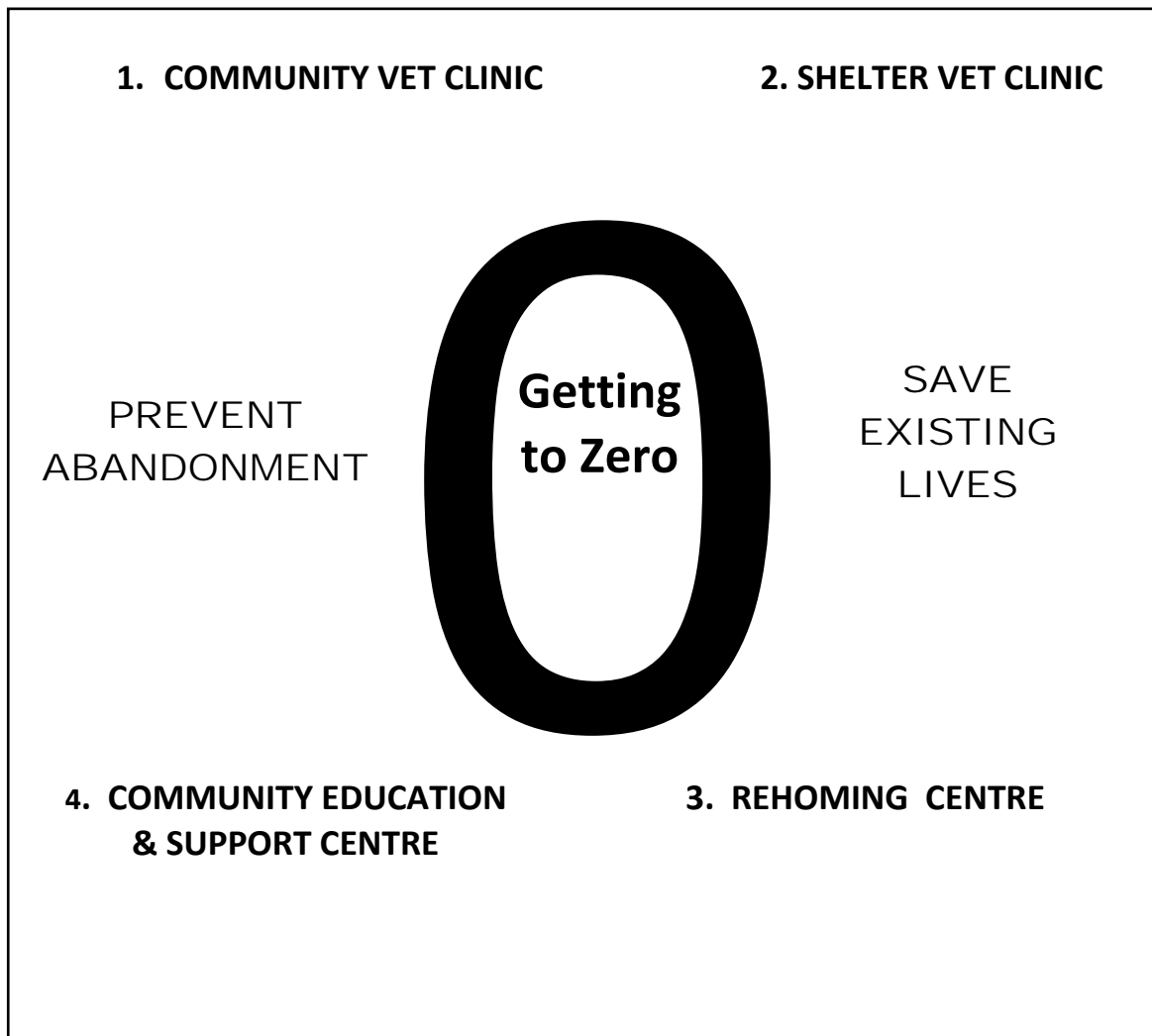


Getting to Zero

A Whole Community Change Model AWL Qld, Gold Coast, Australia

This model provides the key elements for Getting to Zero Euthanasia of healthy and treatable abandoned cats and dogs in YOUR city or shire. It has been developed and trialed successfully over the last few years by AWL Qld.

It can be adopted by local government animal management departments or animal welfare shelters, and preferably, partnerships between the two.



3 Principles for Getting to Zero

1st Principle:

Each community takes responsibility for saving its own abandoned animals.

Pounds and shelters address the abandonment of cats and dogs as a community issue and involve all local stakeholders in the solutions. The numbers of abandoned animals coming into the pounds, shelters and rescue organizations, and the proportions that are being euthanized are disclosed to encourage people to act i.e. Desex, identify, train and keep animals safe and happy.

Everyone needs to be informed and contributing to the solution including animal owners, breeders, pet shops, vets, dog trainers, governments, animal shelters, rescue groups, wildlife groups, teachers, students and the general public.

2nd Principle:

Zero euthanasia of at least 90% of all incoming animals in a given community (i.e. all healthy and treatable cats and dogs) is achievable.

The managers and staff believe it and want to achieve it. They continually add and improve strategies to get closer to zero euthanasia every year.

3rd Principle:

All cats and dogs are equally deserving of our utmost efforts to preserve and enhance their lives.

This includes the stray and unowned animals, the cross-breeds, the boisterous untrained adolescent dogs, the timid cats, the sick, the young, the old, and those lacking the “cute” factor.

1. COMMUNITY VET CLINIC

Preventing Abandonment of Owned Animals

A **Community Vet Clinic** is owned/managed by an individual or group with a strong commitment to saving all healthy and treatable animals in the particular community. It provides access to the community to reduce overpopulation and to ensure that no animal has to lose his/her life because of owner's financial disadvantage or mismanagement. It also allows access to desexing services for ease of compliance with legislation e.g. breeder permits, registration for subsidized registration.

Services:

- a. Low cost desexing and microchipping as standard practice
- b. Early age desexing from 8 weeks of age and 1 kilo in weight for kittens; puppies approx 2 kg for average size breeds
- c. Desexing campaigns and regular promotion
- d. Other veterinary services at reduced rates as needed
- e. Ongoing subsidies/free services to end the cycle of unwanted litters through:
 - i. Last Litter Fund – desex mother cat or dog of a surrendered litter
 - ii. Pound Fund – desex reclaimed animals at point of release
 - iii. Membership of the National Desexing Network
- f. Wholesale desexing prices prior to sale or transfer for pet shops, breeders and rescue groups

2. SHELTER VET CLINIC

Saving and preventing further breeding of pound/shelter/rescue animals

A **Shelter Vet Clinic** offers full veterinary services for all pound/shelter animals preferably on site.

Services:

- a. Desexing, microchipping, health checking, worming, providing flea treatment and heart worm testing prior to being placed in the rehoming area
- b. Early age desexing from 8 weeks of age and 1 kilo in weight for kittens; puppies approx 2 kg for average size breeds
- c. Daily health checks of all animals
- d. Treatment of sick and injured pound/shelter animals
- e. Free veterinary support for foster carers of pound/shelter animals
- f. After sale health guarantee work for rehomed pound/shelter animals
- g. Train vet students in early age desexing (where possible)
- h. Veterinary Support for Trap Neuter Release programs in appropriate environments
- i. Pick up service for collection of animals so that all animals can access services

3. REHOMING CENTRE

A Rehoming Centre saves all healthy and treatable stray and surrendered animals in each community (i.e. at least 90% of the community's animals)

Care of Pound/Shelter Animals

Services:

- a. Capacity of rehoming pens sufficient in relation to numbers of incoming stray and abandoned animals
- b. Efficient movement through the system for animals to be rehomed as quickly as possible
- c. Substantial fostering program
- d. Large network of volunteers
- e. Size and structure of pens allows animals comfort and ability to express normal behaviour
- f. Enrichment and socialization for each species to reduce stress
- g. Training of animals to increase rehoming ability
- h. Rehabilitation for treatable cats and dogs with emotional disorders

Finding Responsible Homes

Services:

- a. Focus on increasing reclaim rates each year
- b. Focus on increasing rehoming rates each year
- c. An easily accessible location
- d. Open when public are available – late in afternoon, weekends, public holidays
- e. Positive communication, promotion and marketing of animals
- f. Bright inviting environment
- g. Pre-adoption interviews to find the best match
- h. Off-site adoptions through pet shops/mobile rehoming units
- i. Involve the community in the zero euthanasia goal
- j. Involve community networks to help rehome animals
- k. Data gathering to assess rehoming progress

4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION & SUPPORT CENTRE

A **Community Education and Support Centre** provides services to prevent animals from being abandoned and develop involvement of all stakeholders.

Owner Education and Support

Services:

- a. Animal Management Officers return animals home rather than impounding, provide advice/support to owners to prevent straying, and efficient systems for matching lost and found animals
- b. Pre-surrender interviews to educate and offer alternatives to surrender e.g. training courses, advice
- c. Comprehensive information and support for new and inexperienced owners
- d. Post adoption support - phone calls, and problem-specific information and training
- e. Pet friendly accommodation development and support
- f. Cat safe fencing education
- g. Early age desexing education

Stakeholder Education and Involvement

Services:

- a. Networks of local government, breeders, vets, pet shops, wildlife groups, and shelter & rescue groups to develop understanding and cooperative involvement in the solutions
- b. Breeder permits to help reduce oversupply and improve the well-being of breeding animals and their litters
- c. Support structures for foster carers and rescue groups
- d. Education of the whole community – from prep to university students and the general public - on how they can help get to zero
- e. Education and support networks to care for, and reduce numbers in, unowned cat colonies

Working Together

AWL Qld, with the help of the Elsie Cameron Foundation, offers support to pounds, shelters and rescue groups to implement this model. Through implementing and sustaining these services, each community in Australia can Get to Zero.

For more information on Getting to Zero, go to www.awlqld.com.au or contact: Joy Verrinder Strategic Development Officer AWL Qld joy@awlqld.com.au