



## Volunteer Induction Information

### Welcome to ACT Pet Crisis Support

Thank you for offering to volunteer for ACT Pet Crisis Support (APCS), this document is designed to give you an overview of the organisation, what we do and what to expect when volunteering for APCS.

### About APCS

ACT Pet Crisis Support is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit Canberra community organisation registered with the ACNC in March 2019 and dedicated to avoiding economic euthanasia of beloved family pets.

### Mission Statement:

***To ensure that all pets in need owned by disadvantaged, low-income pet owners in the ACT and local region have access to veterinary care***

ACT Pet Crisis Support assists pets in the community by providing subsidised veterinary care for disadvantaged, low-income pet owners who have no other options to care for their pets. We are dedicated to avoiding euthanasia purely on economic grounds by providing alternative options for care.

### Volunteer Roles:

We are entirely volunteer-run, so would not exist without the valuable support of volunteers. We welcome volunteers from all walks of life in whatever capacity you can offer. There are many ways that you can help out, including events, market stalls, the Tiny Vet Clinic, writing procedures, articles and grants, social media and other administration work. Please fill out the [Volunteer Application Form](#) if you are interested in a specific role.



## **Committee:**

Vet Lead and Founder: Eloise Bright (dr.eloisebright@gmail.com)

President: Nicky Hunt (president@actpetcrisis.com)

Vice President: Ian McDonald (ian@actpetcrisis.com)

Secretary: Sue Thomas (secretary@actpetcrisis.com)

Treasurer: Alex Bai (finance@actpetcrisis.com)

Regular committee members:

Karen Gerrard, Michelle Tulley, Deidre O'Brien and Carrie Traynor.

The Committee can be contacted via: team@actpetcrisis.com

## **How Does APCS Help Pet Owners?**

Any vet clinic in Canberra and the local region can apply for assistance from the charity via our website under [My Client Needs Help](#). We do not take direct applications. The different types of support we offer include:

*Amounts under \$250* - this is available without prior committee approval to assist pet owners who are unable to afford veterinary care. This was developed to encourage vet clinics to see low-income pet owners, with the assurance that we will cover a consultation fee and some basic treatment.

*Amounts over \$250* - veterinary clinics are able to apply for up to \$1500 to assist a low-income pet owner with an unexpected veterinary bill. We do not assist with routine care such as vaccination, parasite control and desexing. Pet owners must first apply for VetPay and have exhausted other options for funding such as borrowing from friends and family.



*Dentistry* - all dental treatments are referred to the RSPCA (the pet owner or vet clinic can apply via our website under '[dentistry](#)') and the owner is able to utilise Centrepay to pay off the account. Only pet owners receiving a Centrelink payment qualify for this service.

*Home visit palliative care* - we have partnered with Ashlee from **Sunset Vets** to offer home visit quality of life assessments, euthanasia and palliative care visits. These are only for pet owners experiencing financial difficulty.

*Tiny Vet Clinic* - the mobile veterinary (due to launch on 1st March 2023) will bring veterinary services to the local community, assisting those pet owners who have difficulty getting transport to the vet or those that are otherwise unable to access veterinary care due to lack of funds or inability to get a vet appointment.

### **Record-Keeping:**

Important documents, including Application Procedures, Governing Document, Code of Conduct and this Induction document are found in a password-protected part of the website under "Admin" [https://www.actpetcrisis.com/admin.html#/,](https://www.actpetcrisis.com/admin.html#/) password is: APCS2021

### **WhatsApp:**

Our WhatsApp groups are a quick, easy way to communicate with other volunteers. We have set up various different groups to discuss different topics, so whenever possible stick to the group that seems most appropriate to the discussion.

Please be aware that written comments can easily be misinterpreted. We are all volunteers from diverse backgrounds, so always be kind and respectful of other volunteers. Before commenting, always read your message to ensure you are not likely to upset someone unintentionally.

### **Social Media Policy:**



We have a strict policy of not posting photos without permission of the pet owner and/or volunteer. Do not post on your social media page any pictures of animals, volunteers or clients or information about cases that you have encountered while volunteering. Do not include our logo on any personal posts or comment on our page on behalf of APCS. If you see a comment on social media that needs attention, please email [team@actpetcrisis.com](mailto:team@actpetcrisis.com) or simply direct the poster to email [actpetcrisis@gmail.com](mailto:actpetcrisis@gmail.com).

### **Dress Code:**

We have a limited number of t-shirts available for volunteers, please let us know if you would like one to wear to volunteer shifts. Otherwise please wear neat, clean and tidy dress with closed shoes if you will be working with animals.

Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment:

APCS aims to provide a safe environment free of bullying, harassment or discrimination. Bullying can be defined as victimising, humiliating, threatening or undermining an individual or group.

Harassment includes unwanted propositions, inappropriate language or phone calls, touching, staring and persistent requests for dates.

Discrimination is unfair or unfavourable treatment due to a personal attribute such as age, immigrant status, disability, illness, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation or intersex status.

Please advise a committee member if you do not feel safe or are experiencing bullying discrimination or harassment.

### **Safety and Support:**

It is incredibly important that all volunteers, supporters and clients are safe at all times. When volunteering, if something doesn't seem safe, please speak up. Speak



to a committee member or the organiser of the event or volunteering opportunity and do not take unnecessary risks.

When volunteering please ensure you are following social distancing guidelines to keep yourself and others safe from transmission of COVID-19. Please do not attend a volunteer shift if you are feeling unwell. Follow hygiene measures such as handwashing and the use of sanitiser and gloves when appropriate. If you are unable to social distance wear a face mask and gloves if you are unable to keep your distance.

### **Safety with Animals:**

If you are assisting with animals, please ensure you follow the directions of more experienced volunteers. Do not take any risks or assume that pets are friendly and confident, many pets will bite when scared and many do not give clear warning before doing so. Do not make direct eye contact with any dogs or cats that may be nervous and do not reach out to pat an animal unless they come to you and actively solicit attention.

Dogs should be on a lead at all times, if a client has a flimsy or inappropriate lead, offer a lead to borrow (if available) for the duration of the interaction.

Cats should be in a carrier at all times. Cats not in carriers will be unable to attend the Tiny Vet Clinic. If there is a loaner carrier, this can be borrowed by the pet owner for the duration of the clinic, but must be returned by the end of the clinic.

Should you be bitten or scratched during your volunteering shift, please notify the lead vet as soon as possible and fill out an [Incident Report](#).

### **Fear Free Vet Care:**

All volunteers working with animals will need to first view the video available [here](#) on how to read body language in dogs. Dogs that are stiff and showing fear signs need to be given distance away from people and other dogs in order to reduce



their fear increasing. Watching body language increases both pet, owner and volunteer safety in what is often a stressful situation.

The liberal use of treats is an easy way to change a dog's emotional state when it comes to fear, however it is always best to throw treats rather than reach towards a scared dog. Please always check with the owner whether it is okay to give their dog treats, in case of food allergies or intolerances.

Cats should always be placed away from other animals and off the ground with a towel sprayed with [Feliway](#) covering their carrier.

### **Other Safety Measures:**

When volunteering, do not lift any animal over 15kg and if you suffer from any conditions that make lifting risky, please do not lift anything and look after your body first. We only get one body and we want yours to stay in one piece.

When entering or exiting the Tiny Vet Clinic, please always tread carefully and ensure you use the step provided. If you are too tall to safely stand inside, please restrict your volunteering to external tasks.

If you find working at the Tiny Vet Clinic difficult and you are unable to stay safe, please notify the Vet lead and avoid the activity. We do not want to aggravate any pre-existing health conditions you may have.

### **Managing Violence:**

Physical threats towards volunteers will not be tolerated. Should you feel threatened, please advise the Vet Lead, a committee member or a service provider. If you experience verbal abuse or threats, do not confront or argue with the aggressor and do not make promises you will not be able to keep.

Also do not attempt to disarm an armed person, break up an altercation or turn your back on a person showing aggressive behaviours.



Should the aggressor continue in unsafe behaviour, proceed to a safe place (for example the car, a neutral building, or the Tiny Vet Clinic and await further instructions.

### **Incident Reporting:**

An incident includes anything that results in physical or psychological injury, vehicle accidents, disease outbreaks, property damage, fire, theft or environmental damage. Incidents should be reported to a committee member as soon as possible verbally or via email. If the incident has caused injury or property damage please fill out an [Incident Report](#).

### **Boundaries:**

When interacting with clients and other volunteers you may find yourself connecting with people you would otherwise not interact with. You may meet people who are in financial or emotional distress. All our volunteers are good people, but it is important to maintain boundaries and ensure you are not offering to help with tasks that are outside of the scope of APCS.

APCS is non-political, non-religious and inclusive. Any beliefs or views that volunteers communicate can be seen as representing the organisation. As such it is important that volunteers do not impose their personal beliefs or opinions about religion, politics or what they believe to be the appropriate level of care provided to animals. Our clients are often not able to provide 'gold standard' or ideal care for their pets. Should you see an animal that you believe is suffering, please bring it to the attention of the Vet Lead and do not make comments to other volunteers or clients.

Volunteers should never be involved in the purchase or consumption of alcohol or drugs with clients. There is no smoking in and around the Tiny Vet Clinic or at APCS events or fundraisers. Volunteers are also not to give clients money, lifts, food or offer any services besides those offered as part of APCS.



It is also important not to give advice to clients outside of your skills and expertise. Veterinary advice should not be given unless it is confirmed with the Vet Lead first.

### **Rescue and Adoption:**

APCS is not a rescue organisation and as such we do not have the facility to be involved in rescuing, fostering or rehoming animals. Any clients who need to rehome their pet can be directed to an appropriate organisation for assistance. Further information can be obtained from an APCS committee member.

### **Complaints and Disputes:**

Should you have any problems with the way APCS operates or your volunteering experience or you have an issue with a fellow volunteer or service provider, please advise a member of the committee. If the complaint is confidential in nature, please email or phone our President, Vet Lead or Secretary. Please refrain from venting on social media or to other volunteers, as this often reflects poorly on APCS and can be harmful to the emotional well-being of our other volunteers.

If an appropriate resolution is unable to be determined, please fill out a [Dispute Resolution Request](#).

### **Revision:**

APCS may make changes to this document from time to time to improve the effectiveness of the organisation's operation or to reflect any changes in legislation. Should the review find that there is a need to change any policies, volunteers who may be impacted by this proposed change will be advised prior to the change taking place.





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