

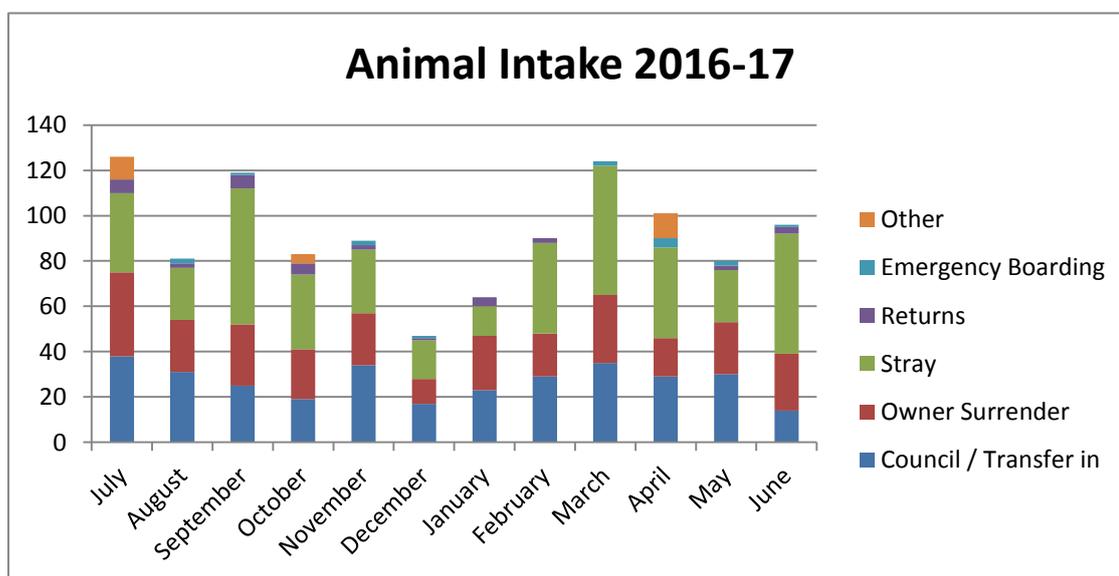
**RSPCA DARWIN REGIONAL BRANCH INCORPORATED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
20 NOVEMBER 2017
SHELTER AND OPERATIONS REPORT 2016/17 (CEO'S REPORT)**

The 2016-17 year marked a significant transition period in the evolution of RSPCA Darwin Regional Branch Incorporated (RSPCA Darwin). With a major operational focus on processes and policies, a healthy and safe workplace, and increasing the successful outcomes of animals entering the shelter, substantial progress has been made in all areas.

Major highlights of the 2016-17 year include:

1. Saving more animals

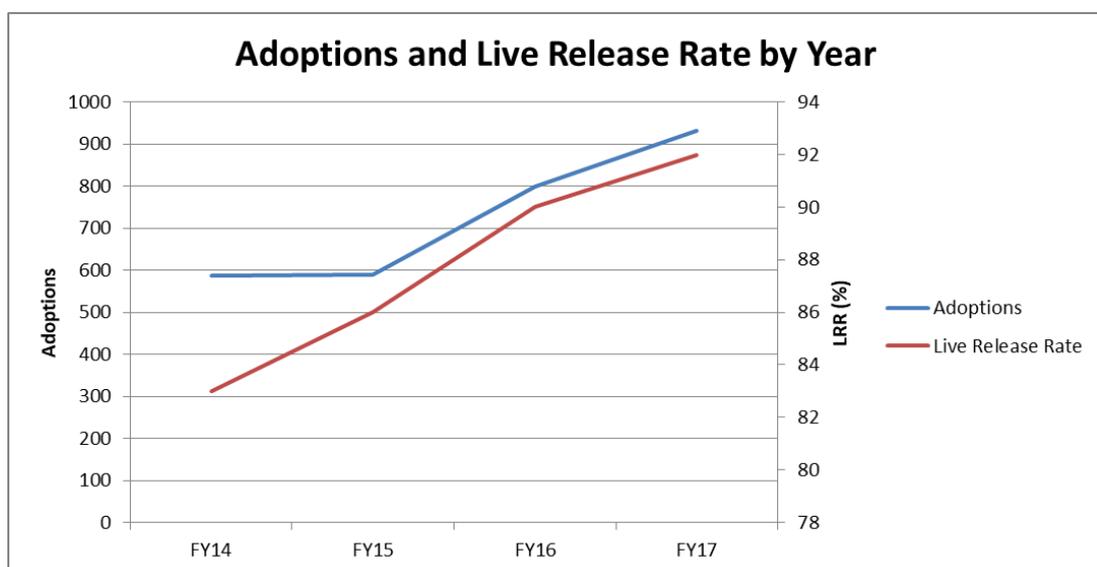
- The implementation of a nationally consistent and highly repeatable Behaviour Assessment protocol for dogs. This enables a transparent and scientifically comparable evaluation of a dog's behavioural traits, which helps to create world-class behavioural rehabilitation programmes where necessary, improves our ability to match the right animal with the right home, and increases the information available to potential adopters with valuable information on the degree of care and training their new pet may need. It is worth noting that Behaviour Assessments are not "pass or fail" as in days gone by, but rather just one part of a substantial process of gathering information on how best to care for and rehome a dog.
- Significant increase in capacity, moving from an average of 100 animals in care per day in FY14 to 165 animals in care per day in FY17. This has been achieved without additional kennelling capacity, but instead by growth of the foster care programme, improved matching of animals that may cohabitate successfully, and finding new and innovative ways to house animals requiring medical care or isolation.
- RSPCA Darwin has increased its intake of animals by 10% since the previous year, and 37% since FY15 (from 817 animals to 1120). A substantial proportion of these increased numbers have been transfers from other organisations, including councils, rescues, Animal Welfare. More than 40% of intake were strays that had been lost or abandoned, and 30% were surrendered by owners no longer able to care for their pet.



- An Animal Welfare Grant enabled significant improvement to the Animal Welfare kennel block, which helps to improve animal care and protection as well as staff health and safety in those kennels.
- Most importantly, RSPCA Darwin has shown exceptional improvement in successful outcomes over the last few years. With adoption numbers climbing from 590 to 932 (an increase of 58%) between FY15 and FY17, RSPCA is now adopting a comparable number of animals per year as RSPCA Western Australia who operate on over eight times Darwin's budget.
- The Live Release Rate (LRR) is a statistic used internationally to enable a consistent method of benchmarking shelter success rates because it is comparable irrespective of the size of an organisation. The LRR is calculated by including all animal outcomes that were positive, compared to unfavourable outcomes. The calculation is below:

$$\text{LRR} = (\text{Total outgoing animals} - \text{animals euthanased} - \text{animals died in care}) / \text{Total outgoing animals}$$

- In FY17, RSPCA Darwin had an average LRR of 93%. This compares to an USA average of 82%. This is broken down into a 91% LRR for dogs (RSPCA Australia average of 85.9%), and 93% LRR for cats and kittens (RSPCA Australia average of 66.9%).



2. Helping the community

- Delivery of an 'Emergency Boarding' programme for victims of domestic violence, to ensure that family pets are not used as a threat against leaving such circumstances.
- Strong involvement in other community programmes such as Work for the Dole, as part of which RSPCA Darwin has employed three staff members and on a number of months has had the highest success rate in the country for participants successfully finding permanent employment after a placement with RSPCA.
- Participated in multifarious community events and campaigns to encourage responsible ownership and pet care, including microchipping campaigns, registration days and expos in addition to running

successful major campaigns such as the RSPCA Million Paws Walk, RSPCA Cupcake Day and the 16th RSPCA Save the Paw Ball.

3. Planning for the future

- The 2016-17 year saw the development and implementation of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, which helps guide decisions and plan for long term sustainability and growth of the organisation
- Moved from a sublease to a Crown Lease in Perpetuity, which ensures security and sustainability from the current Berrimah site
- Certification of a veterinary building onsite, which will enable a more strategic, future-focussed analysis of the provision of veterinary services as well as the use of the shelter facilities going forward
- Welfare upgrades to the cattery to keep animals cooler and improve ventilation and enrichment
- An increased focus was placed on health and safety in the workplace, including a full safety audit, the introduction of Incident and Hazard reporting protocols, visitor registers and updated evacuation procedures. There was also a successful exercise in a full evacuation of shelter animals during a cyclone warning.
- A Northern Territory Government Immediate Works Grant enabled the erection of a storage shed, to ensure longevity of equipped protected from the elements, improve safety of staff and reduce wastage of food and litter from weather and wild animals.

In summary, RSPCA Darwin has evolved immensely over the 2016-17 year, with positive outcomes now among the best in Australia and across the world. Yet, there is a commitment to even further improving these statistics over the next few years, with targets including:

- Average LRR of 96% by the end of FY18 (a 13% increase over 4 years)
- 1300 adoptions/year by the end of FY19 (a 122% increase over 4 years)
- In-housing of veterinary services to enable improved welfare and cost efficiency by the start of FY19
- Significantly increased commitment to public education, training and awareness of animal welfare issues and responsible pet ownership
- Increased community programmes such as expansion of the Domestic Violence scheme, a Pups in Prison programme, engagement initiatives for retirees, schools and FIFO workers, and others

We would like to extend our huge appreciation for the support offered by our members, volunteers, sponsors and so many other members of the community who give time, funds, expertise, energy or in-kind assistance to RSPCA Darwin. While the organisation is only small, the results speak for themselves in terms of the value that RSPCA Darwin can offer to the animals of Darwin with the invaluable support of the community.