



PortAugusta

CITY COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Kylie McKerlie named Australia's top Animal Control Officer

Port Augusta City Council's Animal Control Officer Kylie McKerlie has been named Australia's number one Animal Management Officer of the year. The award was announced at the Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) Conference in Adelaide on Friday morning (21/10/2016), with Ms McKerlie the first South Australian officer to win the award.

Ms McKerlie was named the South Australian Animal Control Officer earlier this year, leading to her nomination at a national level. This is the second time she has won the State award, following a win in 2013. For Ms McKerlie, looking after the welfare of animals is more than just a job and she is dedicated to rehoming stray animals and reducing the incidence of unwanted dog and cat litters.

She works hard to promote responsible pet ownership through initiatives with local vets and organisations, including promotion and support of regular discounted de-sexing days for dogs and cats. Another initiative she has been involved in is the Wandering Dog Campaign – 'Love your Dog, Keep them Safe' which has led to a reduction in the number of dog attacks.

Through a partnership with SA Health, Ms McKerlie has worked on a de-sexing and education program which assists the Aboriginal community with de-sexing, micro-chipping and general health care of pets. One of Ms McKerlie's greatest successes is the number of animals she has been able to reunite with owners or rehome, which is promoted through the *Facebook page Lost and Found Animals - Port Augusta City Council*.

So far in 2016, Ms McKerlie and her staff have returned over half of the impounded dogs to their owners (160) a significant increase from the same period last year. There is also a very high success rate in rehoming impounded dogs which are not claimed by owners, with 85 dogs to date in 2016 being rehomed. This is through Ms McKerlie's involvement with a number of animal rescue groups in South Australia including Port Augusta's new local rescue group 'Jenny Angels'.

And at a time of year when money can run short for families, Ms McKerlie ensures that dogs and cats are not forgotten during the festive season, working with the Salvation Army to supply dog and cat hampers to needy families at Christmas with donations provided by community members. In 2015, approximately 80 dog and cat hampers were provided to the Salvation Army for distribution.

Port Augusta Acting Chief Executive Officer Anne O'Reilly said Ms McKerlie is a hardworking and dedicated officer and well respected within the Port Augusta community.

"We congratulate Kylie on being awarded the nation's number one Animal Control Officer for 2016, which recognises her dedication to her role with Council and extends beyond that to the community," Mrs O'Reilly said.

"Kylie often does work beyond her paid role with Council to ensure that animals are reunited with their owners, and if they can't be, finding them new homes. We are proud to have Kylie as a Council staff member and we value the work she does in our community."

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For more information contact Council's Media and Communications Manager on 0427 413 345.

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