



# OUR CASE FOR SUPPORT



A photograph of a sandy beach with several footprints and a paw print in the foreground. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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.

# Pets bring love, joy, and companionship, promote activity and emotional stability, and enrich people's lives.

**The remarkable impact of pets on people's physical, mental, and social wellbeing comes from the human-animal bond.**

But at Cherished Pets, we see these very bonds preventing vulnerable individuals and their cherished pets from getting the help they so desperately need.

In response to the challenges we see so many people and their pets facing in our Geelong community, including financial hardship, cost of living pressures, crisis situations and ageing related challenges, Cherished Pets Foundation is delivering veterinary social services to help people in need. Our focus has the human-animal bond at the heart of all we do in addressing social disadvantage.

However, the demand for essential veterinary care and social support is far surpassing our current capacity. Only with financial support can we provide our accessible, affordable, and equitable veterinary social services to improve outcomes for people and their pets.

In 2023-24, Cherished Pets measured the impact of our services, revealing a contribution of \$4.39 million in social value to our Geelong community. While this is remarkable impact, it highlights the very real and significant challenges our communities are facing and the critical need for support such as ours.

With your kindness and support, we can help communities thrive by supporting vulnerable people and their cherished pets. Please make a donation and share this with others.

*Lissi*

**Dr Alicia Kennedy**

Founder, Cherished Pets



## The problem

**In our community, vulnerable individuals who have pets, including those experiencing homelessness, mental health crises, family violence, age-related constraints, or disabilities, face significant barriers in accessing essential veterinary care and social support.**

4

Healthy pets and a strong human-animal bond are essential to connected, thriving communities. Pets bring people together, reduce loneliness, and improve mental and physical wellbeing. But for this to happen, pets need to be healthy, cared for, and remain with their families.

For people facing disadvantage, pets are often a lifeline – yet they are also the most at risk of being forced to surrender their companions or watch their pets' health decline. This leads to deep distress, frustration, and, at times, a breakdown of trust in the veterinary profession and broader community. Too often, people are left with an impossible choice: their own wellbeing or their pet's welfare, leading to profound stress and isolation.


While the human-animal bond improves health and wellbeing, it can also become a barrier to accessing support, as many essential services are not designed with pet owners in mind. Addressing these challenges is not just about helping individuals, it's about strengthening our society as a whole.

Pets are a reason why victim survivors delay leaving domestic and family violence, frequently staying in unsafe environments because they lack secure options for their beloved animals.

People experiencing homelessness share profound emotional bonds with their pets, and this social support is essential for their resilience and social connection. But most would rather forgo accommodation than relinquish their pet to a shelter indefinitely.

For those living with a disability or ageing related constraints, a companion pet is often described as "the reason I get out of bed", fostering social connection, and improved mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Compounding the problem, the human and animal sectors are working in silos, not integrating policies, funding mechanisms, or service delivery to achieve positive outcomes for both humans and animals. Plus the veterinary profession is in crisis with a shortage of veterinarians and escalating mental health risks.



**Our vision is a world where the human-animal bond is recognised and supported for the role it plays in creating connected and healthy communities.**

## Our solution

# Helping our communities thrive

**Through veterinary social services, crisis pet care, and home pet care assistance, we keep vulnerable people and their cherished pets together, fostering a fairer, kinder, and more connected community.**

Our services bridge the gap between animal welfare and human health, ensuring accessible, equitable veterinary care for individuals facing challenges like homelessness, family violence, mental health issues, hospitalisation, ageing, disability, and sustained disadvantage.

6

Our team – comprised of skilled veterinary professionals, social workers, community vet nurses, and a Volunteer Coordinator leading over 60 dedicated volunteers – delivers holistic, community-focused support.

From routine veterinary care, dog walking, and in-home assistance to emergency boarding and respite care, our services offer vital help for both pets and the people who love them.

By connecting veterinary care with human welfare services, we help vulnerable people to care for their pets, significantly reducing the need for pet surrender and euthanasia, while ensuring they can access essential support for their own health, safety, and wellbeing.

Our services and support reduce surrender, enable reuniting with pets after periods of crisis, and alleviate the burden on overwhelmed shelter systems.

**With established partnerships and collaboration among veterinarians, human healthcare professionals, and referral social service agencies, we work together to foster positive health and wellbeing outcomes for both animals and people.**



**For individuals experiencing homelessness**, our services provide emergency respite care and discounted veterinary care for their pets who are essential for their mental and emotional wellbeing, offer companionship, and give them purpose through life's challenges.

**For people experiencing family violence**, where companion animals are present in an estimated 70 per cent of cases, providing pet respite care, emergency boarding, and access to veterinary care ensures that individuals and their families can find refuge, creating a haven of safety and support for both pets and people.

**For people navigating a crisis**, where pet ownership adds an extra layer of challenge, we provide immediate support. Our priority is ensuring pets receive essential veterinary care, including emergency boarding and respite, so they can be reunited with their owners whenever possible. This support offers peace of mind to individuals facing mental health challenges or unexpected hospitalisation, allowing them to seek the care they need without hesitation or worry for their beloved pets.

**For the elderly**, we safeguard the human-animal bond through our Home Care Assistance Program, offering pet wellness checks, volunteer support with dog walking and transport, and emergency boarding during illness or hospitalisation. Our Emergency Pet Care Plan ensures their pets are cared for in any crisis, providing peace of mind and allowing older pet owners to focus on their own wellbeing, knowing their cherished pets are safe.



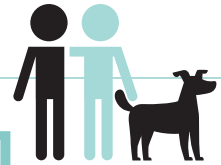
# Our impact

With 69% of Australians owning a pet, and more than 85% of Australian pet owners feeling having pets impacts their lives positively, the human-animal bond holds significant potential for positive social change if supported.

In 2023-2024, Cherished Pets Community Veterinary Care and Cherished Pets Foundation's services generated outcomes valued at \$4.39 million, delivering a social and economic return of \$3.85 for every \$1 invested. This impact was made possible through a one-off \$500K government grant, which enabled us to scale and expand services, reaching and supporting more people and pets in need.

All our surveyed pet owners reported experiencing health and wellbeing benefits from their pets.

However, despite the proven impact, government funding was not renewed, but the need remains. Ongoing donations are essential to sustain and expand these vital services, ensuring everyone who is eligible can receive the care they need.



8

## SOCIAL VALUE

The total value of the social value expected to be created from Cherished Pets services is

**\$4.39M**

## SROI per \$1

For every \$1 invested, the amount of social and economic value expected to be created is

**\$3.85**

## AGED CARE

**1080**

Elderly people aged 65+ supported

**1200**

Elderly people's pets supported

**\$1.75M**

of total projected social value created through Aged Care services.

## RESPITE CARE

**1970** nights of pet accommodation respite care generating social value of

**\$780,000**

**5000**

volunteer hours

**250+**

Community Vet Nurse Visits





**We're keeping pets and people together, healthy, and safe by addressing the challenges that impact them both.**

# Our action plan.

## Why your support matters.

### Supporting Pets & People In Geelong

**The demand for our home care assistance and crisis care services has never been greater. Right now, requests for help outnumber our capacity 3:1, leaving many vulnerable pet owners without the care they urgently need.**

Some are forced to surrender their pets, while others delay seeking help for themselves because they have nowhere safe for their animals.

We are receiving daily referrals from social service agencies and local animal welfare organisations who are struggling to keep up with the growing need for support. The gaps in care are widening, leaving more people and pets at risk.

To continue delivering essential support, we must raise \$500K annually. Our commitment to the Geelong community remains strong, but we need donations to ensure pets and people can stay together, safe, and supported. Every contribution makes a difference.

### Beyond Geelong. Expanding Veterinary Social Services

**Every day, we receive requests for help from pet owners outside Geelong — people in crisis with nowhere to turn.**

At the same time, veterinary clinics across the country are overwhelmed, facing growing demand with complex cases that extend beyond veterinary care.

Our veterinary social services model bridges the gap between human social support and veterinary care, ensuring vulnerable pet owners receive the help they need. Through referrals from social service agencies, people in crisis can access care for both themselves and their pets. This proven approach is already making a difference in our region, and now we need to expand our network of veterinary partners and Veterinary Social Workers to support more communities in need.

With \$500K, we can scale our veterinary social service model beyond Geelong, equipping more veterinary clinics to provide essential services.





## Systems Change. Building a Connected System of Care for Pets and People

We've developed a proven model that connects veterinary care with human social services across disability, family violence, homelessness, ageing, and mental health. It works, but to create lasting change, we need to formalise and expand the connection of services across sectors.

In Australia, human health and social services operate separately from veterinary care, leaving many – especially those in crisis – without the support they need. Many struggle to access essential services simply because they have a pet, leading to avoidable hardship, isolation, and preventable pet surrenders.

This disconnect forces vulnerable people into cycles of disadvantage, while pressure on reactive, downstream solutions continues to grow. By integrating veterinary care into human welfare services, we can create a coordinated system that improves health and wellbeing and reduces crisis situations.

Our first Roundtable brought together 36 organisations and 50 individuals to drive this vision forward, but there is still more to do. With \$50K, we can advocate for policy change, develop practical resources, and strengthen cross-sector collaboration, ensuring veterinary and social services work together to keep pets and people safe, healthy, and supported.

### Help Build a Connected System of Care

Programs	2025 GOAL
Veterinary Social Services in Geelong	\$500K
Scaling Services Beyond Geelong	\$500K
Systems Change	\$50K
	<b>\$1,050,000</b>



**We must provide  
urgent veterinary  
social support  
while reshaping the  
system for lasting,  
sustainable impact.**



# Support us and help people and their cherished pets

## Make a Donation

Your generosity helps keep people and pets together, ensuring vulnerable pet owners receive the care they need.

We invite everyone who shares a love of pets and a vision for a fairer society to support us.

Donations are tax-deductible and can be made as one-off gifts, monthly contributions, or multi-year pledges.

## Corporate Partners

Partner with us to:

- Fund life-changing programs that keep pets and people together.
- Sponsor events and initiatives that drive community awareness.
- Engage employees through volunteering and workplace giving.
- Demonstrate leadership in social responsibility and community care.

## Support Systems Change

Your support enables us to build a sustainable model that integrates social veterinary services across animal welfare, and human health and welfare sectors.

Together, we can create long-term, systemic solutions that keep people and pets supported.

Partner with us to create lasting change. Contact us to learn more.

## Make a Bequest

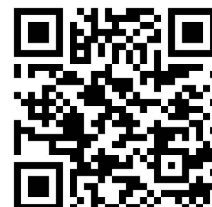
A gift in your Will ensures Cherished Pets can continue supporting vulnerable people and their pets for years to come.

Your generosity provides lasting impact, helping us fulfil our mission and create a compassionate future.

We welcome a confidential conversation to discuss how we can honour your legacy.

Please contact us to discuss giving opportunities  
[foundation@cherishedpetcare.com.au](mailto:foundation@cherishedpetcare.com.au)

[www.cherishedpetcare.com.au/donate](http://www.cherishedpetcare.com.au/donate)





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Cherished Pets Foundation is an endorsed charitable institution by the Australian  
Taxation Office, donations over \$2 are tax deductible.