



To all members of the Public and in response to the public letter by written by Dr McMullen, Chief Executive Officer AWS Philippi today (29 June 2021) herewith the response from Oscars Arc Director, Joanne Lefson:

The purpose of NKWP (No-Kill Western Province) is to stop the unnecessary killing of healthy, adoptable dogs in our province's high 'kill' shelters. As such, we enter not into a circus of facts vs fiction on past events where each side can prove its case to its fan base and pretend to win a public squabble. This will only take away from the much bigger picture of addressing the unmissably high 'kill' rates in our province's shelters – and what we can do to reduce it.

As such, I would like to respond to the key points made in this letter as to why AWSP claim to not want to collaborate with Oscars Arc (*In order that we can collaborate*), the actual reason why they terminated our beneficial collaboration (*The elephant in the room*) and why we should collaborate (*In order to save dogs' lives*) The intention of this response is to address this so we can work together in order to save dogs' lives.

1. WHY AWSP 'WILL NOT' COLLABORATE WITH OSCARS ARC:

- 1. The positive performance of our newly appointed Animal Care Centre Supervisor. RESPONSE:** Are you implying that because you have a new supervisor (with positive performance), you can now adopt out every dog that is in your kennel?
- 2. Your selection criteria (cherry-picking) that almost always precluded our senior residents and dogs with special needs. RESPONSE:** Oscars Arc has always taken a wide variety of dogs from AWSP. The aim of WOOF Project is to have variety. Currently at WOOF Project, we have a three legged dog, 7 senior dogs and a deaf pitbull. AWSP may recall that one of the last dogs given to us was 'Nonie', an epileptic Africanus. It is also worth stating that IF we had in fact only taken 'cherry picked' dogs, wouldn't Oscars Arc still be opening up more space in your kennels by taking these dogs, and in so doing enabling you save more dogs that are coming in that otherwise wouldn't have had the space?
- 3. Your return policy. RESPONSE:** I assume you are referring to dogs that Oscars Arc takes from collaborating shelters and that we return if they aren't adopted through us? If for some reason we have a dog that does not get adopted from WOOF Project who is not coping at our pop-up activations, yes, we do return these dogs to the originating shelter. This is, however, very rare. Of the 3528 shelter dogs that have passed through Oscars Arc doors, only 37 have ever been returned to the originating shelter. This equates to a 0.01 return rate. Of the dogs we take in, we home 99.09 of them.
- 4. Your poor pre and post home check policy. RESPONSE:** Oscars Arc has photographic images of every home that has a dog from us. We also share this information with the originating shelter ensuring a professional, transparent process. I believe that Oscars Arc is the only shelter in the country (and world?) that have this data base of home check imagery and whom shares it with other shelters. This proves trust and confidence and we have always been commended for this process.



- 5 Your lack of enforcement of sterilisation of puppies adopted intact. RESPONSE:** AWSP only gives Oscars Arc sterilized puppies because AWSP sterilize puppies as young as three months. With regards to other shelters from where we take puppies that do need to be sterilized, along with home check and vaccination protocols, we have a highly efficient and effective administrative process (Thank you Salesforce!) and follow up process that ensure all these items are checked. There are accusations being made about Oscars Arc procedures in order to divert attention away from the real heard questions being asked through the NKWP campaign - and we understand why. We invite anyone who has any questions, doubts or interest to view or understand our processes to call us - or to come into our Adoption Centre and to look at our structures and protocols. We are fully transparent and welcome this opportunity to anyone who has questions. We ask that AWSP do the same with theirs.
- 6. Your apparent inability to make a reasonable contribution of more than R350: RESPONSE:** This was a mutually agreed figure between the two organizations and as such, never a contention point. We'd be happy to discuss this again if it means collaborating to save more dogs' lives.

2. WHY DID AWSP TERMINATE ITS COLLABORATION WITH OSCARS ARC?

Oscars Arc received a desperate call from the Adoptions Officer at AWSP in September last year. They were closing the adoption centre and asked if Oscars Arc could take their dogs 'as a matter of urgency' We headed he call for help. Oscars Arc sent out a mailer in which we said that a 'kill shelter' was closing and that we needed fosters. We didn't mention AWSP at all. Dr McMullen terminated the three year relationship following this response: because he said that the use of the 'Kill;' word damaged their age old status, writing: 'We are particularly aggrieved by your draconian "Kill Shelter" turn of phrase that has the potential to cause us serious reputational damage with our benefactors'

CASE IN POINT: The termination of our collaboration by AWSP was immaterial of the 6 points listed above. The reason was simply because we used the word 'kill' which sheds light on the most pressing issue of animal welfare was highlighted and entered the public domain. The unnecessary killing of thousands of healthy adoptable dogs is a very sensitive conversation that is carefully avoided by some shelters at all cost. To do so, they believe, may damage their image and result is lost donations (revenue) from the public. NKWP asks for transparency so that together, we can change the status quo.

3. WHY WE ALL NEED TO COLLABORATE?

Over 15 000 dogs are killed in Western Province shelters each year (That number is a conservative figure and suggested to be substantially higher) We fully respect and understand that not every single dog can be saved. Some are so badly damaged, abused or hurt, that the only 'humane way' is euthanasia. That is not a contention point at all. We are not referring to these dogs at all. The key question that NKWP asks of the AWSP (and of other shelters who refuse to collaborate with other shelters in order to reduce the unnecessary killing) is:

1. How many dogs are taken into the AWSP each year?
2. How many of these dogs are adoptable (is there any assessment?)
3. Of these adoptable dogs, how many do not get adopted (and are therefore killed) because there is no kennel space available **OR** that are killed because despite going up for adoption, they are not adopted. (And therefore have to be killed)?

Dr Mc Mullen, can you please provide the answers to these questions?



For the record, AWSP did publish them, in writing, to me, in 2015 and can unfortunately confirm through your newsletters that are received on an ongoing basis, that the figures have greatly increased. Back in 2015 AWSP stated that of the 539 dogs that went up for adoption, 278 were 'put down'. (This does not include the number of dogs that were adoptable and that could have been adopted but that had to be killed because there was no space in the kennels)

On the contrary, in a period of three years, Oscars Arc pulled 567 dogs from AWSP and found them forever homes. Do the math. The number of dogs that Oscars Arc has saved from your shelter (because of the collaboration) is even higher than the total number of adoptions that AWSP achieved in one year - and Oscars Arc is also working with a dozen other shelters at the same time. It is not to prove a point. It is to constructively argue how beneficial the collaboration was - and how it can (and should) be - if we continued to collaborate.

CONCLUSION: In regards to Dr McMullen's conclusion that Oscars Arc should 'stop bamboozling the general public who you seem to underestimate' I respond in saying that the public is not as 'naive', as some shelters believe. There is accelerating public awareness and growing concern that something is very wrong with the status quo. We hear; We listen; We know. To ignore the real issues presented herewith, is to underestimate the growing public discourse with how certain high kill shelters operate and how certain decisions aren't in the dogs' best interests.

Oscars Arc remains willing and open to meet and address the NKWP campaign and to collaborate with immediate effect. NKWP is about transparency, collaboration and reducing the unnecessary killing of an estimated 15 000 dogs each year in Western Province shelters. It is also to inspire the public to adopt from shelters, yours included, and to sterilise their pets. If we aim to save them all, and only get half way (Because some dogs 'have to' be humanely euthanised due to sickness etc) then surely that is better than to argue why we shouldn't do anything at all?

Together, we can save thousands of adoptable dogs and that would make a great family pet if only given the opportunity through mutual collaboration. These are the dogs of NKWP; these are the dogs that can be given a second chance if shelters like AWSP collaborated with Oscars Arc.

Joanne Lefson
Oscars Arc Director

Without Prejudice and Reservation of all Rights

Ms Joanne Lefson
Director
Oscars Arc



Dear Joanne

RESPONSE TO YOUR NO-KILL WESTERN PROVINCE (NKWP) CAMPAIGN DIATRIBE

We read the contemptuous, scurrilous and fatally flawed narrative of your NKWP campaign launched on Friday the 25th June 2021 with disbelief and wish to respond as follows:

First of all, your sources of information are very questionable. The ex-employee in the video recording misrepresented her nursing qualifications and was summarily dismissed and the Kennel Manager who you appear to hold in high regard had her services terminated for mismanagement so the credibility of any information obtained from them should be considered wanting.

You state that the vast majority of adoptable dogs surrendered to certain shelters are killed due to space and time constraints. This generalisation does not apply to us. It is common cause that we have had dogs and puppies in our care for up to 3 years before finding them loving forever homes and we have never been over-subscribed.

Your continued reference to us as a “high-kill” shelter with dogs on “death row” is devoid of any truth and respect for the dignity of those animals waiting to be relieved of their pain and suffering and utterly disrespectful to our compassionate team.

You state that over the past approximately 3 years you “pulled” 567 dogs from us. Don’t you mean cherry-picked to fit your definition of an adoptable dog?

It appears as though the retraction of your earlier baseless social media post and consequent apology was as we suspected insincere.

Your decision to include select extracts from communiques between ourselves (please see below) added no value to your narrative. Instead, it helped to earn you the wrath of the general public so it came as no surprise that you deleted your Facebook post.

23 April 2021 – *“Lawrence who has been promoted to Animal Care Centre Supervisor is doing an amazing job and whereas before we needed to enlist the help of 3rd parties to help us find homes this is definitely no longer the case”.*

Mr J le Roux (President) | Dr J McNamara (Chairman) | Dr J McMullen (Vice Chairman)
Ms A Sanders (Honorary Treasurer) | Prof M Jacobs | Ms M Pontier | Ms Pam Hart

Ms P Isdell (Patron)
Ms Brigitte Reeve-Taylor | Mr Mike Vietri | Mr William Simpson (Ambassadors)
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04 September 2020 – *“Our entire team feels betrayed and hurt by your apparent lack of sensitivity, consideration and decision to proceed without first checking the facts of such spurious assertions.*

The gravity of the situation has caused our Executive Committee to resolve as follows:

- 1. You provide us with a detailed written transcript of your conversation with ex-employee X. We anticipate the contents to be consistent with what you told our CEO Dr John McMullen yesterday.*
- 2. You post an immediate retraction on all of your social media platforms explaining that your post was based on unsubstantiated utterances by an ex-employee.*
- 3. You include an unconditional apology to our Council, Executive Committee, staff and benefactors.*

Whether or not we continue our collaboration pivots on you acceding to the above remedial steps that are to be implemented before close of business today failing which we reserve our right to reply and institute whatever action is necessary to protect and preserve our almost Century old status.

Your business model is nothing more than a ruse.

It's time to set the record straight.

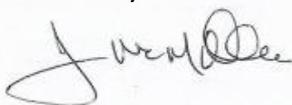
Our decision to discontinue transferring dogs and puppies to Oscars Arc was based on the following reasonable considerations:

- The positive performance of our newly appointed Animal Care Centre Supervisor.
- Your selection criteria (cherry-picking) that almost always precluded our senior residents and dogs with special needs.
- Your return policy.
- Your poor pre and post home check policy.
- Your lack of enforcement of sterilisation of puppies adopted intact.
- Your apparent inability to make a reasonable contribution of more than R350 towards the cost of sterilisation and vaccination of any selected dogs.

Now that these truths are in the public domain perhaps those animal lovers who naively showed their support for your campaign will have a change of heart.

If you want to see your campaign succeed then do a proper feasibility study, stop rubbishing your allies and stop bamboozling the general public who you seem to underestimate and start becoming a team player.

Sincerely



Dr John McMullen
Chief Executive Officer