

## What is a Community Vet Clinic?

A Community Vet Clinic is a not-for-profit clinic which provides low cost veterinary services to animal owners to help **prevent abandoned animals**. It is a key element in Getting to Zero killing of healthy and treatable cats and dogs in pounds and shelters.

Providing **low cost desexing** for owned pets to **reduce unwanted litters of puppies and kittens** is a key role of a Community Vet Clinic. Another important service is **low cost microchipping** which ensures all animals can be reunited with their owners if they are lost. Providing other basic services i.e. **health checks, dental work and vaccinations**, ensures that all pets have access to basic health care. Community Vet Clinics can also **provide more complex procedures and emergency care, so no animal in need is refused treatment due to owners' incapacity to pay.**

A Community Vet Clinic provides services at reduced prices and offers **payment schemes and/or lower prices to owners who are financially disadvantaged**. It prevents animals being euthanized solely because of the owner's financial mismanagement or disadvantage.

A Community Vet Clinic whilst providing a charitable service also **needs to run as a self-sustaining business** so that it can continue to fund the charitable work it does with the communities' pets. A fine balance is required to charge enough for some services so that desexing services can be discounted. The veterinary staff employed at community clinics need to be committed to working in a hectic environment whilst providing a compassionate and caring veterinary service.

**A Community Vet Clinic is similar to a Public Hospital for people.** While many people may choose to attend private hospitals, public hospitals are necessary to ensure basic care is available to all people especially those who cannot afford expensive medical care. Similarly while many people will choose to go to their own local vet for personalized treatment, a Community Vet Clinic provides quality care for animals at affordable prices, with discounted prices negotiated as needed, so that all animals in the community have access to veterinary care.

Community Vet Clinics may also provide services for abandoned animals, by working with local Councils on a contracted basis, providing discounted rates for pound animals' health care and desexing prior to reclaim or rehoming. They may also support rescue groups and pet shops by providing affordable rates for desexing, microchipping and health checks.

## Benefits of a Community Vet Clinic

### Benefits to Animals

- By encouraging and assisting the public with more affordable desexing and microchipping for their pets, the number of stray and abandoned animals in pounds and shelters is substantially reduced. This in turn reduces the high number of animals euthanized annually in pounds and shelters across Australia because there are simply too many –estimated at 180,000.

### Benefits to Animal Owners

- Owners can afford to keep and treat their pets, even if they have financial hardship
- Owners are encouraged and supported to prevent unplanned litters

### Benefits to Councils

- A community vet clinic provides a proactive and rewarding animal management strategy for local councils. With the public able to access cheaper desexing and microchipping the burden to comply with local regulations governing the keeping of animals i.e. compulsory microchipping and desexing, is greatly reduced.
- Desexed pets tend to stray less and those pets that escape their yards can be quickly re-united with their owner if they are microchipped. With promotion and easy availability of just these two services, the cost to local governments to manage the communities' animals can be greatly reduced.
- Community Vet Clinics work with Council Animal Management Departments, pounds and shelters to offer Desexing Subsidy Programs. This helps create better relationships between Councils and the community, with public funds used proactively to desex and prevent unwanted animals and euthanasing.
- Pound and shelter employee's general well-being and health will improve as the number of impounded animals that are euthanased reduces.
- A Community Vet Clinic provides local councils with increased opportunity to address semi-owned and unowned populations of cats who might otherwise not be desexed and contribute to feral and nuisance issues.

**In summary, community vet clinics provide a humane, sustainable, cost effective, and long-term solution for managing the communities' pets at minimum cost to Council and ratepayers.**