

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



Wednesday, 4 May 2022

MORE SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PET OWNERS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting animal welfare organisations to provide care for animals whose owners are experiencing family violence or other crises, backed by funding in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas, Member for Geelong Christine Couzens and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville visited Cherished Pets in Ocean Grove today to announce \$615,000 for an animal welfare package that will ensure animal care organisations have the tools and resources to care for animals in need.

Cherished Pets will receive \$465,000 to support the delivery of its 'Geelong Pets in Crisis Project' – which provides immediate respite for the pets of people experiencing housing insecurity or fleeing violence.

It safeguards the security of the pet, while assuring peace of mind of the owner, allowing them to focus on their own safety and wellbeing.

The funding will go toward pet boarding facilities that can be accessed at short notice as well as expand the team's veterinary social work services to respond to complex crisis cases.

Cherished Pets provides specialised pet care services for animals living in family violence situations, as well as for pet owners living with disabilities or mental illness.

Keeping families and their pets together can help improve health outcomes for all involved, and the safety of pets that have experienced trauma must not be forgotten.

The Labor Government is also investing in Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre with \$150,000 to expand its Pets in Crisis Program which finds pet-friendly emergency accommodation for victims of family violence, ensuring the animal is not left behind.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Nobody should have to make the choice between their pet and their own safety. That's why we are investing in animal care organisations to give them the tools and resources to care for animals in need."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"We're ensuring locals escaping family violence or experiencing homelessness can access immediate respite for the pets through trusted organisations."

Quote attributable to Cherished Pets Director and Founder Dr Alicia Kennedy

"We are grateful for this funding which will enable us to meet a rising demand for crisis pet care in our region for people experiencing physical and mental health or personal security challenges, while supporting the health and wellbeing of the companion animal."