

# NRAS Newsletter – Dec 2022

## 2022 - the year that NRAS came of age

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October NRAS celebrated a major birthday when it turned 21. That's 21 years of helping thousands of unwanted, abandoned and abused dogs, cats, puppies and kittens.

Over those 21 years, thousands and thousands of volunteer hours have been freely given by our wonderful foster carers and volunteers. Not only was it our birthday but it was also the birthday of Paradise FM who have always been great supporters of NRAS. As some adoption days in the past had been washed out, the committee approached the Ballina Jockey Club with a request to use their premises which have a large undercover area. They very generously agreed to give their premises to us at no cost and so serious party planning was then underway. We decided on a joint birthday celebration with Paradise FM and before we knew it we had a party on our hands. Our dear and generous friends at Stone and Wood Brewing, East Ballina Lions Club and Pocket Curries made sure the birthday crowd were well fed and watered while Pest-a-Gon, LJ Signs, VetLove Ballina and Ballina Shire Council were there to support us and help us party.



The Paradise FM family of musicians kept the crowd entertained with some fantastic music and vocals. Lots of former NRAS dogs were bought along to join in the fun and not a cross bark was heard from any of them.



The Ballina Photography Club also gave generously of their time and expertise setting up an indoor "studio" on site where anyone could make a small donation to NRAS and get a portrait of their pet.

## Happy Tails

### Susie the Flood Mum

There are many happy endings for the animals NRAS takes into care but some happy endings are standouts. Such is the story of Suzie the one-year-old flood mum. Suzie, along with her 5 three-week-old kittens survived the early 2022 floods in Mullumbimby and although feral, she was rescued along with her babies and taken to the Animal Welfare League in Mullumbimby. After spending a few days in their care, she and her babies were transferred to NRAS and settled into the Kitty Cottage.

Suzie proved herself to be an amazing mother whose nurturing nature enabled her to raise healthy, friendly, playful kittens. The wonderful volunteers who look after the cats and kittens in the Kitty Cottage spent many hours with Suzie and her kittens, talking, playing with and stroking the kittens to ensure they were well socialised and ready to find happy forever homes. Throughout the period of kitten socialisation Suzie resisted all attempts by the volunteers to approach, befriend or stroke her.

By the end of June all Suzie's babies had found homes but Suzie posed quite a different challenge. She was going to be incredibly difficult to rehome due to her fear of people, her timidity and the fact that she was essentially a feral cat that had never known the kindness of a human touch and hissed and lashed out whenever she was approached or felt threatened or cornered. Fortunately, and unbeknown to her she had an angel sitting on her shoulder. That angel was an NRAS volunteer with a lot of feline experience who could see and understand that Suzie needed time; time to trust and time to lose her fear of humans. Suzie's angel decided to adopt her, confident that she had the skill and patience to rehabilitate her.

It took time, and at first Suzie remained very hostile towards everyone in her new home. Gradually, patience, kindness and a gentle touch saw a change come over Suzie. It

didn't happen quickly and it wasn't easy but today Suzie feels safe in her new home. She gets on very well with her feline housemates, sleeps on the bed and shows off her beautiful nature with lots of smooching, lap cuddles and zoomies around the house as if she were just a kitten.



All it took to rehabilitate Suzie was patience, gentleness and a love and understanding of traumatised cats.

### A cry for help

Earlier this year on a rural road just outside Alstonville a kind stranger heard a weak cry and, on investigation found a tiny four-week-old kitten, lost and alone. There was no mother cat to be seen and no siblings. Without a mother to feed, nurture and protect her, this tiny kitten would likely have died of hunger or been killed by a predator. Her chances of survival were very slim. The kind stranger saved the kitten's life by picking it up and taking it to the Alstonville Veterinary Clinic who provided vet care to the kitten and contacted NRAS.

The abandoned kitten was given a name, Mavis, and so finally her life journey could begin. Mavis went to a wonderful foster home where within a very short period of time she proved herself to be a sassy, chatty and super friendly little girl. She found her forever home at the May Adoption Day and is now being loved and treasured by her forever human family. All because a kind stranger didn't walk away after hearing the faint cry of a tiny kitten asking for help. Mavis found her angel that day in early March.

## News Updates

### \$10.00 "Gift of Giving"

In time for Christmas, NRAS launched its "Gift of Giving" certificates. We all know someone who either has everything they need or maybe just has a love of animals. The new \$10.00 NRAS gift certificate might



be just the ticket for Christmas or a birthday. Every \$10.00 raised from the sale of these certificates goes directly to NRAS and helps us care for all the animals we are responsible for. Certificates can be purchased at the shelter in Piper Drive or from the NRAS Op Shop in River Street.

### Puppies in Paradise

On the Friday before a Saturday monthly Adoption Day, the NRAS Shelter Manager Sarah has a morning spot and puppy play date with Lloyd at Paradise FM. He and Sarah enjoy telling the listeners about the animals available for adoption, sometimes they even have the help of an NRAS pup.



### NRAS OP Shop

Donna, the NRAS Op Shop Manager and her amazing team of volunteers have recovered the shop completely after the devastation caused by the floods earlier this year. Donations are now being accepted, including electrical goods in working order.

The shop is always full of happy shoppers, many of them drawn in by its fantastic, eye catching and ever-changing window displays.

Shortly we will be installing air conditioning in the shop making it comfortable year-round for our vollies and the bargain hunters. Don't forget, the Op Shop only accepts donations on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and now has a new phone number 0400 624 863. Remember, fur babies are always welcome at the Op Shop which has plenty of animal related merchandise. There are lots of bargains in the OP Shop for both you and your best friend.

### Special thanks

NRAS has many, many wonderful supporters, some who give of their time, some who give of their facilities and some who give of their goods and services. Often, it's the little things that count, help given with a smile and without expecting anything in return. You know who you are and we thank each and every one of you.

This edition of the newsletter we would like to make special mention of the Cherry Street Sports Club, who already have the reputation of being a generous corporate citizen. The NRAS Committee meet monthly in the club boardroom which is provided at no cost. Additionally, two volunteer training courses were held in October and once again the Cherry Street Sports Club made its boardroom available at no cost. Duty Managers and staff at the club are unfailingly polite and provide help with a smile. Congratulations Cherry Street Sports Club, your team represent the true meaning of "happy to help".

### NRAS Volunteer Shirts

After some months of very low stock, we now have supplies of new NRAS volunteer shirts in an assortment of sizes. If you need a shirt please go and see one of the volunteers at the Shelter in Piper Drive. The first shirt for a new volunteer will cost \$10.00. If you would like a second shirt, or want to replace your original shirt the cost is \$25.00, with NRAS subsidising the cost of all shirts. If we don't have your size, we will place an order for it. There is no minimum order so we can get whatever you need promptly.

## Calling all potential volunteers

Have you ever wondered what goes on at the NRAS Animal Shelter in Piper Drive? Do you have time on your hands? Do you love animals and want to help them find happy forever homes?

At the Shelter we are looking for volunteers who can commit to one day a week working from 10.00am until 4.00pm, (weekdays only). We can offer you a friendly working environment, a chance to meet likeminded volunteers and the chance to catch up on your clerical skills. Full training is provided. We are looking for people to answer phones, greet walk-ins and assist with the paperwork associated with the surrender and adoption of our cats and dogs. You don't need advanced computer skills as we will teach you all you need to know. If you would like to become a member of the NRAS volunteer team, applications are available from the Shelter in Piper Drive and the Op Shop in River Street. Come on, don't be shy, come and join the happy NRAS family.

## It's amazing what \$2.00 can get you, (in addition to some great Op Shop bargains)



Membership of NRAS, which costs only \$2.00 a year, provides the following benefits.

- It contributes towards the cost of insuring all our volunteers
- It entitles you to attend the AGM, vote on office bearers and any proposed changes to the NRAS constitution.
- It makes a financial contribution towards the welfare of the NRAS animals.
- It entitles you to attend the AGM luncheon
- It puts you on the mailing list for the newsletter.
- It entitles you to receive the NRAS annual financial report.

If you are non-financial you can obtain membership by paying at the NRAS AGM on 11<sup>th</sup> of December.

## Vollie in View

Our vollie in for this edition of the NRAS newsletter is Kalinda, or Kali as she is known to her friends and her NRAS "family".



By day Kali is a vet nurse at VetLove Ballina and at night she is, in her own words, a crazy cat lady. Kali first became a volunteer with NRAS back in 2019 when she fostered an NRAS kitten. Since that first kitten, there has been a steady stream of foster kittens, many of whom have required special "Kali care". Some of her feline babies have been so young Kali has to bottle feed them every two hours, round the clock. Without this type of neonatal intensive care, many of Kali's foster kittens would simply not survive. Not every foster carer is willing or able to take on the care of tiny kittens. Not only do they have to be hand fed every 2 hours but they also have to be toilet trained. Kali's first exposure to tiny kittens came about when she adopted 5 week old Primrose who weighed only 250g. While there are challenges and sacrifices associated with looking after neonatal kittens Kali says the good definitely outweighs the bad, "caring for a tiny creature that can't survive on its own is fulfilling in a way that you'll never understand until you've done it".

Kali says the best thing about volunteering for NRAS is that she feels like she is part of a family of likeminded people who genuinely care for one another and for animals.

When Kali is not fostering and hand raising kittens she is looking after her own 3 cats in a home she shares with her sister, and hopes to soon offer training to people interested in learning about neonatal feline care.