



MOUNT ALEXANDER
Animal Welfare

Mt Alexander Animal Welfare Inc.
No. A0100480K
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The purpose of Mount Alexander Animal Welfare Incorporated A0100480K is:

- (1) To promote the welfare of animals in Mt Alexander Shire and elsewhere.**
- (2) To operate and manage shelters and other facilities.**
- (3) To encourage the awareness of animal welfare generally.**

Q&A'S

What is happening with the Vet Clinic at the Shelter?

The Vet Clinic proposal was put to the MAAW Committee in December 2019. It was an application for a Capital Grant from the Department of Agriculture. The grant amount was for \$91,000 and it was to be used for modifications to the building and the conversion of the current vet room into an operating theatre. At the time of submission, the Treasurer of the day stated that further information was required before this could proceed. In May the shelter was advised that the grant was successful, however, the Committee decided not to accept the grant because the requested information was not forthcoming.

In August, the Minister wrote to the Committee and asked if we would re-consider the grant, we were advised that we would be granted six months to respond. The Committee requested that further information be provided at our meeting on 9 November. A draft document detailing the utilisation of the grant was submitted, however, our Accountant has requested that further information on the budget and operational plan be tabled at the next meeting. The Committee is also seeking evidence of consultation with other vets in the community, information on what impact the Vet Clinic will have on the shelter (staff, activities and hours of operation), veterinary staff employment costs, and documentation related to registration of the clinic and additional insurance/liability.

Note, the Committee has ongoing financial commitments such as paying salaries/superannuation, leases, the mortgage, building maintenance, insurance, equipment, and expendables. It must always have enough money in the bank to cover these costs, hence, the request for a sound business plan to ensure that the Vet Clinic is both viable and sustainable.

Are the Committee members all from the Op Shop?

Members Volunteer experience:

Liz Nolan (President) – RSPCA/MAAW Shelter, MAAW Fundraising and U3A Office/Presenter
Bill Burris (Vice President) -MAAW Shelter and Op Shop, CFA Firefighter and Newstead Shire Counsellor.

Dawn Hartney (Secretary) – RSPCA Shelter, MAAW Op shop

Merilyn Hoysted (Treasurer)- Treasurer of other Not for Profit organisations

Helen Treloar (General) – RSPCA/MAAW Shelter

Hilary Prendergast (General)-MAAW Op shop

Sharnie Digby (General) –MAAW Op Shop, Old English Sheepdog Club, Castlemaine Swimming Club and volunteer and member of a range of sporting clubs.

When is the Annual General Meeting to be held?

The AGM is normally held in September, however, due to Covid restrictions we could not hold it then. The Council were not hiring venues, the social distancing requirements meant that we would need a huge venue and the Committee felt that conducting a meeting via Zoom was not practical as many of our members are not technologically savvy. The Committee sought and received approval from the Consumer Affairs Victoria to hold the AGM in January. Nominations for the Committee will be sent out prior to 19 January and nominees will be required to attend the meeting and be interviewed by the AGM MC about their skillset and what they can contribute to the Committee.

Are we neglecting the shelter?

No, the shelter has received money for completion of the cattery, creation of a new outside washroom, new computers', and additional cat cages. In addition, money has been spent on maintenance issues such as tree removal and landscaping.

What is MAAW doing to help people who cannot afford Vet treatment for their animals?

The Committee have already approved financial support to two local families, at the Shelter Manager's request. The dogs have received treatment and MAAW paid half of the veterinary costs for each animal. In addition, the Committee has put aside funds for a 6-month trial which will operate on a need's basis. The policy including eligibility criteria is being drafted and advice will be circulated to relevant stakeholders soon.

Why is MAAW supporting organisations assisting Wildlife?

MAAW's purpose is listed above. Our brief is to promote the welfare of all animals in the Shire. We have donated funds to registered wildlife carers in the community, provided funding to assist koalas following the bushfires and have assisted the Campbell's Creek Landcare group who are creating natural habitat for the local Platypus. In addition, we collect bedding and cages for our local wildlife shelter.

Why haven't we applied for Charity status?

To get Charity status we need to be able to put policies and procedures in place that demonstrate good governance. We have recently outsourced the management of our finances to an Accountant, hired a HR person to guide us on staffing issues and Performance Management and hired a company to create a new website that operates more efficiently and enables us to sell Empawrium products on-line. In addition, we are introducing policies and procedures on a range of topics and have conducted an audit on previous accounting activities to ensure compliance with government guidelines. Once all of this has been completed the Committee will apply for Charity status and if audited, we know that MAAW through these initiatives will be able to demonstrate we are worthy of this status.

Why isn't the OP Shop open 5.5 days per week?

The Op Shop has been impacted by Covid. There was a shut down for 5 weeks and it is currently open 2.5 days per week because we have lost some volunteers who are unable to work due to concerns for their health. Plus, for OHS reasons we need to thoroughly clean the shop to keep our Volunteers, Staff and Customers safe. The manager and staff are also mindful of not overworking and exhausting our volunteers who work extremely hard on open days dealing with up to 150 transactions. On closed days stock is replenished, the shop is cleaned, and donations are accepted. Note the operating income for 2020 is on par with 2019, hence, the closure of MAAW every second day has not impacted on our takings.

Liz Nolan
President
MAAW