

BACKGROUND

Over the last 15 years there has been a groundswell of change throughout animal welfare organisations across the world, and Wellington SPCA has fully embraced this.

Saving Lives is an ethical and practical philosophy at the centre of which is a commitment to guarantee the lives of as many of the animals in our care as possible.

We already operate a 'no time limit' policy in our centres – all healthy and temperamentally sound animals remain in our care until they are rehomed. Saving Lives, however, is more than just about the animals in our care. It encompasses a range of activities that aim to change the way society thinks about animals and help us to achieve positive outcomes for all animals.

SAVING LIVES IS MADE UP OF TEN INITIATIVES BASED AROUND ONE MISSION.



THE INITIATIVES

- 1. OUR ANIMALS – EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS**
Selecting and preparing animals for adoption
- 2. PET RETENTION**
Helping people to help themselves
- 3. REHABILITATION**
Positive ways to solve medical and behavioural problems
- 4. DESEXING (AND IDENTIFICATION)**
Stopping unwanted lives before they are born
- 5. MAXIMISING ADOPTIONS**
Doing everything we can to rehome animals, and celebrating every life saved
- 6. RESCUE GROUPS**
Harnessing the power of like-minded people
- 7. FOSTER HOMES AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS**
Extending our network of helpers to save more lives
- 8. SAVING THE STRAYS**
Developing an effective programme for saving abandoned, stray and colony cats
- 9. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**
Embracing the community around us in support
- 10. CAN DO!**
Putting our heart and soul into saving lives

THE MISSION

TO TREAT EVERY ANIMAL WHO ARRIVES ACROSS OUR THRESHOLD AS IF IT WERE OUR OWN, AND TO UNDERTAKE TO GIVE IT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE A FULL AND HAPPY LIFE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ALL LIFE IS PRECIOUS.

TO UNDERTAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HEALING THE INJURED, ACCOMMODATING AND RESTORING THE LIFE OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A QUALITY OF LIFE AHEAD OF THEM. TO MAKE EVERY DECISION A LIFE-SAVING COMMITMENT.

“By accepting the Saving Lives mission, Wellington SPCA's team of dedicated and passionate staff continue to improve the lives of animals in our community every day.”

SAVING LIVES MISSION



A day-old kitten receives some special care

3. REHABILITATION

Wellington SPCA does not turn away any animal that needs our help.

Inevitably, some animals come to us with behavioural or medical problems which need to be addressed in order to achieve the best possible outcome for that animal. We use a number of initiatives which aim to rehabilitate an animal as quickly as possible, so that it can be adopted as soon as possible.

- We are fortunate to have a veterinary clinic and hospital, run by a team of committed staff, that provides first-rate emergency and ongoing medical care for sick and injured animals as well as carrying out procedures such as desexing and microchipping.
- We recently introduced an isolation unit that provides a designated area for cats suffering from the highly contagious feline calicivirus to be cared for – thus avoiding cross-contamination with other cats. Similarly, we have other designated areas for very sick or very young animals.
- We work closely with behaviourists who lend their expertise to help address any issues with the dogs in our care. Not only does this process make for happier and healthier dogs, but it can significantly improve their chances of adoption.
- Similarly, volunteers and staff spend as much time as possible simply 'hanging out' with the dogs, cats, rabbits and other animals in our care – providing them with much-needed attention and affection, and helping to build and maintain their confidence with people.

4. DESEXING [AND IDENTIFICATION]

Desexing our companion animals is at the heart of the Saving Lives initiative.

Implementing and investing in affordable and accessible desexing programmes has clear and direct benefits. Simply put, reducing the number of unwanted births reduces the number of animals surrendered to us who then require our care.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we are able to offer low-cost desexing at both of our animal centres. Our Spay Neuter All Pets (SNAP) programme enables companion animal owners to get their animal desexed in return for a donation towards our work.

In addition, we utilise the SPCA's mobile clinic which helps us target communities from which many animals are surrendered to us. In February we performed 304 desexing operations in the clinic during a two-week period – the long-term benefits of which will be significant.

However, the desexing message needs to be spread far and wide. In the first six months of this year we cared for 1,200 kittens alone – numbers that are very difficult to maintain.

Along with desexing, microchipping all companion animals has significant and positive impacts. Any animal that is discovered lost or injured can be reunited with its owner immediately with a quick scan of the chip. This simple and straightforward procedure prevents animals from coming into our care, not only avoiding unnecessary stress for them but also reducing the impact on resources for us.

All animals in our care are microchipped before they become available for adoption, and we also offer a low-cost microchipping service for any companion animal.



Love & cuddles



The SPCA's mobile clinic



Scanning for a microchip

8. SAVING THE STRAYS

Every year a significant amount of our resources are spent trying to rehome the huge numbers of cats and kittens that come to us.

Many of these are long-term strays that have adapted to outdoor life, belong to colonies that centre around food supplies and produce litter after litter of kittens.

When a stray and her offspring are brought to us, sadly the mother will often be euthanased as she is unsocialised and unadoptable; but her kittens, with a great deal of time and effort, may be socialised and consequently be adopted.

The creation of managed cat colonies in urban areas has been identified as having significant impacts on stray cat populations and we have implemented this initiative by establishing four colonies in a number of Wellington suburbs.

While removing a mother and her litter may help to eliminate the visible cats from the area, it does not solve the problem. Before long, other strays move in to take advantage of the freed-up food source and in turn reproduce – continuing the cycle and maintaining the population.

Through a Trap Neuter Release (TNR) system, stray cats are trapped, desexed and returned to the colony to deter new strays from entering; we have already desexed between 10 and 30 cats in each of our colonies. 'Colony Caretakers' ensure the colony is managed and well cared for with support from the SPCA team, and due to a lack of available breeding females the colony will eventually be eradicated.

You can help us by getting involved with the TNR initiative... Contact Jo on 04 389 8044 ext. 810 or email her at jod@wellingtonspca.org.nz.

3. CASE STUDY

From the evidence we pieced together, four-year-old Floyd had had a shocking life. After roaming the Te Horo area of Kapiti and stealing another cat's food for a number of weeks, he was caught and taken to our Waikanae animal centre.

Staff noticed that he had a limp so transferred him to our animal hospital in Newtown for X-rays and further examination, which revealed a mass on his right shoulder. The mass turned out to be a fragmented air rifle pellet; and his left shoulder had also suffered 'traumatic and dramatic' arthritic damage, leaving it completely rigid in place. Our talented vet team successfully removed the pellet and had no other choice but to amputate Floyd's left front leg.

With fantastic care and attention from staff and fosterers, Floyd was soon on the way to making a great recovery. Just three months later he was adopted.

Three-legged Happy (formerly Floyd) is now safe and well