

RSPCA DARWIN REGIONAL BRANCH INCORPORATED
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2019/2020
16 NOVEMBER 2020
CHAIR'S REPORT

Despite the impact of Covid-19 which disrupted the second half of 2019/20, RSPCA Darwin continued the work it has completed for 55 years and successfully achieving outcomes for the animals and community of the Darwin /Top End region. During the year, RSPCA Darwin delivered on its role as a community organisation by:

- Rehoming 720 animals.
- Assisted 735 animals.
- Providing volunteering opportunities totalling 7,000 hours.
- Run a variety of community engagement events including Save the Paws Ball and Cup Cake Day.
- Assisted those in times of need with emergency boarding for domestic violence victims.
- Continued to provide employment for a dedicated team with 8 FTE equivalent jobs.

Animal advocacy

Despite Northern Territory Government's Animal Protection Act passing parliament in 2018, it has yet to be enacted. RSPCA Darwin has strongly advocated and lobbied Ministers to progress this legislation to improve the protection of animals in the Northern Territory. We hope this will shortly be enacted and animals benefit from the strengthened laws.

During the 2019/20 year, RSPCA Darwin actively pursued changes to the Residential Tenancies Act which will align with other states in providing tenants' rights to have pets. RSPCA Darwin supported the passage of this legislation through social media campaigns in the face of campaigns against this legislation. Despite the legislation successfully passing parliament, the Government has not yet enacted these laws. RSPCA Darwin will continue to lobby for these changes and support their progress so less animals get surrendered due to rental restrictions and more Territorians get the benefits of pet ownership.

In addition to the legislative changes, RSPCA Darwin continued its participation in the Northern Territory Government's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee as well as City of Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee.

Operations

Despite Covid-19 driving changes to our operations and broader economic impacts, RSPCA Darwin was fortunate to see a significant uplift in adoptions as people spent more time at home. In addition, RSPCA Darwin bought forward changes to our staffing model to cut operating costs in line with our strategic plan. The result has seen little, if any, impact on outcomes.

Financial

The financial position of the organisation has improved over the year as a result of operating model changes and improved income (including unexpected Covid funding such as Job Keeper), with the net result being a profit of \$45,000. Whilst this position is pleasing, the organisation needs to continue to build its financial strength through a focus on cost control and revenue improvements to support the organisations viability into the future.

Community engagement

The organisation held a variety of community events throughout the year, which saw large attendance demonstrating the strong community support for the organisation. This included many of our premier events such as Cup Cake Day and Save the Paws Ball. Unfortunately, the organisations plans to hold the annual Million Paws Walk at a new venue of the Botanical Gardens were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Employees and Patrons

During the year we changed General Manager with Shae Kriesh leaving the organisation for personal reasons. The Board thank Shae for her contribution to the organisation over the previous two years.

After a period as Interim General Manager, the Board were pleased to appoint Peter King as ongoing General Manager after a full recruitment process. The organisation has benefited greatly from Peter's strong operational leadership experience with the Board reflecting the significant improvements in our operations and employee engagement.

In addition, RSPCA Darwin's second longest serving employee, Taylah Sommerville was promoted to the role of Shelter Supervisor with day to day responsibility for operations and animal attendants. Taylah first joined the organisation as a volunteer and it is great to see her progression.

During the year we were very pleased to welcome Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AM, the Administrator of the Northern Territory and her husband Mr Craig O'Halloran to the shelter and to events as our patrons. Due to Covid-19, the annual supporters event at Government House was postponed to July where we again held a wonderful evening recognising our supporters on the terrace.

RSPCA Australia

During the year the Danny Moore continued as RSPCA Darwin's nominated director to the Board of RSPCA Australia. Through this participation, RSPCA Darwin secured agreement for two years for changes to the disbursement policy which provided a greater share of bequest revenue to smaller societies which will greatly benefit RSPCA Darwin over the term. Throughout the year RSPCA Darwin continued to participate in national initiatives and campaigns. The organisation continues to leverage the national offices expertise to assist in matters of policy and legislation.

Thanks

I would like to thank our team members, volunteers, fellow Board Directors and supporters for their ongoing support in making our achievements a reality and providing our services to the animals and community of Darwin and Top End.

APPENDIX – Board Attendance

Director	Position	Board Meetings	
		Eligible	Attended
Danny Moore	Treasurer (until 20/11/17)	12	12
	Chair (from 20/11/17)		
Stephanie Hawkins	Vice Chair (resigned 04/03/18)	8	6
Joel Dwyer	Treasurer (resigned 16/04/18)	5	5
Chris Hancock	Chair (until 20/11/17)	8	7
	Secretary (from 20/11/17, resigned 02/03/18)		
Matt Baker	Board Member (resigned 30/05/18)	10	5
John White	Board Member	12	12
Ryan Sanders	Board Member (until 26/03/18)	12	11
	Vice Chair (from 26/03/18)		
Ann Coombe	Board Member (from 20/11/17, resigned 15/12/17)	1	1
Sue Samuelson	Board Member (resigned 22/08/17)	2	0
Tom Middleton	Board Member (resigned 22/08/17)	2	0
Cameron Arnott	Board Member (term ended 20/11/17)	4	2
Kerri-Ann Laurence	Board Member (from 28/03/18 until 13/05/18)	1	1
Lea Aitken	Board Member (from 28/03/18)	3	3
David Hunt	Treasurer (from 10/05/18)	2	2
Melissa Reiter	Secretary (from 10/05/18)	2	2
Tanya Izod	Board Member (from 10/05/18)	2	1