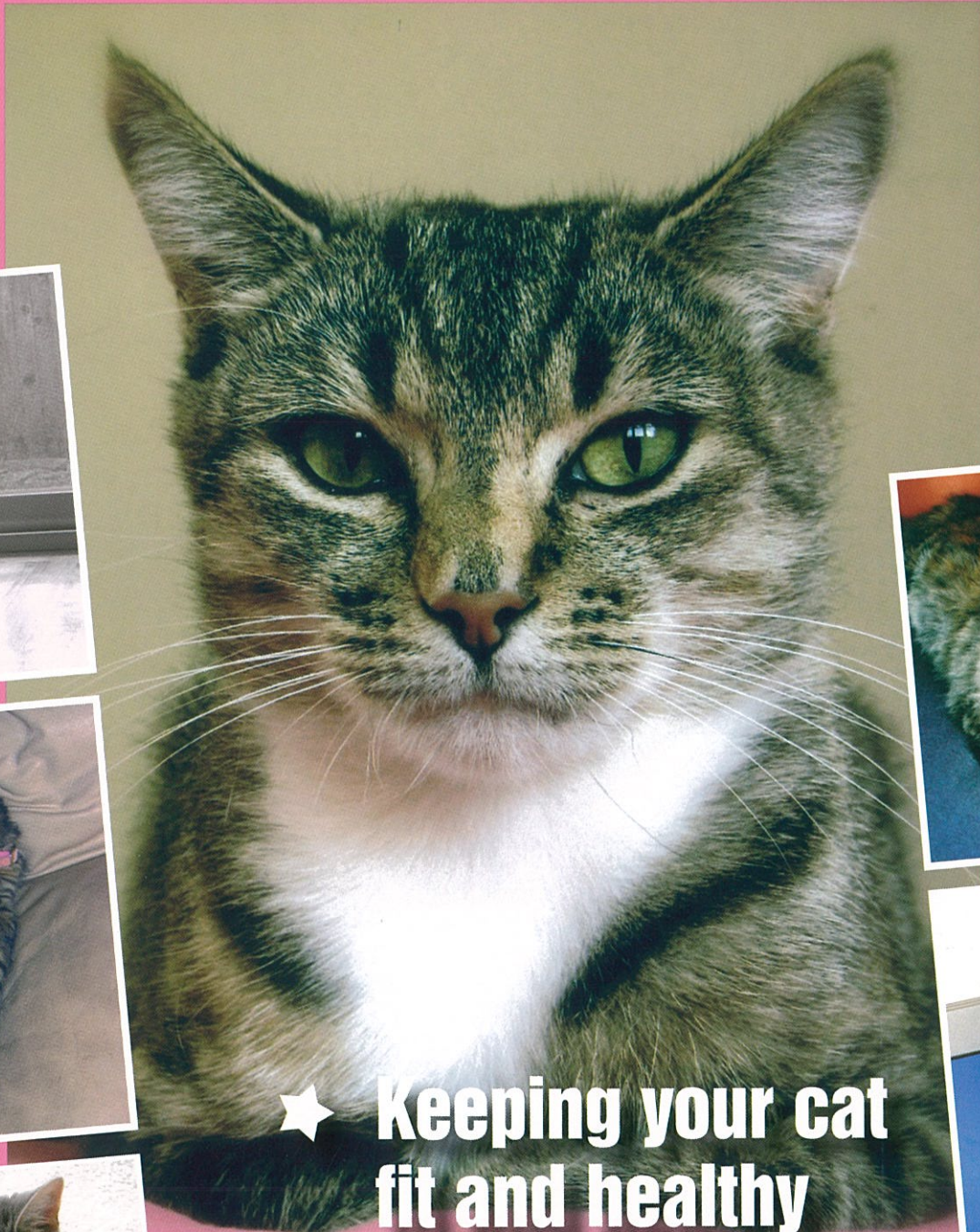


# Cat<sup>★</sup>affairs

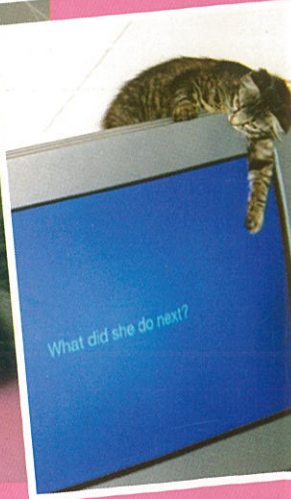
Winter 2009

JOURNAL OF THE CAT PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NSW

ISSN 1834-870X



- ★ Keeping your cat fit and healthy
- ★ Kitten-ka-boodle 2009







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*Front Cover featuring: "Belle" - Kari Krall also appearing  
"Nikita" - Leanne Stewart; "Lynx" - Kari Krall; "Bella Boo"  
- Amanda Haltley; "Panzer" - Aria Lee*

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## Council Report

One day in April someone brought in a stray kitten who was paralysed from the waist down: he'd been taken from the mouth of a dog. We rushed him to the vet but nothing could be done to save his life because his back was broken. Although it was a terrible outcome for the kitten, the dog was in his own backyard so we cannot blame him: the person who dumped the poor kitten is the guilty one.

A foster kitten was taken to the vet that morning because she had suddenly fallen ill – she was put on fluids and antibiotics but by the afternoon her condition significantly worsened – she had massive liver failure. The condition was congenital: she was the offspring of a mother and son (both practically kittens themselves) rescued from a backyard breeder. Less than 24 hours later, two parasite-infested kittens were abandoned (in a box) on the doorstep of Cat Protection.

Those 24 hours offer just a glimpse of the pain and suffering created when cats are not desexed: abandonment; fatal birth defects; violent death. So why do seven out of 14 Sydney council pounds sell undesexed kittens? Why are those in positions of authority perpetuating the problem of stray and unwanted cats? We continue to be frustrated and deeply disappointed that state and local government decision makers in New South Wales refuse to make the regulatory and other changes that could lessen the suffering of companion animals.

On the bright side, the story of those 24 hours also shows what Cat Protection supporters make possible. You enabled two kittens to have some dignity and love in their tragically short lives, and you allowed us to provide the shelter, care and love needed to two kittens so they could be safe and well until they find the forever homes they deserve. You made a difference.

Barack Obama has said if you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress.

We will keep walking. We will keep writing to politicians to try to open their eyes, their minds and their hearts to the problem of companion animal overpopulation. We will keep educating the community about the need to desex kittens. We will keep asking for your support and we will keep helping cats and kittens. We are making progress.





# Keeping your c



*Fit as a fiddle!*



*Who you calling big?*

We've become used to seeing stories about the increasing rates of obesity in the Australian human population – and the health risks of being overweight or obese. But did you know that obesity has increased in felines also?

Recent research published in the *Australian Veterinary Practitioner* found that 33 per cent of the study cat population were categorised as overweight or obese. Domestic breeds were more likely to be overweight than exotic breeds and males more likely than females to be overweight. The UK Feline Advisory Bureau reports that an estimated 25-30 per cent of cats in the UK are obese. A 2008 study by the US Association for Pet Obesity Prevention found that 17.8 per cent of cats were estimated to be obese and 39.6 per cent of cats overweight.

We love our cats, but are we spoiling their health when we spoil them with too much food or treats?

**The risks of being too heavy**  
There are numerous diseases associated with feline obesity

including diabetes, cardiovascular and lower urinary tract disease, and other health complications such as lowered immune function, increased risk under anaesthesia, grooming difficulties, skin and fur problems, and stress on joints/arthritis. Overweight and obese cats have a shorter life expectancy – it's that serious.

Different cats have different ideal weight ranges, with larger breeds such as the Bengal or Maine Coon obviously heavier than smaller, slender breeds such as the Siamese. Some moggies are naturally big while others are petite. Age is another factor that influences weight. Therefore, it is important to have your cat assessed at their annual vet health check to learn their ideal weight.

Assessment is based not just on weight – scales can be used to monitor whether a cat is gaining or losing weight, but are not the main tools to measure feline obesity. A 'Body Condition Score' (BCS) is used – this provides scores from 1 to 5, with 1 being very thin; 2 underweight; 3 ideal; 4 overweight; and 5 being obese.

The Hill's website ([www.hillspet.com.au](http://www.hillspet.com.au)) includes an on-line BCS tool that you can use at home to estimate your cat's BCS (go to the 'PetFit' section). The key factors to consider in determining a cat's BCS are whether you can feel the cat's ribs or spine and whether the cat has a sagging abdomen or a defined waist.

In underweight cats, bones including the ribs will be prominent and easily felt as they have minimal fat cover; in obese cats the ribs will not be visible at all and even difficult to feel due to a thick covering of fat. In a cat of ideal weight, the ribs are easily felt but not sticking out and you can see a rise up from the ribs going up towards the back legs (the cat's waist). Other signs your cat may be overweight include laziness and an inability (or resistance) to jump, and breathing problems.

## **How it happens**

For cats as for people, the key to a healthy weight is to ensure the right balance between energy consumed and energy used. So people with sedentary lifestyles



# at fit and healthy



*I'm just big-furred*

*Post-exercise nap*

simply don't need to eat as much as people who have physically active jobs and active leisure interests; and sleepy, lay-about cats don't need to eat as much as crazy active kittens who are busy playing for several hours a day. Nutritional needs vary with age and other conditions such as pregnancy, lactation or health issues.

While it is true that desexed cats are more likely to be overweight than undesexed cats, that is only because they aren't out roaming, fighting to protect territory and engaging in other dangerous (calorie-burning) pursuits. Undesexed cats have a shorter lifespan for those reasons – as well, they contribute to feline overpopulation. Weight gain in desexed cats comes when they are eating more than they need to for the energy they use – it is not desexing as such that puts on the weight, it is the reduced exercise.

Reduced activity levels are no reason not to desex your cat – the health and other benefits of desexing are paramount.

'Treats' might seem nice, but when you realise giving your cat a 30 gram piece of cheese is the equivalent of you eating three and half hamburgers as a between-meals snack, you can see you're not doing your cat any favours! (Refer to the 'Treat Translator' chart on the Hill's website for more shocking revelations).

The 'meow' factor can also lead to weight gain: just because your cat meows at you, doesn't mean he is hungry. Instead of feeding your cat in response to meows, how about some pats and cuddles? A properly fed cat is not meowing from hunger for food, but an appetite for affection.

As well as too many treats, many people don't know the right amount to feed their cats in the

first place. Consult your vet about the nutritional requirements of your cat and make sure you use consistent measures as it's not just the type of food that makes a difference but how much is fed. Remember cats are small: increasing a portion size by even a tiny amount could lead to a big weight gain.

## **Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight**

If your cat has an ideal BCS, well done – your goal is to help him maintain it. However, if your cat needs to lose weight, you will need to take action to help your furry friend achieve optimum health. **Sudden weight loss is extremely dangerous and can cause fatal complications so NEVER put your cat on a diet without proper veterinary supervision.** Consult your vet and make sure you get a detailed plan: what to feed, how much and how often; and then make sure you take your cat for regular check-ups to monitor the weight loss and your cat's health. Getting an overweight cat to their ideal weight could take from six months to a year, so be patient and remember you don't want dramatic weight loss.

Some cats are good at self-regulating food intake while others easily succumb to temptation. Some cats prefer to graze while others like to have regular meals. In multi-cat households, there is a constant risk of dinner theft. If you find one cat in the household is packing on the pounds, you'll need to look at feeding the cats separately or strictly supervising mealtimes. Don't 'feed and go' or you'll have no idea who ate what, and make sure you always leave plenty of fresh water for your cats.

One way to keep a cat fed, exercised and mentally stimulated is to put their dry food in a 'treat ball' – this means they need to roll the ball until a biscuit comes







*Slender Siamese Rosie enjoying some exercise*

out. This is a good method for making your cat work a bit harder for their food, and is especially good for cats left alone during the day as the activity can help to relieve boredom. Even if your cat is not overweight, it is better to fill the treat ball with a part of their regular serving of dry food rather than additional food as it is these 'little extras' that lead to unwanted weight gain.

### Exercise

All cats need regular exercise but unlike dogs we can't usually pop a lead on our cats and take them for a walk. Nor can we let them roam and threaten wildlife and put themselves in danger. We need to be responsible and creative in our approach.

As hunters, cats love to stalk and pounce so toys that appeal to this instinct work well: catnip mice, 'fishing pole' style toys and ping pong balls are great. Mazes, cardboard boxes and paper bags can be fun and tunnels, scratch poles and things to climb will all get your cat moving. Just as toddlers often prefer the Christmas wrapping to the expensive gifts inside, so too cats can find hours of fun in a bottle-top on the kitchen floor while merely sniffing the fancy



*Active kitten*

toy you present them. Outdoors, you can build a secure cat run with climbing frames or install cat-proof fencing (eg CatMax or similar, or download DIY instructions from our website) and have outside playtime.

Playing with your cat gets you active too, so you can get fit with your cat. It is also a lovely way

to bond with your cat. Of course, if you prefer to relax, you can simply recline on the lounge with a glass of wine in one hand and a torch in the other, while watching your cat chase the light around the room!

An important aspect of keeping playtime fun and interesting is 'refreshing' the toys regularly – simply rotate the toys available and invent new games. Spraying or filling toys with catnip can work wonders for cats who respond to catnip (whether or not your cat does so is genetic). Make sure you don't leave unsafe toys lying around (eg string and small parts that could be swallowed).

If you have more than one cat you will probably find that they play chasings and hide & seek without any help from you. A playmate for a solo cat is worth considering, not just for the playtime benefits but also for companionship when you are out of the house.

A fit cat is a happy cat. Playtime helps a cat exercise her natural behaviours and reduces anxiety and stress. Active cats keep their weight down and enjoy healthier, happier, longer lives. And isn't that what we want?



# CAT PROTECTION DIARY

## Thank you

We would like to thank Tareva-Chine, one of our Kids Club members, for kindly knitting a lovely lot of blankets for our cats and kittens. As you can see from the photograph, this is one talented and generous girl. Thank you to Tareva-Chine's grandmother as well, for the all-important knitting lessons.



*Kitten blankets*

We are also grateful to the NSW Department of Primary Industries for the grant of \$15,500 towards our welfare program. This money goes towards rescuing cats at risk and injured cats, and our discount desexing program. The DPI grant program distributed more than half a million dollars to animal welfare organisations including the RSPCA and WIRES. The Minister, Ian Macdonald, said "I would like to thank the dedicated staff and volunteers who work in animal welfare throughout NSW, their efforts play an important role in ensuring the well being of animals in our state."



## Feline health & welfare education

A big 'thank you' to Lord Mayor of Sydney and State Member for Sydney, Ms Clover Moore, MP; when elected Lord Mayor in 2004, she established a charitable trust into which she donates her Mayoral salary. Cr Marcelle Hoff is also donating her Deputy Lord Mayoral fees into the trust,

which in March this year alone distributed more than \$70,000 to community groups.

We were honoured to have our application for funding accepted and on 20 March 2009, our Education Officer, Nerida Atkin, formally received a cheque for \$2,000 on behalf of Cat Protection. The funds will assist our education work, which aims to promote feline wellbeing and to keep people and their cats together by informing people about responsible cat care, feline health and behavioural issues. If owners can prevent or manage behavioural and other issues, fewer cats will be surrendered and euthanased.



*Nerida Atkin receiving cheque from the Lord Mayor of Sydney and State Member for Sydney Clover Moore*

Nerida is currently studying for a graduate diploma in feline behaviour, and a Bachelor of Natural Science – Animal Science. She already has a Graduate Certificate in Animal Welfare and Certificate IV in Vet Nursing (behaviour major) so she is eminently qualified to lead our education programs.

Please keep an eye on our website or contact us in early June for information about our feline health seminars, which we will be holding at our adoption centre on selected Sundays in winter.





# CAT PROTECTION DIARY

## Kitten-ka-boodle 2009

Winners of the photo competition will be announced in the next *Cat Affairs*, but we couldn't resist a sneak-peek of some of the beautiful entries. Everyone's a winner when they live with a beautiful cat!



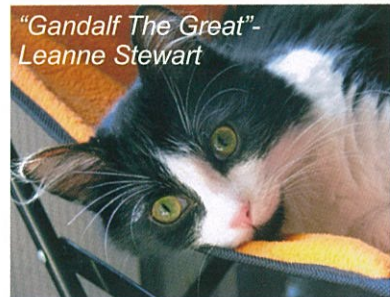
"Twitch"- Nadine Smith



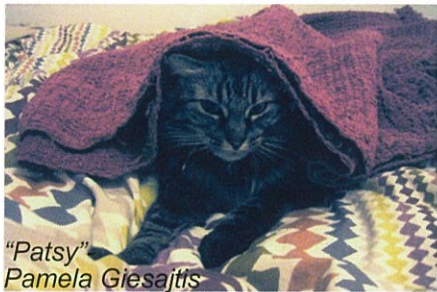
"Friday"- Ellis Longhurst



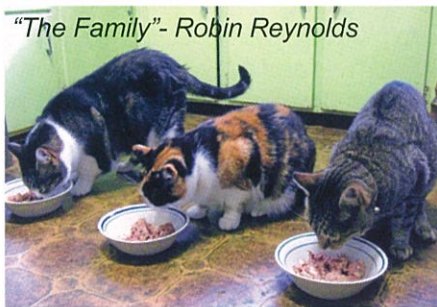
"Stevie"- Nick Phegan



"Gandalf The Great"-  
Leanne Stewart



"Patsy"-  
Pamela Giesajtis



"The Family"- Robin Reynolds



"Nikita"-  
Leanne Stewart



"Highbury & Leo"- David Mann



"Tassie"- Nidia Pereira



"Lynx"- Kari Krall

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# SCRATCHING POST

## Hi CPS

Just a quick update on our kitten we adopted several months ago. We have named him Max. He has settled in well and is a playful, happy cat and we are thrilled to have him. He is now much bigger than in these photos!

Tom



Max

## Hi

We adopted two of Nicky's foster kittens on 13 December and thought she (and others) might be interested in how they're doing.

They've grown heaps and when we took them for their second vaccination on Saturday the vet commented on how healthy and clean they were - and what nice kittens they were too. After he was done with his check-up, Misty snuggled into my handbag and Mango followed him shortly after.

Our kids are thrilled to finally have pets and my husband and I also find them very delightful. So thanks again for all your efforts.

Val & family

## Dear Hannah

The cats are going great. We learnt how to carry Gryffindor and Lovely (Tom and Jerry). I am having fun with the cats and they are very sweet and playful. We call them dinner suit cats. I love cats! Even Louis my three year old brother likes cats.

Kind regards

Jules



Misty and Mango





# SCRATCHING POST

Hi

I wanted to share a photo of our little beauty ... her name is Mushka and she was rescued from the pound. Her left front leg was paralysed and had to be amputated.

She is now a healthy, happy and very loving companion. She can move quickly, jumps without any assistance and has me wrapped around her wee paws!

Cheers

Rob

## Dear Cat Protection Society

In September 2007, it was SO hard to choose from all the lovely cats at CPS. Pumpkin was adorable, but sadly, she was still quite scared and sick from her desexing (where she lost three kittens in pregnancy).

With some TLC, she bounced back from her op and we began to see the real Pumpkin! An indoor cat, Pumpkin follows me around the house, sleeps on the bed and is very clean and tidy. She loves to be chased, racing up and down corridors, with speed usually seen at the tracks!

She had a strong fear of new people, perhaps a legacy from her earlier years. She would hide and wouldn't come out for hours after they'd left. We trained her and she's getting much better at socialising.

Pumpkin is a beautiful girl; she is growing and is part of the family. She's still a bit of a scaredy cat with visitors, but with us, she's loving and sweet!

Thanks for all the hard work you do at CPS.

Sincerely

A. Blackbourne



Mushka



Pumpkin

## Hi guys

We want to let you know that since leaving Enmore in December we have settled really well into our new home. We enjoy racing around outside and climbing trees.

The best thing as brothers is that we were never separated and even now we still stay very close to each other.

Thank you for all your support and kindness.

Woody & Wilcox xxxx

## Hi there

We adopted a kitten from you about a month ago. He was a very quiet black kitten with a white patch under his neck. Just to let you know, we named him Gus. He settled in straight away and is not the quiet shy little kitten he made out to be! He tears around the place like a mad thing. He loves his new home, and is so affectionate. Gus loves to play fight and cuddle, and he purrs constantly. He is a constant source of amusement! We love him.

Thanks again from us all and keep up the good work.

Rob





# SCRATCHING POST



*Luna and Minnie*

## Hi Cat Protection Society

We adopted a kitten from you in January and just thought we would send through some pictures of how she is doing in her new home.

Her name is Lacey and she is very mischievous! She likes to hide behind corners and jumps out at us. Lacey is a very talkative cat, and we find it funny that you can have a conversation with her and she responds by meowing! She loves to jump up to the kitchen benches to have a look at what's going on when we're cooking. Lacey likes to be included in everything especially when we're on the computer. She tries to lie across the keyboard - this has proven a bit of a problem as I have just recently started working from home!

Lacey is much loved and we are so happy with her. Thanks to everyone at the Cat Protection Society who helped us when we were choosing her.

Thanks so much.

Jen, Tom & Lacey



*Luna and Minnie*

## Hello CPS

We adopted sisters, Luna and Minnie, last October. They took no time to happily settle in and now we can't imagine our home without them. They spend a lot of time sleeping but they also spend a lot of time chasing each other from one end of the house to the other, making various detours up and over furniture.

Minnie loves to watch television, especially when Nintendo Wii is on, while Luna prefers to eat a lot (we have to be careful that she doesn't steal her sister's dinner).

They are naughty sometimes. They sneak into the tumble dryer when the clothes are still warm and have a little nap. The toilet paper is now hidden because Minnie cannot resist unravelling the WHOLE ROLL and attacking it! They love to snuggle up on the end of the bed but they also love to attack toes detected moving under blankets – this means we have to stay perfectly still.

But, most of all they love to sit on our laps purring contentedly while giving us occasional affectionate little nips that we now call 'love-bites' and this makes everyone happy!

Dunn Family



*Lacey*





# SCRATCHING POST

## Dear Kristina

We have just received our *Cat Affairs* mag and we love it! For quite some time we have been meaning to send you some pictures of our two little boys from CPS, Lenny and Valentino.

The first shows Lenny and Valy cuddling in a bed that is a bit too small for them! We have since got a bigger bed for them both to sprawl out in. The second shows their favourite afternoon resting place – one on each armchair on the balcony, watching the world go by.

Lenny's nickname is Loony because he can be crazy and a real scaredy cat and Valentino's nickname is Valium as he is super chilled out!

Keep up the great work at CPS.

Kristin & Rob

## Hello

We thought we'd let you know that our kitten is doing REALLY well. We've named her Lucky and we love her dearly, as does her 'sister' we adopted at the same time. The first few days were hairy, as she was terrified of us and her new sister but now she's full of beans and full of cuddles. The two kittens wouldn't know what to do without each other!

Thanks for our beautiful girls.

Rebecca & Simon

## Hi CPS

Just to let you know that after four months together Olive has finally come out of her shell and is showing me affection ... I think she is very cute.

Lisa



*Lenny and Valentino*



*Lenny and Valentino*



*Olive*



# SCRATCHING POST

## Hi CPS

Just to let you know that Madeline has settled in very well. She spends lots of time in the garden and can be very acrobatic in the trees. Madeline is very affectionate and loves people. Even the ones who usually don't like cats have fallen for her!

Thank you - she's a delight.

Sheila

## Hi

I was lucky enough to get two kittens (Maxi and Mrs Chippy) from you a couple of months ago. We only intended to get one but she was handed in with her sister and I didn't have the heart to separate them. It was the best decision! They are great mates. We also have a puppy they adore and the three usually sleep all curled up together.

Attached are photos of the kittens. They show their different personalities.

Kind regards

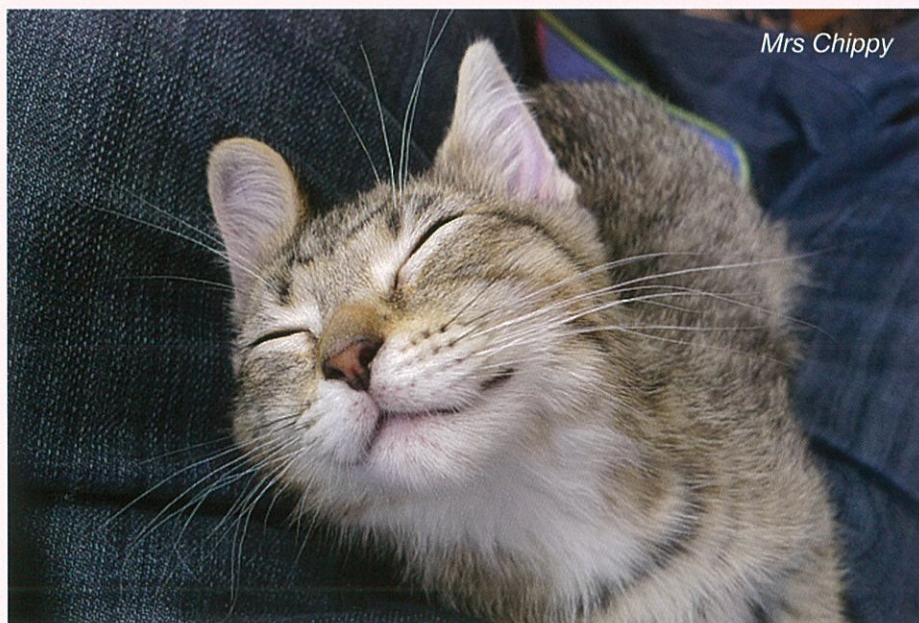
Rosemary



*Madeline*



*Maxi*



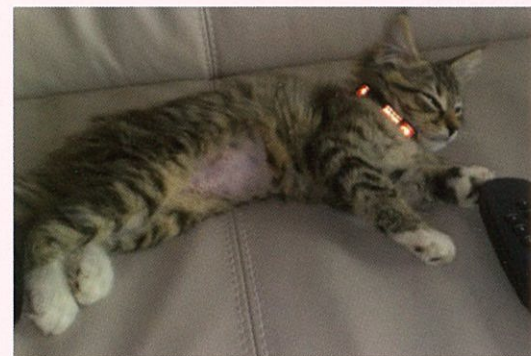
*Mrs Chippy*

## Hello there

I just wanted to thank you for doing such a terrific job with your cats and kittens. My partner and I adopted a little kitten (Pashmak) from CPS a couple of months ago and couldn't have been more impressed with your operation. When we attended your rooms we were after a little girl kitten, and although she was extremely shy and 'hissy' we decided to take her anyway. Now she is a very well-adjusted and confident teenager!

Thanks for doing such a fantastic job; hopefully we'll be adopting another cat from you in the future!

Sarah



*Pashmak*

## Dear Amy

Finally, pictures of Tiger whom we adopted last August - wanted to wait for some really good ones! As you can see, he's decided that my daughter's dolly cot and the bed in the Barbie dollhouse are in fact for him. During the latest heatwave, he decided the coolest place in the house was our large china-serving platter on a shelf in the dining room.

Cheers

Alexa



*Tiger*



# SCRATCHING POST

## Hello

This is Smokey, my brother's cat.

Sincerely

Lorna

## Hi there

I just wanted to let you know that Izzy is settling very well into her new home.

She's very happy and playful. She is using her litter tray beautifully, hasn't cried at night and is eating well.

We love her - thank you!

Libby & Neil

## Hi

My husband and I adopted two kittens from the Cat Protection Society in Newtown on Christmas Eve 2008. They have settled very well into our home and we are very happy with them. The vet said we were lucky to get such good-natured cats! We called them Nacho and Billi.

Thanks

Tara



*Nacho and Billi*



*Smokey*



*Izzy*

## Dear Naomi

You may remember that we adopted Jam (Ginger Rogers) in January with the assistance of Angelika. We're just writing to let you know that she has settled down very well and is enjoying herself. We're enclosing some photographs so you can see for yourselves.

Keep up the good work!

John & Henri





# IN MEMORIAM

Please accept this donation in memory of our beautiful 15 year old cat, Tass.

**D**inking from the blue dish outside first thing in the morning.  
**E**ntertaining all visitors, he was just so friendly.  
**A**lways emptying the water dishes, they were such fun to play with.  
**R**acing through the house, forgetting he wasn't a kitten any more.

**T**apping our legs, especially when chicken was on the menu.  
**A**nnouncing loudly every night that he was going to bed.  
**S**nores so loudly that we had to turn up the TV.  
**S**leeping in his little igloo on the bed, no matter what the weather.

Remembering our 'gentle giant' forever.

Barbara & Nick

Our Sir Humphrey who featured in the last issue sadly suffered kidney failure.

Regretfully, after 17 loyal and wonderful years, advice from our vet was that it was not fair to allow him to continue suffering in pain. We agreed to have him euthanased, and our vet carried this out humanely and sympathetically. We were there at the end.

We miss him.

Ashley & Maree

Please accept this cheque in memory of my lovely Harley, put to sleep at age 14 on 4 January 2009. A much-loved boy.

Euphemia

This donation is made in memory of my dearest friend, Ruth Walshe. Such a worthy cause – more so now in hard times.

Marion

This donation is in memory of our much-loved 19 year old Ella, who passed away recently.

Rose & Diane



**Thank you to all our members for your kindness  
you've made  
a world of difference to thousands of cats**

*The Cat Protection Society extends our condolences to the family and friends of the late Mary Mitchell, a long-time member of CPS. We also extend our thanks for the kind donations made in lieu of flowers - our cats are most grateful for this lovely gesture in memory of Mary.*

*Cat Affairs* is your magazine, so tell us what you think.

Feel free to send us an email at [kristina@catprotection.org.au](mailto:kristina@catprotection.org.au) or post us a letter with your feedback.

We welcome contributions from readers, but CPS reserves the right to edit, abridge, alter or reject any material.

CPS does not pay for contributions.

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