Creatures, Caring and Community

AUSVELS
THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM
IN VICTORIA  LEVLES 3-4
Contents

Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 4

Links to AusVELS ................................................................................................................ 5

About the RSPCA .................................................................................................................. 7

The Needs of Animals ......................................................................................................... 8

Pre-visit Activities ............................................................................................................... 11

A Visit to the RSPCA Education Centre ........................................................................... 12

When we come to you ......................................................................................................... 12

Post-Visit Activities ............................................................................................................ 13

Activity Master Sheets ....................................................................................................... 15
Introduction

Creatures, Caring and Community is a program that encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of the needs of animals. Students will realise animals’ needs are similar to ours in many ways. They will gain an understanding of the implications of pet ownership and the responsibilities required in caring for an animal. The students will gain a greater understanding of the role of the RSPCA in the community and how it cares for all creatures great and small. They will investigate how the community is involved and what people can do to support the RSPCA.

Program Aims

• To examine the specific needs of different animals.
• To discuss our responsibilities required in caring for animals.
• To understand the needs of humans, compared to the needs of animals — to be able to identify similarities and differences.
• To examine the RSPCA’s role in our society as a community organisation.
• To find out how the RSPCA assists animals.
• To investigate the different ways the community is involved in supporting the RSPCA.
• To engage in hands on learning.

Key questions

• What are the main needs of animals and how are these needs similar to ours?
• What are the main responsibilities required in caring for animals?
• What role does the RSPCA play in our community?
• How does the RSPCA help lost, stray, sick, unwanted and neglected animals?
• How is the community involved in supporting the RSPCA?
Links to AusVELS

The AusVELS describes what is essential for all students to achieve.

Creatures, Caring and Community aims to address many areas of the AusVELS curriculum. Facets of the suggested pre-visit activities, the excursion to the RSPCA and post-visit activities are incorporated into the Strands, Domains, Dimensions and Standards for levels 3–4.

The RSPCA Creatures, Caring and Community program can be linked with the following strands and domains.

Physical, Personal and Social Learning

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP — SCHOOL AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
The role of the RSPCA in the community — as a charity — and how schools and individuals can help. Students learn about different types of groups in the community and their functions; and the sense that individuals’ contributions can improve the environment, their lives and the lives of others.

Students participate in community, school and/or home based projects designed to protect and care for the natural environment and contributing to community events.

Students describe some of the roles and purposes of groups in the community. They work with other students to identify a local issue and plan possible actions to achieve a desired outcome.

Values which underpin a community include respect for others, understanding and fairness. Students explore the differences between rules and laws, why we have them, what role they serve and how they can be changed.

Discipline Based Learning

ENGLISH — READING AND VIEWING
Identify the point of view in a text and identify different points of view (ACELY 1675).

ENGLISH — SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations (ACELY 1676). The Creatures, Caring and Community program engages students in discussions about the treatment of animals and presents images of positive and negative examples for discussion.
SCIENCE — SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING- BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Living things can be grouped on the basis of observable features and can be distinguished from non-living things (ACSSU044). The Creatures, Caring and Community program is based around the needs of animals such as food, water, shelter, exercise, friends and vet care. Students discover the differences and similarities between pets, farm animals and humans.

Living things have life cycles (ACSSU072). The Creatures, Caring and Community program offers a variety of animal interaction experiences with animals (excursion only) at different stages of life. Students have the opportunity to learn about the cat overpopulation crisis, ongoing rate of reproduction and associated issues.

Living things, including plants and animals depend on each other and the environment to survive (ACSSU073). The Creatures, Caring and Community program introduces students to animals and their basic requirements of food, water, shelter, exercise and friends. Students explore the similarities and differences between farm animal and pet animal requirements.

SCIENCE — USE AND INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE

Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions (ACSHE062). Students discuss and reflect on how humans use farm animals for production of meat, eggs, milk and wool. Onsite classes have opportunity to meet a variety of production animals and hear their stories.

Interdisciplinary Learning

COMMUNICATION

Students explore a range of aural, written and visual communication forms, which illustrate a variety of perspectives on a range of topics and ideas. They learn how to identify the main message, develop their own interpretation and provide evidence to support it. Creatures, Caring and Community addresses key animal welfare messages such as the needs of animals. Students compare and discuss good animal care examples and poor animal care examples. Students hear the RSPCA’s perspective on an issue such as cat desexing and are given opportunities to express their views.

THINKING PROCESSES

Students explore aspects of their natural, constructed and social world, wondering and developing questions about it. The Creatures, Caring and Community program introduces students to a variety of pet and farm animals (onsite) and discusses their stories and optimal living requirements. Students are involved in discussions about farm animals and their use on a farm for production purposes.
About the RSPCA

Mission
The mission of RSPCA Education is to develop responsible and caring behaviour towards animals.

Five freedoms for animals
RSPCA Australia considers that the welfare of an animal includes its physical and mental state and that good animal welfare implies both fitness and a sense of well-being.

The RSPCA believes that an animal's welfare should be considered in terms of the following five freedoms:

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

2. **Freedom from discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease** by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. **Freedom to express normal behaviour** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

5. **Freedom from fear and distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.
The Needs of Animals

Animals need food, water, shelter, exercise, companionship and veterinary care to survive. Almost all pets depend on their owners to provide these needs. Having been bred selectively for hundreds of years, they have not retained all of the instincts and behaviours that allowed their ancestors to survive in the wild. By containing them in hutches, cages, aviaries, backyards, aquariums and paddocks we take away any abilities they may have to fend for themselves.

Food
Food provides animals with energy. If they don’t have enough energy they can’t move freely, fight disease or think clearly. In time, their bodies no longer perform basic functions like breathing and pumping blood. Slowly and painfully the animals die.

If animals are being fed processed food such as dry food or pellets it is important to follow the recommended daily amounts provided on the packet labels. Children may need the assistance of adults to help them, especially if they choose to feed their animals twice a day and have to halve the quantities.

There are many overweight animals whose bodies work hard to stay alive. Deposits of fat make it hard for the animals’ blood to flow efficiently. As a result, the supply of oxygen to the animals’ muscles and organs is reduced and their bodies no longer function well. The animals live in pain and discomfort and their life expectancy is shortened.

It is very important that children understand the importance of providing just the right amount of food; not too much, not too little.

Water
Animals need fresh water all the time. Water allows the chemical processes that keep animals’ bodies alive to take place. It helps them control their body temperatures, especially on hot days. Water must be fresh. If it has been sitting around for a while water gathers germs and parasites that may be harmful. Remember to refresh animals’ water bowls at least twice a day. Never allow water bowls to remain empty.

Shelter
Just like people, animals need places where they are sheltered from wind, rain and sun. Some animals need protection from predators: guinea pigs need shelter from cats and dogs. Kennels, hutches, houses and bird cages provide shelter for our pets while barns, stables and sheds protect farm animals. If an animal’s shelter is also its home it must be as comfortable as possible. Bedding should be soft, warm and dry and cleaned regularly.
**Exercise**

Exercise keeps animals healthy and alert. Blood flow is increased during exercise, clearing arteries and veins and transporting oxygen and nutrients to the cells quickly. Metabolic rates are increased, allowing faster and more efficient digestion of food. Exercise keeps muscles strong and senses heightened. Energy that has been stored as fat is used up, preventing animals from becoming overweight.

Periods of exercise are very stimulating for animals. New sights, sounds, smells and tastes are discovered; unknown paths, trees and tunnels are explored; new animals are encountered. An animal’s understanding of its environment and the ability to interact with these surroundings is developed through exercise.

**Friends**

Most animals need the company of others to feel safe and secure. Budgies, canaries, cattle, chooks, dogs, guinea pigs, horses, rabbits and sheep prefer to live in groups. For millions of years animals herded or flocked together to protect themselves from predators. Wolves, from which our dogs are descended, live in closely-knit groups in which all members are cared for (especially the pups) and have particular roles.

Cats, which are often regarded as solitary creatures, enjoy occasional cuddles and smooches and are seldom far away from the people who care for them.

It is not always practical to have groups of animals living in our homes. The good news is that many animals substitute people or other animals for creatures of their own species and forge special bonds with them. This is one of the reasons why humans have been successful in training dogs and horses to perform so many extraordinary tasks. It must be remembered that if we leave our animals alone they may become anxious and afraid. In their uncertainty and fear they become destructive or boisterous, damaging property, disturbing neighbours and occasionally harming themselves.

**Vet care**

For many animals, a visit to or by a vet is an uncomfortable experience characterised by probing thermometers, painful needles and unpalatable tablets. Regardless of how enjoyable the experience is, animals should receive veterinary attention at least once a year for a check-up and vaccinations against a range of infectious diseases.

If animals show signs of ill health it is important they receive veterinary care immediately.
An indication that an animal may be ill includes:

- loss of appetite;
- sluggish behaviour;
- rapid weight loss;
- repeated vomiting; and/or
- discharge from ears or eyes.

Vets can also advise on how to rid animals of fleas and worms.

Fleas are small, biting insects that cause animals to scratch. If they are not removed the animals may suffer an irritating skin condition called ‘dermatitis’. There are a number of products that are available to treat fleas, including powders, shampoos, collars, drops and tablets.

Roundworms, tapeworms, hookworms and heartworms are parasites that live in the digestive system, arteries and heart of an animal. Infestations of worms, particularly heartworm, can be fatal. A number of treatments are available and vets recommend the most suitable treatment.

Identification

Identification allows animals to be returned to their owners if they are lost. Cats and dogs need name tags attached to their collars. On one side of a tag is the animal’s name and on the other is a telephone number or address. Victorian law states that all cats and dogs must be registered with local councils. When the animals are registered their owners are provided with registration tags for the animals’ collars. These serve as an additional form of identification. However, animals can lose their collar and tags, and in doing so, lose their identification. To overcome this, owners can have a microchip inserted under the skin of the animals. A microchip is the size of a grain of rice. If a lost animal is brought to a vet or an animal shelter it is checked for a microchip. A scanner is passed over the animal and if a microchip is present, the scanner beeps and displays an identification number. This number is entered into a national database to determine the name and contact details of the pet’s owner. Microchipping is an excellent method of pet identification.
Pre-visit Activities

Note. the following activities could be used (or adapted to be used) in the classroom even if our RSPCA Education excursion or incursion service is not utilised.

• Look at a variety of songs, books, poems and rhymes about animals.

• Spend some time looking at the RSPCA Victoria website www.rspcavic.org

• Getting to know RSPCA activity. Give each student a copy of the Activity Master Sheet. Students walk around the room asking other students questions in order to find people they can match up with a specific item on their list. When they have found someone who fits a description, students write their name under the item. Students need to find a different student for each item.

• RSPCA Word search (see Activity Master Sheet).

• Spelling activity. Unscramble the spelling word that relates to the RSPCA (see Activity Master Sheet). The answers are rescue, stray, cruelty, clinic, shelter, inspector, exercise, community, adopt, animal.

• Construct a KWL chart as a class, small group or individuals
  K - what we know about the RSPCA;
  W - what we would like to know;
  L - what we learnt about the RSPCA).
  The last section (what we learnt) can be completed after the RSPCA visit.

• Find the differences between the pictures activity. Identify the differences between two almost identical pictures (see Activity Master Sheet).

• Watch a popular animal movie such as Charlotte’s Web or Babe.
A visit to the RSPCA Education Centre

Creatures, Caring and Community is a program conducted at the RSPCA’s Education Centre in Burwood East. As you enter our gallery, members of the Education team and their friendly education animals will meet you. This is an opportunity to stop and observe the animals in the gallery, the RSPCA information modules and the animals outside in the adjacent paddocks.

Depending on the size of the group, children will either stay as a class or be divided into smaller groups for the following activities.

In the Theatre (approx 50 mins divided into two sessions)
Students watch a PowerPoint presentation delivered by an Education Officer in the theatre. The presentation gives an overview of the RSPCA’s role in our community. Animal case studies are used to highlight the needs of animals, implications of pet ownership, the work of the RSPCA, and responsibilities required in caring for animals. The role of the community in supporting the RSPCA, including various ways students can help are also included in the presentation. Students are able to see behind the scenes action at the veterinary clinic through closed circuit television.

In the Barn (approx 30 mins)
Exploring the working barn is a highlight of the visit. The barn allows for an ‘up close and personal’ experience with a range of animals. Students meet the barn animal attendants and learn about their job. They are given an opportunity to observe the animals’ enclosures, learn how to correctly handle and pat the animals they encounter and participate in a feeding activity. As the students meet different animals, they learn about where the animals have come from and the RSPCA’s role in caring for these animals. Discussion also focuses on the responsibilities of community members in caring for animals and the specific needs of different animals.

When we come to you
An Education Officer and in some cases an Education animal will visit your school and spend time with you and your students. Students watch a PowerPoint presentation delivered by an Education Officer. The presentation gives an overview of the RSPCA’s role in our community. Animal case studies are used to highlight the needs of animals, implications of pet ownership, the work of the RSPCA, and responsibilities required in caring for animals. The role of the community in supporting the RSPCA, including various ways students can help are also included in the presentation.
Post-visit Activities

Note. The following activities could be used (or adapted to be used) in the classroom even if our RSPCA Education excursion or incursion service is not utilised.

The Arts

- Make models of various animals, their specific environment and needs. This could be presented as a diorama or a mural/painting and undertaken in small groups.
- Create a collage of RSPCA-related images (images could be taken from the internet or magazines).

English

- Animal images activity - look at an animal image (see Activity Master Sheet) and respond using the following sentence starters: I see ...; I think ... ; I wonder ... ; I feel ... Discuss responses as a class focusing on animal feelings, the needs of animals and the role of the RSPCA.
- Spend some time looking at the RSPCA Victoria website - www.rspcavic.org. This is an excellent site for animal welfare research.
- Research an animal welfare issue/campaign and then write a persuasive text arguing for a particular position, eg. compulsory desexing, banning battery cages, banning sow stalls.
- Create a poster advertisement promoting an animal welfare issue/campaign or an upcoming RSPCA community event.
- Imagine you are interviewing an animal at the RSPCA. Write interview questions and what you think they would say (if they could talk!).
- Write a story about ‘a day in the life of an animal at the RSPCA.’
- Write down, draw, role-play or discuss all the things you do to look after your pet - link these with the needs of animals and the Five Freedoms.
- Research a specific job at the RSPCA (eg. vet, animal attendant, inspector) and write a story about ‘A Day in the Life of …’.
- Write acrostic animal and RSPCA poems.
- Do a PowerPoint presentation about the visit to the RSPCA and what the RSPCA does (small group or individual).
- Focus on the commitment required in owning a pet by designing a questionnaire that people or families should answer before deciding if they should adopt a pet, eg. what sort of exercise will you be able to provide your pet and how often?, who will look after your pet when you are on holidays?
- Undertake a series of lessons investigating issues relating to the needs of hens and egg production.
Mathematics

• Order animals found at the RSPCA according to their size or weight.
• Look at the RSPCA shelter statistics which can be found in the RSPCA Victoria Annual Report on our website - www.rspcavic.org/about_us/annual_report.htm
• Create a bar graph displaying the number of dogs admitted to the different RSPCA shelters.
• Create a bar graph displaying the number of cats admitted to the different RSPCA shelters.
• Create a graph displaying the total number of cats and dogs reclaimed, adopted and euthanased in a nominated time period.
• Describe what changes have occurred between two nominated time periods.

Science

Write an information report about a specific animal that one might find at the RSPCA (include a labelled diagram and information on the animal’s needs and how to care for the animal). Animal care notes are available on www.rspcavic.org

Thinking

• Discuss animal scenarios as a way to assist students in considering the feelings of animals, eg a dog tied up on a chain with no sign of food, water and shelter; a small calf separated from its mother; a tiger pacing in a zoo enclosure (link these to the Five Freedoms).
• Write a list of words starting with each letter of the alphabet that relate to the RSPCA (see Activity Master Sheet).
• Do a PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) on an animal welfare issue, eg. compulsory cat desexing.
• Choose a word (a noun) that relates to the RSPCA and write five questions where the only answer can be that word.
• Answer the question ‘What if there was no RSPCA?’
• Construct a mind map or a concept map relating to the RSPCA (students could refer to different animals at the RSPCA and their specific needs, as well as different aspects of the RSPCA, eg. vet clinic; shelter for lost, stray, abandoned animals; inspectors and animal rescues; community support).
• Use a Venn diagram to show differences and similarities between two different animals found at the RSPCA (students could focus on appearance, specific needs, environment).
Activity Master Sheets

Getting to Know (English)
RSPCA Word Search (English)
RSPCA Spelling (English)
Find the Differences (Mathematics)
Animal Images (English)
A to Z (Thinking)
### Getting to Know

Can you find someone in your class who ...

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has adopted a pet from the RSPCA?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has adopted a pet from an animal shelter? (not the RSPCA)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... knows what RSPCA stands for (they need to say it out loud)?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has taken a lost animal to an animal shelter or a vet?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has seen an episode of RSPCA animal rescue?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... is a member of the RSPCA Paw Prints Club?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has rescued an animal before?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has visited the RSPCA?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has been to an RSPCA School Holiday Program activity day?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>... has been to <em>All Creatures Day</em> or the <em>Million Paws Walk</em>?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RSPCA Word Search

ADOPT | ANIMAL | BARN
CLINIC | COMMUNITY | CRUEL
DONATE | IDENTIFICATION | INJURED
INSPECTOR | LOST | MICROCHIP
PAW PRINTS | RESCUED | RESPONSIBILITY
RSPCA | SHELTER | STRAY
VET | VOLUNTEER
**RSPCA Spelling**

Unscramble the letters to find each RSPCA-related word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>seucer</th>
<th>yasrt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _</td>
<td>_ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cutryle</th>
<th>lciinc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _</td>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hertlsr</th>
<th>optiercsrn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _</td>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sereexic</th>
<th>omyucinmt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _</td>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tdpao</th>
<th>niaalm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_ _ _ _</td>
<td>_ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Find the Differences

Students compare the two pictures (see following page) and find the differences. They can highlight or circle each difference on Picture B.

There are eight differences between Picture A and Picture B.

In picture B ...

1. the hutch contains guinea pigs, not rabbits;
2. the cat is sleeping in a box, not a cat basket;
3. one hen has been replaced by a tortoise;
4. the dog by the kennel has spots;
5. the dog is chasing another dog not a cat;
6. there is one less bird in the aviary;
7. the bowl has food in it; and
8. a pony has its head over the fence.
Can you find the differences between Picture A and Picture B?
Animal Images Activity

The following images may be useful as inspiration for creative writing or role play. Please refer to Post-visit Activities on page 13 of this document.
RSPCA — A to Z

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>