



Workplace Foster Care Program



Bring some happy into your working week and discover the life-saving power of your workplace!

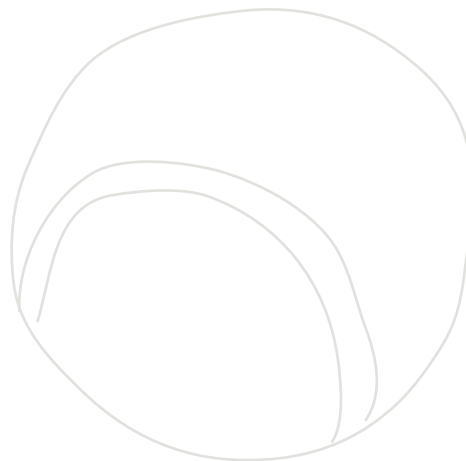
Why welcoming a rescue foster dog into your workplace is a pawsitively brilliant idea!



The benefits of being around pets are well known. Furry friends are proven to improve the physical and mental health of the people around them. But why should people at home be the only ones to lap up all that joy, happiness and wellbeing when we spend so much of our lives at work?

Opening your workplace to a foster dog has a huge range of benefits for businesses, individuals and for the dogs themselves!

- ▶ Bring some super stress-busting happy into your workplace. Happy workers are productive workers, and it's hard not to be happy when there's a gorgeous dog in the mix. Just a few minutes patting a dog has been shown to lower stress levels. Dogs make good days great and bad days better, and nothing feels as good as knowing you've helped save a life. Time spent interacting with a dog (whether it's a quick pat or a short walkies for a toilet break) is a great way to refresh and recharge the mind for a more productive working day.
- ▶ It's a fabulous way to develop and strengthen bonds between colleagues, to get everyone engaged in office life and boost morale. The 'warm and fuzzies' will abound, not only by having a furry friend around, but in knowing that you and your team have changed the life of a deserving rescue dog. There is no greater team-building project than working together to help save a dog's life.
- ▶ No more awkward ice breakers that shy newbies dread, or cheesy team-building activities that have workers rolling their eyes - dogs are a natural conversation starter and have an incredible gift for putting people at ease. A workplace foster dog is a great way to break down barriers in the workplace, improving relations with both employees and clients.
- ▶ It's also a unique angle to use to promote your business. Australia is a nation of dog lovers with one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, so an adorable workplace foster dog is a great way to help generate media interest, and makes the best accessory for an office photo shoot!
- ▶ It's just good, clean fun. Never mind the espresso machine - having a furry friend in the workplace is guaranteed to perk you up better than any caffeine hit! The cheerful grin, adoring eyes and wagging tail of a gorgeous rescue dog is sure to put a smile on your dial and a skip in your step (but espresso machines are good too).
- ▶ Studies and polls agree that a pet-friendly workplace can decrease stress, improve morale and productivity, reduce absenteeism and increase staff retention rates. A study in the International Journal of Workplace Health Management found that stress levels declined over the course of a day when employees brought their dog to work. And, in comparison, stress levels increased for non-dog owners and dog owners who left their pups at home.



How your workplace can do wonders for a dog in need

Every homeless dog deserves a highly dedicated public relations team to champion his cause. And with a whole business behind him, your workplace foster dog will have the very best chance of finding his new family.

- ▶ It's a great way to get the company PR machine into overdrive. Sharing the dog's profile and promoting him via social media and other channels will generate unique media opportunities that promote both your business and the rescue dog.
- ▶ Staff will get to know the dog and become its greatest advocates. This way, the dog gets a whole team of supporters who can work together to promote the dog and help find him a home through their own contacts and social media connections.
- ▶ Staff can of course adopt! It's a great way to get to know a potential new furry family member before permanently welcoming him into your life.

Why your life-saving skills are so important

Rescue groups do a wonderful job of rehoming pets, but are always short of foster carers - it's a crucial element in the life-saving equation. By welcoming a rescue dog into your workplace, you won't just be helping that one dog. You will be raising awareness of fostering for all dogs in need and freeing up space for rescue groups to save even more lives.

It takes a village. A dog that has access to a whole team of people loving, caring and championing for him has a much better chance of finding his new family. And it's a great way to help dogs through the rehoming process - a dog in foster care will let his true personality shine, compared to a long stay in a kennel facility which can be very challenging for some dogs.

The sad truth is that one in every four dogs don't make it out of the pound system alive because homes aren't found for them. By opening up your workplace to the joys of a foster dog, you will be making a life-saving difference to homeless dogs in need.



Creating a dog friendly workplace

How to make it happen

So, if you have fallen for the idea of getting your very own foster fido to add some some joy to the 9-5, read on. Here are a few practical things to consider before you go adding a puppuccino to your team's regular coffee shop order...



- ▶ The workplace environment. Can the dog be safely secured within the building? Some things to be mindful of include access to lifts, stairwells and doorways, just in case your foster dog gets any ideas about taking himself for walkies.
- ▶ Where will his basket, bed or crate be located? It can be hard work being totally adorable, so each dog will need their own quiet spot with a comfy bed so that they can take five when they need to.
- ▶ Where will his water bowl be located? Somewhere easily accessible for the dog but out of the way of human feet is best, just in case it gets knocked or there are any splashes or dribbles.
- ▶ Is there a spot where you can stash a few toys?
- ▶ Will your dog have access to walk freely around a wider workspace area, or will he be confined to a smaller office and be on lead when travelling through other parts of the office? Baby gates or play pens can be handy to keep the dog contained.
- ▶ You may wish to consider whether you want or need designated dog-free areas, such as lunchrooms and staff toilets.
- ▶ When nature calls, do you need a formal toileting roster with one person (or several designated people) responsible, or will there be the opportunity for something more flexible? What is the outside environment like - is there a park or other suitable area nearby where the dog can have a quick loo break or a longer walk and play during lunch breaks?
- ▶ Can you dog-proof your workplace to ensure that the dog does not have access to anything hazardous, such as dangerous chemicals or electrical hazards?
- ▶ Who is ultimately responsible for the dog over his stay? Perhaps this can be rotated or shared between staff should you take on future foster dogs.
- ▶ What are the night-time sleeping arrangements? After a hard day's yakka at the office, the dog will need a place to spend the evenings. Will the dog go home with a designated person each night?

Considerations

Policy, procedures & insurance

As much as we hate to draw you away from the tantalising thought of puppy dog eyes and waggly tails, bear with us a moment while we cover some slightly less cute but, nonetheless, important considerations.

- ▶ Gauging staff interest is an important first step towards implementing a workplace foster dog program. A survey can be a helpful way to get feedback, and it's also a good way to pre-empt any potential issues that may arise, such as when staff members have allergies or other concerns. Believe it or not, some people don't like dogs, or other people may be fearful if they aren't used to dogs or have had a bad experience in the past.
- ▶ Does your office need a formal policy regarding pets in the work place? If so, forming a committee can be a great way to get the ball rolling to ensure the necessary policy aspects are covered and documented in line with organisational requirements.
- ▶ Does your office need formal agreement from staff? You may want or need to come up with a form to obtain staff members' consent to having a dog in the workplace.
- ▶ Does your Public Liability Insurance cover pets in the workplace? Does it need to? It's best to know exactly where your organisation stands in the unlikely event of something happening, whether that be damage to property, an incident with a staff member or visitor, or something happening to the dog.
- ▶ You will need to have a discussion about, and agreement upon, which staff member will ultimately be responsible for the individual dog, and who will sign the foster care agreement with the rescue group. To share the love around, this could be a different staff member each time.
- ▶ Because your workplace foster dog is ultimately looking to find a permanent family to love, meet-and-greets with potential adopters will need to take place. Rescue groups will screen adopters as part of the application process, but short-listed applicants will need to visit their potential new furry family member, which the rescue group will help arrange.
- ▶ Oh crap! Unfortunately accidents do happen from time to time, and doggy doo-doo is definitely a doggy don't when it comes to inside the workplace. So who will get the short straw if your workplace foster dog has a toileting mishap? Regular toilet breaks are essential and should prevent any mess, but it's better to be safe than sorry. Make sure you have plenty of cleaning products on hand, such as towels, paper towel and cleaning spray. Poo bags will also be needed to pick up after your dog when out and about.

The right dog for your workplace

There's a huge variety of dogs in rescue, which is what makes rescue such a great option for anybody looking to add a dog to their family. The rescue group will help match the right dog to your workplace.

All dogs are different, but workplace foster candidates will be dogs that are happy meeting strangers, comfortable around other dogs and, of course, toilet trained!

The role of PetRescue

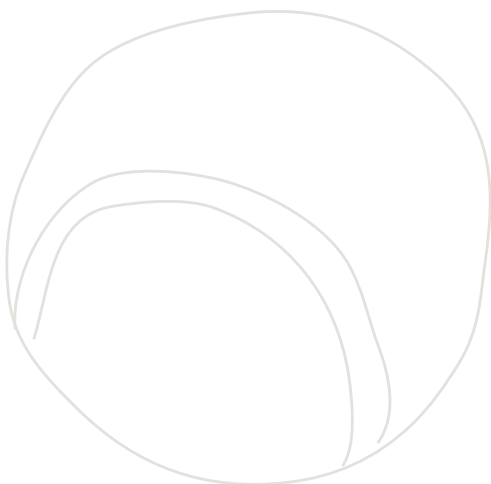
PetRescue supports more than 950 independent rescue groups nationwide and we will help pair you with compatible rescue groups participating in the PetRescue Workplace Foster program. This will ensure there is always a furry foster dog available to start bringing some joy and love into your workplace.

All dogs involved belong to the participating rescue group, and you will be signing a foster care agreement directly with the relevant rescue group.

As each rescue group is independent, policies and forms may differ slightly from group to group, but what unites all rescue groups is the need and desire for more life-savers like you to help find homes for these loving dogs.

Next steps

- ▶ To find out more about the program and register your interest, please contact Laurel: laurel@petrescue.org.au
- ▶ PetRescue will pair you with a participating rescue group that has a potential furry foster dog for your workplace.
- ▶ Meet your foster dog. This is the really fun bit!
- ▶ Once the obligatory sniffing, patting and gushing is carried out, all being well you can complete the foster agreement paperwork and be well on your way to saving a life.

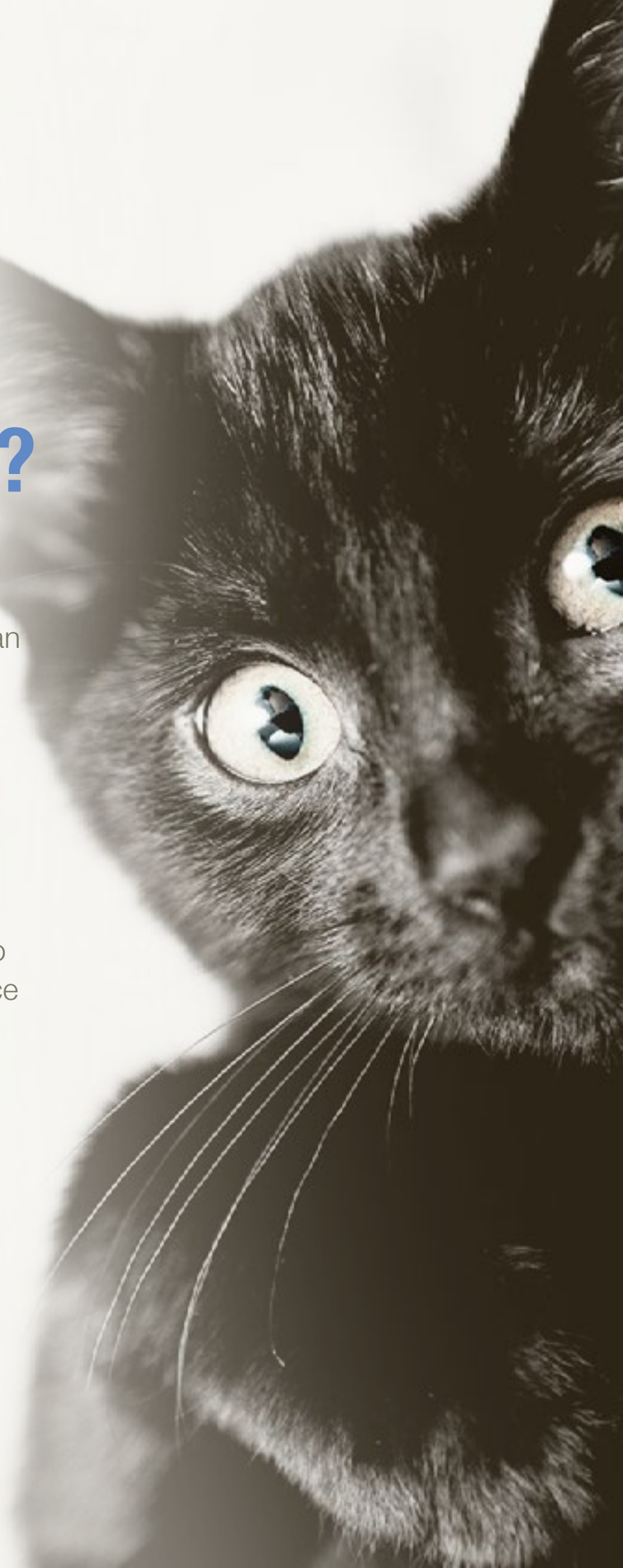


Foster cats?

Yes!

If you are more ‘team cat’ than ‘team dog’, there are plenty of gorgeous felines looking for foster care. Having your very own workplace foster cat is far more satisfying (and productive) than having your staff spend all day looking at cats on the Internet. And who knows, maybe your workplace foster cat will become the next YouTube superstar!

So if an office kitty cat seems more your cup of tea, please contact Laurel at laurel@petrescue.org.au and we will help find the perfect puss for your workplace.



So you've got your workplace foster dog

What next?

Settling in

Like a new employee, it can take a little time for a workplace foster dog to find his furry feet and settle in. However, dogs are remarkably adaptable and should become part of the office furniture (so to speak - no sitting on the dog please!) in two shakes of a waggly tail.

Training & behaviour

Every dog naturally wants to put his best paw forward, and the greatest way to help him do so is to establish a kind and consistent approach to training and behaviour. This can sometimes be tricky when different people have different ideas about how to behave around dogs, and how to train them.

PetRescue promotes scientifically proven, rewards-based training methods. For more information we highly recommend drsophiayin.com

- ▶ [How to Greet a Dog \(and What to Avoid\)](#)
- ▶ [Body Language of Fear in Dogs](#)
- ▶ [The Learn to Earn Program](#)
- ▶ [Dr Yin's Top 10 Dog Training Tips](#)

PetRescue's Vickie Davy is a qualified behavioural dog trainer and is available to visit your workplace (for Victorian-based workplaces). Vickie will share tips on body language and basic training to help give your workplace foster dog the very best chance at being rehomed.

Should you have any queries or concerns, please get in touch with your rescue group or with Laurel (laurel@petrescue.org.au).

Promote, promote, promote!

Once your workplace foster dog has arrived, it's time to get snap happy and take some great photos to share on social media. Who doesn't go gaga over gorgeous doggy pics?

Tell all your suppliers, clients and customers so that they too can get involved in sharing the love and follow your foster dog's journey from homeless to happy-ever-after.

Don't forget to include @PetRescueAU in your post and use the tags #OfficeFoster #OfficeFurry #OfficeDog #OfficeCat and last but not least #PetRescued when your pet is adopted. We'd love to see how your dog is settling in and help promote your efforts to our own fans and followers!

What to do if there is a problem

If there are any issues with your foster dog, please don't be shy. In the first instance, get in touch with the rescue group - they are there to support you and your workplace foster dog, and to help with any teething problems or issues that may arise.

The PetRescue team is also on hand to support you, should you have any concerns. If there is anything you wish to discuss, you can get in touch with Laurel at laurel@petrescue.org.au.

The adoption process

What to expect

Meet-and-greets with potential adopters

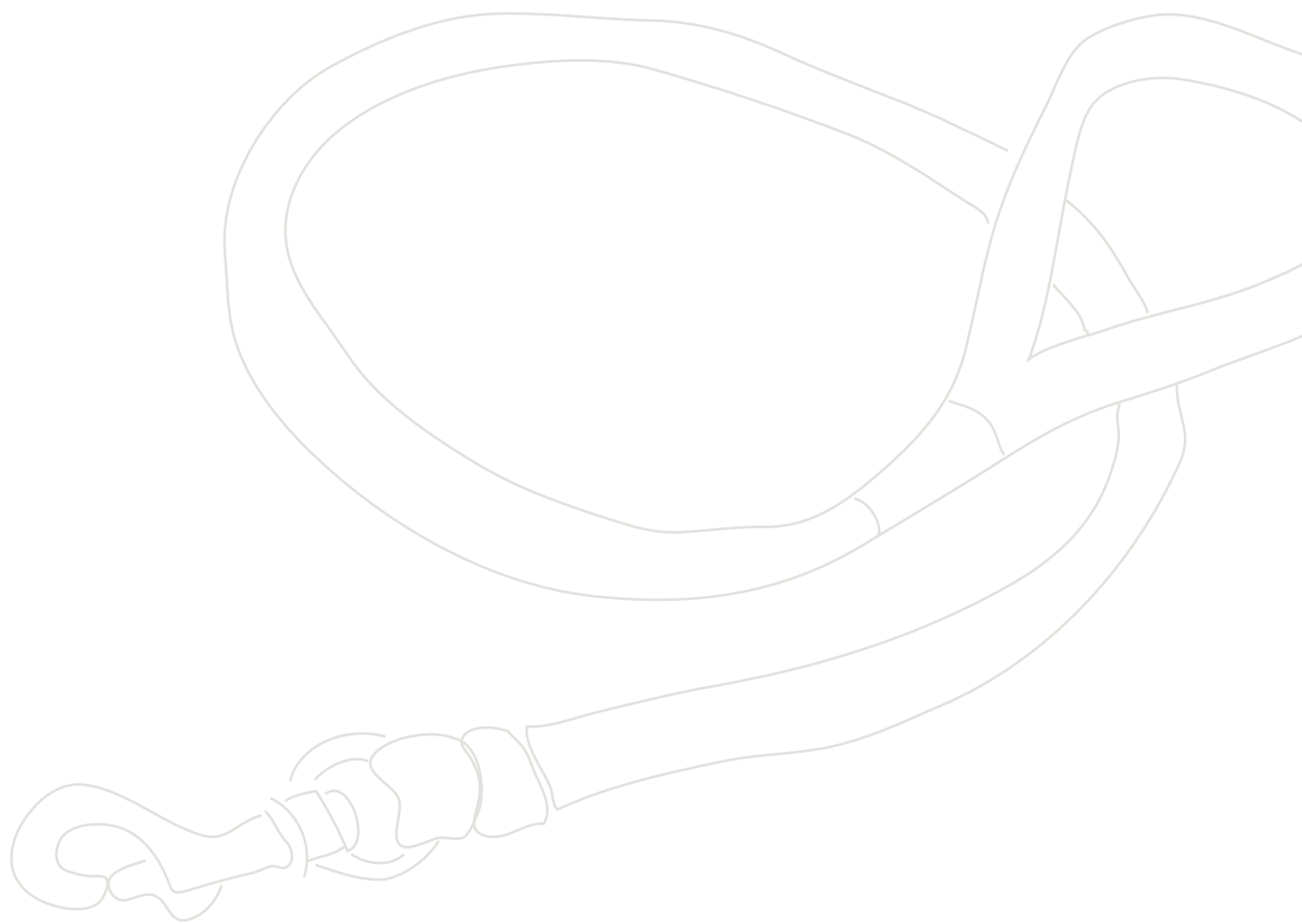
All workplace foster dogs will be available for adoption and listed on PetRescue.com.au to help give them the best chance at finding their new family.

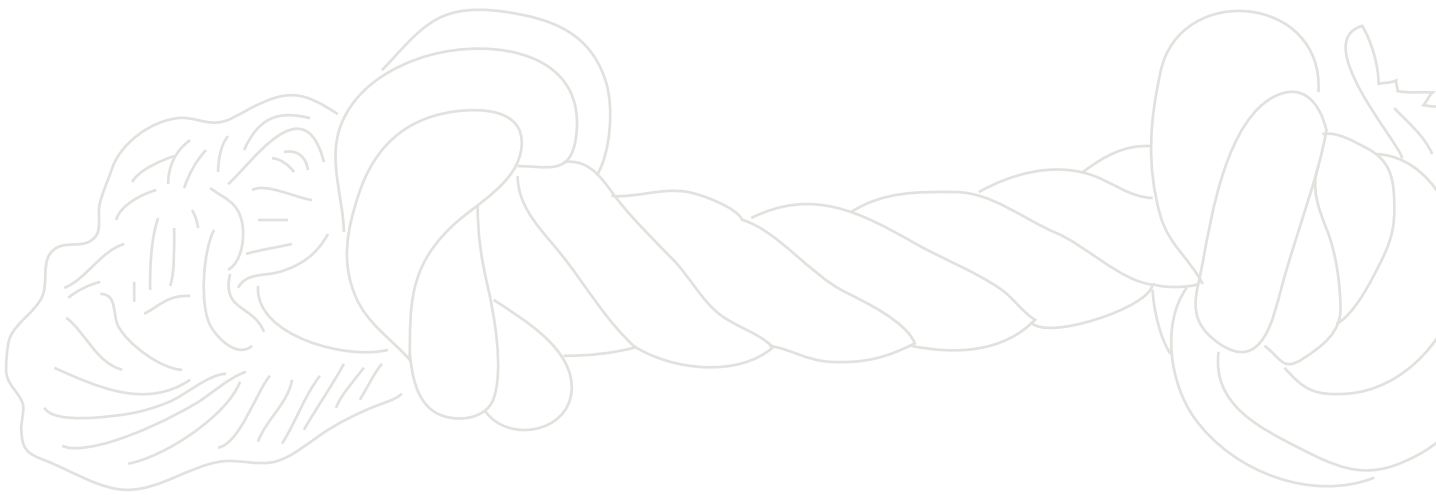
The rescue group will take applications and help find a great match for the dog in your care. And once a suitable adopter has been found, a 'meet-and-greet' will be organised. This may be during work hours at your workplace, or after hours at the home where the dog will stay overnight/on weekends if mutually agreeable.

In-house adopting

Fostering can be a brilliant way to really get to know a potential furry family member before making the decision to adopt. So, if you or one of your staff members has fallen in love with your workplace foster dog, we would encourage you to apply to adopt and make the dog a permanent part of your life!

The rescue group will advise you on the adoption application process, as this can vary between different rescue groups.





Saying goodbye & saving another life

Once a new family is found, the time will come to say goodbye to your furry workmate. It can be a bittersweet moment when your workplace foster dog finds his forever home, but it's a time to celebrate your incredible lifesaving efforts and to be super-proud of the crucial role your workplace has played in giving a needy dog a second chance.

Be sure to take lots of photos and to update all your supporters who have been following your workplace foster dog's journey. And know that, by helping rehome one dog, more lives will be saved as there are lots of other loving dogs eagerly awaiting their chance to be fostered and adopted.

Once your first workplace foster dog has found his happy ever after, we would encourage you to help save another dog in need. Get in touch with the rescue group or the PetRescue team so that we can match you with another rescue group.

Warning! Fostering can be highly addictive and, indeed, you may find that life without an adorable office dog just isn't the same!



Thank you!

On behalf of rescue pets in need,
thanks a million for considering
a workplace foster dog!

To find about more and to register your interest,
please contact Laurel at laurel@petrescue.org.au

www.PetRescue.com.au