

# NRAS Newsletter – June 2022

Talk about a CRAZY year already!!! We're nearing the middle of 2022 and there must be a huge apology that this is our first newsletter instalment but it is a bumper issue.

On Saturday 26 February the Op Shop team closed the doors after a busy day of trade, unaware they would not re-open to the public until some ten-long-weeks later.



Op Shop Volunteers, including **Lesley T.** (above), sand-bag the back door of the Op Shop after the flood warning was received

Despite the valiant efforts of volunteers; sand-bagging the shop's doors (particularly the rear access facing the Richmond River), on the morning of **Tuesday 1 March** the Ballina community watched as their homes and businesses went underwater as only days earlier the town of Lismore once again did battle with record-breaking water levels.

It was not the back of the shop that would suffer the most damage as water levels rose almost instantly flooding many parts of River Street.



NBN Nine's **Karl Stefanovic** speaks with Ballina Mayor, **Councillor Sharon Cadwallader** in River Street flood waters only metres from the NRAS Op Shop

Whilst the river-facing rear of the shop was spared, water ravaged through the front door destroying the carpet with all cabinetary damaged to such an extent as to be unsalvagable.



See details of the **RE-OPENED Op Shop** on page 4.

Fortunately, residents of Cabbage Tree Island had been evacuated prior to their homes going under, with their animals safely transported to NRAS' Rescue Shelter at Piper Drive.

Although the Shelter facility was not hit by flood waters, access roads were cut off due to king tides.

It was during this time that a volunteer\* (living locally), bicycled into the shelter to ensure all animals on site were taken care of. **Sarah**, NRAS's Shelter Operations Manager, also decided to sleep overnight in the office in case she was unable to return to the animals the following day.

*\*Read more of this wonderful volunteer in the **Vollie in View** profile on page 3.*

Numerous volunteers became transporters for animal supplies, including bedding, bowls, food and medication to the designated Flood Recovery Centres as NRAS became the "all things animal" distribution point for the many donations being sent to the region.



**Generous donations continue to arrive by the pallet- load for distribution throughout the Northern Rivers to those in need.**

Many people have said that when a community is faced with a disaster such as this it brings out the best and worst in people.

Whilst there were some folks trying to take advantage of an already distressing situation, in the MAIN the community rallied together in solidarity.

A big shout-out to everyone who assisted during this time and our thoughts to those who are still recovering from this disaster.

WE ARE WITH YOU.

And speaking of "being with you" ... the awesome team at **BUNNINGS** once again came to the fore, providing a shed to assist NRAS to house the donated goods for the animals of those affected by the floods.



BUT, there were some silver linings in the first half of 2022 ... In January NRAS was a co-recipient of fundraising by the Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary with the annual **Great Duck Race** at Fawcett Park.



**Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary representatives with some of the 2022 DUCK entries**

An incredible **\$3000 was presented to NRAS** which the group's Committee decided to allocate to the plight of sibling puppies, **Frank & Leia** born in care in October 2021 and diagnosed a few months later with a progressive and ultimately terminal condition of Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy.

This is a serious heart condition and whilst they are not in any pain or discomfort, they will likely only live a maximum of 3-5 years.



FRANK



LEIA

This generous donation paid for the specialist cardiac care that was required and the remainder is earmarked to upgrade and expand the Shelter's rear exercise yard with artificial grass.



January also saw NRAS' President, **Jo Parker**, awarded **Volunteer of the Year** in the Ballina Shire Australia Day Awards.



Jo's nomination for the award was based not only for her work with **Northern Rivers Animal Services** and establishing its shelter and cat cottage facility, but also as the Event Organiser of the **Mother's Day Classic** fun run for breast cancer research that she has hosted for 10 years.

And continuing the awards theme ... in March NRAS volunteer, **Sonya Newman**, was the deserving recipient of the **2022 Ballina Local Woman of the Year** honour.

Held in Sydney to coincide with *International Women's Day*, the **NSW Women of the Year Awards** recognises one woman from each electorate in NSW, nominated by their local Member of Parliament.

Nominees are "women who are outstanding members of their local communities".

And for those who aren't familiar with this outstanding woman, a short synopsis is:-

Sonya not only volunteers for NRAS but is a **Northern Rivers Wildlife** carer who is often called out a few times a week in her local area of Alstonville on a wildlife rescue or running an injured soul to the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital.

She **helps feed bats** that have graduated from care to their 7-metre release cage in the month prior to being released, and then support-feeds once they are back in the wild until they become totally independent.

Sonya spends a couple of hours, three times a weeks at a local **aged care facility** helping residents with movement exercises; is a **Community First Responder** with Fire & Rescue supporting NSW Ambulance with medical call-outs; she is a **solo parent** to two children and often others from within the foster system and she **runs her own training business** (teaching First Aid, CPR and Fire Safety training. **Life is busy but rewarding**



**"It truly was amazing just be nominated and such a big surprise and real honour to have won"**



If you missed our **Facebook** post or you're not the social media kind, we're sharing our fundraising call-out for **BEANIE** ... a beautiful little girl born in care at the NRAS Rescue Shelter with a kidney condition called POLYSYSTIC KIDNEY DISEASE.

This condition causes constant uncontrollable urination and means that she has a reduced lifespan of just 1-3 years.

Currently BEANIE is being fostered by a wonderful carer, but this condition means that BEANIE needs daily medication and some special treatment.

NRAS is on a mission to find BEANIE either a SPECIAL ANGEL to give her a forever home that could cater to her needs, including covering the cost of her medication, and where she could enjoy being safe, cared for and loved for the time that she has, Or SPONSORSHIP to continue her treatment while she remains with her special foster carer.



Anticipating that BEANIE would survive for three years we will need to raise approximately \$3000 to continue her care.

For any enquiries regarding BEANIE, please email us at [nras@live.com.au](mailto:nras@live.com.au) or call the office on **6681 1860**.

If you would like to contribute to the BEANIE FUND, please make a direct deposit using the **reference BEANIE** to:

Northern Rivers Animal Services  
BSB: 728 728 ACC: 2221 4082  
REF: Beanie 



When she's not cycling through floodwater to get to the Piper Drive Shelter as a much beloved Cat Cottage volunteer, our *Vollie in View*, **Robbie Stuart**, leads a very full retired life doing aqua aerobics and lots of walking throughout the beautiful Ballina area taking nature photos.

Robbie joined NRAS in November 2020 and had previously volunteered with a cat rescue shelter in Melbourne as a "cat socialiser".

She would walk dogs at her local pound as well as visit another cat cottage with "bequest cats" who just wanted cuddles and love.

"It's so rewarding giving your time to vulnerable animals. Knowing that these beautiful creatures will eventually end up in a loving home makes it all worthwhile.

Plus ... I get my kitten fix so **I'm in my element!!**"



Our Volie in View, **Robbie Stuart**

In her professional life, Robbie worked as a Personal Assistant in various Executive Search firms (head-hunters). She recalls that "it was always so hectic" but it was a job she enjoyed very much, dealing with people all over the world.

And the international life was something that Robbie was no stranger to; having been born in Caracas, Venezuela before going to school in Singapore, Malaysia and Tokyo then returning to Australia and boarding school in Mittagong, south of Sydney.

Robbie tries to visit her almost 99-year old Mum, sister and niece in Sydney as often as she can, but when she's not catching up with her family or caring for the lovely cats and kittens in NRAS' Cat Cottage, she is happy nestled in her beautiful Ballina Over 55's lifestyle village focussing on her passion for craft ... cross-stitching, knitting and crocheting and enjoying the love of her own two (mother & daughter) rescue cats.

THANK YOU, ROBBIE!!!!



The rain, the floods and that COVID "thing" hasn't stopped animals coming into care. Whilst a few Adoption Days had to be cancelled due to the weather, the fact is figures suggest the Shelter is **business as usual**. Adoption figures for the period 1 January – 31 May indicate **54 DOGS & 71 CATS adopted**.

**Yes! We're BACK**

The NRAS Op Shop finally opened its doors on **Monday 9 May**.

After removing the sodden carpets and cabinets and having to air the site for days, the team got stuck in to pack stock away in preparation for the **BIG CLEAN**.

Walls needed to be washed down as green mould began to take hold on the whole of Ballina and its surrounds.

Everyone was in the same position ... you needed to have damage evaluated by Insurance assessors; Trades to check out water enveloped power points and resurrect electricity supplies; new flooring to be sourced and installed. And, with the whole of the region in the same predicament, it was a long wait.

New fittings and fixtures were required for the entire front section of the shop, but this also provided an opportunity to do a thorough clean, upcycle some donated and purchased cabinetry and sort out the stock (preparing for a seasonal change-over).

Hats off to Op Shop Manager, **Donna** and her amazingly creative flair. Together with the impressive team of volunteers they enthusiastically tackled the clean up / set up challenge and, the shop has never looked better.



The team is still getting on top of incoming donations so **please be patient**. Donations are accepted on **Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday** but please call to check prior to dropping off ... **0400 624 863**.