

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIAre Collection of Stray Dogs

On the 16th November, 1946, the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital circularised councils in the metropolitan area stating -

"That owing to our hands having been forced by certain councils with regard to the handing over of dogs to the University and owing to the odium attaching to this Institution in connection with the collection of stray dogs from the streets, we have decided to give up such collection as from the 31st March, 1947, but will be willing and anxious to receive and house any lost, strayed or injured animals, giving them sanctuary until all reasonable efforts for restoration to their owners have been taken."

The matter was referred by a number of councils to the Metropolitan Sectional Council for consideration.

Following a meeting of the Metropolitan Sectional Council on the 19th February last, metropolitan municipalities were circularised asking whether they would be interested in the establishment of group schemes for dog collection and disposal of stray dogs and the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital was asked to extend the time for collection of dogs to the 31st May.

Subsequently the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital suggested the holding of a conference to discuss the whole question. The Institution also advised that it would be agreeable to extending the time for collection of stray dogs by it to the end of April.

In the meantime, replies had been received from a number of councils in regard to the suggestion that they should form groups for the collection and disposal of stray dogs.

Twenty councils indicated that they would be prepared to join in group schemes, while six stated that they were not prepared to join in a group.

A special meeting of the Metropolitan Sectional Council was held on the 31st March, which was attended by Dr. Day, Vice-President, and Mr. Busst, Manager of the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital.

Dr. Day explained the objects of the Dogs' Home which were generally to give temporary shelter and food to lost, abandoned, wandering and starving dogs; to rescue injured animals and to provide hospital accommodation and skilled treatment for diseased or injured dogs; to ensure a merciful and painless death for those dogs which, owing to old age, injury, disease, vice or other sufficient reason, it may be deemed desirable to destroy; and to provide a depot for the safe-keeping of dogs seized by any lawful authority and for feeding and disposing of same in accordance with the law for the time being in force.

He added that the Home is financed by public subscriptions, legacies etc.

Originally the Home received from Councils dogs collected by them and not disposed of. Later some Councils appointed the Home as a place for custody of dogs under the Dog Act and authorised the Home to dispose of the dogs not claimed. In 1922, the Dogs' Home staff commenced collecting dogs by arrangement with the Melbourne City Council and this arrangement extended to other Councils.

Dr. Day said the Home would be prepared to continue the collection of dogs in metropolitan municipalities under the following conditions :-

1. That the Councils agree on a uniform interpretation of the Dog Act and adopt uniform by-laws and also a more liberal interpretation of "stray dog".
2. Councils to provide a place to which people might deliver stray animals for safe keeping pending their collection by the Dogs' Home which would be done within 24 hours.
3. That stray dogs collected will not be handed over to the University for experimentation.
4. That the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital be adopted by the Councils as the only depot for the reception of stray dogs.
5. That a Dog Inspector, preferably in uniform, travel with the dog cart at all times.
6. That an annual subsidy of £2,500 be paid by the Metropolitan Municipalities to the Home in lieu of the daily charge now made of £4. 10. 0.

Mr. Busst stated that during the last twelve months payments by metropolitan councils for the hire of the dog cart amounted to £1,039.10. 0. The cost to the Home for wages alone amounted to £1,260 and in addition, it had the expense of providing and maintaining four large accommodation yards costing from £600 to £1,000 each and providing attendants, food, water, electric light, gas and administrative and office expenses as well as the cost of maintaining the motor vehicle which collects the dogs.

The total number of dogs collected was 4109 for the year of which a high percentage was unregistered.

The Home also maintains a small ambulance to pick up injured or stray dogs for the maintenance of which some Councils give a donation and others pay 7/6 a trip.

If the Councils decided to set up their own systems of collecting dogs, the Dogs' Home is prepared to act as a depot for their reception and care.

The foregoing report is submitted for the information of metropolitan councils.

The offer of the Dogs' Home and Animal Hospital to continue the collection of dogs under the conditions outlined by it will be listed for consideration at the next meeting of the Metropolitan Sectional Council on 7th May, 1947.

FRANK A. JENKINS.
Secretary.