



feline futures

ANIMAL WELFARE SEMINAR 2021

18 - 19 February 2021 | ONLINE



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PROGRAM (all session times are in Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT))

18 February

12:00PM–12:15PM · *Chair: Dr Bidda Jones - Chief Science and Strategy Officer, RSPCA Australia / Official welcome: Richard Mussell - Chief Executive Officer, RSPCA Australia*
Welcome to day one of the seminar

12:15PM–12:30PM · *Dr Sarah Zito - Senior Scientific Officer, RSPCA Australia*
Introduction

12:30PM–1:30PM · *Keynote Speaker: Dr Kate Hurley - UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, USA*
Rethinking the role of shelters as a response to outdoor cats

1:45PM–2:10PM · *Dr Sophie Riley - Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney*
Legal classifications as social constructions on the place of cats in society

2:10PM–2:35PM · *Dr Lynette McLeod - Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of New England*
Can I buy me a social license? Understanding risk, trust, social capital and contested science in the context of domestic cat management

2:50PM–3:15PM · *Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand - Australian Pet Welfare Foundation*
Connecting positively with cat semi-owners

3:15PM–3:45PM · *Nell Thompson - Secretary, Australian Institute of Animal Management & G2Z Coordinator*
Overview of Australian Local Government domestic cat management strategies

3:45PM–4:35PM · *Dr Gabrielle Carter - Veterinary Specialist in Animal Behaviour, RSPCA Victoria*
Assessing suitability of cats for rehoming

4:35PM–4:40PM · *Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Science and Strategy Officer, RSPCA Australia*
End of day one and closing remarks

19 February

12:00PM–12:05PM ·
Welcome to day two of the seminar

12:05PM–1:00PM · *Keynote speaker: Dr Cindy Karsten - UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, USA*
New models for humane and effective cat management in shelters

1:00PM–1:30PM · *Dr Rosemary Elliott - President, Sentient, the Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics*
Characteristics of cat hoarders and ways forward for better management

1:45PM–2:05PM · *Emily McLeod - Senior Social Science Research Manager, Zoos Victoria*
Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife: Using social science to inform and evaluate a community conservation program

2:05PM–2:25PM · *Dr Joy Verrinder - Strategic Director, Animal Welfare League QLD, NDN & Getting to Zero*
National Desexing Network (NDN) Cooperative Desexing Programs with Councils

2:25PM–2:45PM · *Dr Lynette McLeod - Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of New England*
Who let the cat out - overcoming barriers for cat containment

2:45PM–3:05PM · *Dr Ann Enright - Shelter Veterinarian*
Cat de-sexing programs - great partnerships achieving great outcomes

3:05PM–3:25PM · *Nikki Brookman - Regional Cat Management Coordinator, Tasmanian Cat Management Project*
TassieCat: working with councils and the community to improve cat management and responsible cat ownership

3:25PM–4:00PM ·
Panel discussion with audience questions and speakers from this session

4:00PM–4:05PM · *Dr Bidda Jones, Chief Science and Strategy Officer, RSPCA Australia*
Wrap up



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SPEAKERS

- Dr Sarah Zito
- Dr Kate Hurley
- Dr Sophie Riley
- Dr Lynette McLeod
- Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand
- Nell Thompson
- Dr Gabrielle Carter
- Dr Cynthia Karsten
- Dr Rosemary Elliott
- Emily McLeod
- Dr Joy Verrinder
- Dr Ann Enright
- Nikki Brookman

SARAH ZITO

Dr Sarah Zito BVetMed MANZCVS PhD - Senior Scientific Officer, RSPCA Australia

Sarah Zito is a veterinarian who graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in London, has a membership in feline medicine and has worked in equine, small animal and university teaching practice. Sarah has a keen interest in animal welfare and shelter medicine. She set up and ran the University of Queensland's Shelter Medicine rotation for final year students and completed a PhD investigating the human factors involved in the unwanted cat problem in Australia, working with RSPCA Australia and RSPCA Member Societies on this project. Sarah has been an animal welfare research coordinator with the Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics working on the OIE Animal Welfare Standards in Asia and other projects and was also a Senior Scientific Officer with the Animal Welfare Science and Education Department of the New Zealand SPCA. Sarah has continued to progress and publish research, particularly in the humane cat management field. Sarah returned to RSPCA Australia and now works as their Senior Scientific Officer for Companion Animals.

Sarah and her husband share their life and home with four happy stay at home rescue cats.

Presentation abstract:

Sarah's presentation will introduce the seminar and themes that will be explored, including an overview of the human-cat relationship and cat population categories, cat management and challenges for future cat management.



KATE HURLEY

Dr Kate Hurley DVM, MPVM - UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, USA

While in veterinary school at UC Davis, Kate Hurley had to pass a herd health class to proceed with her studies. Her professor assigned a production plan, which students generally understood in terms of helping livestock produce more wool, meat or milk, helping dogs produce larger litters of healthy puppies and the like. But this assignment confounded Hurley. Though she loved a cozy wool sweater or a bouncing healthy puppy as much as anyone, she couldn't get excited about a plan to make more animals after working in an animal shelter for six years. Instead, she decided to craft a production plan that would result in fewer unwanted animals in a community.

On a yellow legal pad she explained her rationale: If a shelter adopted out sick animals, people wouldn't adopt from there — distrust and eroding support would follow. A shelter that vaccinated and practiced good cleaning and adequate housing would have healthier animals, retain quality staff and improve its reputation, likely increasing volunteers and donations, thereby improving outreach. That would lead to fewer animals coming into the shelter, which meant staff could take better care of each animal and keep all of them healthy and adoptable. The cycle would continue.

"I wrote this all out and thought, dang, that's a good idea!" Hurley recalls. "Someone should actually do all this. I ran to my professor, 'Look at this! I think I cracked the code!'" This was in 1997, before she had ever heard the words shelter and medicine uttered together; the main role she'd heard of for veterinarians at shelters was to spay and neuter. There was no advanced training in shelter medicine, no textbook to turn to, no shelter medicine conference to attend or website to research. So Hurley hit a dead-end.

While her path wasn't easy, Hurley eventually achieved her goals and now directs the Koret Shelter Medicine Program at the CCAH. Hurley — who grew up all over, including Colorado, California, Idaho, New York, Japan and England — graduated from the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine in 1999. She immediately took a job at an animal shelter that had recently committed to stop euthanizing healthy animals — a goal close to Hurley's heart — but, unfortunately, without a sufficient plan to make it a reality. The facility soon became overcrowded and infectious disease ran rampant. Quelling the constant crises grew overwhelming. The crowding and illness undermined the very goal the shelter had set of saving more lives. Frustrated, Hurley called Dr. Niels Pedersen, then-director of the CCAH.



KATE HURLEY

Pedersen told her that the CCAH was about to receive a grant for shelter medicine and in 2001 Hurley returned to Davis to become the first in the world to undertake a residency in this discipline; she completed her Masters in Preventive Veterinary Medicine and Residency in 2003. Hurley has since advanced the quality of life for animals in shelters throughout the country through preventive medicine, disease management, and humane care and housing. She helps shelters achieve their goals of euthanizing fewer pets, saving more lives, and making their communities better for all animals and people.

Among her proudest achievements she lists co-authoring guidelines for standards of care in animal shelters, and co-founding the Million Cat Challenge, a campaign to save a million cats in North American shelters over five years. She co-edited the textbook, "Infectious Disease Management in Animal Shelters" and co-chaired the committee that led to the establishment of a boarded specialty in shelter medicine in 2014.

In Hurley's downtime, she's fond of unusually short dogs, orange cats, ballroom dance and getting out to vote.

Presentation abstract:

Rethinking the role of shelters as a response to outdoor cats

Rethinking the role of shelters as a response to outdoor cats: For over a century, programs based in animal shelters have been a centerpiece of society's response to free roaming, abandoned and unwanted cats. The tradition approach has generally relied on unscheduled, ad-hoc intake of cats to shelters based on citizen initiative versus an analysis of the risks or threat associated with an individual cat. This talk will review research on the potential and limits of this traditional approach in reaching commonly held goals of shelter programs including: mitigation of nuisances and concerns, reuniting lost cats with their owners, rehoming cats in need of homes, protecting feline welfare, protecting public health and wildlife, and reduction of feline overpopulation.



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SOPHIE RILEY

Dr Sophie Riley LL.B (Syd) LL.M (UNSW) Phd (UNSW) GradCert Hed (UTS) - Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney

Sophie Riley is a senior lecturer in law at the University of Technology Sydney. She teaches corporate law, environmental law and animal law. Sophie's research focuses on the historical and ethical dimensions of human-animal interactions. At present, Sophie is finishing a book on the historical aspects of commodification of farm animals.

Sophie is also a Category C member of the Animal Research Review Panel (ARRP), Vice-President of the AALTRA (Australasian Animal Law Teachers' and Researchers' Association Inc) and the Review Editor for a project conducted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), for Chapter 6 on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Policy (part of a global report that IPBES is preparing on IAS for the United Nations).

Presentation abstract:

Legal classifications as social constructions on the place of cats in society: Lessons from Australia on why definitions matter

The presentation examines a range of definitions found in legal and policy instruments at the Commonwealth, State and Local Government levels, to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of cat management in Australia. The latter is primarily seen as an environmental issue, where scientists and regulators aim to eradicate feral cats, and in some circumstances stray cats, by the continuous use of lethal methods. Animal advocates however, argue that management practices should take greater cognizance of cat welfare and should also integrate the use of non-lethal methods. The article argues that definitions such as domestic, stray and feral describe the presence of cats in the Australian landscape and also the relationship of cats to humans. The definitions, however, have also been used as a proxy for environmental harm. This creates a regulatory hierarchy where terminology provides shortcuts to decision-making, so that decisions to use lethal measures are based on cat classifications rather than cat welfare and/or environmental outcomes. In the long-term this approach is counterproductive because it does not target measures where they will be most effective, enhancing neither environmental protection nor cat welfare.



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LYNETTE MCLEOD

Dr Lynette McLeod, BSc (Hons), MSc, MLIS, PhD - Post-Doctoral Fellow University of New England

Lynette is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of New England. She has been conducting research in environmental psychology for seven years, concentrating on the application of human behaviour change approaches to improve current extension and adoption practices. Research projects over that time have included domestic cats, wild dogs, widespread weeds and chemical spray application. In 2017 she completed a PhD on human behaviour change and domestic cat containment. Previous to this Lynette was with NSW Department of Primary Industries, working with Local Land Services, community groups and landholders to manage a range of invasive mammal animals. She currently shares her home with one cat and two dogs.

Presentation abstracts:

Can I buy me a social license? Understanding risk, trust, social capital and contested science in the context of domestic cat management.

The concept of a 'social licence to operate' (SLO), i.e. a level of acceptance or approval by communities and stakeholders of organisations and their operations, is not a new one. It has been widely used in the mining sector for decades, and has links to the business-orientated Stakeholder Theory, which covers organisational management and business ethics. The term 'social licence' can be misleading as the SLO concept is more than a singular entity granted by a society. Rather it is the result of ongoing negotiations with multiple stakeholder 'communities' across a range of geographical and political scales (Dare et al, 2014).

The requirements for a successful SLO - social legitimacy, management credibility, and trust - can only be gained through effective and genuine community engagement (The Social Licence to Operate, 2018). This presentation will discuss what this should 'look like' in the context of domestic cat management in Australia, both at the local operational level as well as at a broader strategic level. It will explore the major challenges faced in reaching and including all stakeholder communities, building social capital, gaining and maintaining trust, assessing risk, responding to changing social expectations, and handling seemingly contradictory world views. It will conclude with a brief overview on how SLO can be measured, as well as recommendations for future action and research.



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LYNETTE MCLEOD

Who let the cat out - overcoming barriers for cat containment.

A key challenge in domestic cat management is to convince cat carers to act 'responsibly'. This can involve changing current behaviours and/or encouraging the adoption of new behaviours. Providing information through educational campaigns is an important strategy for increasing awareness and shifting attitudes. But contemporary behaviour change literature shows that providing information by itself is insufficient to persuade, facilitate and maintain behaviour change. A successful behaviour change intervention needs to consider all the factors that promote or impede the desired action. Once these drivers and barriers are understood, appropriate behaviour change strategies can then be developed.

This talk will illustrate the steps required to design an effective intervention, using examples from recent projects in NSW, Qld and Tasmania. The results from two different randomised two trials will be presented; the first evaluating how message framing influences adoption, and the second examines the influence how information is delivered. Our findings emphasise the value of adopting approaches incorporating human behaviour and persuasive communication theory to improve the adoption of cat containment.



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JACQUIE RAND

Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand BVSc, DVSc, MANZCVS, DipACVIM (Int Med) - Australian Pet Welfare Foundation

Emeritus Professor Rand graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science from Melbourne University in 1975, and is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Medicine in internal medicine.

She was appointed Professor of Companion Animal Health at UQ in 2001 and retired at the end of 2015 to head the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation as the Executive Director and Chief Scientist, which is dedicated to saving pets' lives through research, education and advocacy. She has published over a 117 journal articles, authored 43 book chapters, and is author or editor of three books.

Currently, she is involved in research programs aimed at strategies to achieve zero euthanasia of healthy and treatable dogs and cats in shelters and pounds, as well as ongoing research in diabetes and obesity. A key focus of her research is the Australian Community Cat Program.

Executive Director & Chief Scientist, Australian Pet Welfare Foundation.

Emeritus Professor of Companion Animal Health, School of Veterinary Science, The University of Queensland.

Presentation abstract:

Connecting positively with cat semi-owners

The majority of cats entering shelters and pounds are stray cats from the general public and council impoundments. Most of these cats are not desexed or microchipped, and many have had kittens. Australian research shows that many people bringing a stray cat to a shelter have been caring for it, often for several months, but they do not perceive they are the owner. These people, termed semi-owners, care for the cat and believe they will be better off in a shelter. Many of them also own a cat.

Research from the Australian Community Cat Program demonstrates semi-owners are typically undertaking "responsible" cat caring behaviours that are within their resources. For example, they are buying cat beds, treats, and toys, paying for health care and keeping the cats confined. They have an average of 2 cats requiring desexing, which is unaffordable for them. However, they will take ownership of the cat if offered free desexing, microchipping and registration. Assistance with transport and trapping is also sometimes required. Free desexing, microchipping and registration programs for all undesexed cats in locations contributing to high cat-related complaints and impoundments are an effective way to rapidly reduce cat admissions and euthanasia. Intake of pre-weaned kittens and healthy but timid cats is markedly reduced.



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NELL THOMPSON

Nell Thompson - Secretary, Australian Institute of Animal Management & G2Z Coordinator

Nell Thompson has a solid background working in shelter and pound operations and management and animal health. She is particularly focussed on best practice in operational and facility management, program development and strategic planning.

Nell was appointed as Coordinator of the national Getting 2 Zero program in July 2012 and in this role works to expand the use of G2Z principles and practices nationally. This is done by working alongside organisations and government departments to provide guidance on how to prioritise and implement these principles and practices in progressive animal management.

Nell also delivers the G2Z National Summits which are held every 2 years. This event is the key opportunity for professionals in the companion animal welfare, shelter and pound sectors to acquire best practice knowledge from local and international speakers.

Nell has been on the Committee of the Australian Institute of Animal Management since 2013 and has held the position of Secretary since 2015. AIAM is a national organisation focussed on service delivery and the development of solutions in animal management. Nell is also involved in the delivery of the annual AIAM Workshops and Training Day and is responsible for developing and managing the 2020 event program.

Nell has been on the Committee of the Australian Institute of Animal Management since 2013 and has held the position of Secretary since 2015. AIAM is a national organisation focussed on service delivery and the development of solutions in animal management. Nell is also involved in the development and delivery of the monthly member only webinar series that AIAM have implemented in lieu of the regular annual Workshops and Training Day.

Presentation abstract:

Overview of Australian local government domestic cat management strategies

Cat management policies, practices and strategies vary widely across our wide nation. For us to look at optimising and improving on current practice we first need to determine what is happening on the ground in the sector. It was clear that we did not have a good grasp on what approaches any of the 537 Local governments were taking to cat management and so the survey was born. RSPCA Australia and the Australian Institute of Animal Management developed the survey with input from other industry and sector groups with the aim of accurately capturing who was doing what, or not!

We expect the results to be illuminating and fascinating and anticipate that it will give us a great basis to work from when it comes to best practice in this, for much of Australia, the largest challenge in companion animal management.

✉ secretary@aiam.org.au or info@g2z.org.au



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GABRIELLE CARTER

Dr Gabrielle Carter BVSc (hons), MSc, MANZCVSc, DACVB - Veterinary Specialist in Animal Behaviour, RSPCA Victoria

Gabrielle is a Veterinary Specialist in Animal Behaviour. After many years in general veterinary practice, Gabrielle completed a 3 year Residency at the Behaviour Referral Service in the Veterinary School at Purdue University, USA and became a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviourists. For 8 years she has worked at 'Good Pet Behaviour' in Melbourne, helping owners solve their pet's behaviour problems, before taking on the role of Chief Veterinarian at the RSPCA, Victoria. Currently she works at RSPCA Victoria as the Learning and Development Consultant, providing training and education for staff, volunteers and the general public. Additionally, she has provided educational opportunities in animal behaviour for veterinarians and veterinary nurses and continues to teach veterinary students. She loves the hands on time she spends working with owners and their pets, addressing behavioural and mental health issues, and is continually inspired by the many ways in which pets and owners can share and enrich each others lives.

Presentation abstract:

Assessing suitability of cats for rehoming

Socialised cats can form bonds with people and are currently regarded as the most suitable candidates for rehoming. But how can you determine if a cat is socialised or not? A frightened, but socialised cat, will try to escape or may show aggression when handled or housed in a shelter and appear 'unsocialised'. A major strategy to improve assessments is to reduce fear when handling, housing and caring for cats. Additionally, there are some specific behaviours to watch out for that only socialised cats will show. This seminar will provide both a background to making assessments of feline behaviour and take home tips to get you started.



CYNTHIA KARSTEN

Dr Cynthia (Cindy) Karsten, DVM, DABVP (Shelter Medicine Practice) - UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, USA

Cynthia (Cindy) Karsten, DVM, DABVP (Shelter Medicine Practice) – graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine, completed a shelter medicine internship at Colorado State University and a Shelter Medicine Residency at UC Davis. Currently she is the Outreach Veterinarian with the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program. Dr. Karsten's interests include teaching and mentoring undergraduate and veterinary students, leading shelters through online Bootcamp and other interactive formats, and providing accessible, affordable veterinary care to everyone who seeks it. She also continues to work to understand her role and that of animal shelters in increasing awareness of social justice issues and implementing policies to bring about change.

Presentation abstract:

New models for humane and effective cat management in shelters

In the last decade, new approaches that more effectively and humanely solve community and cat issues have become well established. These include providing finders and owners with support in solving cat-associated issues using methods other than bringing the cat to the shelter; offering scheduled rather than ad-hoc admission in order to ensure the shelter capacity is matched with the population at any given time; and "Return to Field" or Shelter/Neuter/Return programs in which healthy free roaming cats presented to the shelter are sterilized, vaccinated and returned to the location found. There is mounting evidence from research and experience that these newer approaches better realize the goals we have for shelters and cat management in communities. We have taken all of this and define it as The Four R's that all animals in need deserve – The Right Care in The Right Place at The Right Time to The Right Outcome. Learn about this approach and how it can be implemented in your organization and community to better meet the needs of both cats and people.



ROSEMARY ELLIOTT

Dr Rosemary Elliott, B.A. (Hons), B.VSc. (Hons), M. Psych., Dip. Ed., MANZCVS - President, Sentient, the Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics

Due to her devotion to animals and fascination with their behaviour, Rosemary studied veterinary science at the University of Sydney after establishing her career as a clinical psychologist. As a student, she was an executive of the student organisation 'Veterinary Science for Animal Welfare' and student representative on the faculty's Animal Welfare Advisory Committee. After graduating, her honours research led to the first published study of greyhound adoption. Her experiences during veterinary training fostered an ambition to focus directly on animal welfare and ethics. In 2011, she co-founded Sentient, an independent veterinary association dedicated solely to animal welfare advocacy, and is their current President. Rosemary still practises as a psychologist and is the Clinical Manager of a child and adolescent mental health service. She combines her psychology background and veterinary skills to contribute to the animal protection movement through writing, public speaking, political advocacy and research. Rosemary is a member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (Animal Welfare and Ethics chapter) and supervises DVM students on animal welfare placements. Her particular interests are animal sentience, the human-animal bond and the plight of production animals and animals used in entertainment and research.

Presentation abstract:

Characteristics of cat hoarders and ways forward for better management

Rosemary presents findings from a study of animal hoarding based on a sample of 48 consecutive cases referred to RSPCA NSW over a two-year period. Consistent with most previous research, cats were the most frequently hoarded species. The aim of this presentation is to reflect on the unique factors that leave cats especially vulnerable to animal hoarding, and on the implications of these vulnerability factors for best practice in companion animal management. A further aim is to discuss the human factors that underlie cases of animal hoarding and the detrimental impact on feline welfare when the human-animal relationship becomes harmful. Recommendations arising from this research include increased regulatory control of companion animal breeding and management, the regulation of animal rescue and carer networks, training and support for veterinarians and closer links between animal welfare organisations and mental health services to help reduce the human and animal suffering caused by animal hoarding.



EMILY MCLEOD

Emily McLeod, BSc (Psychology/Psychophysiology), BSc (Zoology), MSc (Zoology) - Senior Social Science Research Manager, Zoos Victoria

Emily McLeod is the Senior Social Science Research Manager at Zoos Victoria. Emily has an interdisciplinary background in the social and biological sciences with a Master's degree in Zoology and Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Psychophysiology. She is currently undertaking a PhD in ethical wildlife tourism behaviours. Emily is interested in how conservation organisations can best connect people with wildlife and the environment with the goal of fostering sustainable behaviours in the broader community. Her current research focuses on applying social psychological theories to understand people's motivations to engage in pro-conservation behaviours. The outcomes of this research will help to inform the development and focus of conservation behaviour-change campaigns at Zoos Victoria.

Presentation abstract:

Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife: Using social science to inform and evaluate a community conservation program.

Embedding best practice behaviour change frameworks into community conservation initiatives is key to achieving conservation outcomes. Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria's campaign Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife (SCSW) encourages cat owners to keep their pets always contained to keep both cats and wildlife safe. To inform the development of the campaign, we worked with researchers from La Trobe University to survey 5384 Australian cat owners to identify what factors led people to keep their cats contained (i.e. not free-roaming). Once identified, these factors informed the development of the SCSW messaging to encourage cat containment. The SCSW campaign was launched at the beginning of 2018 at all Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria properties, and was supported with an online presence. Using a Before-After-Control-Impact design to evaluate the impact of SCSW, we surveyed three groups of people: Zoos Victoria visitors, people who joined the SCSW community, and a wider community sample not exposed to the campaign. Over 12 months we saw a significant increase in the proportion of people signed up to the campaign who were keeping their cats fully contained all the time. This increase was not seen in the zoo visitors or the wider community. This suggests the SCSW campaign is successfully engaging cat owners in the campaign message and helping them to change their behaviour.



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JOY VERRINDER

Dr Joy Verrinder PhD BA DipT MBA MA(Professional Ethics and Governance) – Strategic Director, Animal Welfare League QLD, NDN & Getting to Zero

Dr Joy Verrinder is Strategic Director of the Animal Welfare League of Queensland and its national programs, the National Desexing Network and Getting 2 Zero. She works with local and state governments, veterinarians, breeders, the pet industry and other animal welfare organisations at local, state and national levels to prevent unwanted cats and dogs. She has a PhD in animal ethics and Master's degrees focussed on Strategic Management and Professional Ethics and Governance. She has been working to improve the lives of animals for the last 40 years, serving on the Boards of numerous animal organisations, on government and university Animal Ethics Committees, and state and federal government advisory groups.

Presentation abstract:

National Desexing Network (NDN) Cooperative Desexing Programs with Councils

NDN developed the Cooperative Desexing Program to enable Councils to be proactive in helping to prevent stray and unwanted cats, rather than the more traditional expensive, time-consuming and less ethical catch, impound and/or kill or rehome model. It is a positive, sustainable and ethical way for Councils to work with the community to prevent stray and abandoned cats (and dogs where needed). It is applicable in any city and town across Australia where there is at least one vet clinic. With funding for desexing subsidies ranging from \$5000 to \$60 000 per Council per year, the program is designed to support pension/concession card holders, people on low incomes, people with too many cats/dogs, and compassionate people willing to take responsibility for stray cats and get them desexed. NDN sets up and manages Cooperative Desexing Programs for Councils free of charge to make it easier for them to sustain. The benefits to Councils are reductions in animal management costs, pound/shelter intake, and nuisance issues and an increase in community satisfaction and compliance with local laws.



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ANN ENRIGHT

Dr Ann Enright BVMS, Grad Cert Shelter Medicine, Fellowship Shelter Medicine – Shelter Veterinarian

After spending nearly twenty years working in Human Resources and Industrial Relations Ann returned to study veterinary science, graduating from Murdoch University in Perth Western Australia in 2008. Since then she has worked in both general practice and animal shelters in the UK and Australia. Determined to make a difference for shelter animals, Ann completed a Graduate Certificate followed by a Fellowship in Shelter Medicine and is now undertaking a Masters in Shelter Medicine.

Ann was first exposed to shelter medicine during final year rotations in vet school and was hooked on shelter medicine after completing rotations and several placements at a cat shelter with an intake of 8,000 cats/kittens a year. She co-founded a Special Interest Group providing information sessions on housing and disease management and behaviour for smaller rescue groups.

Ann enjoys thinking outside the box to find ways of reducing the number of animals entering shelters, improving the lives of those in shelters, and then seeing them being adopted is the icing on the cake. She hopes to be able to assist other shelters and rescues make positive changes for the animals in their care.

Presentation abstract:

Cat de-sexing programs - great partnerships achieving great outcomes

Working in the animal industry can be daunting at times, but when staff face abandoned, abused, stray or just plain unwanted animals the task can seem so much harder. There are significant costs involved – and more than just animals' lives. Staff can easily become overwhelmed and despondent whilst at the same time organisations struggle to manage the increasing drain on limited finances and resources. Additionally shelters, rescues and pounds are faced with increasing community concerns regarding animal welfare outcomes.

There is light at the end of the tunnel – by using proven, straightforward concepts and practices both local governments and private organisations can work together to achieve amazing outcomes. Just by knowing some basic information your organisation will be able to assess options regarding intake and adoption practices, reduce the time animals spend in your facility and minimise disease. All these things will save your organisation money, improve staff moral and consolidate community support. Learn how one organisation was able to increase intake and adoptions, assist other local governments and shelter organisations whilst substantially reducing and remaining disease free for over a year.



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NIKKI BROOKMAN

Nikki Brookman, BA (Geogr & Env Studies), BCom (Marketing) – Regional Cat Management Coordinator, Tasmanian Cat Management Project

Nikki Brookman is the Southern Cat Management Coordinator for Tasmania, where she is one of three Coordinators who manage the TassieCat Program, working with Councils & the community to improve cat management. She has a background in environmental management and community engagement, and has worked on the delivery of landscape-scale environmental restoration in South Australia, as well as in a variety of community engagement roles in South Australia and Tasmania.

Nikki enjoys working with the community on projects that achieve positive outcomes for people, the environment and animal welfare. In her role as Cat Management Coordinator Nikki particularly enjoys working with cat owners and Councils to promote ways for cat owners to improve their cats' quality of life, while reducing impacts on native wildlife.

Nikki is hosted by Kingborough Council, just south of Hobart, and works across Southern Tasmania.

Presentation abstract:

TassieCat: working with councils and the community to improve cat management and responsible cat ownership.

The TassieCat project provides resources to raise awareness and facilitate improved management of cats in Tasmania to ensure that their impacts on wildlife, agriculture and human health are minimised while preserving their welfare and benefits to the community.

TassieCat works to coordinate strategic cat management and responsibility sharing across all levels of government, industry and the Tasmanian community. This is implemented on a regional level by working in close partnership with 29 Councils, vets, cat management facilities, and State Government departments. Each of the three regions in Tasmania is working on a regional cat management strategy with key stakeholders with the aim of identifying regional issues and possible agreed and shared solutions.

To support education and behaviour change across the state TassieCat launched a social marketing campaign, engaging with the community through a variety of media to improve levels of responsible ownership and cat welfare. This campaign has received a positive response and continues to raise awareness about responsible cat ownership.





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