



RSPCA TAS
**Strategic
Plan**

2023-2026

RSPCA 
Tasmania

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

A time for change...

Seven years ago, the Board of RSPCA Tasmania recognised it was time for change.

Ensuring the future protection of our animals and the sustainability of the organisation in a rapidly evolving environment, demanded we take a critical approach to what we do and how we do it. We needed to contemplate a fundamental re-engineering of our strategic direction.

The Board embarked on a journey which was guided, every step of the way, by our unwavering focus on RSPCA's vision - *"A Tasmania where all animals are treated with respect and kindness."*

We began with defining our core role in protecting the most vulnerable animals across the state. This was crucial in determining the activities and, in turn, the resources and organisational design needed to achieve a more stable future and secure our role in protecting the most vulnerable animals across the state.

The Board acknowledged that:

- RSPCA Tasmania could not maintain a practice of 'being all things to all people' and needed to focus on delivering the best outcomes for animals most in need, while remaining true to the organisation's essential purpose;
- stronger collaboration with the other member societies across the country, along with aligning with like-minded associations on the ground in Tasmania, could deliver improved outcomes for animals in need of care and support a more efficient delivery system overall;
- consolidation of RSPCA facilities and structuring the organisation into a centralised operating model were key to creating operational sustainability into the future; and
- the current delivery model needed to be recalibrated against more contemporary and effective operating models.

2023

2026





It was determined that the future role of RSPCA Tasmania should be one of facilitator and leader. Our focus should be as the primary advocate speaking for Tasmanian animals most in need.

This journey defined three key strategic pillars that would underpin the work of today's RSPCA Tasmania and define our role as leaders in animal welfare.

PROTECT EDUCATE ADVOCATE

These strategic pillars, in turn, helped inform the organisational mission statement that was ultimately adopted by the Board:

**“A sustainable RSPCA Tasmania
– helping animals in most need,
enlightening people, and changing lives.”**



Arriving at our future...

With this as a backdrop, in 2017 the Board laid out an ambitious *Roadmap to the Future*.

The Board deliberately set out a path that would redefine the role of the organisation, provide a detailed plan to consolidate our operations, stabilise our future, and implement innovative programs to reinvent the RSPCA in ways that would improve and enrich the lives of animals most in need across the state.

The Board acknowledged that to secure the future protection of our animals and of the organisation, some tough decisions needed to be made. We took our role as custodians and guardians of this future seriously and did not shy away from taking action, no matter how challenging in the short term, to secure it.

There are two key essential principles that support our *Roadmap to the Future*.

A centralised operating model:

Recognising that continuing to operate multiple animal care centres across the state, duplicating services, roles, and infrastructure, was unsustainable and put a strain on RSPCA Tasmania's limited resources. Determining the most appropriate centralised operating model has been critical to creating the impetus for change to be managed and delivered effectively across the business.

Collaborating to deliver the best outcomes for our animals and a sustainable organisation:

Acknowledging that we needed to focus on core functions and commit resources to delivering those with the best possible outcomes. Over time, RSPCA Tasmania had stepped into filling voids in the community which stretched our resources unsustainably. We needed to unwind some of the practices that, over time, had added pressure to our financial stability. In doing so, establishing partnerships and strategic alliances was crucial to ensure the needs of the animals in the community were met – they simply did not all need to be met under the auspices of RSPCA Tasmania.





Today...

Today, our statewide network of animal care units and shelters, staff and volunteers, education and community outreach programs and inspectorate service, work together to deliver a shared vision of a future where animals are free from experiencing fear, cruelty, and neglect.

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 builds on the achievements of our past, providing a new roadmap of actions to further strengthen our position as a leading voice in animal welfare and to drive our mission to protect Tasmania's animals most in need.

We have retained our focus on the original principles of PROTECT, EDUCATE and ADVOCATE, but this now manifests in ways that connect more deeply with our community, our stakeholders, and our staff who bring this vision to life every day.

The strategic priorities reflect our commitment to caring for animals, achieving organisational sustainability, and valuing our people.

We want to hold ourselves accountable in how we pursue these priorities, so we have also outlined what success looks like as we redefine our future.



We are committed to leading animal welfare through regular research, adaptive service delivery, and ongoing advocacy. We know there is a Tasmania where animal welfare is understood, upheld, and embraced in our community. This plan is a vital step towards creating that future.



WHAT WE DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- We prevent cruelty to animals by enforcing animal welfare laws and prosecuting those who inflict harm on these vulnerable animals.
- We drive necessary legislative change to protect the welfare of animals most in need across Tasmania.
- We develop policies that are aligned with contemporary expectations of society, backed by science and evidence-based rationale, to improve the quality of animals' lives.
- We rescue and rehabilitate animals, providing the care, shelter and love they need to recover.
- We bring together domestic animals and people so their lives can be mutually enriched.
- We educate and empower the community to care for animals humanely by raising their awareness and improving their knowledge.
- We identify and establish partnerships with key stakeholders to improve animal welfare and extend our reach to wider audiences.

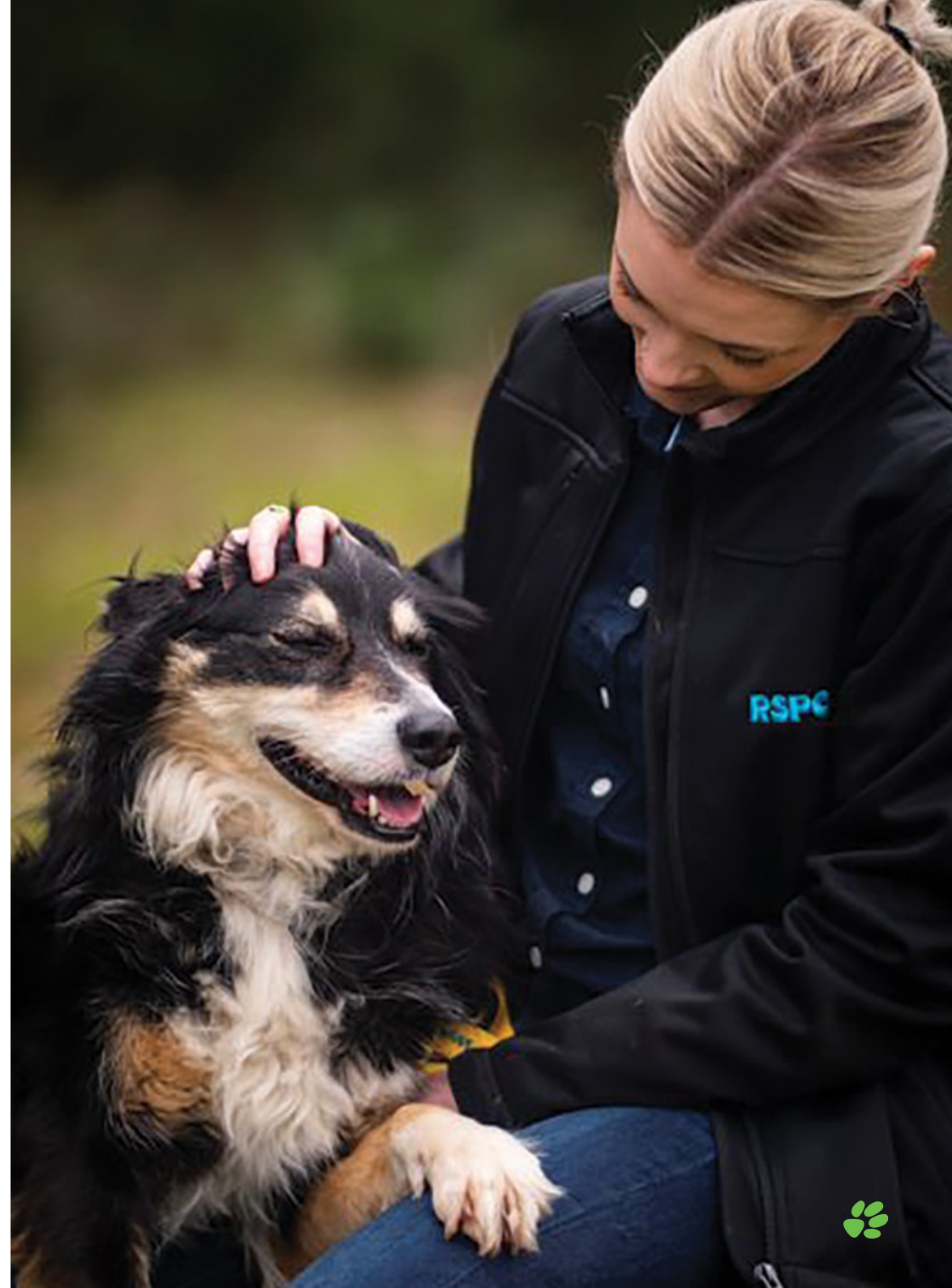


- We inform public opinion on animal welfare issues through effective advocacy and credible thought leadership.
- We address contemporary social challenges and their impact on companion animals, such as domestic violence and homelessness, and provide socially conscious support for those facing difficult circumstances.



HOW WE DO IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- We work as one team, with passion, focus and commitment.
- We support our people through a positive workplace culture and a dedicated network of foster carers, volunteers, and animal specialists.
- We manage our costs effectively and continue to grow reliable revenue streams to ensure our long-term sustainability.
- We adapt and evolve as we learn from experience and gain new knowledge.
- We use our collective and individual voices to increase community awareness and promote positive change for improved animal outcomes.



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022/2023

Our **Animal Care** team cared for

1813 cats,
122 dogs, and
335 other animals
across Tasmania.



Of the 2167 calls to our cruelty hotline,

1903

were investigated by our **Inspectorate** and 225 were transferred to other agencies.



61 animals were cared for under our **Centrepay Desex Program**, aimed to help low-income earners with the cost of emergency surgeries and reduced desexing fees.



26

Greyhounds were adopted through our **Greyhound Adoption Program**.



Our **Inspectorate** successfully prosecuted 84 charges against 9 defendants, with 77 animals either seized or surrendered.



165

animals slept safely thanks to our **Safe Beds program**.



None of this would have been possible without the generous support and commitment of our 93 volunteers and foster carers.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Animal Care & Collaboration

Building a future for animals free from fear, cruelty and neglect.



Community Outreach

Nurturing a strong community that understands, upholds and embraces animal welfare.



Inspectorate

Investigating, rescuing and protecting to prevent animal cruelty.



Advocacy

Establishing RSPCA as the leading voice for animal welfare in Tasmania.



Corporate

Being a sustainable, efficient, effective and well-resourced organisation.





ANIMAL CARE AND COLLABORATION



What we will do

Provide the shelter, care and love needed to help animals recover from harm and provide a safe haven for those needing temporary care options.

How we will do it

We will...

- Embed the principles of socially conscious sheltering in everything we do, including supportive and comprehensive foster care and post-adoption programs.
- Establish new facilities across the state to address critical areas of need in specific geographic locations.
- Improve our internal veterinary care capacity.
- Expand our capacity to extend into rural and remote areas of the state.
- Improve data collection and analysis to make better informed, strategic decisions about the care of animals under our protection.
- Strengthen our partnerships with individuals and organisational stakeholders who also support the lives and wellbeing of animals.





What success looks like

- ✓ A well connected, accessible and supported foster care network.
- ✓ Reaching more vulnerable animals across the state.
- ✓ Animals in our care experience regular enrichment activities.
- ✓ All operational facilities meet contemporary standards and are effective at nurturing those animals in distress as a last resort where their humans are unable to keep them.
- ✓ Strong collaborations with partners to ensure we deliver support that is cohesive and holistic.



CASE STUDY: Socially Conscious Sheltering

We had a 7-year-old cat surrendered who had originally been seized by RSPCA Inspectors from a hoarding situation. Typically, a cat from a circumstance like this takes time to adjust as they are only semi-socialised. This cat had been through a shelter into a home and then surrendered again due to it having been gifted to a family member for companionship, but the bond had not been realised between the new owner and the cat.

By the time this gorgeous cat came back to us, she was starting to shut down. We brought the cat into one of our centres and straight into a habitat, rather than a cage. Habitats are one of the core principles of Socially Conscious Sheltering – they are large spaces which contain hidey holes and enrichment for cats like this one. She spent the first few days holed up, without wanting human connection. Then, little by little, she began exploring her habitat and started to use some of the perches and other apparatus in the multi-level space. She started to look for pats and cuddles and spends time peeking over the top of the habitat to meet her feline neighbours. She soon greeted all visitors to her space. We eventually found the right furever family for this puss, and she soon settled in to become a wonderful companion for them. We love these stories and the way the Socially Conscious Sheltering model helps us to help the most vulnerable cats.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



What we will do

Raise awareness of animal welfare in the community and empower people to proactively identify and act to improve animal health and welfare.

How we will do it

We will...

- Leverage our position as a recognised and trusted animal welfare advisor to gain support for improved animal welfare outcomes.
- Listen to community views to understand concerns and focus our activities where they are most needed.
- Provide engaging and informative outreach programs and services that meet community expectations and needs.
- Deliver programs to keep pets and their owners together in vulnerable segments of the community, including the elderly, people with mental health issues, those living with disability and those experiencing domestic violence.
- Expand our capacity to play an active role in responding to natural disasters.
- Evaluate current outreach activities and explore new ways to connect with the community to encourage cultural, social and financial support of animal welfare activities.
- Increase our volunteer base to meet growing demand for services and expand our positive impact on animal welfare standards.



What success looks like

- ✓ Our level of community engagement grows each year.
- ✓ Our outreach programs have an increasingly positive impact on animals.
- ✓ We have strong community support for what we do.
- ✓ We reach out to diverse communities across the state.
- ✓ The number of animals that come through our last resort shelters decreases as our programs enhance community understanding of the needs of animals.
- ✓ An increase in the engagement of volunteers, including foster carers.



CASE STUDY: Safe Beds

Our Safe Beds program is recognised as a vital element of the wraparound services available for victims and survivors of family/domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness. It is made possible through generous sponsorship from the Pet Barn Foundation as well as the Federal Government's National Partnership on Family/Domestic Violence Responses

We received a phone call from a social worker to say that one of their clients had been admitted to a psychiatric unit but had a large, fractious dog, which was causing the team at the homeless facility serious concern, as it could not be handled. The owner was in psychosis and was not able to give any valuable information about the health or recommended care of the dog. We contacted one of our partner boarding facilities but as the dog had proved difficult in the past, they understandably refused to accept the dog for emergency boarding.

This left us in a difficult situation because a dog who is refused entry to another facility has been excluded for very valid reasons, and ensuring the safety of our own team is vital.

This is where the breadth of experience in our team is critical.

One of the people tasked with transporting animals in this program is a former RSPCA Animal Welfare Inspector and has a wealth of experience with anxious dogs. Our animal transporter was able to coach the social work team on how to manage the animal, while we made plans to bring the dog in. Within 24 hours, we safely transported the dog to our Devonport facility.

The animal was with us for eight weeks, as his owner's recovery was slow.

While the dog was in our care, we employed the services of a behaviourist to assist with training and ongoing support, which meant we were eventually able to return a less anxious, more settled dog to our Safe Beds client.



CASE STUDY: Puppy parking

Salamanca Market is one of Hobart's best known tourist attractions – and a highlight each week for many locals. However, because food is served within the market precinct, dogs are not allowed – and that was creating significant pushback for City of Hobart Council from locals and stall holders. As a result, the Council approached us five years ago to provide a Puppy Parking service at the market.

This involves us setting up a doggy creche on the outskirts of the market where patrons can 'park' their dogs while they experience the market hustle and bustle.

We employ two casual staff with experience in dog handling each week to manage this program. They organise volunteers; pack the van each Friday; set up on Saturday; supervise and look after patrons' dogs during the market; pack up after the markets close; then on Monday, they unpack the van so we can use it for our regular activities.

Council covers the cost of the space we use for Puppy Parking each week. For the first two years, Council also provided funding for one employee each week. Other than that, the RSPCA has borne the cost – which has only been possible through the generous support of our enthusiastic team of volunteers who turn up every weekend to support this activity.

We know this service is valued by market patrons and stall holders. We have only missed a few weeks over five years – due to COVID, weather, or staff illness – and on each occasion we've received messages of disappointment.

Council too has recognised the important role Puppy Parking plays for the market. From April this year, Council has agreed to cover the cost of one staff member each Saturday once again.



Puppy Parking is going
cashless from 7/10/23

**SALAMANCA
MARKET
PUPPY
PARKING**

Saturdays 9am-1pm
\$5 for two hours
contact: events@rspcatas.org.au

RSPCA
Tasmania





INSPECTORATE



What we will do

Protect animals from cruelty and prosecute those who inflict cruelty or cause undue suffering.

How we will do it

We will...

- Embed a positive and collaborative culture in our highly engaged inspectorate team.
- Equip our inspectors with the training and resources they need to do their jobs safely and efficiently.
- Encourage and enable our inspectors to engage with breeders, pet shops and sanctuaries proactively and constructively.
- Investigate expansion of inspectorate services.
- Collaborate closely with state and local governments and other relevant agencies to improve overall animal welfare outcomes.





What success looks like

- ✓ Our inspectors can intervene in a timely manner to assist animals subjected to cruelty or mistreatment or otherwise in distress.
- ✓ Our inspectors are trained and equipped with appropriate resources to safely deal with calls for assistance.
- ✓ Roles, responsibilities, funding and other resources are clearly defined across all agencies engaged in the prevention of cruelty to animals.

CASE STUDY: Interagency MOU project

A number of agencies and organisations have responsibilities for animal welfare under Tasmanian legislation and regulations. As well as the RSPCA, these include Biosecurity Tasmania, Tasmania Police, the Office of Racing Integrity, and local government. Other agencies may have relevant responsibilities, including in cases of animals in care of people with mental health issues or where community service orders are issued by courts.

Information exchange about animal welfare investigations, offenders, and suspects is therefore an important tool in ensuring a more seamless and whole-of-government approach to managing animal welfare outcomes across the state. In particular, information is required from police about dangers present at a property attended by compliance and enforcement personnel, including RSPCA inspectors, or about the location of offenders wanted for questioning or for appearance in court proceedings.

However, there are currently few provisions for information exchange between these agencies in the course of their enforcement duties.

For example, convictions against offenders prosecuted by the RSPCA are not included on criminal history reports, and prohibition orders or prosecutions arising from actions in one jurisdiction are not notified to other agencies for enforcement.

There is a recognition that this inability to exchange information results in lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, hinders investigations, compromises the safety of all personnel involved, and also puts welfare outcomes for animals at risk.

The RSPCA has been funded by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to develop a model Memorandum of Understanding between relevant agencies that will deliver a contemporary and more effective system for co-operative activities and information sharing.



ADVOCACY



What we will do

Lead public awareness by continuously advocating for improvements to animal welfare and recognition and enhancement of bonds between humans and animals.

How we will do it

We will...

- Collaborate with government, industry, and other stakeholders to advocate on behalf of animals and develop legislation and practices that improve the quality of animals' lives.
- Provide reasoned, compassionate and scientifically sound advice to government, industry, and other stakeholders.
- Identify and respond to relevant issues as they arise with credible commentary.
- Continuously develop our understanding of animal welfare based on the best scientific knowledge, and transparently share our findings with the public.
- Develop our data collection and evaluation processes to facilitate evidence-based activity.





What success looks like

- ✓ We have positively impacted decisions of government and community agencies regarding animal welfare.
- ✓ We are recognised as a credible and trusted animal welfare voice.
- ✓ The community is better informed about animal welfare as a result of our efforts.

CASE STUDY: Changes to Animal Welfare Act 1993

The Tasmanian Animal Welfare Act came into effect in 1993. That's a long time ago – and the world is a very different place 30 years on.

People have an expectation that our animal welfare framework is really strong. They want to be sure that if there is cruelty towards an animal, if animals aren't being cared for properly, that we have the good legislation in place to ensure they are held accountable for the decisions they make, and for the actions they take.

Unfortunately, our legislation has not kept pace with changing community attitudes and expectations.

The RSPCA worked closely with the State Government to bring forward a range of amendments to the Act last year. The proposed Amendment Bill secured unanimous support in the Lower House and passed through the Upper House with only three dissenting votes. This is not only an outstanding endorsement of the level of community interest in improved animal welfare legislation, but also the RSPCA's credibility with a wide range of stakeholders and our capacity to drive change.

The use of pronged collars was banned, and authorised officers now have greater power to enter properties and seize animals under a range of proposed changes to Tasmania's animal welfare laws that were tabled in Parliament today. Other changes included greater sentencing options for animal cruelty and aggravated cruelty, and reversing the onus of proof so an animal is assumed to belong to the person listed as the owner in a welfare complaint.

These changes are just the start in bringing Tasmanian legislation up to the standard of other states, where a range of reforms have been ongoing for several years. In some states there has been incremental improvement to existing animal welfare legislation. In other states, there has been a clean sheet rewrite of the legislative framework.

It is important to move our current Act towards best practice. However, while we're doing that, we also need to be thinking about what animal welfare legislation might look like in another 30 years. Recognising animals are sentient is a high priority, as is widening the scope of other legislation to reflect the importance of the relationships people have with their companion animals in ensuring better physical and mental wellbeing.





Our Advocacy Priorities

We drive change to improve the lives of animals, fighting for a future where they are free from fear, cruelty and neglect through pursuit of the following advocacy priorities.

Laws and policies to:

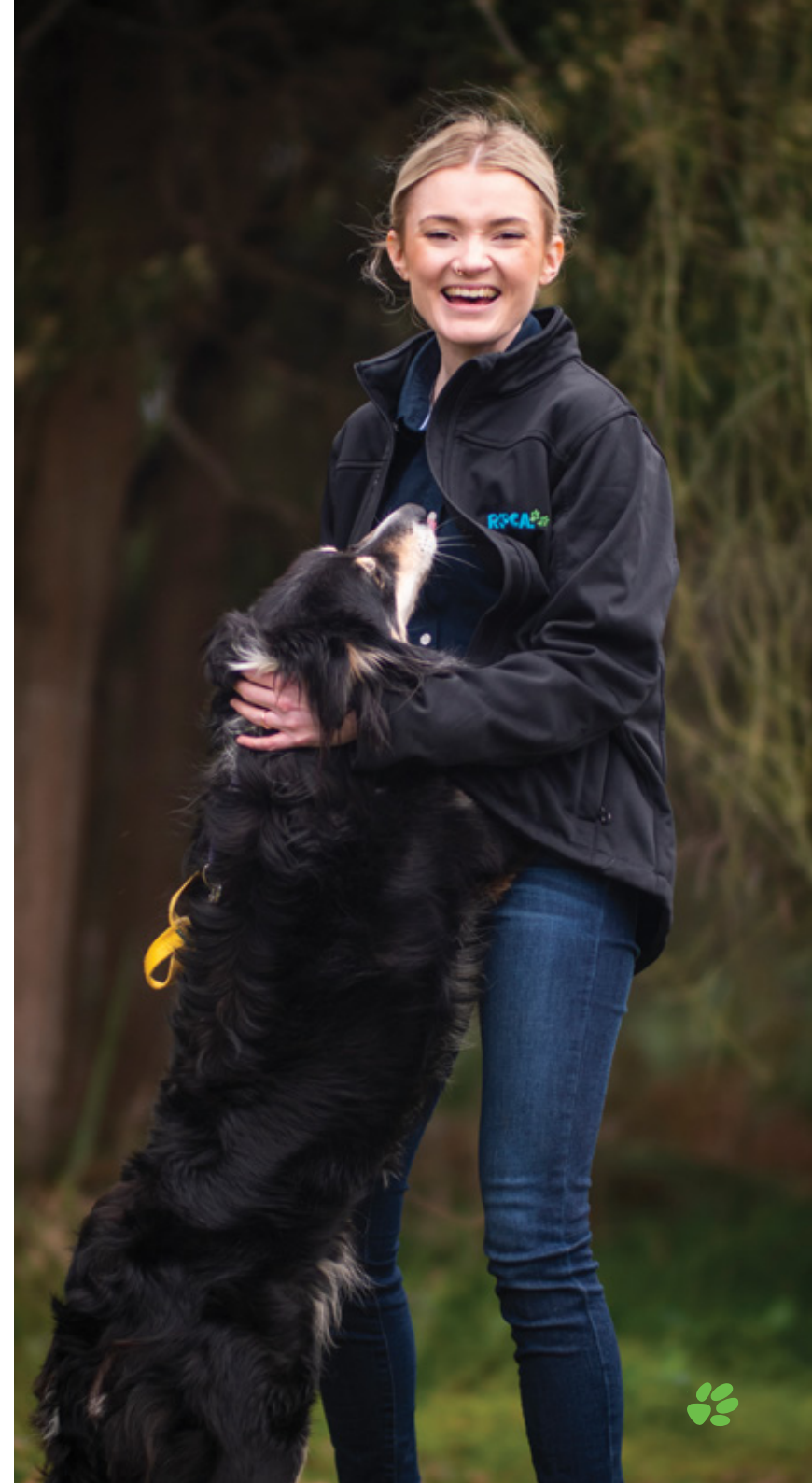
- Recognise the role of companion animals
- Abolish puppy farms and online pet scams
- Ban recreational duck shooting
- Strengthen regulation of greyhound and horse racing
- Phase out public funding for animal racing
- Establish pet friendly tenancy regulations.

Funding to:

- Protect animals from cruelty and help keep pets and their owners together
- Build a stronger inspectorate enforcing animal welfare laws
- Support effective cat management programs
- Expand our Safe Beds program, caring for the companion animals of those escaping abusive situations.

Education to:

- Improve community understanding and change attitudes towards animal welfare issues, with a focus on raising awareness among young people.



CORPORATE



What we will do

Ensure our operations are financially and strategically sustainable, enabling us to deliver optimal outcomes for animals in need and communities across Tasmania into the future.

How we will do it

We will...

- Pursue operational efficiencies to make best use of all funding opportunities and investments.
- Diversify our fundraising activities and sources to secure our long-term viability.
- Consolidate, share and leverage corporate knowledge.
- Provide a safe working environment for all employees and volunteers.
- Build a resilient organisation with development opportunities for our staff, including education and training, and encouraging innovation and sharing of ideas.
- Be transparent in our organisational communication demonstrating inclusivity and respect for all.



What success looks like

- ✓ A financially stable organisation able to implement its vision in caring for Tasmanian animals most in need.
- ✓ A volunteer contribution that effectively supports our financial operations and amplifies our community impact on animal welfare.
- ✓ Well-informed and engaged staff who are inspired by our organisational vision and clearly able to articulate their own individual contributions to the realisation of that vision.





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