

**RSPCA DARWIN REGIONAL BRANCH INCORPORATED
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 16 NOVEMBER 2020
SHELTER AND OPERATIONS REPORT 2019/20 (GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT)**

The 2019-20 year was eventful for RSPCA Darwin Regional Branch Incorporated (RSPCA Darwin). Despite a disruptive leadership transitional period between September and November 2019 and the obvious impacts of COVID-19, RSPCA Darwin has managed to regain a steady course and produce impressive results in a number of areas. With a major operational focus on improving morale across the staff and volunteer base as a key early improvement strategy, gains have since been realised in overall volunteer engagement, safety performance and general adherence to policy and shelter procedures. Animal rehoming and general shelter animal management statistics have also been impressive, and continually improving.

Major highlights of the 2019-20 year include:

1. Animal intake and outcomes

The continued productive relationship between RSPCA Darwin and all three local Councils (City of Darwin, City of Palmerston and Litchfield) ensures a consistent line of communication to allow for transfer of animal custody following the relevant holding period for each municipality. We also maintain a proactive relationship with the Animal Welfare Branch (a division of NT Government) to assist with emergency boarding and rehabilitation of abused, neglected mistreated animals. On most occasions these animals are transferred to the custody of RSPCA Darwin for continued rehabilitation and eventual rehoming. Owner surrenders are the third channel for incoming animals to RSPCA Darwin.

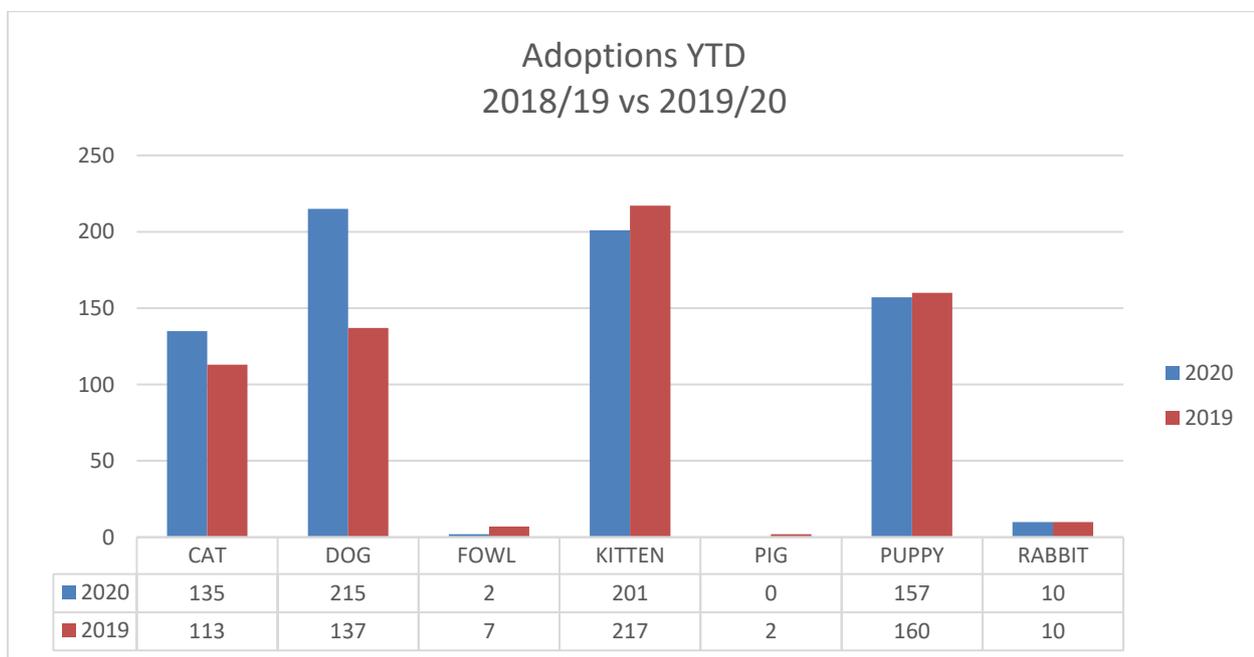
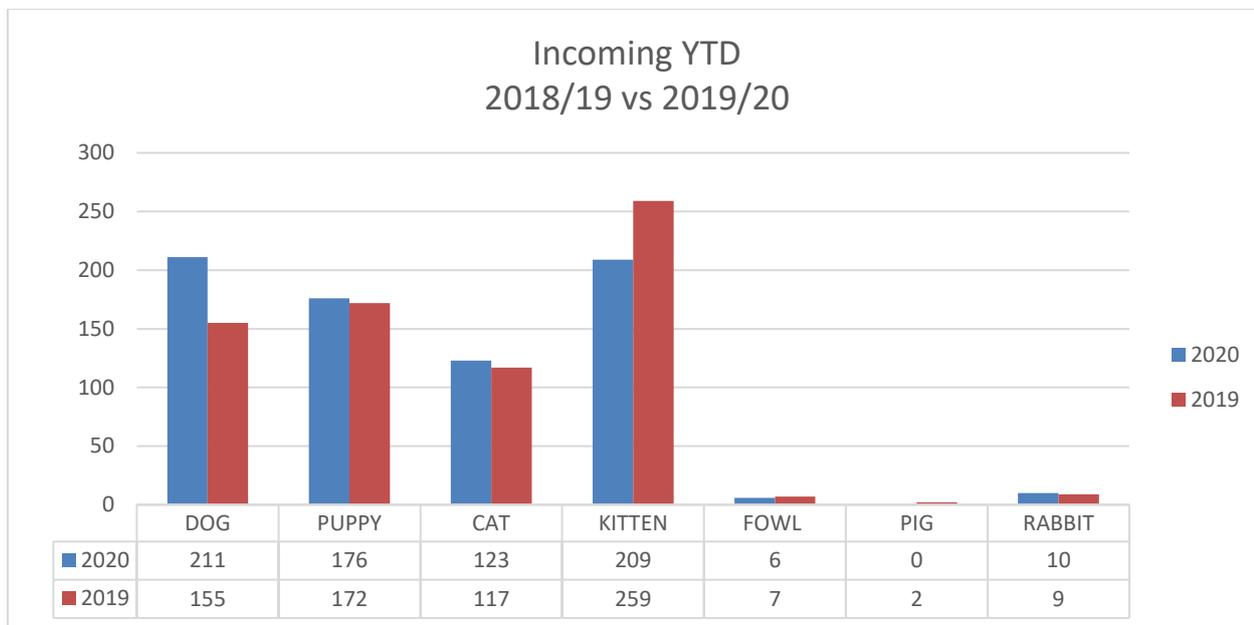
RSPCA Darwin continues to abide by the three main objectives for every animal that comes into our care prior to being made available for rehoming:

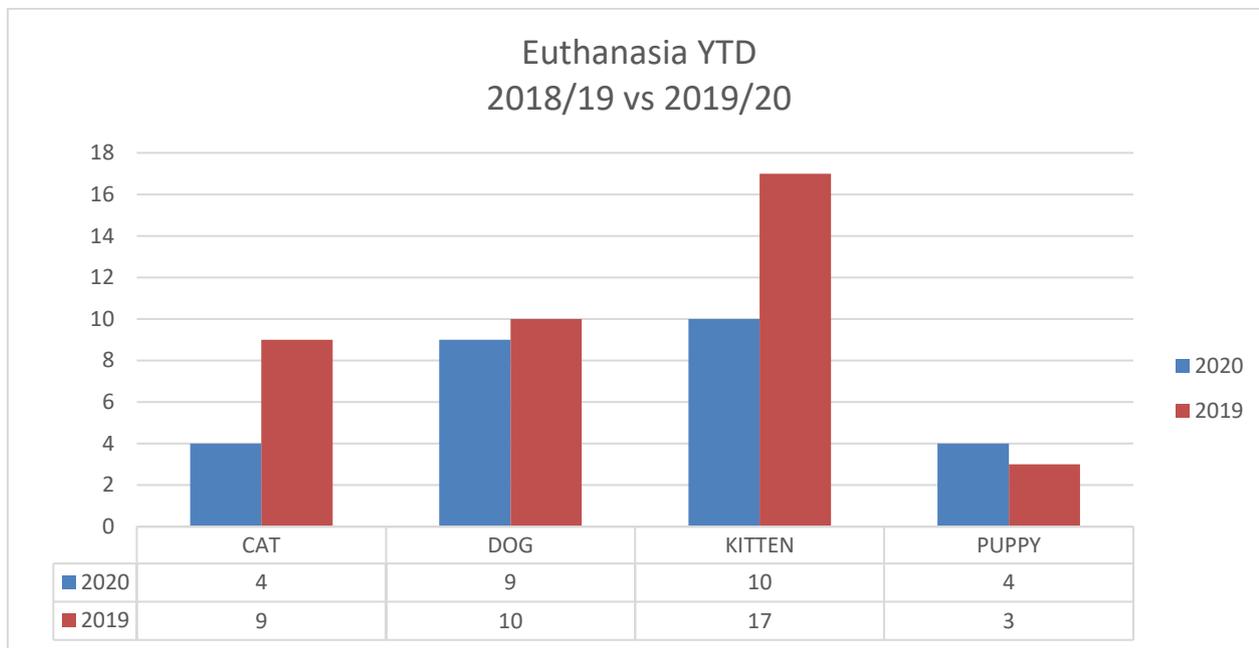
- Veterinarian health check
- Desex (if required)
- Behavioural assessment

The latter is particularly critical in determining the animal's best scenario for a successful rehoming result. The behavioural assessment outcome is noted on the animal's file and is brought forward to discuss with potential adopters to ensure as many factors as possible are considered prior to the adoption process finality. This approach has been used consistently with excellent results.

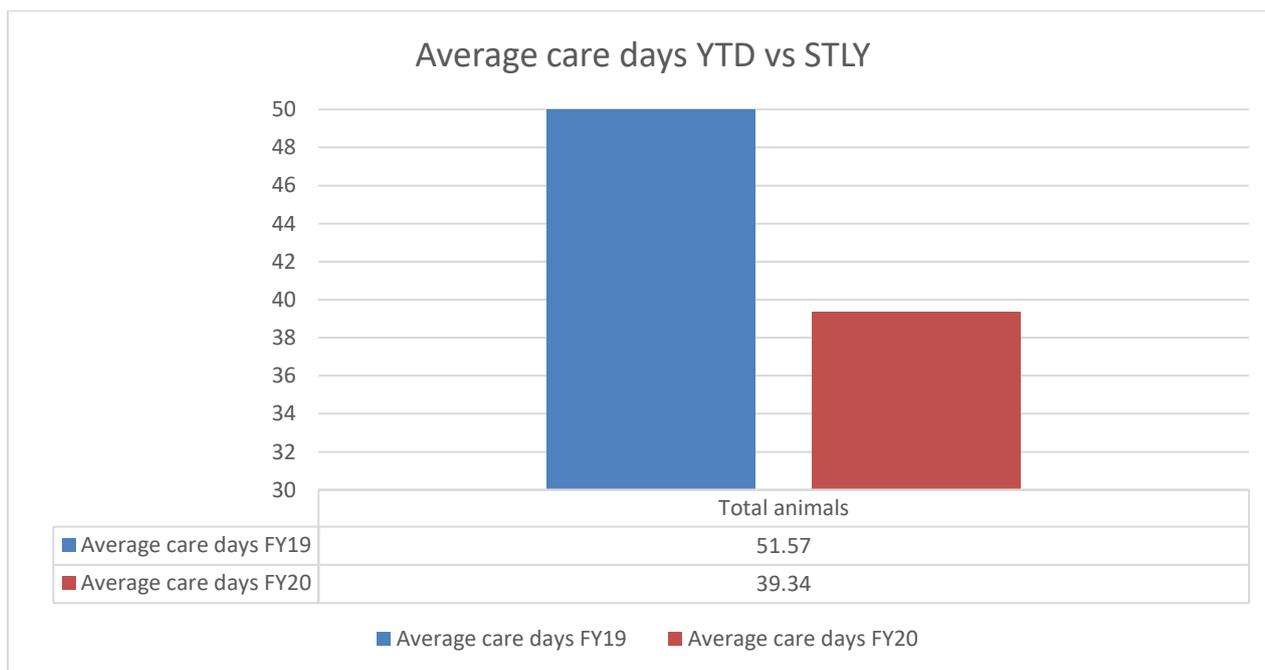
A total of 735 animals were inducted for the 2019-20 financial year. 720 animals were successfully rehomed after induction during this period and RSPCA Darwin is proud to report that this represents a 98% 'Live Release Rate (LRR)' which is a leading statistic by national standards, and comparable to world class performance.

Final shelter animal statistics for FY19/20 and compared to FY18/19 are illustrated in the following graphs:





A particularly positive result during the 2019-20 year is the reduction in average days in care. The best environment for a shelter animal is in the home, and RSPCA Darwin is well aware of this so significant focus is placed on promoting available animals for adoption. This is done through our social media platforms and at community and business events. A comparison and visible improvement on the 2018-19 year is illustrated below:



2. Working with the community

A number of positive relationships have continued, or commenced during the 2019-20 year at RSPCA Darwin. Examples of such collaborative success include:

- Continuation of a confidentially managed 'Emergency Boarding' programme for victims of domestic violence, to ensure that family pets are not used as a threat against leaving such circumstances.
- Enhancements to a working relationship in providing gradual return to work options in a volunteer capacity for candidates undergoing rehabilitation management under accepted compensation claims by their employer. RSPCA Darwin provides relevant tasks for each candidate with a few exceptionally positive results. This arrangement certainly provides a benefit to all parties.
- Provision of volunteer duties and time under a Centrelink plan for payments for semi-retired individuals
- Shelter maintenance and general yard work for teams led by NT Department of Corrections providing assistance to individuals serving community service
- Impact Day and corporate volunteering days for various businesses across the Top End. This provides a great opportunity to both parties to benefit from understanding shelter operations and animal care.
- A relationship with Department of Defence and in particular the visiting US Marine Corps to provide valuable community engagement by assisting with volunteer tasks and animal enrichment at the shelter.
- Significant growth and promotion of our volunteer network, which has active involvement from around 80 members of the community. These volunteers are invaluable in assisting with day-to-day shelter operations and event management and have been truly appreciated.

3. Capital works and operational improvement support

RSPCA Darwin would like to acknowledge the contribution from both NT Government and City of Darwin for their generous support during the 2019-20 year. A number of NTG Grant funding submissions were successful and resulted in the following improvements to our shelter and operations:

- Feline Isolation facility upgrades
- Community desexing program
- Staff professional development funding
- Provision of a community marketing and events trailer

Further, City of Darwin provided a generous operating subsidy to RSPCA Darwin to assist in the continued care of our shelter animals.

4. Planning for the future

RSPCA Darwin is committed to ensuring a sustainable future business model that meets the expectations of the community and also aligns with the RSPCA mission and vision. In order to achieve a secure financial and ethical future for the organisation, RSPCA Darwin has developed a Strategic Plan and is in the process of constructing a broader Master Plan that will detail the future model for our operations. These plans extend past the existing, successful shelter and rehoming operations to a wider reaching, community and business based set of programs to leverage ongoing financial security and enhanced educational and advocacy elements which are of high importance to the organisation.

RSPCA Darwin will also continue to lobby various stakeholders to improve animal welfare and animal owner rights, including but not limited to:

- membership and participation on the NT Government Animal Welfare Advisory Committee
- NTG Residential Tenancy Law amendments
- Animal Protection Act reviews and improvements
- Local council by-laws

RSPCA Darwin would like to acknowledge appreciation of the support and professional governance provided by our volunteer group of highly skilled Board members who donate hundreds of hours to our organisation every year.

RSPCA Darwin would also like to extend our thanks for the outstanding assistance provided by our many sponsors, supporters, members, volunteers, and community who have donated their time, funds, expertise and in-kind effort to RSPCA Darwin. While the organisation is only small, our results speak for themselves in terms of the value that RSPCA Darwin can offer to the animals of the Top End.