

Subject: Re: [External] Herald Sun - Inquiries Regarding Animal Aid Cattery Coldstream
Date: Friday, 4 July 2025 at 2:06:00 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time
From: Animal Aid
To: [REDACTED]@news.com.au

Attachments: image001.jpg, image002.png, image003.png, image004.png, image005.png, image006.png, image007.jpg, image008.jpg, image009.png, image010.png, image011.png, image012.png, image013.png, image014.jpg

Hi Fergus,

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to respond. We genuinely appreciate it.

We acknowledge this has been a difficult period for our cattery team. Like any organisation, periods of unexpected change can create disruption and require adjustment.

Earlier this year, we had a change in long-term cattery management. This brought some challenges which meant our team had to pivot and readjust to keep everything running smoothly, but at no point was animal welfare compromised. Since then, we have strengthened our processes, made adjustments to staffing and resources, and things are now running much more effectively.

We are actively recruiting for a new permanent manager and have also created a full time pathways support role to make sure we are making the most of all resources available, including foster care networks, additional external adoption spaces, and working closely with rescue groups.

However, these changes have left a couple of people feeling offside. To take isolated moments or single instances and present them without context, as was done in this report, paints an inaccurate and unfair picture of the care we provide every day. We remain confident that our shelter is not in breach of any animal welfare standards and we continue to meet our responsibilities under our Domestic Animal Business licence.

It is deeply disappointing that this situation appears to stem from a personal vendetta aimed at dismantling and discrediting our leadership team who continue to act in the best interests of our animals, staff and community.

This is a lengthy response, but we want to be really clear, sensitive matters like this deserve care and honesty, and we hope this helps ensure the facts are fully understood.

Please see our responses to each of your questions below.

Are you aware of a report sent to the board of Animal Aid on Monday June 30, 2025?

We are and believe the claims are either untrue, exaggerated, misquoted or based on observations taken out of context.

Is Animal Aid aware of allegations that cats have been euthanised for being too timid, or cats have been euthanised after they were already desexed, vaccinated and microchipped?

We do not euthanise cats simply for being timid. Each animal undergoes thorough behavioural and veterinary assessments, and any decision to euthanise is made only in line with veterinary advice when it is the kindest outcome. On the rare occasion that a difficult decision is made to let a cat go after they have been desexed, vaccinated or microchipped, there would need to be a significant downturn in their health or behaviour, but this is an unusual occurrence. Our feline save rate is currently 82.9 percent with no spike in euthanasia compared to previous years. Euthanasia statistics are published by Animal Aid on a quarterly basis and in our Annual General Report, and we also provide our data to Animal Welfare Victoria as required. We are proud to have found loving homes for 1,481 cats this year.

Is Animal Aid concerned about the living conditions of cats in the cattery, namely the lack of bedding provided and cramped living spaces for stressed out cats?

We have appropriate bedding for all cats, and our cattery is carefully managed to reduce stress. Each cat's comfort and health are monitored daily, with health charts updated with notes on feeding, toileting, hydration and behaviour. These notes are clearly annotated on paperwork attached to the exterior of each cat's pen so our team can easily see and respond to each animal's needs. Our shelter was audited by council in April this year and our licence was reissued without issue. Our cattery was rebuilt in 2020 and provides modern, fit-for-purpose accommodation for cats, built to code. All of our team members are trained in animal husbandry and are passionate animal lovers dedicated to giving every cat the best possible care.

Is Animal Aid concerned about allegations of underfeeding: a directive that all cats must be fed one teaspoon of wet food per day, and no cats are to be fed more than once?

This claim is inaccurate. All cats and kittens have dry food available at all times. Wet food is provided daily as a supplement, usually one spoonful for adults (depending on individual needs and tolerance) and multiple wet feeds for kittens. The only time an animal's food or water would be restricted is for medical reasons, such as before or after surgery or imaging. We have scheduled vet welfare checks delivered by our competent veterinarians who visit our cattery Monday to Friday, with our shelter team recording observations daily. Each animal's food, health and individual requirements are assessed regularly to ensure they receive the care they need.

******The claim made in the report to the Board was that feeding was restricted to one tablespoon, not one teaspoon. Although we completely refute this allegation, there was an error in the questioning which makes the suggestion appear even more damaging.

Is Animal Aid concerned about allegations of overcrowding at the cattery?

Our cat population varies with intake and adoptions, but our numbers remain manageable and within the capacity allowed under our Domestic Animal Business licence. We have four staff and up to eight volunteers overseeing our colonies daily to make sure all animals receive individual attention and care. At present, we have around 70 felines in on-premises care, which is well within our capacity and very manageable for our team.

Is Animal Aid confident it can support the pound contract for the City of Monash?

Yes, we are confident in our ability to deliver on the lost and found contract for the City of Monash. Like any reputable shelter, we do experience seasonal peaks and unexpected surges,

but our team adjusts resources to ensure that every animal receives the care they need. We are currently procuring and fitting out an additional kitten triage unit, which will provide extra space and further improve the safety and comfort of each cat in our care. In addition, we have recently increased our cattery staff resources by 25 percent, plus additional veterinary support and a new full time staff member responsible for building our foster community and strengthening external adoption pathways.

Are the above allegations as a result of cost cutting measures?

Not at all, we have increased our investment in cattery care, including additional staff, expanded veterinary resources, and new pathways support. This is the opposite of cost cutting. Our focus has always been, and remains, on the wellbeing of the animals in our care. Animal Aid's financials are publicly available in our annual reports and reported to ACNC as required. Our revenue and expenses clearly show that cost cutting is not occurring.

Will Animal Aid be investigating allegations included in the report sent to the board on Monday? Has Animal Aid started looking into the allegations?

Our CEO and Board are aware of the allegations and we always take genuine concerns seriously. All aspects are still under careful consideration by the Board. It is deeply troubling that those involved (who themselves asked for anonymity) have chosen to circulate the report publicly before the Board has had the opportunity to respond. For the avoidance of doubt, the board received the report via email at 830pm on Sunday, and its receipt was acknowledged before 8am the following day.

We have robust processes, clear reporting systems, daily monitoring and veterinary oversight to ensure our standards are maintained. Everything will be appropriately addressed; however, based on the information we have, we can see that most of the claims are unfounded or misrepresented. We remain committed to sharing truthful information with our community and will continue to correct any misrepresentations if they arise.

[REDACTED]

Yes, our Board and senior leadership team have the full support of the organisation. This has been a challenging period and, like any organisation, it has required everyone to pull together. We are confident in our ability to keep operations running smoothly.

We would love to invite you or any member of your team to visit our cattery, speak with our CEO and vets, and see firsthand how our animals are cared for every day. We believe this is the best way to ensure your story, if you choose to run one, is fair and accurate.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond. Please let me know if you would like to arrange a visit or if you need any other information.

Speak soon,