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## REGIONAL ANIMAL FACILITY (BALLARAT)

**SHOVEL READY**

### The Ask

\$13 million to develop a state-of-the art regional animal facility to service the Ripon electorate; including the municipalities of Ballarat, Golden Plains, Pyrenees, Ararat, Hepburn, Central Goldfields and Moorabool.

### Overview

Planning is well advanced for a new, fully compliant regional animal facility designed to relieve chronic overcrowding and poor conditions at the existing Ballarat facility.

Construction of the new facility will represent the single biggest improvement to animal welfare services in this region in a century.

Increasing levels of animal ownership as a consequence of significant population growth in the electorate requires proactive animal management, primarily through the development of a state-of-the-art regional facility.

The City of Ballarat is taking the lead on the project which will become a shared regional service.

### The Benefits

A new facility will enhance the quality of life, and standard of care delivered to the hundreds of stray, lost, abandoned or abused animals from around the region that pass through the City of Ballarat's animal shelter each year.

Construction of a new purpose-built facility will be a popular move in the community, ensuring the region can care for animals appropriately, educate the public, foster adoption rates and reduce rates of euthanasia.

The new shelter will operate according to industry best practice; provide accommodation to meet future demand in the region; and provide shelter services in the most cost-effective way (capital, operating and ongoing maintenance costs).

### Additional Benefits

- Ensuring animals are adequately housed minimises spread of disease and euthanasia rates.
- Improved quality of life for animals
- Increased rates of adoption
- In a state of art facility there is significantly less risk for staff in handling dangerous dogs
- Capacity for community education to increase responsible pet ownership
- Permanent office for RSPCA as the regulator
- Provision of purpose-built facilities to meet the 'Code of Practice' (2011) obligations.

### The Issue

The existing facility does not meet modern community expectations of how 'at risk and vulnerable' animals should be cared for; current conditions are at capacity, cramped and over crowded, making it difficult for the shelter's dedicated and caring staff and volunteers to provide levels of care and housing at best practice levels.



- The facility does not fully comply with the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds (2013)
- The existing facility does not have the capacity to meet the regional demand for appropriate emergency evacuation animal management accommodation during times of natural disaster such as fire or flood events; animal owners often show a reluctance to evacuate when a bushfire or flood occurs because there is no secure facility to take their animals to.
- The Ballarat shelter is the only facility in the region able to hold dogs which have been seized and are the subject of pending court cases. These animals are often impounded for months; current holding areas for long term residents are inadequate. (five seized dogs currently being held, one had been held for 11 months).

## The Site

A greenfields site has been secured on Blind Creek Road at BWEZ (Ballarat West Employment Zone). The site is readily accessible within an hour's drive or less for all municipalities, with excellent access from the Ballarat Ring Road; its location in an industrial area means minimal amenity impacts on adjoining landowners.

(Note: proposed All Waste Interchange facility to be co-located bringing operational benefits with joint staff facilities, security, access, staff development and opportunities for integration with social enterprise and education opportunities).

## Timeframe

Project is ready for an immediate start with construction estimated to take 12 months. The Department of Agriculture, the government authority which regulates animal shelters, has advised that replacement of the shelter should be considered as 'a matter of urgency'.

## Existing Facility

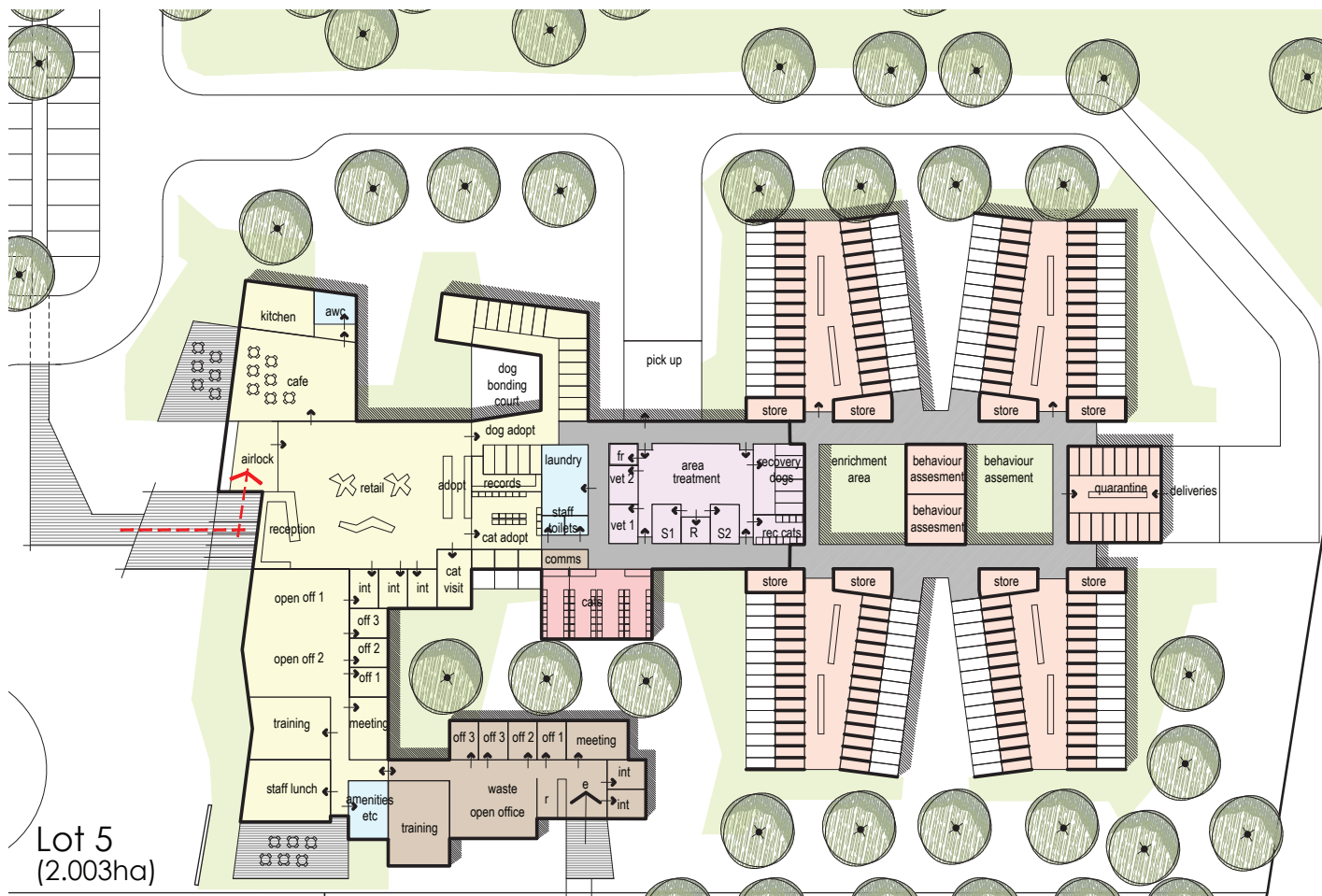
Is a former abattoir building converted into an animal management facility in the 1990s with limited retrofitting or rebuilding works being undertaken making it functionally deficient, well past its service life and is not fit for purpose with inadequate facilities to cater for current and future needs at peak times for all animal types. (Source: Ballarat Animal Shelter Feasibility Study Final Report, March 2017)

The facility is poorly located; it is not easily accessed by the public to retrieve, adopt/purchase an impounded animal, which potentially impacts on adoption and owner rescue rates.

## Outcomes

### Jobs

- An additional 12–15 full time positions will be created when the new facility is operable
- 70 full time construction jobs created during the construction phase of the project



### Investment

- Total output, including all direct, industrial and consumption effects is estimated to increase by up to \$29.055m

### Community

- Improved conditions and therefore quality of life for the animals held at the shelter
- This facility will improve responsible pet ownership
- A centralised animal shelter gives a point of reference for lost animals for all residents and allows for a centralised reclaim centre.

### Environmental

- Reduce risk to native wildlife by effectively housing impounded cats
- Enhance usability of open space by improving responsible dog ownership

## Strategic Alignment

### City of Ballarat

- Council Plan 2017–2021
- Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017–2021

### Central Highlands Regional Councils

- Pyrenees Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2012-2016
- Golden Plains Shire Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017
- Ararat Rural City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2012-2016

- Central Goldfields Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2016
- Moorabool Shire Domestic Animal Management Plan 2012–2016
- Hepburn Shire Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017–2021

### State

- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds (2013)
- Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farm and Pet Shops) Bill 2016

## Partners

- Central Highland Regional Councils
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

## Project Status

- Feasibility study complete (March 2017)
- Site secured
- Concept plans complete
- Commitment to the project from neighboring municipalities; discussions ongoing
- Ongoing community consultation; high level community 'buy in'
- 'Shovel ready' for a twelve-month construction.



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