

# SYDNEY DOGS & CATS HOME

 PO BOX 4105, KOGARAH BAY NSW 2217  
 02 9587 9611

 SYDNEYDOGSANDCATSHOME.ORG  
 INFO@SYDNEYDOGSANDCATSHOME.ORG

 ABN: 16 943 464 587  
 CFN: 16738

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Date:** 14/12/2021

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### Headline:

Animal Shelter Forced to Turn Away Influx of Surrender Requests Post-lockdown

### Lead:

Each week as Covid restrictions lift, charity animal shelter Sydney Dogs & Cats Home (SDCH) currently fields an average of 40 phone calls every week from the general public requesting support to surrender or rehome companion animals.

### Body:

SDCH Acting General Manager Rebecca Beare said the shelter simply doesn't have the resources to keep up with increasing numbers of lost, abandoned and neglected pets.

"The demand for council impound services is high!" she said.

"Each animal that enters our shelter receive a veterinary examination, and all animals are microchipped, vaccinated, treated for parasites, and tested for common diseases. The average stay per council animal at our shelter is currently 27 days and the cost of the average stay for an animal at our shelter is \$1,355.00, with only a small portion covered by council fees. Unfortunately, this means that we often can't afford to support the 100% funding requirements of animals surrendered by the general public."

Sydney Dogs & Cats Home cares for lost, abandoned and surrendered companion animals and aims to reunite, rehabilitate and rehome these animals. There are two main avenues by which animals enter the facility: through council partners and direct from members of the public. A smaller number of animals enter the facility after being accepted from other animal welfare organisations.

A trend has emerged post-lockdown worldwide, where many companion animals adopted during lockdown have been surrendered or abandoned due to their owners no longer having the time for them. Sydney Dogs & Cats Home has noticed this trend is prevalent in Sydney, but while there has been an increase in the number of animals that have come through the doors, this isn't unusual for this time of the year and every avenue is explored to reunite or rehome as many animals as possible.

Dr Renae Jackson, Sydney Dogs and Cats Home, Animal Care Manager advises the following, "I urge people to consider the commitment before taking on an animal; animals have their own personalities and needs and do require ongoing care. People should consider how their lives may change over the 15-20 year lifespan of a pet and be sure they can accommodate the pet over that time. If people feel they may need to surrender their animal, I recommend that pet owners look into different options before they make this decision. Many behavioural or medical issues can actually be simple to treat or manage if professional advice is sought early on, meaning that people can keep their pets rather than rehoming them. If they have no other option, owners should have their pet microchipped, desexed, vaccinated and any health issues addressed prior to rehoming, so that shelters and rescue groups aren't left to cover these costs."

# WOOF. MEOW.



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Sydney Dogs & Cats Home provides stray animal holding services for eight Sydney councils. Lost animals are found by members of the public or by council animal management officers and are approved by the relevant council to be impounded at Sydney Dogs & Cats Home.

Every effort is made to reunite the animal with their owner by utilising the Companion Animal Register, national microchip databases, information on collars and tags, information from veterinary clinics and investigation into where the animal was found and who the owner may be. Animals are also photographed and posted on the Sydney Dogs & Cats Home website and social media pages and local community social media pages.

Over the past year (July 2020 – June 2021) Sydney Dogs & Cats Home has reunited 406 dogs and 54 cats with their owners. In some situations, owners may require assistance to reclaim their loved animals; Sydney Dogs & Cats Home provides this assistance in the form of veterinary care, financial assistance and animal care education.

Sydney Dogs & Cats Home also selectively accept animals who can no longer be cared for by their owners. The reasons for surrender may include people with health issues or elderly people who cannot physically care for their animal, people whose landlords have ordered them to remove their beloved pets or, more recently, people who have lost their homes or employment due to Covid-19. Sydney Dogs & Cats Home takes in these animals when possible and provides all the care they need prior to rehoming.

The animals are held at the shelter in secure enclosures with a focus on stress reduction and disease control. While Sydney Dogs & Cats Home shelter processes are aligned with the NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No. 5, they typically exceed the welfare standards set out by these guidelines. Many dedicated volunteers attend the shelter daily and assist by cleaning, walking, playing with and spending time with the animals. While many animals are held on site, a large number are also placed in temporary foster care where they experience a more realistic home environment.

If Sydney Dogs & Cats Home is unsuccessful in reuniting animals with their owners, the animal undergoes behavioural and veterinary assessment and, if healthy and treatable, is rehomed. Sydney Dogs & Cats Home adheres to the 'Getting to Zero' goal of rehoming every healthy and treatable animal and does not place a time limit on finding the animals new homes.

A thorough veterinary examination is conducted, and all animals are microchipped, vaccinated, treated for parasites, and tested for common diseases. If the animal requires medical or surgical treatment, this is provided by experienced veterinarians and veterinary nurses. Treatment can range from simple desexing to complex soft tissue, dental and orthopaedic surgery. The Sydney Dogs & Cats Home veterinary team have many years' experience working in animal shelters and are passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of our shelter animals.

Animals at the Home undergo a behavioural assessment process to determine the specific needs of the animal so they can be best matched to an appropriate home. During their time at the shelter, the animals receive daily behaviour support including mental enrichment, physical exercise, behavioural modification, play and socialising with other animals. Sydney Dogs & Cats Home.

The rehoming process aims to match the most suitable animal to the most suitable person, with the welfare of both the animal and person as the top priority. Our goal is to place each animal into a home as soon as possible, while ensuring the safety and welfare of all involved. The experienced staff discuss the animal's needs with potential adopters and provide information, education and training support to all adopters. A three-week trial period is offered to all adopters; since Sydney Dogs & Cats Home does not know the background of most of the animals, it is understood that

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some new homes may inadvertently be a mismatch. If the adoption is not successful, the animal is readily taken back to be placed in a more appropriate home. In most cases, the placement of the animal is successful and results in many happy experiences for the adopters, the animals and the Sydney Dogs & Cats Home team.

To view our animals in our care currently, you can visit our lost but found page <https://sydneydogsandcatshome.org/lost-but-found/> and our adopt page <https://sydneydogsandcatshome.org/adopt/>.

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## Image Title

Pablo – The French Bulldog

## Image Credit

Daniella Cortis

## Image Caption

Pablo the French Bulldog had been surrendered to Sydney Dogs & Cats Home due to no fault of his own. It was a rare occurrence to find an almost 2-year-old French Bulldog available for adoption from a shelter. Pablo's adopter Helle knew his size and placid temperament would be best suited to her rescue dog Ayla and two young daughters.

More information can be found here: <https://sydneydogsandcatshome.org/pablo-the-frenchie-perfect-pooch-completes-young-family/>

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## Quotes:

*“Sydney Dogs & Cats Home is Sydney's only charity pound and community facility and is owned and operated by The Sydney Dogs & Cats Home Incorporated association. The Home has been taking care of Sydney's lost, abandoned and neglected pets since 1946. We open our doors to up to thousands of pets each year, servicing multiple council areas across Sydney. As a charity council impound facility we currently fund 60% of all animal care costs via fundraising efforts in order to support animals brought to us via council rangers.”*

Rebecca Beare, Acting General Manager

*“The demand for council impound services is high! Each animal that enters our shelter receive a veterinary examination, and all animals are microchipped, vaccinated, treated for parasites, and tested for common diseases. The average stay per council animal at our shelter is currently 27 days and the cost of the average stay for an animal at our shelter is \$1,355.00, with only a small portion covered by council fees. Unfortunately, this means that we often can't afford to support the 100% funding requirements of animals surrendered by the general public.”*

Rebecca Beare, Acting General Manager

*“I urge people to consider the commitment before taking on an animal; animals have their own personalities and needs and do require ongoing care. People should consider how their lives may change over the 15-20 year lifespan of a pet and be sure they can accommodate the pet over that time. If people feel they may need to surrender their animal, I recommend that pet owners look into different options before they make this decision. Many behavioural or medical issues can actually be simple to treat or manage if professional advice is sought early on, meaning that people can keep their pets rather than rehoming them. If they have no other option, owners should have their pet microchipped, desexed, vaccinated and any health issues addressed prior to rehoming, so that shelters and rescue groups aren't left to cover these costs.”*

Dr Renae Jackson, Animal Care Manager

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## ABOUT US

Sydney Dogs & Cats Home is Sydney's only charity pound and community facility and is owned and operated by The Sydney Dogs & Cats Home Incorporated.

The Home has been taking care of Sydney's lost, abandoned and neglected pets since 1946. We open our doors to up to thousands of pets each year, servicing multiple council areas across Sydney including:

- [Bayside](#)
- [Fairfield](#)
- [Georges River](#)
- [Inner West](#)
- [North Sydney](#)
- [Randwick](#)
- [Waverley](#)
- [Woollahra](#)

We aim to provide shelter, food and veterinary care to lost, homeless and abandoned animals, primarily dogs and cats, in association with the local councils of Sydney. We act under the [NSW Companion Animals Act 1998](#) and the associated [Companion Animals Regulations and Codes of Practice](#) and care for pets until a time when such animals can either be reunited with their owners or found a new, suitable home.

We support the [Getting to Zero](#) movement, which means we strive to rehome every healthy and treatable animal that comes through our doors, and we never place a time limit on any animal awaiting adoption.

We also deliver a range of successful mental health-focused [community programs](#), creating a lifeline to both the animals we care for and those in the community who need it most.

We are a member of [Companion Animal Network Australia](#) (ACAN), which comprises six member agencies, each aiming to make the world a better place for pets. Through national campaigns, partnerships and initiatives, we celebrate the human-animal bond and promote responsible pet ownership. We use our national voice to campaign for the humane treatment of all companion animals, and we rally support for programmes that deliver high welfare standards.

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