

President's Report 2025

As always, this last year has had its fair share of challenges, not the least being the continued rise in living costs combined with rising unemployment rates. The result of this is twofold: an increase in the number of cats needing to be surrendered to CPW care, and a decrease in the number of people wanting to/able to adopt. More people are moving overseas and unable to take their pets with them; more owners are struggling with care costs; and rentals that accept pets are still proving to be difficult to find.

Nevertheless, thanks to CPW's financial support, the Care For Life Programme continues without disruption despite rising veterinary costs. It's reassuring that senior cats are still finding loving homes.

Keeping cats safe until we, or another rescue, can help is becoming increasingly important and much time is spent by our Team-Leads offering alternatives/suggestions and general guidance. Our partner vet clinics are also instrumental in providing a lifeline for cats who would otherwise be without homes – and sometimes their lives - taking ownership of and boarding cats until we can take them in.

While there isn't a great deal that we can do to lessen the numbers of cats on the waitlist, we are working on increasing our social media presence so that more people know about us and about our cats. Our website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc are now the most effective advertising modes and while we have had many people offer to help in these areas, initial enthusiasm and changes in available time doesn't always translate to the commitment, consistency and frequency needed to gain maximum exposure and responses. We are very lucky to have the volunteers and staff members that we do who have been quietly managing these areas – as well as the newsletters and the monthly Brooklyn Tatler's CPW Cat of the month, thank you to Amy – for many years. We look forward to increased engagement with the public through more of our volunteers now getting on board 😊

Tapping into the very positive cat community out there is also a good way of maintaining awareness of the pressures faced by the public, something which can easily be missed in the face of managing a busy shelter and desexing programme 24/7. Maintaining positive relationships with and working alongside other rescues continues to be an important part of us all achieving our goals of providing a better life for cats in need.

Provision of that better life falls to the people involved and CPW is extraordinarily lucky in both its paid staff and its volunteers.

I can't speak highly enough of the committee (Amanda, Sharon, Charine, Kate and Gabby) who keep CPW 'ticking along' but who also keep an eye on the governance and management elements of running a charity, as well as being active in their 'hands-on' roles – on shifts in the shelter, managing the finances, ensuring that our health and safety requirements are met and keeping fundraising going. On top of that are the hours spent on areas outside usual committee responsibilities, such as revamping the memorial garden and facilitating photography for the annual calendar.

The teams of volunteers who turn up fortnightly or weekly to help care for our shelter cats continue to surprise and impress me with their commitment, good humour, willingness to

help and huge love of the cats. Team members usually stay with us for months and months at a time, and at least 50% have been with us for many years, which ensures both increased consistency of care, positive team interactions and increasing knowledge and skills. Being able to offer a placement in these teams for students in Animal Care or in Veterinary Nursing studies is still very important to us, both from an educational point of view and as part of our meeting one of CPW's core goals. At any given time we are likely to have two or three such students on our volunteer teams.

We are also lucky to have those who volunteer their time and skill in non-shelter areas (social media, providing product for and managing market stalls, keeping the volunteer Facebook page on track, etc) as they too are an integral part of our mahi.

As I have said before, we couldn't do what we now do without our Team Leads Delwyn and Elle, and our Relief Team Lead, Julie. Between them, and the effective assistance of Rebecca (our evening and admin employee), the level of care offered to our cats until they find new homes, the management of the volunteer teams, care of the foster programme and interactions with the public has been consistently high, resulting in extremely positive feedback on the public's perception of what CPW is and what CPW does. As the public face of CPW, we could not ask for better, and as the providers of empathetic and effective care of our cats we could not ask for more.

Again, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all the vets who partner with us – from the Wairarapa to Kapiti and through to the Hutt Valley and Wellington we are very lucky to have their involvement in caring for the cats coming through the desexing programme, our foster cats and our 'in-patient' shelter cats. Without their expertise, compassion and flexibility we would not be able to offer the ongoing medical support that our cats require – and in the case of Central Veterinary Hospital in Brooklyn in particular – collegial and educative support for our staff as well.

Now that the Memorial Garden upgrade is complete – thanks to Amanda – we have focused on another of our maintenance tasks: that of upgrading our current cages in the main shelter. In constant and heavy use since the day the shelter opened in 2007, the cages are now showing their age with the MDF swelling and splitting in places while the cage door wire is becoming increasingly unsafe as it comes away from their frames. It is a testament to the skill of those who made the cages in the first place that they have lasted so long, but years of tidy ups and DIY fixes have come to an end and we are looking forward to new, fully enclosed plywood cages with perspex doors and shelves, and with rounded corners that will be both easier and safer to clean. DRD, the building company who so successfully built our West Wing, are taking on this task.

We have also investigated the possibility of getting the grouting between the floor tiles replaced at the same time.

It is no mean feat to orchestrate the replacement of the 20 cages between the three rooms and we thank Delwyn, in particular, Elle and Julie and their volunteers for their forbearance in managing a temporary shelter upstairs in the West Wing as well as an increase in the number of cats located in the West Wing's lower level. As a result, it became necessary to hold this year's AGM online!. Thanks also to Julie for taking four of our more 'behaviourally complex' cats (Billie, Beans, Stanley and Charlie Boy) to her cattery for the duration.

From the Analysis of Revenue part of the Financial Performance Review you'll see that we have been the recipients of seven different legacies in the last financial year and we recognise our reliance on the kindness and generosity of such people. Day to day donations of food, bedding, climbing towers etc continue to be made which just reinforces that our cats and CPW as a whole are valued by the wider community.

From our people to events and now to the cats themselves...as always, we have cared for a great many cats over the last year including several with complicated medical situations: insulin-dependent Thomas, Charlie Baby with her extremely unusual pituitary dwarfism and Minxie, with her unexplained and intractable low platelet levels. A fair few have had temperament or behavioural idiosyncrasies: ginger girl Fizz, extremely shy girl Bentley, demanding tabby girl Mog and Rosie Posie, who was so matted and unwell it was hard to recognize her as a cat at all. We also had small Petra whose self destructive tendencies finally resulted in her whole tail needing to be amputated. We watched as love affairs, largely reciprocated, blossomed in the Timids' room between Watson and Thena, and Missy with her Thomas. Wasabi stoically endured a fractured kneecap, reconstructive surgery and months of limited exercise without any effect on her outgoing and loving personality. All these cats have since found new, loving homes.

Very sadly we lost long term resident Bostic to a sudden overnight death due to his chronic illness, Patch had a totally unexpected heart attack after her dental, and D2 finally succumbed to his IBD.....and of course some of our senior foster cats have crossed the rainbow bridge so there *has* been sadness and tears, but we know that every cat directly or indirectly in CPW care has been valued and given a second chance with a warm and safe place to be.

The final word must be in acknowledgment of Jeremy, our long-standing 'meet and greet' shelter cat, who is now 19 years old. Although he is no longer as active as before, Jeremy continues to reside at the shelter with managed palliative care for arthritis, chronic kidney disease, and a blood disorder. In addition, he has had a lumpy tumour growing on his left ear lobe and twice now he has removed it himself since he is no longer safe to have a general anaesthetic. Jeremy nevertheless continues to yell loudly when he is hungry (at the kitchen door as soon as the Team-Lead arrives in the morning, telling us it is lunchtime around 11 am and demanding dinner at about 4.30 pm). He also jumps up to seek laps whenever there are people on the couches for morning tea - any cream cake or sandwich with cheese is simply not safe if he spots it! - and blisses out in the sun on the deck. As with all our cats, quality of life - not length of life - is paramount, so he is on a very frequent QOL check, but for the meantime he is still with us and sends you all squawks and purrs.

Iona Anderson, President