



Connecting the community in print and on line

Campaigner advocates 'no kill' for pet shelters

by Daniela Frangos

Strathalbyn No Kill campaigner and creator of The PAW Project Mia McKenzie is lobbying politicians across all parties to commit to saving the lives of dogs and cats in animal shelters.

Ms McKenzie met with labour member and head of the SA Government's Dogs and Cats as Companion Animals sub committee, Dr. Susan Close, at Parliament House last week to discuss the legislation and management of dogs and cats in the state's shelters and how to reduce the number of animals being euthanised.

The No Kill Equation has been implemented in 93 shelters across the US with one in New Zealand and one in Canberra – but many Australian shelters have refused to introduce the life-saving policy, citing the lack of Government funding and overpopulation of pets.

“A No Kill shelter will euthanase if the animal is irredeemably sick, injured or traumatised or in the case of dogs, ones that are vicious – there is no killing for lack of space or because the animal is old.” Ms McKenzie said.

“Our South Australian shelters have refused to implement the programs and services that

will increase their save rates to greater than 90 percent.”

“Currently SA shelters kill over 13,000 dogs and cats every year. Since adopting the No Kill policy, the RSPCA ACT shelter has a 94 percent save rate for dogs, 67 per cent for adult cats and 90 percent for kittens. You can't argue with the states – it's a workable solution providing optimum results.”

Ms McKenzie said the fundamental difference between the No Kill program and the current model in shelters is that No Kill shelters 'embrace the community'.

“The current model blames the public for the killings, even though it's the shelters doing it, then asks people to adopt animals from the shelters.” she said.

“You can't blame someone, then ask them to purchase your product”.

“The No Kill shelters embrace the community, decrease the number of incoming animals and increase the number of outgoing animals.”

Ms McKenzie disagrees with the arguments of many Australian animal shelters who have said the No Kill program is simply too expensive.

“The No Kill program is cost effective.” she said.

“Killing costs, and it costs a lot of money when you combine the trapping, housing, feeding, vet care, euthanasia, plastic wrap and dumping fees or incinerator fees plus cleaning and maintenance costs.”