



UPDATE on ACTIVITIES **of THE FELINE HEALTH RESEARCH FUND**

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

1. Meetings

Since our last update in November last year, the Trustees have met in December, March and June and our next meeting is scheduled for mid-July. The frequency of meetings has increased over time as the workload of the Fund increases. Our meetings are now being held by Zoom and this technology is working well and is economical.

2. Finances:

The FHRF assets total \$87087 as of 16th June 2020 so far showing a deficit of \$10013. This is largely due to record low interest rates and the cancellation of many cat shows, due to Covid, thus reducing the opportunities for fundraising. Last year the Trustees decided that due to the increasing costs of research it would be more effective to fund one grant per year of \$10000 (a requirement of the ATO to retain our DGR status) rather than 2 grants of \$5000 and so one grant was funded in this financial year. Please refer to the attached report.

3. Applications.

A significant amount of the meeting time continues to be taken up with the assessment of applications - a fortunate position for the Fund to now be in. There is a requirement for ancillary funds to distribute \$8800 per year. Capital must be retained to generate ongoing interest, and the funding must be issued on merit and spent wisely. It is clear with the number of requests that there is a need to prioritise our funding and a scoring system has been developed and refined. For example - is the project within the scope of the Fund, will the project contribute significantly to the improvement of feline health and welfare, how important an issue is the area being investigated i.e., how many cats will it benefit, how is the grant going to be used and the money allocated, what is the score from the Peer Review Panel, have all the animal ethics requirements been met etc. The costs of research are continuing to increase and in 2019-2020 the Trustees reviewed our grant funding. Previously two grants of \$5000 were funded each year in two rounds of applications. It was decided that our funds would be used more effectively if we allocated one grant each year of \$10000 (to meet our ATO obligations).

As reported previously, the FHRF is now receiving several grant applications at each funding round. The standard of grant application is very high and the process very rigorous to receive funding. Since our last update we have approved one application for the 2020-2021 financial year.

If there are any special interest areas, we are more than happy to be advised of this (aware of the renal interest from our memorial to Helen Menrath, the FIP interest from Governing Council, cardiomyopathy in Birman cats and Abyssinian health from The Abyssinians Cats in Distress Club) and can give projects with this as the subject a priority listing.

4. Marketing:

- 👂 At the most recent meeting in June the Trustees discussed the urgent need to find expertise in marketing to increase the income for the Fund. Through our Secretary, Helen such a person has been identified and a workshop organized for our next meeting in July. We are seeking advice in increasing the profile of the Fund and attracting new donors to continue our important work.
- 👂 We are also seeking support from all the pedigree cat bodies within ACF and CCCA to continue our work and would be grateful for your assistance. Some suggestions are - including a FHRF flyer in the show catalogues seeking members support through donations; a donation request with each new kitten/cat registration (previously pioneered by GCCFV); running a show for the FHRF



PROJECT FUNDED IN 2020-2021

📌 **Coinfection dynamics between viral and bacterial pathogens of cats** Dr Paola Vaz and Dr Sara Mahdizadeh Melbourne University March 2021

The project aims to understand how synchronised infection with feline herpesvirus 1 (FHV1) and common bacterial pathogens *Chlamydia felis* (*C. felis*) and *Mycoplasma felis* (*M. felis*) may affect the dynamics of infection, and how this could lead to increased bacterial and viral persistence and poorer health outcomes in cats. The FHV1 used in this study will be a vaccine strain commonly used in Australian cats, and the outcomes from this study could help improve the safe use of vaccines. It will use classical virological and bacteriological assays combined with advanced metabolomic and transcriptomic analyses to understand coinfection interactions in cell culture systems.