RSPCA

for all creatures great & small

Punching Above Your Weight

Michael Linke – CEO RSPCA ACT

The ACT

Some comparisons:

Population

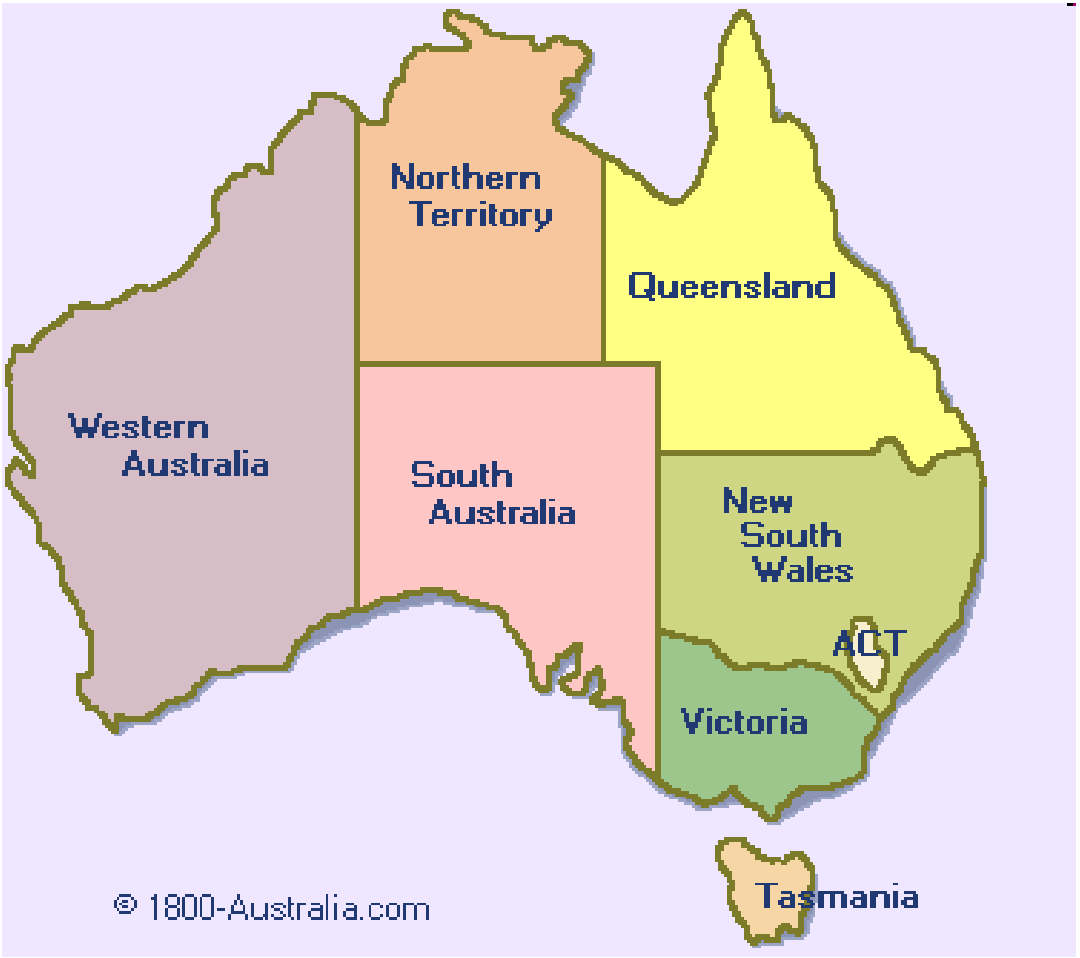
NSW = 6,850,000

ACT = 360,000

Size

WA = 2,500,000 Sq Kms

ACT = 2,400 Sq Kms



RSPCA ACT – a snap shot

- Operating budget 08/09 = $3,500,000
- Staffing = 50FTE, 500 volunteers
- Animals
  - 1600 dogs and puppies
  - 2800 cats and kittens
  - 600 other small animals
  - 3500 native wild animals
- Members = 3,600
- Donors = 7,000

How to punch above your weight

- Firstly, shifting the culture of staff and volunteers
- This shift then leads to:
  - Improved animal welfare
  - Improved revenue
  - Improved public image
- How do you make the shift?

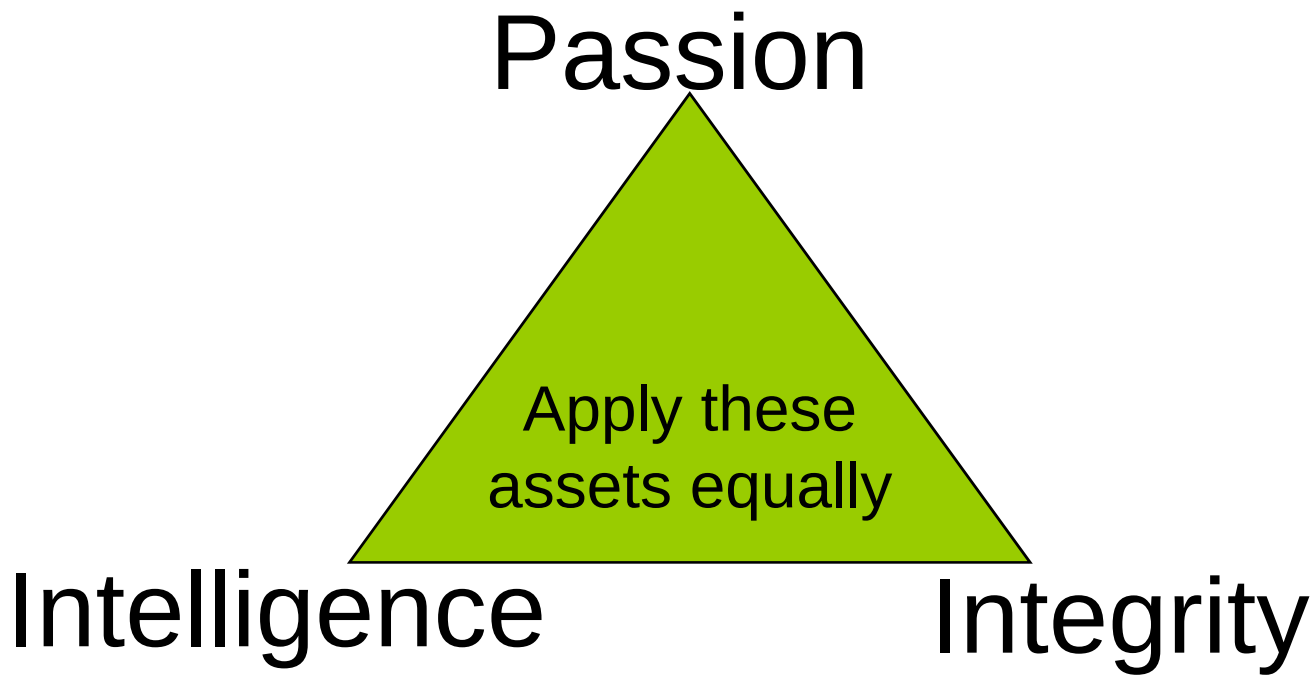
My First Day!

- The Culture
  - Five puppies were surrendered
  - Sent up to the vet clinic for PTS
  - I asked why and was told:

    »“it’s our job”

- How do you change this culture?

The Passion Triangle



Intelligence

- Policy regime
  - We had no policy, so it was whoever had the biggest personality won
  - We now have clear policy - although we don't have a euthanasia policy, for good reason
- Structure
  - Be clear about who makes decisions
- Innovative strategies
  - Environmental enrichment, everyone plays a role
  - Find a friend
  - Training School and Life Skills Book
  - Apartment living

Integrity

- Being honest
  - With your people
  - With the public
- Honesty and openness about decisions
- Open about results
- Reward success
- Learn from, don’t punish mistakes

Passion

- Every animal is given a chance
  - PTS is last thing on our mind now
  - It's Ok to cry
  - We openly talk about decisions
- Staff encouraged to think about innovation
  - Life Skills Book
  - Prime Time Pals
  - Website – won an award – website of the year
  - Find a Friend

Dealing with Fatigue

- Compassion fatigue and what we call “Drink Breaks”
- What is a Drink Break?
  - Time to let off steam
  - Allows staff some time to recharge
  - Safe and friendly environment
  - Externally facilitated

Does a cultural shift improve animal welfare?

- Yes, without a shadow of a doubt
- Lets look at a few indicators
  - Homing rates
  - Revenue
  - Public image
  - Positive staffing benefits

Homing Rates

Animal	2005	2008
Dogs	80% homed, return rate of 15%	93% homed, return rate of 1%
Cats	48% homed	72% homed
Small animals	52% homed	75% homed

Turnover

Income item	2005	2008
Retail sales	$240,000	$1,200,000
Fund Raising	$500,000	$1,500,000

Public Image

- In the ACT we have a very positive public image
- We have a very open relationship with the press
- Our shelter, website, publications, staff uniforms are all very professional
- We have a service charter

An improved culture also helps…

- Reduced sick leave – staff on average are taking 2-3 less sick days per annum
- Reduced turn over – turn over in 2005 was 50%, now running at an all time low of 25%

Example: dog program

- We currently home 93% of all dogs
- We have no time limits
- We are an open admission shelter
- We believe the concept of “no kill” is a fallacy
- We regularly innovate: life skills book, find a friend system, prime time pals, marketing of dogs
- Dog staff are not just kennel hands, we engage three qualified behavioural trainers

Questions?