

Submission: Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reform) Bill 2020

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[Contents](#)

Introduction	2
Discussion	2
Legislation.....	2
Legislation Education Sterilisation (LES).....	3
Pet overpopulation.....	3
Irresponsible pet owners.....	3
Cost.....	4
Playgroup.....	4
Barn cats.....	5
Council admissions.....	5
No Kill shelters.....	5
South Australia	6
Dog and cat admissions.....	6
Dog and cat purchases.....	6
Cost of killing.....	8
Leadership.....	8
Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reforms) Bill 2018	
Division 1	
15C – Application of Part.....	9
Division 2	
15F – Code of Practice.....	9
Division 3	
15I – Minister may grant licence.....	15
Division 4	
15L – Euthanasia of dogs and cats held by prescribed organisations.....	15
Division 5	
15M – Licence holders to report to Minister.....	16
Part 3 – Amendment of Dog and Cat Management Act 1995	
20 – Amendment of section 64 – Power to seize and detain cats.....	16
Part 5B – Special provisions relating to greyhound racing industry.....	18
Appendix 1	19
Appendix 2	22
References	23

Introduction

There are hundreds of open admission shelters in the United States that are saving all healthy and treatable dogs and cats. The shelters are in urban and rural areas, operate under different political parties, have divergent economies, climates, and capacities. The only similarity between these shelters is that they have implemented programs and services that have decreased admissions and have increased a live release rate.

Shelters that have progressed to life saving have done so over a short period of time. Smaller shelters have transformed overnight, and larger shelters have reached success within a six month period.

Nineteen years after the creation of the first successful shelter, South Australian shelters are still killing healthy and treatable animals. Implementing lifesaving programs and advancing the shelter industry to meet ethical and social standards has not been a priority in South Australia. It is clear that relying on the goodwill of our shelter Directors has been a poor strategy in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of homeless pets.

Legislation has helped American shelters to improve and expedite their functionality. Collating data assisted these shelters to understand the issues within the shelter and within their community. They use their data to create, enhance or taper programs. Their ability to adjust their programs and services to best serve the animals highlights a clear distinction between Directors that have a passion to save lives, and Directors that maintain a self-serving and conservative industry.

Discussion

Legislation

The Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reforms) Bill 2018, has been guided by the successful Companion Animal Protection Act (CAPA) (Winograd 2020). CAPA has been modelled on the No Kill Programs and Services (Winograd 2020), however CAPA does not mandate No Kill, it mandates the policies that will lead to successful live outcomes in an animal shelter. Similar versions to CAPA have been implemented in California, Delaware, and Austin.

No Kill is about saving every healthy and treatable animal in the shelter system. It is not based around an arbitrary number. The ninety percent save rate figure was created in 2005 by advocates in Austin prior to a council meeting for the purpose to set a numerical goal. Shelters that are continually tapering their programs are reaching save rates far beyond ninety percent. Euthanasia, in its proper meaning, still serves a purpose in a shelter. Dogs and cats that are irremediably sick, injured or are dangerous are still euthanased within this proposed Bill. However, the first No Kill shelter was first established in 2001, we are decades behind (Winograd, 2007).

Legislation, Education, Sterilisation

In South Australia, it appears that the SA Dog and Cat Management Board utilise the LES model – legislation (license, fines, law for pet owners), education (for pet owners) and sterilisation (desexing). This model was created in Chicago in 1974. The model's focus is public irresponsibility and this redirection of blame exonerated the shelter from killing animals. The LES model has never created a No Kill community and has only succeeded in forming a larger wedge between the shelter and the community (Winograd 2007). It is easy to understand why our pet management has never progressed when the current authoritarian body is preserved in a 46 year old model.

Double standards applied to LES because the shelters expected the pet owners to act responsibly and care for their pet but disregarded their own actions when the pet entered the shelter and was killed.

In private communication, the SA Dog and Cat Management Board expressed that they do not oversee the operations of any shelters. However, the FOI documentation attained by Hon. Tammy Franks highlighted this to be false, because the Board ensured that the shelters complied with the Animal Welfare Act. The Board also had detailed knowledge on the killings, but they never intervened.

Currently, there is no body that is interested or has the role of ensuring ethical operations in a SA animal shelter. Therefore, the proposed legislation is needed.

Pet Overpopulation

People in authoritarian positions believed, or conveniently touted in the myth of pet overpopulation - "too many animals and not enough homes". People were also too willing to use killing as a means of population control within their shelter system rather than to improve operations. And others shamelessly ignored the killing while overseeing the shelters' statutory requirements. In the United States there are seven to ten times more people acquiring pets per year than animals entering the shelter system (Clinton 2019).

Irresponsible Pet Owners

There is no doubt that there are irresponsible pet owners within our community. But this does not give the shelters a free pass to kill animals. Shelters are supposed to be a safety net for lost and homeless animals and must meet their obligation to care for these animals and implement programs that will support these animals to a successful outcome. This also includes implementing programs to keep people and pets together, managing intake, collecting data on the reasons people surrender and investing in preventative programs.

The media focus on stories that detail death, trauma, and neglect of pets within the community. We rarely see stories that reflect the majority of pet owners within the community. It is easy to have a distorted view.

In all communities that have achieved No Kill success, it was the shelter that changed, and it was the community who supported the change with adoptions, donations, volunteering, fostering and corporate relationships. Collectively, the community is not irresponsible and are waiting for the shelter to progress and reflect their values.

Cost

Many of the programs associated with lifesaving are more cost effective than admitting, housing, killing, and dumping animals. In Reno Nevada prior to progressing, the shelter had two full time staff killing animals and a freezer full of barrels of dead pets. Staff turnover and burnout was high and there was a substantial hidden cost in human resources to hire and train new staff. The cost of sanitation, pharmaceuticals and maintaining the freezer was high and they lost a lot of adoption revenue. They explained that it was economically valuable if you moved away from killing (Schneider 2011).

Saving lives and reducing costs starts in the field. An animal control officer in Reno Nevada had a great return to owner rate. He said 'think virtual shelter' – scan for a microchip, call all phone numbers, check lost animal reports, take a photo and upload details to the Council website/Facebook, and knock on doors. Fewer animals handled equated to fewer accidents, it decreased pet abandonment in the shelter by 50-75%, and it provided good public relations and less citizen complaints. Animal control officers received more positive feedback, and this was great for employee morale and retention (Schneider 2011).

In Minnesota, a shelter compared financial data pre and post lifesaving. During their save rate of 36 percent, the cost per animal was \$190. During the year they saved 100 percent of animals, the cost per animal was \$207. However, the donations increased by 43 percent, a net increase in fundraising by 294 percent and an overall increase in revenue of 61 percent. The increase in funds enabled the shelter to implement more programs to assist people and their pets and they became a trusted organisation within their community. They felt that transitioning to No Kill enabled them to secure a stable future (Appendix 1).

Playgroup

Current industry standards decrease adoption potential, increase length of stay and decrease the quality of life for a dog in a shelter. One of those standards is temperament testing for dogs. It is a snapshot of a dog's behaviour within the walls of a foreign and fearful environment. It is outdated and only finds reasons to kill. It does not offer a means to support the needs of a dog and you cannot predict a dog's behaviour (Sadler 2012).

Playgroup for shelter dogs is the solution to managing dogs within the shelter system, including defensive, fearful, reactive, and catatonic dogs. It is cost effective, promotes physical and mental health, increases the quality of their stay, enables faster dog assessments, reduces stress, supports healthy behaviour modification, enables improved cage cleaning, decreases decibels within the shelter, allows dogs to interact in a natural environment, and leads to faster and improved adoption matches (Sadler 2014).

It is also noted that staff enjoy managing playgroup and watching a dog transform. Playgroup enables exposure to many dogs and people prior to adoption and this is a far safer option than the current management of shelter dogs.

Barn Cats

The implementation of a Barn Cat Adoption program has enabled shelters to provide a safety net for those cats that do not want to reside in a home. Barn cats are cats that are healthy, vaccinated and desexed cats and can be placed into barns, warehouses, and factories. They are adopted by a person who provides food, shelter, and veterinary care to the cats and in return, the cat provides non-toxic pest control. This program is supported by the ASPCA (ASPCA 2020).

The two South Australian shelters have a persistent high number of cat admissions versus dog admissions. Cats that enter the shelter are surrendered by an owner, found by a stranger, or picked up by council. However, the public can still access traps for hire and are invited to trap cats and bring them to the shelter. The traps are available from various Councils. These cats can be owned, owned and lost, or unowned and live in the community. For most of these cats, entering a shelter is a death sentence if the shelter does not have a Barn Cat Adoption program. Most importantly, most of these cats are healthy and treatable.

Council Admissions

Freedom of Information has highlighted the extensive intake of dogs and cats from Council contracts and how effortless it is for a Council person to transfer an animal to the shelter. It has also highlighted the enormous amount of money that rate payers are paying for this service (South Australian Councils 2014). Not all admissions to a shelter are from owner surrender.

No Kill Shelters

No Kill shelters have reduced their intake with improved return to owner in the field, working better with Council, owner support for medical conditions, fostering (especially for special needs), and managing intake. This includes a Help Desk that manages appointments for surrender (to stagger incoming) and to assist the pet owner with potential adoption alternatives or programs that will enable the pet to stay in the home. Desexing programs are proactive and a good investment, but they do not save the lives of the animals that are currently in the shelter.

No Kill shelters have increased their live outcomes by removing barriers to adoption, intensive and consistent marketing, expanding hours of operation, offsite adoptions, foster to adopt options, implementing Barn Cat programs, playgroup for dogs, removing outdated attitudes towards the public and harnessing community compassion, respectful and affordable reclaim process, transfer to rescue and encouraging interaction between people and animals. All animals, except for animals that are being medically treated and are under a court order, can be accessed by the public. Successful shelters are using transparency as a model for accountability, identifying problems, developing solutions, and asking for help.

Progressive programs allow the shelter to manage intake and outgoing more effectively than the current system. Successful shelters embrace and value animals, treat animals as individuals, support them through a difficult time and find them a good home.

To denigrate animal sheltering into a choice of warehousing or killing is undeniably lazy and ignorant. People in governing and executive positions that continue to support this concept need to leave the industry.

This proposed Bill is not about legislating compassion and disregarding fiscal management. We have been led to believe that saving animals is too expensive. But shelters have been saving lives and maintaining healthy budgets since 2001. This proposed Bill will enable the progression and longevity of the animal sheltering industry, as well as ensuring the care and safety of homeless pets.

There are over three hundred open admission No Kill shelters in the United States (Clinton 2019). Achieving save rates as high as 95 percent is not impossible if it already exists. Our shelters do not need to kill animals. For decades, the shelters have had unreasonable expectations that the public and the law play no role in how a shelter should operate. Sheltering is the only industry where the public are more progressive than the organisation. The Government is designed to reflect the values of the community and it is time that legislation maximises opportunities for life saving and secures the future of the shelter industry.

South Australia

In South Australia, the two main shelters are RSPCA SA and AWL SA. Most urban councils have contracts with either shelter (South Australian Councils 2014). Other smaller shelters exist and would also have to comply with this proposed Bill.

Dog and Cat Admissions

Over a six year period, the two main shelters admitted 108,881 dogs and cats and killed 43,943 dogs and cats. Forty percent of these animals did not make it out alive. Over the past six years, under the direction of different management, the SA shelters have killed around 20 animals per day, including holidays and weekends (Appendix 2).

In comparison, in the fiscal year of 2019, the Austin Animal Center euthanised 255 dogs and cats out of 18,114. The outcomes for animals included a 98 percent save rate for dogs, 95 percent save rate for cats, and an overall save rate of 97 percent (Austin Animal Center 2019).

Dog and Cat Purchases

Over population of dogs and cats within South Australia does not exist. The data for procurement of dogs and cats in South Australia has never been available to the public. However, accessible data can explain the extraordinary differences between how many animals are killed per year, versus how many animals are purchased per year in South Australia.

Submission: Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reform) Bill 2020

The Australian Veterinary Association stated in 2009, pet ownership in South Australia reached 327,600 for dogs and 254,800 for cats (AVA 2013).

Animal Health Alliance stated in 2013, pet ownership reached 384,000 for dogs and 306,000 for cats (AHA 2013).

Data can be extrapolated to affirm that between 2009 and 2013, South Australians have bought 56,400 dogs and 51,200 cats.

On a yearly estimate, South Australians have purchased approximately 11,280 dogs and 10,240 cats.

Animal Health Alliance also indicated that 15 percent of Australian people purchased their dog from a shelter and 22 percent of people purchased their cat from a shelter (AHA 2013).

This data suggests that South Australians are purchasing over 16 thousand dogs and cats every year that are not from the shelter.

The annual reports from the RSPCA SA and AWL SA between 2013 and 2019 indicate on average, a kill rate of 7,323 per year (Appendix 2).

Estimated non-shelter purchases per year in SA

	2009-2013	Purchase per year	Minus purchase from shelter	Total purchase per year minus purchase from shelter
Dog	56,400	11,280	2115 (18%)	9,165
Cat	51,200	10,240	2816 (27%)	7,424
Total				16,589

The above data and Appendix 2 shows that South Australian shelters have killed approximately 7,323 dogs and cats a year. However, 16,589 (over twice as many dogs and cats) are purchased every year from channels other than animal shelters.

There is no pet overpopulation. There is a market share problem, people are purchasing pets, but they are not purchasing from shelters. Shelters are accountable for continually marketing their animals and building a competitive advantage against other sources of pet's sales (backyard breeders, registered breeders, family, pet shops and print/online sales), but are failing to meet this requirement.

Also note that the data compiled through the census and surveys does not include owners that have replaced a deceased pet. In a census, pet ownership statistics can remain the same for a family that has had a pet die but has bought another pet prior to the subsequent census. This indicates that the total purchase per year for South Australia would be higher.

Cost of Killing

Without a breakdown of available animal care costs within South Australian shelters, it is difficult to calculate lost revenue (adoption fees – care costs) from animals that were killed. It is also difficult to estimate the negative financial impact that so much killing has had on the human resource section of the shelter.

However, the Upper Peninsula Animal Shelter calculated that it cost \$200 to impound, care, kill and dump animals (Appendix 1). Using their estimates, killing over forty thousand animals over six years would equate to over a cost of \$8 million of donated money.

Leadership

Both the RSPCA SA and AWL SA's executive management team were aware of shelters that were achieving much higher animal outcomes. A previous SA shelter Director had attended a No Kill Conference in Washington DC, but thereafter had an increase in the kill rate for dogs and a stagnant save rate for cats. Knowledge about saving lives has proven to be a weak indicator of future performance.

Leadership plays an important role in saving lives. Over the years, many shelter Directors have been selected using traditional, but misguided criteria. When searching for effective leadership, shelter boards now look for a person who can find solutions to saving lives, treat each animal as an individual, question policies that do not work, embrace data collection to identify faults, promote a shift in culture, are team players, have an innovate approach to solving problems, handle criticism, embrace progression and change, have the ability to manage challenging behaviours during transition and people who simply find the joy in saving lives.

However, it has also been identified that an effective Director can leave their position and be replaced with a new Director that dismantles the programs and services that save lives. This evidently leads to an increased kill rate. Legislation is required to progress a shelter to reflect public views and to ensure its organisational longevity, but it is also required as a safety net to ensure that saving lives remains a priority regardless of who is directing the shelter.

Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reforms) Bill 2018

Division 1

15C – Application of Part

2b Mandating lifesaving of animals in animal shelters and excluding community cats from the Bill is misguided, confusing and provides loopholes for animal shelters to never reach the acceptable standard in animal sheltering.

The Dog and Cat Management Board and various Councils encourage members of the community to trap unidentified cats and bring them to the shelter. (DCMB 2018) It would be unreasonable to expect a shelter worker to differentiate between an unidentified owned cat that displayed defensive behaviours in a foreign environment, and a community cat.

Community cats, and unidentified cats with an owner that enter the shelter system will still be subjected to death under this proposed Bill.

In addition to this, it would be cruel to cage a community cat under the 7 day holding period and then kill it. But again, how can a shelter worker determine the difference between an unidentified unsocial cat and a community cat?

It is essential that these cats be incorporated into the Barn Cat Adoption program to enable the shelter to reach their life saving goal, save money, and save critical cage space.

This approach would abide by Section 15E (1)(a) “stray”.

Division 2 – Code of practice

15F – Code of Practice

Provisions to consider within the code of practice:

Definitions

Dangerous dog – a dog that has caused an unprovoked bite and/or a dog that has caused severe injury to a person.

Intake

Immediately upon intake, the shelter Director is the designated caretaker of the animal and is accountable for all care given to the animal by paid staff and volunteers.

The shelter Director is accountable for staff not adhering to legislative requirements and codes of practice.

The intake room needs to be accessed by an external door to minimise infectious disease contamination and to increase privacy for the pet owner.

A holding period of seven days (not including day of admission) will be assigned to an animal surrendered, brought in by a member of the public or by a Council officer (Animal Control).

Due to the increase of the holding period from three days to seven business days, it would be acceptable that the Council does not pay the 'sustenance fee' from days four to seven during an introduction period. The proposed Bill is directed at increasing performance at shelters, it is not directed at Councils. However, more return to owner in the field would assist the Councils in reducing their expenditure related to contracts.

Surrender by appointment to be incorporated into intake prevention programs to assist in managing intake and identifying possible problems that can prevent surrender.

Immediately upon intake, the animal must be provided with vaccinations and a clinical assessment must be performed.

A care plan is created and documented. Programs are identified to support a live outcome. The plan would include support programs and services and expected length of stay.

A shelter may transfer the animal to a Rescue Organisation prior to the end of the holding period if the rescue organisation is willing to take that animal. If that animal is transferred before day three, the Council 'sustenance fee' is reduced.

The shelter must keep a photo, information and documentation pertaining to the animal's intake and transfer. This information is to be made public for seven business days.

An owner has the right to reclaim the animal within the seven business days.

The marketing of the animal for adoption or rescue transfer to begin the day of admission.

This section does not apply to animals that are irremediably suffering.

This section does not apply to animals that are classified as dangerous.

This section does not apply to animals with a court order.

Housing

The animals are to be kept clean, sanitary, and healthy.

The animals are to be free from mental and physical distress.

The animals are to be protected from the elements but be offered daylight.

The animals are to be protected from excessive heat and cold.

The animals are to be given beds that are elevated from the ground.

Living areas are to be cleaned daily and as necessary.

The animals must be provided with an adequate supply of nutritious food and clean water.

Each animal has a dedicated food and water bowl to minimise cross contamination of infectious disease.

Dogs are to be included into a daily morning playgroup session prior to the shelter opening.

Dogs that require additional training are to be included in an afternoon playgroup session or specialised session.

Most cats require residence in a colony cat room to increase their adoption potential.

Most cats require residence in a colony cat room to minimise their stress and to maintain a proper immune system.

Cats are to be given horizontal and vertical space.

Isolation

Infectious disease protocols for housing, isolation, treatment, and handling need to be created.

Infectious disease protocols available (American Pets Alive! 2020).

Animals are geographically and independently isolated if they are infectious.

Proper single use PPE is used to care for infectious animals.

Hand washing facilities must be provided for soiled hands.

Alcohol based hand rub is used before and after touching an animal.

Cages are cleaned regularly with sanitiser sensitive to the infectious organism.

Infectious animals are medically treated.

Cleaning

Cleaning and infectious disease requires a written policy and a daily regime plan.

Cleaning requires a checklist and is signed on completion.

Sanitation procedures available (Koret Shelter Medicine Program 2020).

Surfaces outside of the animal areas need to be wiped with detergent and water daily to reduce fomite transfer (office areas, lobbies, eftpos, doorknobs, furniture, tools, visiting, intake, and computers etc.)

Surfaces used by animals need to be wiped with quaternary ammonium compound QAC (treatment and medical rooms, grooming, training, transport cages and vehicles). If soiled, the area needs to be wiped with detergent and water first, dried, then QAC.

Infectious disease areas need to be cleaned with detergent and water followed by a product that the organism has a known sensitivity and left to dry.

Efficacy of a product is maintained through correct concentration (and to avoid toxicity), contact time, application systems, drying and storage.

Each animal requires their own food and water bowl that stays with them through their stay.

There is no one product that kills all organisms.

Enrichment

All animals require various types of enrichment each day.

Dogs require at minimum, a morning playgroup for assessment, exercise, mental health support, socialisation, and behaviour adjustment.

Playgroup is separated into big and small dogs, with further categories of 'gentle and dainty', 'rough and rowdy', 'push and pull', and 'seek and destroy' (Sadler, 2014).

'Rockstar' dogs are utilised to assist in behaviour modification of dogs in the afternoon.

Playgroup requires implementation and education from an experienced specialist.

Playgroup can be managed by staff and volunteers.

Cat colony rooms require vertical space, seclusion areas and access to customers.

People play an important enrichment role for cats.

All enrichment toys and areas need to be easily cleaned.

Medical

Medical and treatment protocols, treatment procedure, medication charts, checklists, flow charts, and foster and adoption information need to be created.

At a minimum, Calicivirus, Canine medical protocols, Distemper, Feline medical protocols, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV), Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV), General medical, Neonatal kittens, Panleukopenia, Parvovirus, Ringworm, Heartworm and Desexing protocols must be developed and made available to all staff. These protocols are available online (American Pets Alive! 2020).

Fees

To reduce abandonment, a Director of an animal shelter must waive a fee against an owner reclaiming an impounded animal if the owner presents a written statement of inability to pay.

Barn Cats

Immediately establish a Barn Cat Adoption Program.

Cats that do not want to reside in a home are identified, vaccinated, desexed and are placed into the Barn Cat Adoption Program.

Adoption

Create monthly adoption goals.

Encourage interaction with animals to facilitate bonds.

Use a cat colony room.

Simplify the adoption process.

Allow visitations without view to adopt.

Embrace positive impulses.

Extend opening hours.

Increase exposure with offsite adoption.

Aggressive, consistent promotion and marketing of animals.

Plan follow up calls post adoption to identify problems and initiate a care plan to solve problems, minimise re admission and to provide good customer service.

Long Stay

Animals in the shelter after 14 days are placed into a long stay program and reviewed every 7 days. Documentation is collected and analysed and reasons for the long stay are identified: either medical treatment or behaviour modification. If neither program is required, independent marketing is highlighted to commence on the animal to expedite its adoption.

Special Needs

Special needs program, protocols and checklists need to be created.

Animals on intake, or through their stay can be placed into a special needs program.

These include neonatal kittens and puppies, medical conditions, behavioural, infectious disease, and seniors.

The special needs team are required to work with the foster care team to prioritise special needs animals into foster care where appropriate.

Prior to Killing

Not less than two business days before killing an animal, the shelter must:

- . Notify any rescue organisation that has previously requested to be notified or any rescue organisation that is within the State of South Australia.
- . Unless there is any evidence of neglect or cruelty, make a reasonable attempt to notify the owner
- . Notify the finder of the animal
- . Give the rescue, owner, or finder possession of the animal to avoid its death. Prohibit the shelter to charge a fee for care and transfer of the animal.

The shelter must not kill an animal without fulfilling the above requirements.

This section does not apply to animals that are irremediably suffering.

This section does not apply to animals that are dangerous.

This section does not apply to animals that have a court order.

Shelters cannot desex an animal exhibiting signs of pregnancy or lactation for the purpose of sterilisation. Desexing while pregnant or lactation can only occur if medically required. Animals that are pregnant require immediate foster care.

Gas Chamber

Ban the use of carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide gas chambers and remove unused gas chambers.

Paediatric, geriatric, pregnant, physically sick, or injured dogs and cats may have the ability to survive lower oxygen levels and delay its death.

The use of this system commonly involves placing multiple pets into the chamber. It is impossible to regulate equal flow to each animal resulting in an extremely distressing vocalised environment for the last few.

Carbon monoxide is toxic and flammable. In 2001, a shelter worker in Tennessee was found dead, slumped over the chamber.

In private communication, SafeWork SA stated that all gas chambers (functional or not) must be maintained, documentation upheld, seals replaced regularly, placed in a ventilated room, and inspected by SafeWork SA. To their knowledge at the time, SafeWork SA has never inspected a gas chamber in South Australia.

Reporting

The Director of the animal shelter or rescue organisation must prepare an annual statement for the Minister of the Environment that includes:

- . The number of animals impounded
- . The number of animal's euthanised, and for each, a description of the animal including age, species, size, and the reason for euthanasia.
- . The live release rate, which must be calculated by dividing the number of animals released alive during the reporting period by the number of animals with final dispositions during the same period; animals released alive are impounded animals that were adopted, transferred to rescue organisations, reclaimed by the owner, stolen, and does not include animals in the foster system.
- . Final dispositions are animals released alive and impounded animals that were euthanised, died in kennel or foster or missing, but does include animals euthanised by owner request or court order, this does not include animals in the foster system.
- . The number of animals adopted.
- . The number of animals returned to owner after impoundment and the number of animals returned to owner before impoundment.
- . The number of animals placed into the shelter's foster program during the period and the number of animals within the shelters foster program on the date of reporting.

- . The number of animals over four weeks of age that receive vaccinations upon intake, and the number of animals over four weeks of age that did not receive vaccinations upon intake.
- . The number of animals desexed at the shelter.
- . The number of animals microchipped at the shelter.
- . The number of animals that died in the shelter or within the shelters foster program, and the suspected cause of death for each.
- . The number of animals transferred to rescue organisations.
- . The number of animals lost, stolen, or missing.
- . The number of intact animals adopted or returned to owner, and an explanation for each.

Division 3 – Licence required to operate certain rescue organisations

15I – Minister may grant licence

4b It is reasonable that transparency and accountability be expected from any group that is caring for homeless pets, this includes rescue organisations.

Size and description of housing, housing capacity, foster care capacity, enrichment programs, and protocols including veterinary care, cleaning, and infection control, are to be included into the application for a licence.

Transferring a considerable number of animals from a shelter to rescue organisations is uncharted waters. To facilitate this process and to support this Bill, information regarding standards, safety, cleanliness, and capacity needs to be provided to the Minister.

Suitability for capacity would be incorporated into 15J(2) endorsement of licence.

The flow of animals from a shelter to a rescue can be accomplished when transparency about capacity and standards of care are available to both parties.

Division 4 – Euthanasia of dogs and cats held by prescribed organisations

15L – Euthanasia of dogs and cats held by prescribed organisations

1 ‘Unsuitable’: meaning animals that are irredeemably suffering and require euthanasia for compassionate purposes.

The term ‘unsuitable’ is ambiguous and allows both misinterpretation and the ability to flout the legislation. Truly unsuitable dogs are dogs that have proven over time to be a risk to public safety. These dogs display offensive aggression to humans, unpredictable aggression to humans and have an uninteruptable drive. (American Pets Alive! 2018)

Cats that express a behaviour that does not allow the cat to be safely handled cannot be included into the Barn Cat Program. If Trap Neuter Return (TNR) was introduced to decrease the community cat population, this final program would ensure that no

healthy cat was killed. The previous Director of RSPCA ACT rehabilitated kittens that were found in the community with domestic kittens to improve and develop their behaviours. Kittens of feral mums do not need to be killed.

This proposed Bill has the ability to offer the term 'unsuitable' as the true definition of euthanasia (with the current exclusion of community cats). Hopefully with future legislative developments, community cats will be awarded the same consideration as other cats.

2b The Bill does not hold the shelter accountable for not implementing a lifesaving pathway for animals on intake and during its stay. Shelters with a save rate of 95 percent or more utilise cat colony rooms, playgroup, aggressive and continual marketing, offsite adoptions, disease prevention and animal flow protocols, long stay dog strategies, enrichment programs, perfecting match making adoptions and making adoptions easier, calicivirus and parvovirus protocols, utilising foster carers, community embracement and removing the public irresponsibility mantra, developing return to owner programs and working with Council to keep pets out of the shelter.

Division 5- Reporting

15M – Licence holders to report to Minister

Transparency is one of the most important principles in animal sheltering. Every life is valued and counted.

It sanctions accountability; it highlights problem areas and enables the shelter to ask for help in areas that need support.

Reporting can be manipulated when defining categories of the live release rate. An animal in foster care is still a part of the shelter and is not included in the live release rate until it is adopted. It cannot be counted twice.

Sometimes animals do not survive. These include kittens that fail to thrive, animals that are irredeemably suffering with no chance of recovery, and dogs that pose a risk to public safety. All animals euthanised require documentation on preventable action taken, reason for euthanasia and notes detailing the incident leading to euthanasia.

Please refer to page 14-15 for the specific inclusions in a Ministerial report.

Part 3 – Amendment of Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

20 – Amendment of section 64 – Power to seize and detain cats

64 1b The phrase 'designated area' does not exist in '4-Interpretation' of the original Act and this current proposed Bill, which makes it difficult to analyse this section.

64 1c Allowing the capture of a cat that is 1 kilometre from any place or residence seems an unnecessary enticement to kill and an unnecessary inclusion into an animal welfare Bill. Given the remote location, the animal will not be taken to a facility for rehoming. This proposed Bill cannot guarantee that end of life treatment of the animal will be in accordance with Part 3A.

64 1a-e does not indicate that a detained cat can be killed without regard to Part 3A or whether the cat is required to be transported to the nearest rehousing facility.

The only model ever used in South Australia to manage the unowned cat population is 'catch and kill'. It has not been effective, it is costly, and places an unnecessary burden on the capacity and productivity of a shelter.

Killing community cats, or better known as 'cat eradication programs', have only been successful on small islands. The term successful is misleading because of the time, money and collateral consequences that have resulted in eradicating a species from an established ecosystem.

On Macquarie Island (128km²), during 1996-2002, \$3.8million was used to kill 761 cats. (Wolf 2012) As a consequence, the island suffered from a rabbit, mice, and rat infestation. During 2007-2014, \$24million was used to kill these additional animals (Darby 2009).

On Marion Island (290km²), during 1972-1991, \$800,000 was used to kill 2220 cats. The modalities used included poison, dogs, traps, panleukopaemia and 30,000 one day old chicks injected with bait (Bester 2002). In 2011, Marion Island suffered a mice infestation. The mice were eating the eggs, chicks and adult birds which caused a profound impact on the bird population (Howard 2019).

On Ascension Island (97km²), during 2002-2006, \$1.4million was used to kill 635 cats. The modalities used included traps, shooting and poisons. Unfortunately, 40 percent of pet cats died during the program (Wolf 2012).

Kangaroo Island (4400km²) began a cat eradication program in July 2020 to kill an unspecified number of unowned cats over a 15 year period, at a projected cost of \$2.03million. The Government paper is not transparent in the modalities used to kill the cats. Stage three includes the phase out of all domestic cats (Kinloch 2015). Based on previous events, it is safe to presume that Kangaroo Island will experience a rodent infestation that will be detrimental to animals, people's homes, businesses, the tourism industry, and the taxpayer.

Killing community cats is now regarded as an outdated program. Dr. Levy explains that if there is the same amount of pet cats as there are community cats, the birth rates of community kittens per year can be six times more than of pet kittens. This is simply because the community cat population is not desexed (Levy 2012).

The program, Trap Neuter Return maximises the number of cats desexed. They are trapped, desexed, ear tipped for visual identification, vaccinated, and returned to their home. It is humane, cost effective, decreases complaints, and decreases shelter admissions.

In 2007, Jacksonville, Florida had an estimate of 143,000 community cats and intake was 13,365 of cats to the animal control facility. Their live release rate was less than 10 percent. The facility struggled with a lack of protocols, insufficient staff for the number of animals in care and this led to animal suffering and death, plus a risk to staff and visitors to the property. In 2008, they began a TNR program.

There were 9801 cats trapped and 82 euthanised (<1%). The program resulted in a 59 percent decrease in adult killing and a 19 percent decrease in kitten killing (Levy 2010).

The impounding, staffing for capacity, caring, feeding, cleaning, veterinary checks, pharmaceuticals, killing, plastic wrap and dumping fees of over 13,000 cats costs an extraordinary amount of money. The cost associated with killing cats can be shifted towards a TNR program.

Over many decades, humans have contributed to urban sprawl, freeways, farming and pesticides, and high-rise buildings that have disseminated some bird populations. An Australian study spanning one year had identified that 64 percent of prey caught by cats was non-indigenous. While a New Zealand study identified that the cats reduced the rat population, which led to a denser population of native birds (Gorman Levy 2004).

Wolf (2010), pointed out that the most popular cat predation paper, written by Longcore et al (2009), includes erroneous estimates, unfounded assumptions, inflated predation levels and is teeming with fundamental flaws. We need to move towards a program that humanely decreases the community cat population, rather than focusing on cat predation. The above studies show that cats have a place within the ecosystem, but we need to humanely manage their population.

The current practise of killing community cats has led to a considerable problem and has utilised an enormous amount of money and resources. Even though the eradication programs have been a spectacular disaster, our governing bodies still refuse to implement a TNR program for the State. The TNR program assists both the cats and the wildlife by humanely managing the cat population and offering chemical free rodent control.

It is acknowledged that TNR is not a part of this proposed Bill, but the program should be seriously considered for inclusion or an amendment at a later date. It is going to be difficult to maintain a high live release rate and managing capacity at a shelter whilst admitting community cats and not having a TNR program or a Barn Cat Program.

If TNR is not to be included into this proposed Bill, the encouragement of trapping community cats and bringing them to the shelter should be abolished.

An estimated cost analysis for implementing lifesaving programs in South Australian shelters has been created. It is available upon request.

Part 5B - Special provisions relating to greyhound racing industry

Detailed reporting discussed in the Code of Practice for prescribed organisations must also be applied to the Greyhound industry.

Agree to all amendments regarding the greyhound racing industry.

APPENDIX 1

Email sent to Shirley Thistlewaite, blogger of YesBiscuit! From Reva Laituri, Director of Upper Peninsula Animal Shelter, Michigan, United States

Dear Shirley,

Per your request, below is our current average cost-per-animal versus what it was the last full fiscal year before we started implementing changes toward no-kill. Because the old data came from our 2005/2006 fiscal year, I converted 2006 dollars to 2013 dollars so that we are comparing apples to apples.

It took a while to put some numbers together because cost-per-animal is not something we regularly calculate. The only time it is used is when we prepare to negotiate contracts for impound services with municipalities. As far as we are concerned, the cost-per-animal is irrelevant. Each animal is evaluated on its own merits and if a decision is made to euthanize, bottom line is that it better be a justifiable one. Just this year our shelter manager has taken it upon herself to make sure a note is made in her shelter stats report next to any animal euthanized giving the Board the animal's name and specific reason for being euthanized. She feels strongly, and the board agrees, that in doing so, it is giving those animals a measure of respect and helps to ensure they are not just case numbers or statistics, but that each and every one should have a "face".

The figures being provided should be considered as a case study. They represent how things have played out for UPAWS. Our experiences, methods of resolution, and results are most likely unique to us. We are not saying anything we did or are doing is the best way or the only way. Every shelter has its own sets of strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles and the path each needs to travel will be slightly different depending on those factors. What works for one shelter, will not necessarily work for another.

But that does not mean the killing can't be stopped; it only means that shelters will need to be creative in finding what works for them. There are key areas that every shelter must address in order to be successful. The differences lie in the specifics which vary by shelter.

What is important is the unwavering decision to not kill healthy, treatable, adoptable animals. Once that decision is made and everyone (board, staff, volunteers) are committed to that goal, it can be done. It won't be easy, there is no cookie-cutter approach, and there is no slacking off. Obviously finances are a concern in running any shelter and have to be taken into consideration, but finances should not be an excuse to stop evolving. Rather they should serve as a prompt telling you that a particular area requires more creative thinking to get what you need.

As mentioned earlier, UPAWS has not used cost-per-animal in any decision-making processes. We were therefore very surprised to learn from a study done by an architectural firm in 2012 that our cost-per-animal is roughly one-half the national average for open admission shelters (no-kill shelters tend to run much higher). In addition, based on a metric formulated by UC Davis, while the maximum absorption capacity (i.e., adoptions) nationwide is 10 animals per 1,000 people, UPAWS has an absorption rate of 23 animals per 1,000 people. So based on national averages, and in simplistic terms, UPAWS has been able to adopt more than the double the animals at less than half the cost per animal than the national average...and has done it while remaining a no-kill, open admission shelter.

Submission: Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reform) Bill 2020

Why this is, we don't really know. Based on our 38-year history, I suspect most of it is because UPAWS made some fundamental changes and focused on a promise and commitment to save lives and to always look for a Plan B, or C, or D. The "promise and commitment" was to the animals in our care and our community. We are now transparent with our supporters, releasing our annual stats and financial statements for viewing on our website. This is an important step because the transparency has engendered trust from our community. Admittedly, other factors may have played a role, but until the change, our save rate was in the toilet, and our financial situation dire...to the point we were on the verge of closing our doors. It wasn't until we changed our philosophy that everything else changed.

Now for the numbers, all of which are based on our fiscal year so that we could compare animal stats to dollars for the same period. And again, the dollars have been adjusted for inflation to allow for comparable comparisons. In FY 2005/2006, UPAWS admitted 1,456 animals, 530 left our shelter alive resulting in a save rate of 36.4%. Our cost per animal was \$190.85. In FY 2012/2013 we admitted 1,620 animals, 1,628 left our shelter alive resulting in a save rate of 100%. Our cost per animal was \$207.58, or \$16.73 (8%) more per animal. Looking at it from a strictly numbers viewpoint, by killing 63.6% of the animals, we were also basically throwing away the corresponding revenue those animals represented (after all, we didn't fulfill our mission to save and re-home them). That amounts to \$178,636 when for another 8% (\$15, 660) we could saved nearly every one of those 936.

But, and this is the reason we don't look at cost-per-animal, the numbers do not end with expenses. While cost-per-animal rose, two other areas also rose. First the figure of \$207.58 includes a number of services and programs we were not providing seven years earlier.

By 2013, we were open seven days a week and one evening, including every holiday except Christmas (instead of being open only five days a week). Advertising animals through the UPAWS website, print-radio-TV media, and social media and keeping the public updated from start to finish in terms of adoptability and outcome, became standard. Pet sponsorships became and continue to play a huge role in getting animals adopted (donors can opt to pre-pay for medical care, vaccinations, or all or part of adoption fees for specific animals). Promotions with accompanying adoption fee reductions or waivers were being used on a regular basis. We had implemented reduced adoption fees for seniors and "Lonely Hearts" (those animals who have been in the shelter 3 months or longer). People willing to adopt animals for what would equate to hospice care had fees waived. All animals were being microchipped and we were Felv/FIV testing all cats and heartworm testing all dogs. In addition, staff and volunteers began making a more concerted effort at reuniting lost pets with their owners and becoming more pro-active in pet retention efforts.

Also, not included in the cost-per-animal, a community spay-neuter program was instituted to assist pet owners in getting their animals altered which ultimately reduces the numbers of litters being admitted and a Home-2-Home program that allows owners to use the UPAWS website to advertise pets that need re-homing, thus preventing them ever being admitted to the shelter. (A number of restrictions were put in place to avoid advertising by breeders.)

The second very important component that cannot be ignored is that while the cost-per-animal rose 8%, we also saw an increase in donations of 43% and a net increase in fundraising efforts of 294% for an overall increase in revenue of 61%. This is where the transparency and trust, mentioned above, enters the equation. Obviously, the increased revenue more than makes up for the cost-per-animal, and has allowed us to implement more services, become pro-active and plan for a future (including plans for a new shelter). Also, in calculating revenue, I did not include income from bequests, which while hard to budget or predict, can have a huge impact on the future of a shelter and its animals.

Submission: Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reform) Bill 2020

When reviewing the ramifications of becoming no-kill, the move has actually generated more revenue, is securing a stable future, and has made UPAWS a recognized, respected and trusted part of our community. It is always a source of pride to hear from participants at non-profit conferences and workshops that UPAWS is now their charity of choice – before even their own non-profit! Those are things you can't readily translate to dollars and cents when looking at saving animals. Those are the intangibles that get animals adopted, that promote good will, that generate support in the form of volunteers, foster homes and in donations. It is something that is in the heart of a community that wants to support a shelter that they feel confident is doing everything in its power and ability to put the animals first. That is why we don't really care about the "cost-per-" animal, we just care about the animal.

Reva Laituri
President, UPAWS

Submission: Statutes Amendment (Animal Welfare Reform) Bill 2020

APPENDIX 2

		ADMIT	KILLED	KILLED PER SHELTER %	TOTAL % KILLED
13-14	RSPCA				
	DOG	3417	380	11%	
	CAT	4815	1723	35%	25%
	AWL				
	DOG	4800	1800	37%	
	CAT	7000	5600	80%	62%
14-15	RSPCA				
	DOG	2900	398	13%	
	CAT	4378	1471	33%	25%
	AWL				
	DOG	4300	1500	34%	
	CAT	6800	5200	76%	60%
15-16	RSPCA				
	DOG	3097	671	21%	
	CAT	4805	1587	33%	28%
	AWL				
	DOG	4200	1300	30%	
	CAT	6900	4900	71%	55%
16-17	RSPCA				
	DOG	3000	740	24%	
	CAT	4721	1532	32%	29%
	AWL				
	DOG	3900	900	23%	
	CAT	6900	4000	57%	45%
17-18	RSPCA				
	DOG	2453	532	21%	
	CAT	4902	1357	27%	25%
	AWL				
	DOG	3200	650	20%	
	CAT	6500	2900	45%	36%
18-19	RSPCA				
	DOG	2427	562	23%	
	CAT	4766	1140	23%	23%
	AWL				
	DOG	3200	700	21%	
	CAT	5500	2400	43%	35%
TOTAL OVER 6 YEARS	RSPCA	45,681	12,093	26%	
	AWL	63,200	31,850	50%	
TOTAL FOR BOTH SHELTERS OVER 6 YEARS		ADMIT 108,881	KILLED 43,943	KILLED % 40%	
		AVERAGE KILLED PER YEAR	7,323		

Statistics taken from RSPCA SA annual reports 2013-2014 (figures) and AWL SA annual reports 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 (ambiguous bar graphs). All annual reports available on respective websites.

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