

# NRAS Newsletter – #1 /2021

## Vollie In View

If you thought YOUR life was busy ... then meet this edition's *Vollie in View*, **SONYA NEWMAN** and you'll truly understand BUSY.

As single Mum to two teenagers, Sonya also provides respite foster care to two young boys each month; runs her own Remedial Massage business - *Serenity Massage* in Alstonville; is a paid fire-fighter with Alstonville Fire & Rescue as well as being a local First Responder Paramedic.

Sonya also teaches First Aid, which includes CPR and supervises students under controlled fire situations to demonstrate the correct use of a fire extinguisher.

Readers, are YOU tired yet?  
But wait ... there's more!!!

Sonya is our *Vollie in View* because she also "finds time" to volunteer for Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers rescuing all kinds of native animals, nurturing them back to good health and (if she's lucky) releasing them back into the wild ... AS WELL as being one of NRAS' busiest foster carers.

Sonya joined NRAS as a Foster Mum for puppies and kittens about seven years ago but has shifted into just about any category from senior dogs and pregnant cats to orphaned kittens requiring bottle feeding.

Her passion comes from "wanting to provide a safe place and loving environment for domestic animals until they find their forever homes."

*"The peace & calm an animal brings to you and your family is priceless"*

And speaking of families ... the Newman's are definitely a clan with passion, spirit and generosity, as all are very hands-on with their foster fur babies.



*Sonya flanked by her Chihuahua Jax and foster kitten Zoe*

And then there is her NRAS family ... As Sonya describes, one of the best parts of being a volunteer with NRAS is the circle of friends she has made who are "always at the end of the phone" should she need them as well as the office volunteers who support her 100% in anything needed to care for her foster fur babies.

There will be no surprises to learn that Sonya has her own menagerie with four cats, one kitten, four dogs and four snakes ... oh and an extra snake that she is currently rehabilitating as part of her wildlife rescue volunteering. However, let's not forget her daughter's 100 lizards added into the mix.

"As you may have guessed, I'm a very busy person, but I do take time out for walks on the beach with my dogs; I like to head off camping once a month and I do love to settle into a good paperback novel".

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**NRAS Rescue Shelter** – 61 Piper Drive, Ballina  
T: 6681 1860 E: [nras@live.com.au](mailto:nras@live.com.au)  
Office open Weekdays 10:00am – 4:00pm  
[www.northernriversanimalservices.com](http://www.northernriversanimalservices.com)

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**NRAS Op Shop** – 268 River Street, Ballina  
T: 6686 7069 E: [NRAS.Opshop@gmail.com](mailto:NRAS.Opshop@gmail.com)  
Open Weekdays 10:00am – 3:00pm  
Saturday 10:00am – 2:00pm

## THE PUPPIES THAT STOLE CHRISTMAS

It was just before Christmas 2020 and **Bulma** – the most enormously pregnant dog EVER was now a week overdue. Travel plans went out the window as we went into puppy watch.



Long nights of false labours passed and after inducing Bulma it was finally time! 5:00pm and my kids and hubby were as excited as I was and ready to lend a hand.

Bulma was in full-blown labour; surely a puppy would arrive any second.

But ... it took six long hours of panting and vomiting until the first pup finally arrived at 11:00pm.

A storm was raging and my back-up team were all asleep, so I settled in with Bulma for the long-haul. She puffed and pushed (and vomited even more) all through the night until 5:00am **when the last pup arrived.**



By the time the household woke up I can honestly say it had been one of the best and most memorable nights of my life.

I had a bag full of placentas, vomit all over my jacket and blood in my hair, but none of that mattered because we had seven healthy pups – five girls & two boys, and mama was doing well.



In the days and weeks that followed we were all on a newborn high and totally smitten with the new arrivals. Bulma instantly transformed into a wonderfully attentive mother and the blur of Christmas passed and puppy cleaning began.



Watching our seven fat little miracles, all the adorable firsts and puppy cuddles, made the hours of cleaning and feeding worthwhile.

Every day brought another hilarious and beautiful moment along with plenty of poop and chaos.



We were very lucky to have our Op shop angels provide us with plenty of towels and bedding along the way. Other volunteers and carers brought toys and treats and when we were devastated by the sudden loss of one of our pups following a horrific seizure at just six weeks old, our NRAS family surrounded us with love and support.

When it finally comes time to farewell our foster pups our journey always ends the same way. We love; we learn and we send them off to their forever homes. But this time the story ends a little differently.

After all the highs and lows there was one little pup we couldn't let go of.

So, as we farewell the litter who stole Christmas, we welcome **Pepsi**, the puppy that stole our hearts and completes our family.



AMY XXX



Our monthly **Adoption Days** at the NRAS Rescue Shelter - 61 Piper Drive, Ballina will recommence (post COVID) from next month. Whilst usually the **first Saturday of the month**, with Easter falling that weekend April's Adoption Day is scheduled for **April 10<sup>th</sup>**, from 10:00am – 1:00pm. ★

It hasn't just been raining puppies as the **NRAS Cat Cottage** has played host to a number of guests. From late December we had Mumma puss cat, her oldest daughter and her five, 5-day-old kittens staying in what is commonly referred to as the **"penthouse"**. Only one of the kittens remains in foster care, with the four siblings already finding their forever homes.

Jackie has been with us since mid-February and a team of volunteers are responsible for her daily feeding and cuddles roster.



The cottage has also provided a great facility for folks to meet the cats in NRAS' care if they are unable to visit their foster home as well as short-term accommodation pending vet appointments or in transit from the pound to a foster carer.

*A Cat Cottage resident testing out the new tunnel to the outdoor cat enclosure*

## BARNEY SPREADS SOME XMAS CHEER

For avid NRAS newsletter-readers, you would recall our story in the September 2019 issue of **BARNEY, our beloved Boofhead.**

Well to recap ... Barney had a rough beginning and a few false starts but after a three-month stay at the NRAS Rescue Shelter (where he won the hearts of ALL the volunteers) he finally landed the most amazing PEOPLE and new FAMILY.

But, not to forget his NRAS friends, Barney did a shelter drop-in a few days before Christmas for a surprise visit and deliver some goodies for under the tree.



The **BEST Santa's Helper ... EVER!!!!**

AND, speaking of "drop ins" ... the NRAS Op Shop has had its fair share of extraordinary visitors, including 32 year-old **Mr Pickles** (*the one without the hat*) who caused quite a squawk inside the shop recently while a yellow Lamborgini (*on another occasion entirely*) was spotted parked out front.



And keeping with the superstar status, a very excited volunteer had the pleasure of serving **Bridesmaids** star and Hollywood fave, **Melissa McCarthy** when she popped in for a quiet shop during a break in filming.



Oh, the things you see in Ballina!!!!  
**Still no sign of the Hemsworths ...**

And then we have our own superstars. As was announced last year, we appointed two paid positions to help the NRAS Committee steer the organisation into 2021 and beyond.

**Donna Lloyd** (*left*) took over the role of Op Shop Manager and with her undisputed style (*as her pic suggests*) she has made some fantastic changes, including the much-talked-about themed window displays and flash sales that have customers rushing through the doors.



Then January saw us welcome **Sarah McKenzie** (*right*) as Shelter Operations Manager who has had a lot to handle in a few short months ... but she appears to have puppy juggling under control.

