



cat  
welfare  
society

SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

Create a caring and socially responsible society where cats are treated humanely, are cared for responsibly as pets and treated with compassion as community cats.

# Table of Contents

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. INFOGRAPHIC</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS &amp; DRIVERS</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>The Stakeholders (People)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Internal Factors</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>External Factors</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>5. DIGITAL CAPACITY &amp; GAPS</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Current Digital Landscape</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Current Societal Trends</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Current Stakeholders' Sentiments &amp; Legislation</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>6. CONCLUSION &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. REFERENCES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>8. Appendices</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Appendix A</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Appendix B</i>	<i>18</i>

**Word Counts: ~ 2060 words**





## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the main cat organisation in Singapore, the Cat Welfare Society (CWS) play a huge role in sustaining the overall cat population and providing support to the cat community within the country (Ee, 2014). Like any non-profit organization, CWS's challenges are its limited resources to be responsive and proactive towards its community.

With cat ownership and cat abandonment rates on the rise, CWS and other rescue organisations have been on a mission for the past years to lobby cat ownership rights and legislation for the cat banned in public housing homes, Housing & Development Board (HDB) flats (Housing & Development Board, n.d.) to be lifted and to enforce a mandatory licencing system for all pets including cats (Sankar, 2022).

This whitepaper also looks at frameworks like SWOT analysis, VUCA, and Horizon Scanning to determine CWS's current state and look at various angles to unlock its full potential. It uncovers that CWS can leverage a strategic partnership with leading technology players in the market to transition and enable its digital transformation. In return, it will strengthen its digital capabilities to support its current challenges and have a proper system to help manage the cats' cases under their care.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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Cat Welfare Society (CWS) is the main animal welfare group for all cats in Singapore and the third-party partner to the government agency for all animals in Singapore, Animal & Veterinary Services (AVS), formerly known as Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) (AVA Vision, 2018) as shown in Appendix B. CWS aims to create a humane society through its four pillars: mediation and community engagements, education, sterilisation, and advocacy for every cat to have a place to call home, whether at home or within the community. Their responsibilities include communicating, advocating, and educating pet owners and caretakers on the fundamentals and necessity of caring for their cats with the standard guidelines of responsible cat ownership and management (CWS, n.d.).

As a non-profit sector, CWS work is impactful and driven by ethical resolutions and responsibility to the various stakeholders (Conaway & Laasch, 2012). CWS offers two membership tiers for the cat people in Singapore; an Ordinary Member with annual renewal and a Life Member for a lifetime membership. Its members will receive updates on upcoming events, adoption drives, and other important information and play an important role in supporting and advocating for CWS's work and vision (CWS, n.d.).

As a non-profit organisation, CWS only has three full-time employees and relies on volunteers to assist in their daily operations (CWS, n.d.). Due to the limited resources, it is very challenging to be responsive and proactively tackle the cats' issues throughout the country and manage daily operations concurrently without a proper system. They also know the need to strengthen and diversify their education strategies on sterilisation (Tan, 2022) to greater outreach and target audiences as the trend of cat ownership (Government of Canada, n.d.) and abandonment rates (Youjin, 2022) are at an all-time high.

Therefore, digital transformation could provide the support they need with the proper tools and integrated systems to automate and compensate for their limited resources, enabling them to reach greater outreach and engagement.



# 3. INFOGRAPHIC

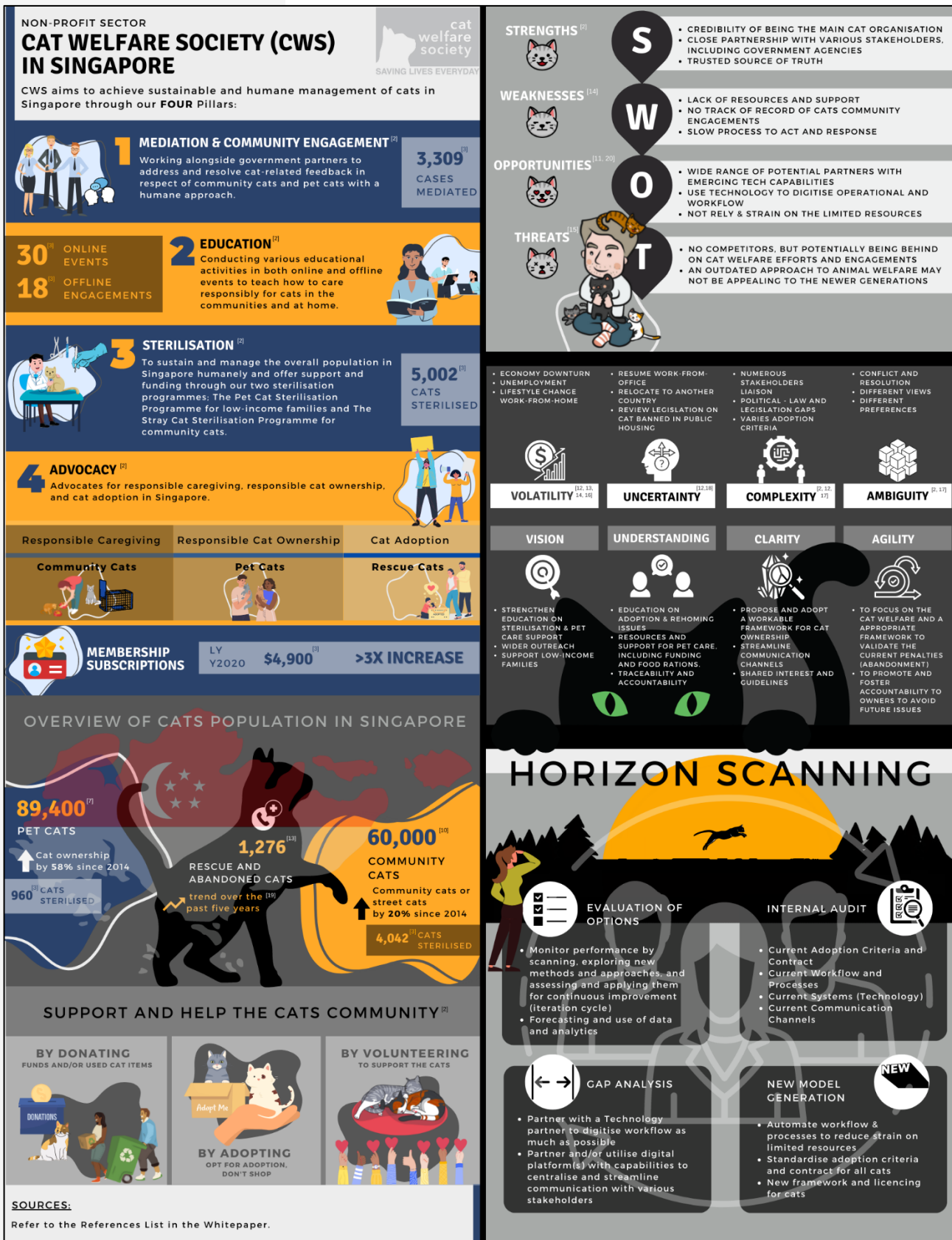


Figure 1 – Source: Appendix A Self-Created Infographic by the Author

## 4. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS & DRIVERS

### CATS-RELATED CASES



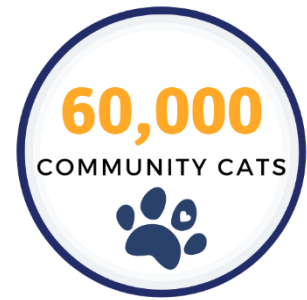
### CAT(S) OWNERS & CARETAKERS



### ANIMAL SHELTERS & RESCUE ORGANISATIONS



As an organisation, CWS liaises with various stakeholders to support the cat community in Singapore. CWS also assist in funding support for low-income families to assist them with sterilising their pet cats to contain the population within a household and not resorting to abandonment (Tan,2022).



### The Stakeholders (People)

The stakeholders consist of a pool of internal or external individuals that CWS engages with daily. This includes government agencies like AVS and HDB, the cat people and owners, independent rescuers and caretakers, other animal welfare groups, and animal rescue organisations that keep cats.

The main communication channels for CWS to the cat people pertaining the general information is through social media channels like posting adoption posts, adoption drives and events that will be happening soon, and other latest news related to cats.

This section will highlight the organisational factors, drivers, and some of the frameworks presented in section 3, the Infographic.

## Internal Factors

A strategic partnership with AVS has made CWS a trusted and credible source for its various stakeholders, including other government agencies, cat owners, animal welfare groups, and rescue organisations in Singapore. As indicated in section 3, this is considered the organisation's strength.

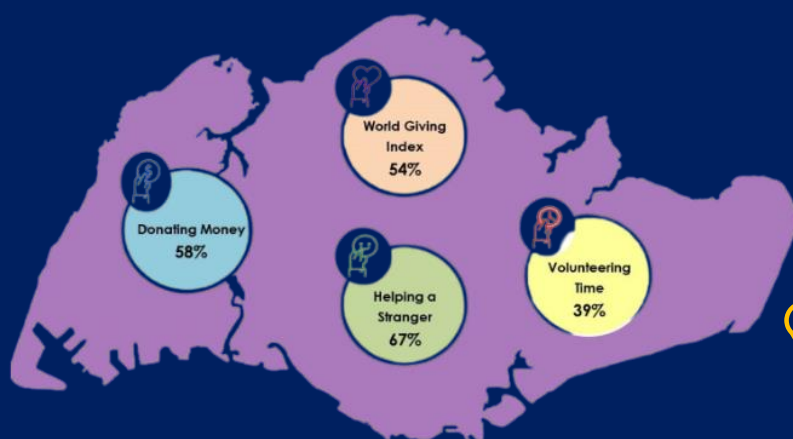


STRENGTH 

On the other hand, as highlighted in section 2, being a non-profit organisation has challenges and limitations. In addition, their funds are also dependent solely on donations and partially subsidised funding from AVS to sterilise community cats only (Ee, 2014). As a result, it is challenging to analyse performance as they have less time to focus on enhancing the organisation's capability (Bussin, 2013) and other requests; hence, the processing timeframe might take much longer than anticipated. Therefore, this can be considered their weakness.



WEAKNESS 



## SINGAPORE RANKED 7<sup>TH</sup> IN THE WORLD IN GIVING

\*The result is based on responses in terms of donating, giving a helping hand and volunteering.

 This means that with a proper system and marketing efforts, CWS could get more support and resources.

Figure 2 – Source: SPD: Serving people with disabilities since 1964. Data from World Giving Index 2010 to 2018.

## External Factors

The opportunities and threats in the SWOT analysis, as indicated in section 3, represent the external drivers and factors for CWS.



The opportunities for CWS include partnering with technology players in the market or emerging new companies focusing on the cat or pet adoption market to help and support animal welfare groups and rescue organisations. At the same time, CWS could use its platform to strengthen its current digital capabilities and broaden education to create cat owners' awareness of their responsibilities and role as pet owners.



For instance, partnering with **Pawtner**, a mobile application that aims to match potential adopters to a rescue animal and simplify the rescue organization's adoption process, could help tremendously in the CWS adoption effort. Another company, **Wildpaws NFT**, uses emerging technology like metaverse to create 3D cat profiles for digital adoption and support animal shelters in Southeast Asia. It could be an excellent source to support CWS in raising funds for their cause. The opportunities for partnerships with these companies are readily available for CWS to help optimise its operational needs.



Alternatively, CWS could benefit from partnering with leading technology players like **Microsoft** (MS) by supporting its cause as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. This way, CWS could utilise MS products like Office Suites and MS 365, including MS Dynamic Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and its Cloud, to capture, store and use data accordingly to help boost its marketing efforts and outreach.





Although there are no real threats regarding competitors, as CWS is the leading cat organisation in Singapore, the outdated animal or cat welfare approach may not be appealing to target the newer generations to consider cat adoption. The lengthy adoption process and silent treatments from the current caretakers or fosterers may kill the interest of potential adopters keen to adopt a cat and push them to buy one instead (Teo, 2020).

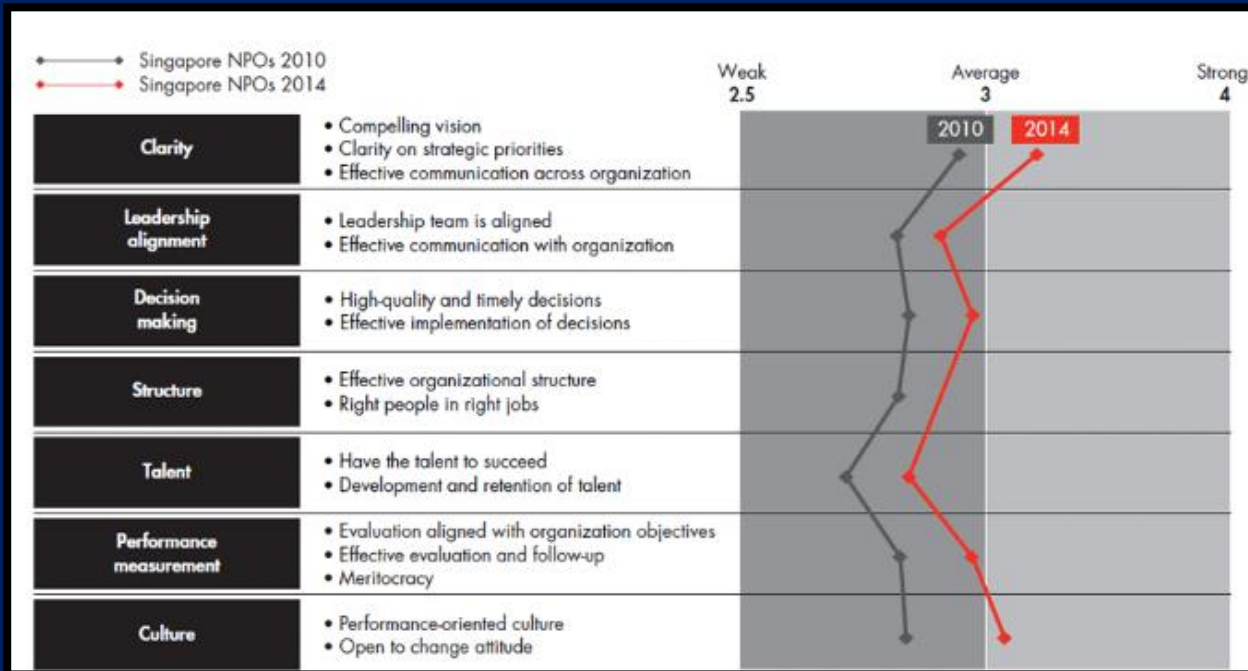


Figure 3 – Source: Singapore Nonprofit Capability Survey 2014 <sup>[9]</sup>

**This shows that NPOs are behind in internal structure and processes in general, which could threaten CWS to garner interest in cat adoption rather than buying one due to the complexity and ambiguity of the cat adoption process.**

THREATS

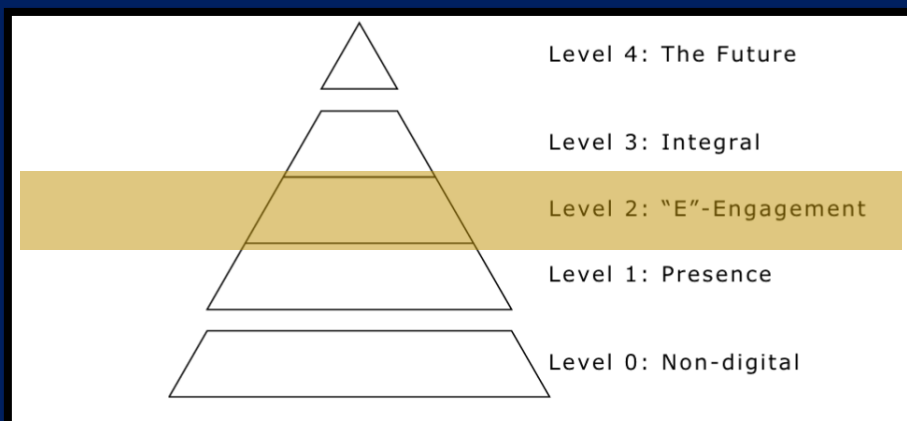


## 5. DIGITAL CAPACITY & GAPS

### Current Digital Landscape

CWS relies heavily on its social media channels, Facebook and Instagram, to engage with the cat community in Singapore. Besides that, CWS also has an online presence, a website equipped with an adoption board for the public to utilise and post cats that are available for adoption, and an e-commerce store, Cat Mama Shop, to raise funds by selling cats-related merchandise.

CWS uses its social media channels, Facebook, Instagram, and Mailchimp, to engage and communicate with its members regularly. Based on the Digital Business Maturity Model, CWS is somewhere in **Level 2: "E" – Engagement**, but without the "refined & connected systems" as everything is pretty much working in silos still.



**Level 2: "E" – Engagement is CWS's current digital state**

Figure 4 – Source: Heinze et al. (2016) <sup>[6]</sup>



## Current Societal Trends

According to the pet trends analysis by the Government of Canada, pet cat ownership in Singapore has increased by 58% since 2014. It is forecasted to continue to grow for the next five years (Government of Canada, n.d.).

In addition, the current concern is that abandonment rates have been rising in the past five years (Youjin, 2022). It is at its peak this year with the latest post-Covid, and re-opening of the economy as the majority is resuming work in the office (Tan, 2022) as compared to during Covid due to the economic downturn and unemployment (Kai & Qing, 2021). As a result, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) rescues more than 100 cats each month, making their shelter reach its maximum capacity (Sankar, 2022).

Another alarming trend that CWS highlighted during the latest Pets Day Out event in September 2022 is the different criteria required from potential cat adopters from the cat rescuers or fosterers. As there are plenty of independent rescuers and caretakers using the CWS adoption board, the expectations from each caretaker may differ, which confuses new adopters (Teo, 2020) who are seeking adoption, as mentioned in section 3 VUCA.



## Current Stakeholders' Sentiments & Legislation



The main reasons why abandonment rates for pet cats are high are that, unlike pet dogs, pet cats have no proper licencing and ownership tracing like mandatory microchipping. This gap has enabled irresponsible owners towards pet abandonment, as highlighted in section 3 VUCA, for its complexity and ambiguity of the circumstances and consequences of their actions.

To overcome this, CWS works closely with the relevant government agencies and AVS as they conduct public consultation surveys from September 2022 (Woon, 2022). This effort will help lift the current legislation that banned cats in HDB (Housing & Development Board, n.d.) and provide a proper licence for pet cats and traceability for the authorities.

The outcome of this effort will assist AVS and other relevant government agencies in formulating a workable framework to legalise pet cats in HDB flats (Sankar, 2022) and provide licencing for pet cats. This traceable approach will allow the authorities to trace irresponsible cat owners (Woon, 2022) and hopefully prevent cat abandonment and abuse.

**7,000**  
STRAY DOGS



**60,000**  
STRAY CATS  
AKA COMMUNITY CATS

**MICROCHIPPING IN PET DOGS IS PROVEN EFFECTIVE AND TREMENDOUSLY LESSENS THE STRAY POPULATION**





## 6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

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In conclusion, there is still much work to be done for CWS.

As highlighted in section 3 on Horizon Scanning Framework, for CWS to be flexible in the ever-changing "VUCA world," CWS needs to adopt an innovation ecosystem to enable their strategic digital transformation to solve issues and continuous improvement (Fenton, Fletcher, and Griffiths, 2020).

Digital transformation will enable CWS to unlock its digital capabilities to provide and reach a larger audience through digital education, like short online courses for cat owners and caretakers. These short courses should aim to educate cat owners on their roles and responsibilities as pet cat owners and, at the same time, promote and simplify fixed mandatory adoption criteria for caretakers based on cat welfare.

As mentioned in section 4, External Factors, CWS should seek strategic partnerships with technology companies to streamline its operations and workflow with automation, like database syncing and automating social postings, and integrate with the AVS system for real-time updates to follow up on active cases. Additionally, use a proper CRM System to blast EDM for regular updates and the latest news to the cat's community and its members. Proper digital tools could help not to restrain its limited resources on hand.

In terms of recommendations, as highlighted in section 3 of Horizon Scanning, Digital Transformation will not only strengthen CWS's digital capabilities but also aid in the **three** critical areas by bridging the current gaps:

Firstly, digital transformation will enhance and bridge the digital gaps that could be used to emphasise education to the general public and cat people/owners on the importance of sterilisation and microchip their pet cats. Although it is hard to cater to the older generation, who are the majority of the caretakers, to change, technology has its benefits. It is more appealing to potential younger generations looking to adopt a cat. The transition can be mitigated by assigning a dedicated volunteer to assist the caretakers with the new technology platform, which could benefit their work.

Secondly, to digitise the workable framework for cats to be kept as pets in HDB and for ownership traceability to its owner with proper licencing and microchipping and integrate it with the CWS system. It will enable visibility that will help reduce abandonment rates altogether and give the majority of the human population residing in the HDB the chance to own a cat as a pet legally.

Lastly, as highlighted in section 3 VUCA, to digitise and promote the mandatory adoption contract, guidelines, and criteria and make them available online and make it mandatory to apply to all caretakers, which focuses on the cat's interests, not the caretakers. It will eliminate unnecessary hindrances and assist in expediting the cat adoption process.



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# 8. Appendices

## Appendix A

**NON-PROFIT SECTOR**  
**CAT WELFARE SOCIETY (CWS) IN SINGAPORE**

CWS aims to achieve sustainable and humane management of cats in Singapore through our **FOUR** Pillars:



SAVING LIVES EVERYDAY

**1 MEDIATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**<sup>[2]</sup>

Working alongside government partners to address and resolve cat-related feedback in respect of community cats and pet cats with a humane approach.

**3,309**  
CASES MEDIATED

**30**<sup>[3]</sup> ONLINE EVENTS  
**18**<sup>[3]</sup> OFFLINE ENGAGEMENTS

**2 EDUCATION**<sup>[2]</sup>

Conducting various educational activities in both online and offline events to teach how to care responsibly for cats in the communities and at home.


**3 STERILISATION**<sup>[2]</sup>

To sustain and manage the overall population in Singapore humanely and offer support and funding through our two sterilisation programmes: The Pet Cat Sterilisation Programme for low-income families and The Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme for community cats.


**5,002**  
CATS STERILISED

**4 ADVOCACY**<sup>[2]</sup>


Advocates for responsible caregiving, responsible cat ownership, and cat adoption in Singapore.




Responsible Caregiving



Responsible Cat Ownership



Cat Adoption



**MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS**

LY Y2020 **\$4,900**<sup>[3]</sup> **>3X INCREASE**

**89,400**<sup>[7]</sup> PET CATS

↑ Cat ownership by 58% since 2014

**1,276**<sup>[3]</sup> RESCUE AND ABANDONED CATS

trend over the past five years<sup>[3]</sup>

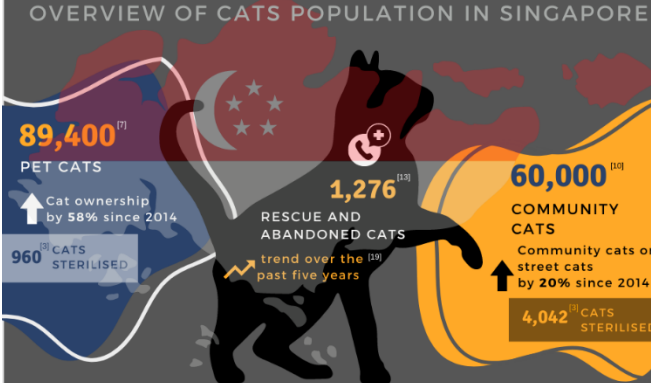
**960**<sup>[3]</sup> CATS STERILISED

**60,000**<sup>[10]</sup> COMMUNITY CATS

Community cats or street cats by 20% since 2014


**4,042**<sup>[3]</sup> CATS STERILISED

**OVERVIEW OF CATS POPULATION IN SINGAPORE**




**SUPPORT AND HELP THE CATS COMMUNITY**<sup>[2]</sup>


**BY DONATING FUNDS AND/OR USED CAT ITEMS**



**BY VOLUNTEERING TO SUPPORT THE CATS**



**BY ADOPTING OPT FOR ADOPTION, DON'T SHOP**



**SOURCES:**  
Refer to the References List in the Whitepaper.

**STRENGTHS**<sup>[2]</sup>

- CREDIBILITY OF BEING THE MAIN CAT ORGANISATION
- CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
- TRUSTED SOURCE OF TRUTH

**WEAKNESSES**<sup>[14]</sup>

- LACK OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
- NO TRACK OF RECORD OF CATS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS
- SLOW PROCESS TO ACT AND RESPONSE

**OPPORTUNITIES**<sup>[11, 20]</sup>

- WIDE RANGE OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS WITH EMERGING TECH CAPABILITIES
- USE TECHNOLOGY TO DIGITISE OPERATIONAL AND WORKFLOW
- NOT RELY & STRAIN ON THE LIMITED RESOURCES

**THREATS**<sup>[15]</sup>

- NO COMPETITORS, BUT POTENTIALLY BEING BEHIND ON CAT WELFARE EFFORTS AND ENGAGEMENTS
- AN OUTDATED APPROACH TO ANIMAL WELFARE MAY NOT BE APPEALING TO THE NEWER GENERATIONS

**ECONOMY DOWNTURN**

- UNEMPLOYMENT
- LIFESTYLE CHANGE WORK-FROM-HOME

**RESUME WORK-FROM-OFFICE**

- RELOCATE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY
- REVIEW LEGISLATION ON CAT BANNED IN PUBLIC HOUSING


**NUMEROUS STAKEHOLDERS LIAISON**

- POLITICAL - LAW AND LEGISLATION GAPS
- VARIES ADOPTION CRITERIA


**CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION**

- DIFFERENT VIEWS
- DIFFERENT PREFERENCES


**VOLATILITY**<sup>[12, 13, 14, 16]</sup>




**UNCERTAINTY**<sup>[12, 18]</sup>




**COMPLEXITY**<sup>[2, 12, 17]</sup>




**AMBIGUITY**<sup>[2, 17]</sup>




**VISION**




**UNDERSTANDING**



**CLARITY**



**AGILITY**



**STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ON STERILISATION & PET CARE SUPPORT**

- WIDER OUTREACH
- SUPPORT LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

**EDUCATION ON ADOPTION & REHOMING ISSUES**

- RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR PET CARE, INCLUDING FUNDING AND FOOD RATIONS.
- TRACEABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY


**PROPOSE AND ADOPT A WORKABLE FRAMEWORK FOR CAT OWNERSHIP**

- STREAMLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS
- SHARED INTEREST AND GUIDELINES

**TO FOCUS ON THE CAT WELFARE AND A APPROPRIATE FRAMEWORK TO VALIDATE THE CURRENT PENALTIES (ASABANDONMENT)**

- TO PROMOTE AND FOSTER ACCOUNTABILITY TO OWNERS TO AVOID FUTURE ISSUES

**HORIZON SCANNING**



**EVALUATION OF OPTIONS**

- Monitor performance by scanning, exploring new methods and approaches, and assessing and applying them for continuous improvement (iteration cycle)
- Forecasting and use of data and analytics

**INTERNAL AUDIT**

- Current Adoption Criteria and Contract
- Current Workflow and Processes
- Current Systems (Technology)
- Current Communication Channels

**GAP ANALYSIS**

- Partner with a Technology partner to digitise workflow as much as possible
- Partner and/or utilise digital platform(s) with capabilities to centralise and streamline communication with various stakeholders

**NEW MODEL GENERATION**

- Automate workflow & processes to reduce strain on limited resources
- Standardise adoption criteria and contract for all cats
- New framework and licencing for cats

17 | Page

## Appendix B

**4 Animal Agenda**  
Living in Harmony  
with Animals

**8 Animal Agenda**  
Fighting Illegal  
Wildlife Trade

**12 Corporate Cuts**  
New Appointments  
to AVA Board



# AVA VISION

Issue 2/2018

Scan  
to read  
the  
issue  
online



## A BRIDGE BETWEEN HUMANS & CATS

AVA appoints Cat Welfare Society as mediator for cat-related issues in the community.



AVA, in its First Responder role, handles animal-related feedback from the public. As these issues are often complex, we adopt a multi-stakeholder and multi-pronged approach to manage them. To this end, AVA has been working closely with animal welfare groups in co-managing such issues, to achieve a harmonious environment for both humans and animals.

In 2017, we received over 4,000 cases of feedback on cat-related issues, such as irresponsible feeding, soiling, caterwauling, roaming, and damage to property. Since 2015, Cat Welfare Society (CWS) has been helping to mediate cat-related disputes raised by residents, as

well as advising community cat feeders and cat owners to practise responsible cat feeding and pet ownership.

To formalise our existing collaboration with CWS, on 7 May 2018, AVA announced that it has appointed CWS as its third-party mediator for cat-related issues. Under this partnership, there will be service delivery standards imposed, for example, in terms of response time to a case. If a solution cannot be found immediately, there will be an explanation to the feedback provider about why the issue requires further study, as well as an action plan to address the issue in the long term.

*"CWS plays an active role in supporting us to manage cat-related issues on the ground."*

**Ms Jessica Kwok, Group Director for Animal Management, AVA**

■ A cat in the community (Photo: Cat Welfare Society)