Nadia found her grandmother's two-year-old Pomeranian cross on a council website on January 11 and rang the North Melbourne shelter an hour before it closed, fearing he may have been put down. She said she was told, "There are lots of Pomeranian crosses in here. You need to come in".

Nadia said she arrived at the shelter from Frankston the next day, but after three hours



Beloved pet Fonzie

was told the dog had been euthanised that morning.

"I know we came in after the (eight-day) legal time they can keep them, but he would still be alive if they had taken the time to help me properly when I rang," Nadia said. "Grandma was very, very upset. We gave her the dog to cope with the loss of her husband, and I was crying in front of all the staff."

The shelter said Fonzie had been neither microchipped nor tagged so staff could not identify or contact his owners.

elissa.doherty@news.com.au
Twitter: @ElissaDoherty

'TOO MANY' KITTENS KILLED

EXCLUSIVE

LOST DOGS HOME

The Lost Dogs Home euthanised more than 90 per cent of kittens it received from the streets of Moreland in a six-month period last year.

According to figures obtained exclusively by TWR, the animal shelter put down 94 per cent of kittens and 72 per cent of cats picked up in Moreland between July and December.

In October, all nine kittens that came to the Lost Dogs Home were euthanised.

A total of 185 cats and 37 kittens were picked up in Moreland in the past six months. In September, the shelter received 43 cats from Moreland, 34 were put down.

All dogs and cats found in Moreland are taken to the Lost Dogs Home, which has been under fire over its euthanasia rate.

In June last year, Moreland requested the Lost Dogs Home provide monthly statistics on the number of animals picked up, euthanised, adopted and reclaimed in the municipality.

Moreland mayor Meghan Hopper said it was "very disappointing" such a high number of cats had been put down and that she was "sure" more kittens could be adopted.

"The majority of cats are not finding their home again once they are lost, and they are not getting re-homed. It's a terribly sad thing to see that so many kittens are getting euthanised," Cr Hopper said.

Responsibility should not be entirely with the Lost Dogs Home, she said.

"I don't think the blame can be put solely on the animal management service," she said.

"It does go back to responsible pet ownership, which includes making sure cats are registered and de-sexed so they can be returned home if they become lost."

A total of 270 dogs were picked up in the six-month period; 213 were reclaimed and 21 were euthanised.

The council plans to use the Lost Dogs Home figures to identify whether a regional animal shelter can be established with neighbouring councils.

A Moreland spokesman said the council is working with Darebin Council to undertake a feasibility study into a local animal shelter. He said the council expected to appoint a consultant to undertake this study by February. The study was expected to take two months.

Lost Dogs Home spokeswoman Kate Hoeltes said the North Melbourne shelter takes in a number of feral cats trapped in Moreland, which would account for a large percentage of the euthanasia rate for cats and kittens.

"Overall at our shelter reclaim rate for cats is 7 per cent compared to 70 per cent for dogs, which is indicative of how the community value cats as pets and the number of 'wild ownerless cats we receive,'" she said.

"It has been a long-term strategy of the home to put in place initiatives that have increased our reclaim and adoption numbers, thereby reducing euthanasia and increasing our live-outcome rate."

The state government launched a formal investigation into the Lost Dogs Home last month.

VIRGINIA MILLEN

www.moreland.vic.gov.au

"IT'S A
TERRIBLY
SAD THING
TO SEE"



NUMBER OF CATS EUTHANISED IN MORELAND

21	29	34	20	14	17
JUL 2014	AUG 2014	SEPT 2014	OCT 2014	NOV 2014	DEC 2014

Animal shelter sackings

TOM MINEAR

TWO senior staff at The Lost Dogs' Home have been sacked amid an ongoing investigation into the shelter's animal welfare practices.

Maraging director Dr Graeme Smith and shelter operations manager Sue Conroy both said they were dismissed and were seeking legal advice against their former employer.

Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford announced an investigation into The Lost Dogs' Home in January as animal welfare activists raised concerns about the shelter's high rate of euthanising unclaimed cats and dogs.

In one incident, a widow's dog was put down a day after a call was made to claim him.

The audit was completed last month and the *Herald Sun* understands a report will be released soon.

But Ms Conroy and Dr Smith claim their dismissals were not related to the inquiry.

Ms Conroy said it was "awful" to leave after giving her "heart and soul" to the organisation for nearly 30 years.

She criticised the State Government's "trumped up audit" as a "highly irresponsible" move which was forced by a negative social media campaign.

"We get audited by the City of Melbourne every year and we got a clean bill of health late last year," Ms Conroy said. She said the reasons for her dismissal were "flimsy" and she was seeking legal advice before going to the Fair Work Commission.

Dr Smith told 3AW he was also seeking legal advice and that his dismissal had "nothing to do with the government inquiry".

Shelter to explain dog deaths

SAMANTHA LANDY

THE Lost Dogs' Home will be required to report the reasons it puts down animals to the State Government in a bid to reduce the organisation's startlingly high euthanasia rate.

The move comes as a government investigation into the home found that while euthanasia rates had dropped over the past six years, a large proportion of animals were still being put down across the organisation's three shelters.

The report also found the home was housing dogs in pens with cracked floors — putting them at risk of disease — and cats in cages below the size required by law.

Despite this, the report did not identify "any major concerns with animal health or welfare" at the shelter, which provides pound services for 17 Victorian councils. The report

also revealed the Lost Dogs' Home did not keep records breaking down the reasons euthanasia was carried out.

Victorian Agriculture Minister Jaala Pulford said she had asked the organisation to report to her twice a year for the next three years. "It was troubling that the Lost Dogs' Home were really unable to account for the factors that had caused for the euthanasia of dogs and cats," she said.

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2015 THE AGE

NEWS 13

Animal home must report on euthanasia

Alana Schetzer

The Lost Dogs Home will be forced to report to the state government twice a year for the next three years about its euthanasia rates, following an investigation into claims too many cats and dogs are killed every year.

The investigation found some of the home's facilities did not meet minimum standards, and included animals living in pens with cracked concrete floors, which exposed them to risk of disease. The size of enclosures cats were kept in was also found to be too small.

However, the report found the home had consistently reduced its overall euthanasia rates during the past six years. Since 2008-09, rates have varied between 71 and 13 per cent.

The home did not keep any paperwork that detailed the health, sociability or temperament of animals put down and whether that decision was reasonable.

Agriculture Minister Jaala

Pulford said more work was needed to address the home's management and how it assessed which animals should be put down.

"We will work to ensure all issues raised in the report are addressed and issues of non-compliance put right," she said.

The Lost Dogs Home came under intense scrutiny in January, when it was revealed that a widow's pet dog, Fonzie, was put down the day after his owner had called to claim him.

One of two online petitions calling for an investigation into the shelter attracted almost 10,000 signatures.

The government launched an investigation into the home's high euthanasia rates, housing of animals, identification of animals' owners and how it assessed which animals were suitable for re-homing.

The report found no major concerns.

The home has 17 contracts with local governments throughout Victoria.

Challenges

- Access to suitable land in established areas
- Reduction in volunteering in NFPs (Service Operators) is rapidly increasing cost
- Barrier to entry for service delivery operators limits market competitiveness
- Greater interest from community & animal welfare organisations
- It's complex & time consuming!

- A rigorous Business Case is essential
- Establish a common vision with partners through an incremental commitment process
- Relationship management is critical
- Respect each others differences and leverage each others strengths
- Appoint your best officers on the working group
- Independent facilitation of Shared Services / Facility Agreement
- Role of Finance Practitioner?

Ground Works



Canine Building



Feline Building



QUESTIONS

