



Annual Review 2025

A year of nurturing
and supporting the
human-animal bond



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Our Vision

A world where the human-animal bond is recognised and supported for its role in creating connected and healthy individuals and communities.

Our Mission

To deliver interconnected veterinary and social services that harness the power of the human-animal bond to enhance the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people and their cherished pets, creating connected communities and driving transformative social change.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, work and play, and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waterways, and community and acknowledge that this land was never ceded. As an organisation that values the human-animal bond, we endeavour to learn from, and incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and the idea of oneness into our practice, in order to benefit both the land on which we live and all beings residing upon it.



Healthy Pet
Happy Pet
Content Pet

Cherished
Pets

Message from our Board

This year has been one of both reflection and renewal as we celebrate ten years of Cherished Pets Foundation.

Our 10-year milestone provides a moment to honour our journey, from humble beginnings in Geelong to becoming a national voice for veterinary social services.

Like many charities, we have faced the ongoing challenges of a changing funding landscape and increased need for our services, requiring us to adapt and rethink how we sustain our mission. True to the Cherished Pets' spirit, we have responded with creativity, collaboration, and courage – launching new fundraising initiatives, building stronger community partnerships, and refining our model of care to ensure every service delivers the greatest possible impact.

The Anthony Costa Foundation and Geelong Community Foundation once again provided steadfast support, enabling us to maintain critical services. Their belief in our work, and the generosity of so many others, has ensured that pets and people in need can be supported.

Our incredible team and volunteers continued to deliver meaningful impact, with over 2,600 volunteer hours and 2,200 nights of respite care provided to support vulnerable pet owners. We strengthened our referral pathways with 18 social service agencies, further embedding our model within the broader care ecosystem.

As we look to the future, our focus is on sustainability and systems change, ensuring that every person and pet can access compassionate, connected care. This means deepening partnerships, diversifying income, and advocating for the integration of pet welfare into social systems.

We extend heartfelt thanks to our volunteers, donors, partners and community. Together, we are building a compassionate system where people and their pets can thrive, side by side. Here's to our next chapter – one of hope, purpose, and shared care for every cherished pet and person.

Cherished Pets Foundation Board of Directors

Impact Overview



349 Crisis Care
Beneficiaries



36 Home Care
Assistance Clients



27 Social Service
Agencies



37 Volunteers
delivering
2,300 hours of
volunteer support



79% increase in
volunteer
contribution per
volunteer



50% growth in
referring partners

*This growth reflects:
Stronger sector collaboration
improved referral pathways
increased service awareness*

Crisis Care demand continues to be driven by **financial hardship (23%)**, **hospitalisation (21%)**, and **ageing-related challenges (17%)**. **Housing instability, mental health crises, and family violence together account for 28% of cases**, reflecting the need for strong cross-sector collaboration.

Crisis-related rehoming and other complex circumstances represented 11% of support provided. This distribution demonstrates the breadth of need and the essential role of coordinated, pet-inclusive crisis support pathways.



972 nights of pet
respite care

★ 4.87

Average volunteer
experience rating
demonstrating
consistently positive
volunteer-client
interactions.



Our Theory of Change



Our Services

By interconnecting veterinary care with human health and wellbeing services, we support positive health, wellbeing, and social outcomes.



Home Care Assistance Program

Our Home Care Assistance Program supports older and vulnerable pet owners in the Geelong region, particularly those living alone, with a disability, or facing unexpected challenges.

Grounded in our belief that pets are family, this program provides practical, in-home support to help people care for their pets and keep them safely at home. Services include volunteer dog walking and pet transport assistance, animal health and wellbeing check-ups delivered by our Community Vet Nurse, and assistance to complete emergency care plans in the event that people are not able to care for their cherished pets.

By ensuring pets receive the care they need, we help owners overcome barriers to accessing veterinary and social support, reducing stress and strengthening wellbeing for both people and pets.

The program also fosters social connection, reduces isolation and loneliness, and keeps pets out of shelters – easing pressure on the broader animal welfare system by helping pets remain with their families, where they belong.

A Circle of Care for Mavournee & Georgie

With the right support, even life's hardest chapters can be filled with comfort, care and connection.

Mavournee first connected with Cherished Pets in 2018 through our volunteer dog walking program. When she brought her beloved dog Georgie to the Cherished Pets Community Veterinary Clinic in early 2023 for a simple ear infection, our team soon realised there was more we could do to support them both at home.

Through the Cherished Pets Foundation, a Community Vet Nurse began daily visits to clean Georgie's ears and give medication. What started as short-term treatment grew into an ongoing relationship built on trust and care.

As Georgie recovered, monthly check-ins continued to monitor her diet and wellbeing. Volunteer dog walkers joined the circle of care, taking Georgie out twice a week for her favourite neighbourhood walks. Over time, this small team became a lifeline for Mavournee, offering companionship and reassurance.

Recently, Georgie faced another challenge — a cancerous mass that required surgery. The Community Vet Nurse provided in-home care so Georgie could recover in comfort and dignity, surrounded by familiar faces. Now considered palliative, Georgie continues to receive gentle, loving support to maintain her quality of life.

For many older Australians, pets are their closest companions — a source of routine, comfort, and unconditional love. Through programs like ours, older people can continue caring for their animals safely at home, reducing loneliness and isolation while improving wellbeing for both pets and people.







Crisis Care Program

Supporting people in crisis. Keeping pets safe.

When people face homelessness, family violence, or sudden hospitalisation, their pets can become a barrier to safety or care — yet they are also a lifeline of comfort and connection.

Our Crisis Care Program ensures pets are safe and cared for while their owners access the help they need.

Thanks to the Anthony Costa Foundation, we have been able to sustain and strengthen this vital service, providing emergency pet care, veterinary support, and compassionate case management for people in crisis.

At the heart of this program are our Human-Animal Bond Practitioners, including our Social Worker, who connects human and animal welfare systems — ensuring both people and pets are supported through trauma-informed care. Working with housing, family violence, and community agencies, we're modelling a systems-change approach that integrates animal welfare into social policy and practice.

Every pet we keep safe prevents another person from falling through the cracks.

When pets remain with their families, people are more likely to seek help, recover, and rebuild their lives.

Our Social Worker is the vital link between animal welfare and human care, ensuring no one has to choose between their own safety and their pet's wellbeing.

By demonstrating how pet care directly supports outcomes in housing stability, mental health, and family safety, Cherished Pets Foundation is influencing broader social systems.

Keeping Samantha and Diesel Together Through Life's Challenges

Recently, we supported Samantha, who became homeless after leaving a family violence situation. When she left, she had to make the heartbreakin decision to leave her five-year-old kelpie, Diesel, behind in a situation where she feared for his safety.

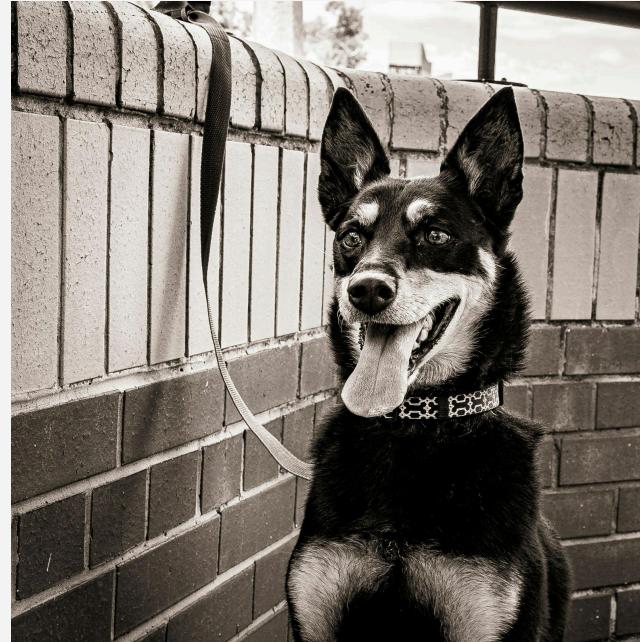
Not knowing whether he was okay caused her enormous distress, particularly after she was admitted to hospital for mental health treatment. Being separated from him made it difficult for her to focus on her recovery, and she shared that she could not truly focus on herself until she knew he was safe and being cared for.

Through the Cherished Pets Foundation Crisis Care Program, and with funding from the Anthony Costa Foundation Grant, our team worked with local partners to create a coordinated plan for Diesel's safe care and later reunion with Samantha. We arranged private pet transport to bring him to the Cherished Pets Hub, where he received a health check and behaviour assessment from our Community Veterinary Nurse.

Diesel then spent a few days at a local boarding facility for behaviour assessment before meeting one of our Cherished Pets volunteer respite carers. After a calm and positive introduction, Diesel moved into home-based respite care with our volunteer where he quickly settled and relaxed. Throughout this time, Samantha received regular updates and photos, helping her feel reassured and connected.

When Samantha's health improved, we arranged a supervised visit for her and Diesel at a local park. We worked with Samantha's health care team to facilitate her reunion with Diesel when she was ready to care for him and maintain the human-animal bond. It was such a joyful and hopeful moment.

This shows how our veterinary social services work in partnership with local health, housing and community agencies to help people in crisis to access the care and support they need without the fear of losing their cherished pets.



With thanks

With gratitude to our generous supporters – your belief in our mission helps pets and people thrive together.



Anthony Costa
Foundation



Ducas Paul Foundation

Pets Regardless Foundation



We thank Cherished Pets Community Veterinary Care for their valued partnership, which enables us to deliver vital services across the Geelong region and ensure pets and their people receive compassionate, connected care.

Monthly Donors

Our Monthly Donors are the steady heartbeat of Cherished Pets. This regular generosity provides the stability we need to respond quickly, and deliver compassionate care year-round. We are profoundly thankful for their enduring generosity.

Annual Appeal Supporters

Each year, our Annual Appeal unites a community of generous supporters who believe in the power of the human-animal bond. We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who gave during the year.

cherishedpetcare.com.au

Please visit our website or scan the QR code to learn more about how you can support our work

