

Territory Business Services Grant Response Template: Financials, Issues & Ideas

Companion Animal Grant

- **Organisation Name:** ACT Rescue and Foster
- **Reporting Period:** 2024-2025
- **Date Submitted:** 30 July 2025
- **Contact Person:** Angharad Lodwick, President, Personal information,
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Summary

During the reporting period, ARF desexed at least 31 dogs from Domestic Animal Services (DAS) and took on 6 dogs with behavioural issues and placed them in boarding.

ARF exceeded the goal of desexing 30 dogs, but had a slight underspend due to value for money from the veterinarians we use.

ARF met the goal of taking on 6 dogs with behavioural issues, however exceeded the budget of \$1,666.67 per dog due to some dogs taking much longer to find a suitable home.

ARF appreciates the extension to submit the report due to delays in receiving invoices from businesses.

ARF and DAS are continuing to work together to better identify dogs at risk of euthanasia that could come into ARF care or be advertised more broadly across ARF's networks within the dog rescue sector.

ARF strongly supports an initiative for DAS to desex dogs in-house prior to adoption or releasing them to rescue. ARF looks forward to working closely with DAS to develop a new MOU.

Financial Reporting

A. Budget Summary

Budget Summary

Category	Amount Budget	Actual Expenditure
Personnel	\$	\$
Equipment	\$	\$
Vet bills	\$15,000	\$13,832.43
Other (specify) Board & Train	\$10,000	\$38,743.56
Total	\$25,000	\$52,575.99

Narrative Explanation

A spreadsheet detailing the above spending together with invoices is **attached**.

Desexing

ARF anticipated spending \$15,000 on desexing 30 dogs from DAS during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, ARF arranged for the desexing of 31 dogs from DAS for exceeding the original goal of 30 dogs. There was a slight underspend of approximately \$1,200. This underspend represents value for money achieved through ARF's existing positive relationships with vets who provided discounted rates. ARF had estimated desexing at approximately \$500 per dog, but in many instances was able to get a reduced rate meaning more dogs were able to be desexed for less money. This slight underspend was reallocated to board and train.

Board and Train

ARF received \$10,000 to take on six dogs from DAS with challenging behaviours at short notice, including where a foster carer is not immediately available to foster a dog. ARF budgeted for approximately \$1,666.67 per dog.

The six dogs ARF was able to take on were: Bentley, Elsa, Freya, Joey, Oreo and Toby.

ARF received advice from DAS that **Bentley** was not coping in the pound. He went into board and train for a short period before a suitable foster carer was found. Bentley was doing very well with his new foster carer however unfortunately died very suddenly of an apparent heart attack. ARF spent \$1,680 on board and train for Bentley, which was almost exactly the budgeted amount.

Elsa was a lovely dog that was showing some anxiety in DAS, especially during storms. There was no board and train space available for her, so ARF placed her directly in boarding. ARF arranged a roster of dedicated volunteers to walk her before she finally found her forever home. ARF spent \$2,880.01 on boarding for Elsa. This exceeded the budgeted amount because due to Elsa's exuberance and need for high, secure fencing, it took some time to find the right home, and multiple meet and greets with her forever family before adoption was able to be finalised, resulting in longer time in care.

Freya came into foster care directly from DAS, however it became clear that she had some significant behavioural issues and when the foster carer was away, went into board and train. She showed significant improvement and has now found her forever home. ARF spent \$3,330 on boarding for Freya. This exceeded the budgeted amount, and was a slightly different scenario because Freya did originally have a foster carer, however the training was needed to address Freya's specific behavioural challenges.

ARF was unable to initially find a foster carer for **Joey**, so he went directly into board and train. Our dedicated Rescue Sub-Committee volunteers were able to facilitate meet and greets while he was in boarding and he found his forever home. ARF spent \$1,347.50 on boarding for Joey, which was slightly less than the budgeted amount.

Oreo came into ARF care from DAS and went into board and train with two different providers. He had particular issues with chasing his tail and overstimulation. Oreo did well, however due to his issues and little interest from prospective adopters, was in boarding for a very long period of time, resulting in the highest expenditure of \$25,157.75 – well exceeding the budgeted

amount. Unfortunately, for many large crossbreed dogs that are impounded at DAS, it can be very challenging to find them appropriate foster care let alone a permanent home. We have numerous similar dogs that have been in care for extended periods of time. However, Oreo is a nice dog who is good with other dogs, and whose behaviour improved enough to attend a fundraising event at a gallery in Yass, and he has now found his forever home.

Toby was not coping in the pound, so went into boarding for a short period of time before an appropriate foster carer was found. Toby is doing well in care and will be advertised for adoption soon. ARF spent \$1,433.30 on boarding for Toby, just under the budgeted amount per dog.

Issues and Challenges

A. Operational Challenges

ARF did experience some operational challenges during the grant period.

Dogs at Risk of Euthanasia

One issue that arose was that staff at DAS did not always provide us with notice of dogs that were at imminent risk of euthanasia due to behavioural problems, emotional problems or health issues. ARF is always eager to know about these dogs in case there is assistance we can provide (including advice about whether these issues are likely to affect a dog's chances of being rehomed or whether they could be addressed outside the pound environment), or an opportunity to advertise dogs across our broader networks to find a rescue if we do not have availability.

Our DAS Liaison Officer and Rescue Sub-Committee Chair have since met with senior staff at City Services to discuss ways in which we can improve communication and better utilise our experience in rescue. Communication about dogs at risk of euthanasia has improved as a result, and ARF can now share more information across our networks about dogs that require urgent rescue. ARF is also working with DAS to reinstate an MOU which we have had with DAS in years past.

Invoices

ARF has relationships with a large number of veterinary practices across Canberra, as well as board and train facilities, and as a result, there is diversity among their invoicing practices. This means that it was challenging to get invoices submitted to us in time for the final report. ARF appreciates the extension provided to submit this final report.

As a result, the amount reported may actually be less than the total spend, particularly in relation to board and train as ARF is aware that there are some invoices which have not yet been issued by the provider.

Difference in Type of Boarding

As set out above, availability of board and train services are sometimes limited, especially during the summer period when many people holiday and place their dogs in boarding. This means that some dogs like Elsa were occasionally placed in boarding without a formal training component. As set out above, ARF ensured that these dogs were nevertheless receiving positive human contact through e.g. volunteer walkers.

Total Number of Dogs Desexed

There is a possibility that the total number of dogs desexed is higher than 31 as reported above. ARF provides desexing vouchers to people who adopt young puppies. However, as at least two puppies who have been desexed had their names changed post-adoption (i.e. Betty and Boop/Boof), we have not been able to verify whether they were from DAS, another pound or private surrender in time for the submission of this report.

B. Financial Challenges

Despite three of the dogs requiring the same or less than the budgeted amount of \$1,666.67 for board and train, the total amount ARF spent on board and train far exceeded the funding received from ACT Government.

Unfortunately, due to a nation-wide high rate of surrenders, there are far more dogs being surrendered to pounds than there are volunteer foster carers. While puppies and smaller or pedigree dogs tend to be adopted quickly, larger crossbreed dogs or breeds such as Staffies, Bull Arabs and Bull Mastiffs tend to take a long time to get adopted, especially if they have specific requirements for their home such as no other dogs, pets or children. Furthermore, many of these dogs have been under-socialised without adequate training, which means that they require a lot of support before they are ready to be adopted.

ARF's purpose is to rescue dogs from pounds at risk of euthanasia and care for them until they find their forever homes, as long as it takes. Unfortunately, for some dogs, this can take months and even years. As a result, ARF continues to experience high expenditure on board and train.

Our Rescue Sub-Committee works really hard to mitigate these costs, and as soon as appropriate foster carers are available, looks to take these dogs out of boarding as quickly as possible. ARF has positive relationships with many services who provide us with discounted rates. Some businesses who have had dogs for extended periods of time have even agreed to take them on pro bono.

Ideas and Innovations

A. Process Improvements

In-House Desexing

Following the recent Animal Welfare Forum discussion, ARF understands that DAS is exploring desexing dogs in-house prior to rehoming or releasing dogs to rescue organisations. ARF is very supportive of this proposal, which will result in a lot more efficiency, lower costs and will greatly reduce the rate of unwanted puppies. The number of dogs impounded at DAS who are not desexed remains high, with 54% of the dogs we took on from DAS in 2023-24 being entire.

Better Internal Communication

As highlighted above, there could possibly have been better internal communication with DAS about the program and ARF's funding parameters which may have assisted DAS to more consistently and proactively identify dogs suitable to be placed in board and train.

B. Program Enhancements

As discussed above, ARF is working with DAS to create a new MOU as in years past. ARF considers this to be a very important document to ensure our strong collaborative and effective relationship with DAS continues into the future.

C. Additional Feedback

N/A

6. Attachments

- Spreadsheet summarising spending
- Desexing invoices
- Board and Train invoices

7. Declaration

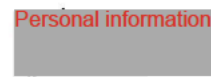
I certify that the information provided in this report is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name: Angharad Lodwick
Title: President

Personal information


Signature:
Date: 15 August 2025

Name: Mellisa Eyre
Title: Vice-President

Personal information


Signature:
Date: 15 August 2025