

# Gone to the dogs, Lauren loves it!

**Freyla Ferguson**  
reports

**LAUREN Black is not your typical foster parent.**

SHE'S a volunteer for Canberra Pooch Rescue, a local organisation that has saved the lives of 1479 dogs and cats since starting in November 2006.

"Rehabilitating dogs is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done," Lauren said.

"Any dog can be rehabilitated."

Every year, Canberra Pooch Rescue (CPR) rescues and rehabilitates about 300 dogs and cats from pounds from the ACT, Queanbeyan, Wagga, Temora, Griffith, Sydney and West Wyalong.

On average they have about 40 dogs and cats in their care on a daily basis.

The dogs are de-sexed, health checked, vaccinated, wormed and micro-chipped, then sent to a foster home, sometimes for up to a month, where they are treated as part of a family and taught basic manners, toilet training and exposed to new things such as car rides and meeting children and other pets.

It also gives the foster parent a chance to discover the dog's temperament before being bought by their new owner or "forever home".

All proceeds from "adoption fees" go directly back into the organisation.

Lauren became a foster parent after adopting her pet Jack Russell cross Fox Terrier, Alfie from CPR.

She had been watching the CPR website to find a friend for her miniature Fox Terrier



**Lauren Black...** "Rehabilitating dogs is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done." Photo by Silas Brown

Lolli, who was saved from the Albury pound.

After meeting Alfie at his foster parent's house, and a second "play date" with Lolli, Lauren knew Alfie was exactly what she was looking for.

"Lolli and Alfie have been best friends ever since they met," Lauren said.

"They are just like brother and sister."

It was after the adoption that she was invited to become a foster parent.

But according to Lauren, finding a "forever home" is not just about finding a family who say they are willing.

"Every family has a different energy," she said.

"It's about matching the personality of the dog with the personality of the family."

She said previous experience with animals is also a big part of the process.

"Each foster parent is an expert on a breed," said Lauren, who specialises in Terriers and small dogs.

At the moment Lauren is looking after Jack, a 10-year-old Terrier mix, who was saved from the Wagga pound.

"Dogs are able to live in a home environment and learn a proper structure," she said.

"They eat at the same time, get good sleep, good walks. They start to become your own dog."

All foster parents are volunteers with full-time work.

Although only new to CPR, Lauren is already feeling the rewards of giving a dog a new chance of life.

"There are a lot of dogs out there being put down around Australia," Lauren said.

"And a lot of families that could benefit from having a dog."

"The social benefits for a family are just enormous."

And although she finds it rewarding, Lauren says the most difficult part of the job is facing the reality that some people are not respectful towards their animals.

"It's not just physical abuse, it's every day mental abuse; things like being left alone, no exercise," she says.

"A dog's a dog. You have to be aware that you'll need to walk a dog every day."

Currently, CPR are looking for more foster parents.

"We are looking for people who know the responsibilities of having a dog," she says.

"You can tell when you first meet someone whether they are in it for the dog."

*To become a foster parent or to adopt a CPR dog visit [www.canberrapoochrescue.org.au](http://www.canberrapoochrescue.org.au)*



The Kent Street "blue bridge"... "Some people think it's quite nice and other people think it's ghastly," says Roads ACT director Tony Gill. Photo by Silas Brown

## Bridge gets the blues

By Freyla Ferguson

COMBINING the rich blue sky and the Brindabellas in the distance; the design of the new blue screens on the Kent Street bridge over Adelaide Avenue, are all about the aesthetics says Roads ACT director Tony Gill.

Although the practical purpose of the bridge is safety, to "limit rocks and missiles" thrown off the bridge on to traffic, the new Plexiglass screen, that cost about \$700,000, is the first of many to be installed on selected bridges in the city and town centres.

However bridges in outer suburbs will retain the metal wire mesh screens that cost about \$500,000.

Mr Gill said the installation has been an ongoing project, in consultation with the National Capital Authority, as part of a policy introduced in 2008.

"As we got closer to the city, NCA thought the look of the treatment was a more important consideration," Mr Gill said.

The National Capital Plan includes provisions that require: "...planning and development in Canberra Central in particular and generally throughout the Territory, should have high aesthetic and environmental quality. Planning controls should seek to ensure that development in all forms, including landscaping in urban and non-urban areas, complements and enriches its surroundings."

Mr Gill said part of the NCA's role was the urban design for the route into the national capital, and for that reason the screens needed a more aesthetic solution than the metal mesh.

"We've had a mixed reaction to it," he said.

"Some people think it's quite nice and other people think it's ghastly."

Urban design company Thylacine came up with the "site specific" design of the screens.

"It really is a response to the environment, and where the bridge is," Thylacine creative director Caolán Mitchell said.

"In this case, when you drive over the hill, you see expansive sky."

The company used a newly developed technology from German company Plexiglass for the screen. The acrylic sheet is stronger than glass and most paints can be washed off.

It also can be produced into a custom-made colour.

Mr Mitchell said the company worked with a surveyor to map the typography of the area, then etched topographic line work on to the Plexiglass to create the pattern.

The company is also working on the Cotter Road bridge on Adelaide Avenue, that will see a site specific metal mesh design.

"Because the Kent Street bridge is so vibrant, the design on the second bridge is a bit more recessive," he said.

Work has already begun on the next screen on the Chandler Street bridge in Belconnen.

It will be of the same blue colour, keeping with the design of the Belconnen town centre improvements project. The installation is expected to be complete by the end of April.

The company is also developing designs for four more sites.

"We spend so much money on road infrastructure," Mr Mitchell said.

"It doesn't take much more to improve on that."

"Canberra has been quite safe for a while."

"So it's good to see people take risks on design."

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