

Examining the role of National Planning Principles for Animals in Australian disaster response

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

RSPCA Animal Welfare Seminar 2022



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What we'll cover today

- 
1. Australian disaster response context for animals
 2. National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters
 3. Need for the Principles to guide animal planning
 4. Overall research design
 5. Stakeholder online survey and interviewing
 6. Implications for animal disaster planning in Australia

Animals in Australian Disaster Context

-
- Animals (i.e. non-wildlife) are managed as **assets and property**.
 - Farmed animals, household pets, sport/recreation animals (e.g., equestrian).
 - Animal owner is **ultimately responsible** for animal's safety and welfare in disasters
 - Legal duty of care
 - Managed from state level, down to local government level
 - National frameworks more so for biosecurity (e.g., AUSVETPLAN), or economic systems (e.g., AGAGINPLAN)
 - National disaster resilience frameworks rarely address disaster welfare of these owned animals.
 - **Animal Welfare Management Plans in Disasters:**
 - **State Government** Agencies - Agriculture Departments, Environment Departments
 - **Local Government** Agencies: City/Shire Councils, Local Land Services
 - **Non-Governmental** Functional Supporting Organisations: E.g., RSPCA, Red Cross, Animal Welfare League
 - Structure varies by State/Territory (different needs) – **some harmonisation needed**

Animals in Australian Disaster Context



State-Level Animal Management

Examples:

- Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan
- Managing Animals in Emergencies Framework SA
- Animal Welfare in Emergencies Support Plan WA

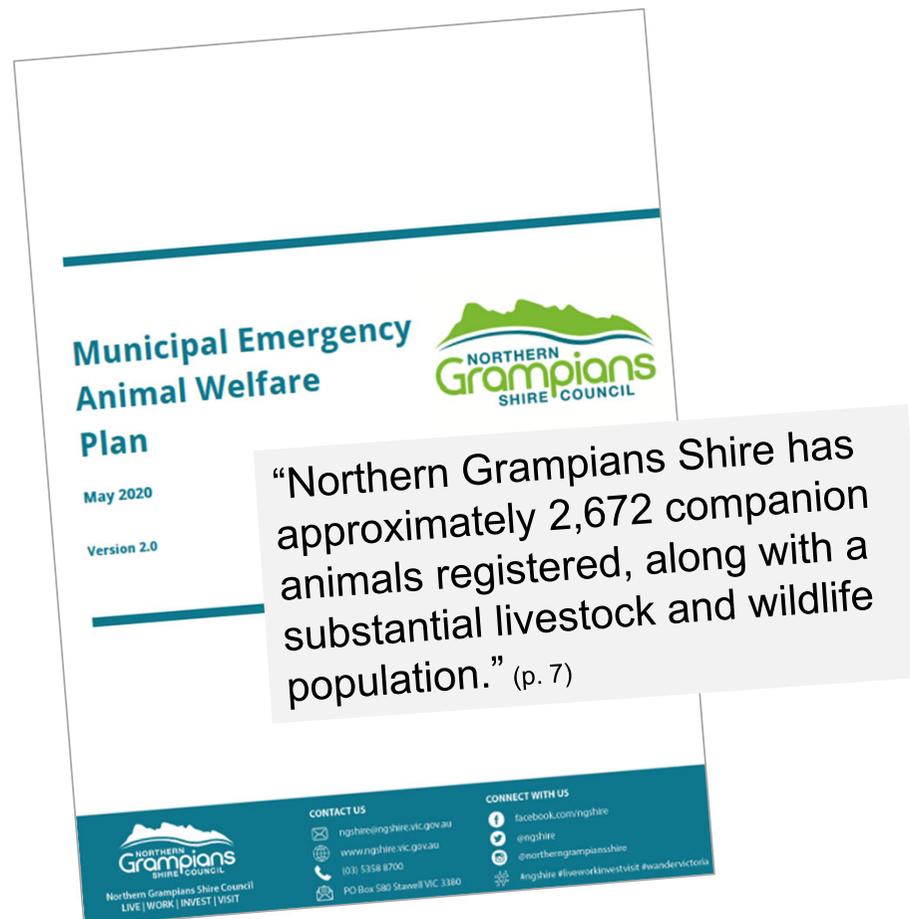
Describe:

- Emergency processes
- Roles and responsibilities
- Combat Agencies (e.g., fire)
- Support Organisations (e.g., welfare)
- Legislative guidelines

Inform:

- Local/regional plans
- Local government response
- Local government plans

Animals in Australian Disaster Context



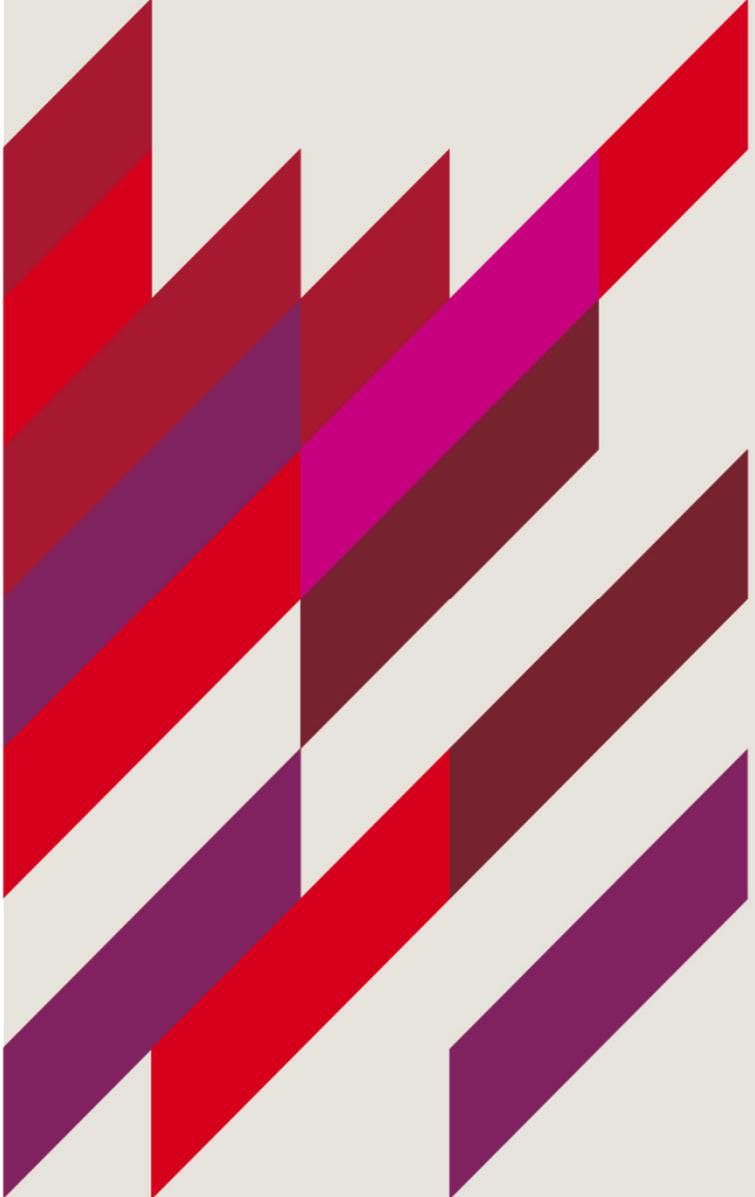
Local Level Animal Management

Example:

- Victorian Municipal Plan for Animal Welfare in Disasters
- Developed in reference to the Victorian State Plan
- Used to **coordinate** animal welfare support for owned animals before, during, and after emergency

Covers:

- Animal identification
- Evacuation/sheltering
- Welfare/veterinary assessment
- Emergency aid (e.g., food)



National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

- **Created** via animal welfare expert consultation:
 - At National Planning Committee Workshop in Melbourne, 2013
 - By AAWS, WAP, State/Territory and local governments, emergency services, RSPCA, Red Cross, Australian Veterinary Association, media and university researchers
- **Supported:**
 - Endorsed by Australia New Zealand Emergency Management Committee (2014)
 - Endorsed by Australian Animal Welfare Committee (2013)
 - Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (ended mid-2014)
- **Progressing** the Principles
 - Promoted by World Animal Protection (e.g., Disaster Inquiry/Commission Submissions)
 - Remained available to National/State/Local Government
 - Available to non-government groups and private organisations also
- Download a copy via the Australian Veterinary Association: bit.ly/2Z8Puva

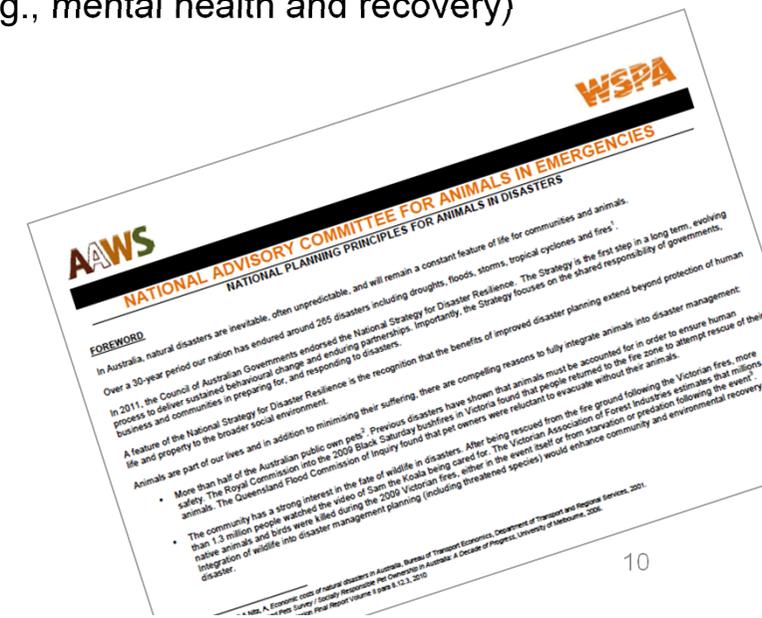
AUSTRALIAN
ANIMAL
WELFARE
STRATEGY



RSPCA 

National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

- **Role of the Principles:**
 - “These principles reflect the minimum expectations of the community for animal welfare outcomes in disasters.” (p.1) - AAWC
- **Why this matters:**
 - Animals have **intrinsic value**
 - Animals contribute to **human health** and wellbeing.
 - Both broadly (human-animal bond effects), and disaster specific (e.g., mental health and recovery)
 - Animals have **economic value**.
 - Agricultural impacts, animals used in sport/recreation
 - Failure to account for animals **puts human life at risk**.
 - Evacuation failure, complication, and refusal
 - Compliance, re-entering high-risk areas, unable to re-enter
 - Increased load on emergency resources (e.g., shelter facilities)
- These are **enduring issues** in disaster management.
 - Supported by research, increasingly considered in planning.



National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters

PROCESS (creating animal arrangements)

- **Explicitly recognise** that integrating animals into emergency management plans will improve animal welfare outcomes.
- Aim, for the benefit of emergency managers and animal welfare managers, to clearly **identify roles and responsibilities within command- and control structures** in sufficient detail to allow for effective implementation of animal welfare measures.
- Be communicated **in language that is accessible** to all stakeholders including the general public.

PLAN (final documents/frameworks)

- Specify that the individual in charge of an animal is **ultimately responsible** for its welfare in disasters.
- Include **consideration of animals at all stages** of the disaster cycle including preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.
- Include a system for **formalising arrangements with animal welfare support organisations**.

8 Principles for **Process**.

16 Principles for **Plan**.

24 Principles overall

Research design

Research design

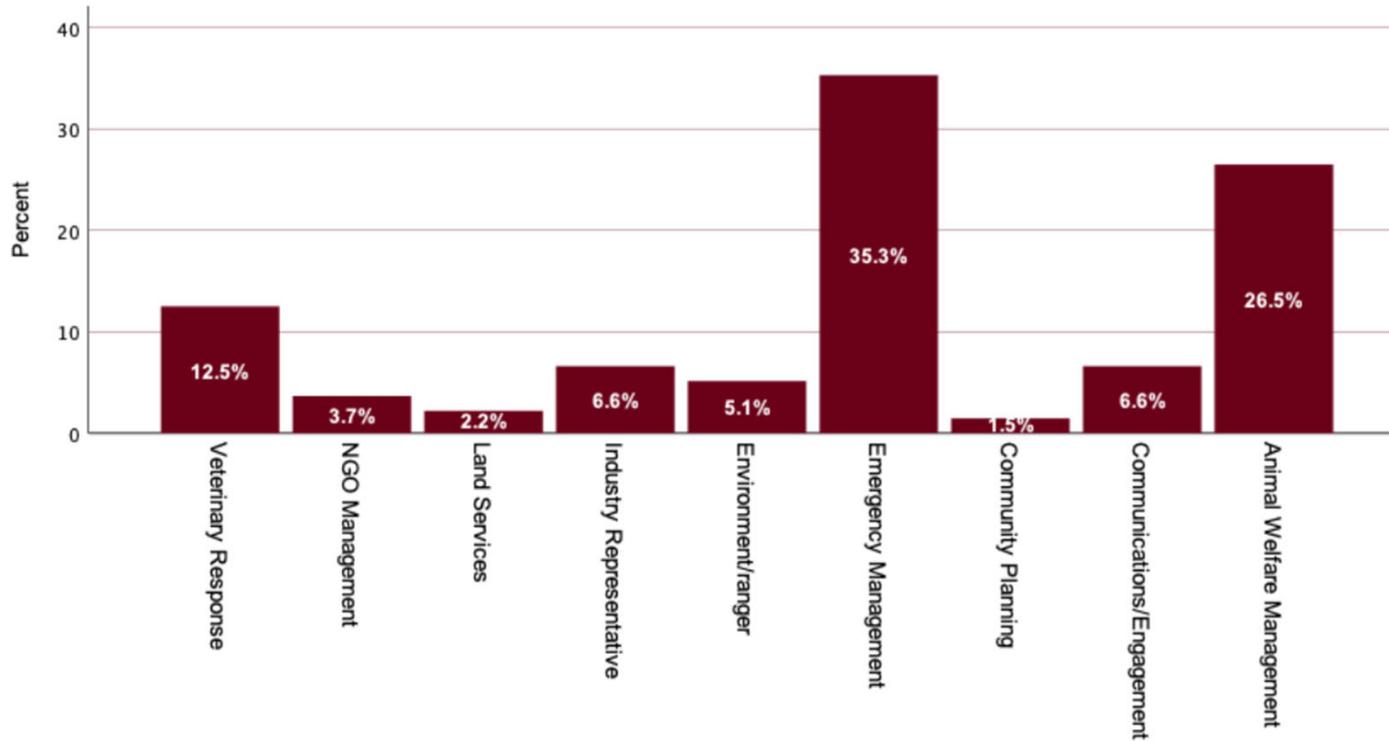
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-  • **Literature review:**
 - Australian documents on planning and policy for animal management in disasters (e.g., plans, frameworks).
 -  • **Stakeholder interviewing:**
 - In-depth interviews of Australian stakeholders in this space (e.g., government, emergency services, NGOs)
 -  • **Stakeholder survey:**
 - Detailed online survey examining organisational implementation of the National Planning Principles.
 -  • **Case studies:**
 - Selected case studies describing approaches to managing animals in disasters.
 -  • **Media analysis:**
 - Content analysis of Australian media coverage of animal management in selected recent bushfires.
 - **Coverage:**
 - Documents and events occurring after Principles were endorsed (2014-2020).
 - Full report was released earlier this year.

Stakeholder survey

- **Survey aim:**
 - Describing the types of stakeholders in animal emergency management
 - Examine awareness of the National Planning Principles
 - Examine implementation of the National Planning Principles
- **Design and procedure:**
 - Confidential 40-minute survey: org description, roles for animals, plan arrangements, and use of the Principles
 - Via Qualtrics, emailed to key contacts, sharable, allowed for follow-up for later interviews.
 - July-October 2020
- **Sample:**
 - 137 respondents in roles with a **stake in planning, policy, and response for animals** in disasters.
 - NSW (25.5%), SA (15.3%), WA (14.6%), QLD (10.9%) and VIC (10.9%), with 10.2% reporting Commonwealth or National jurisdiction, 5.8% 'Other', 4.4% TAS, and 0.7% NT.
 - State/territory government (26.3%), local government (21.2%), emergency services (13.1%), nonprofit organisations (25.5%), professional associations (2.9%), private companies (2.9%) and other (8.0%).

Survey findings

Survey findings



Stakeholder roles

Key points:

- Many in Emergency Management and Animal Welfare Management **61.8%**.
- Shows good coverage of role types.
- Most had direct contact with animal owners **74.5%**, particularly in government, emergency services, and nonprofit organisations.

Survey findings

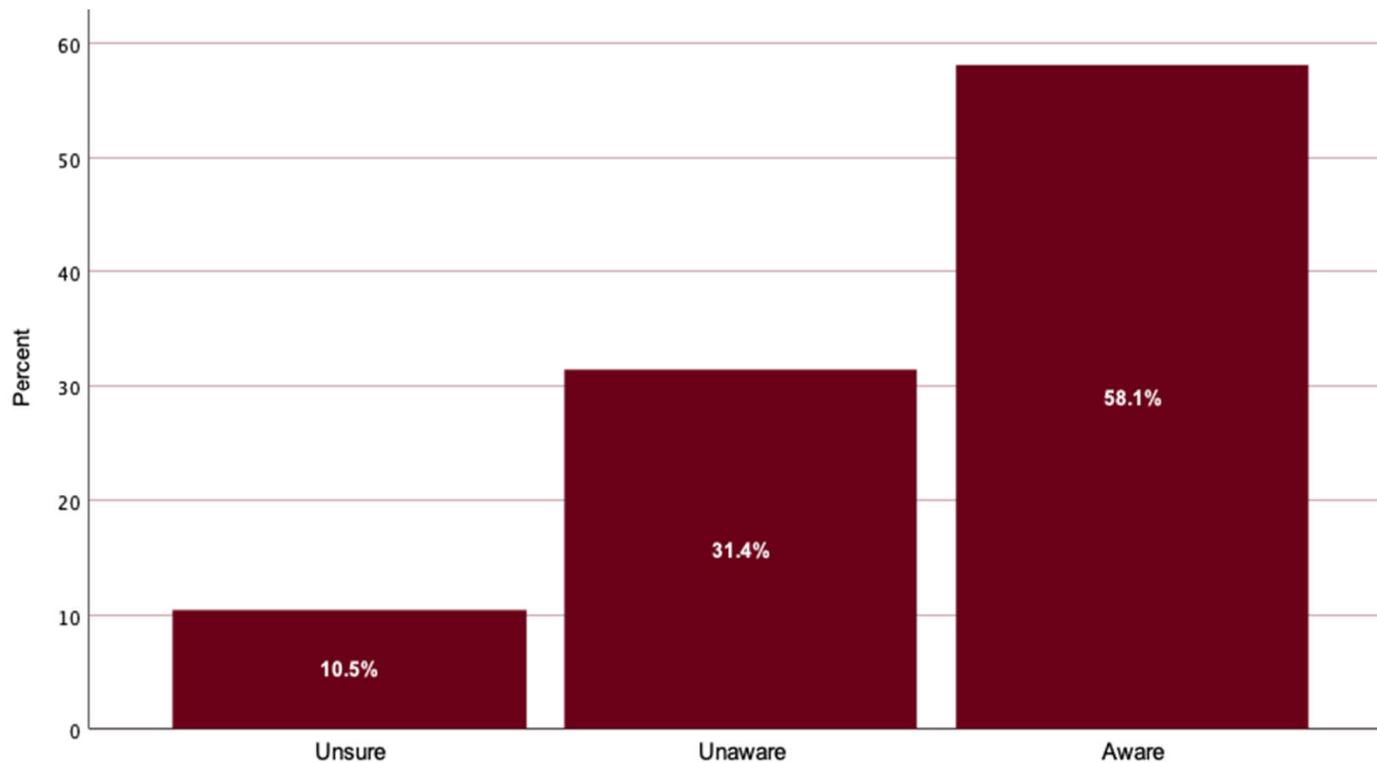
Oversight area (n=137)	% Yes	% No
Community engagement/preparedness	68.6	31.4
Operational disaster response	79.6	20.4
Animal management/animal welfare	78.1	21.9
Evacuation centres	41.6	58.4
Emergency management/planning	73.7	26.3
Community recovery	48.9	51.1
Other	2.9	97.1

Oversight/responsibility

Key points:

- Most had oversight for community preparedness, operational response, and emergency management planning.
- Most were directly responsible for animal management and welfare **78.1%**.

Survey findings



Implementation of Principles

Key points:

- Moderate level of awareness of the National Principles.
- Just under a third were not aware of them.
- Suggests scope to more actively promote/share the tool.
- Of those aware, over half had implemented them at their organisation **53.8%**.
- Next asked how each principle was implemented...

Survey findings

PROCESS (creating animal arrangements)	% Fully implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explicitly recognise that integrating animals into emergency management plans will improve animal welfare outcomes.	52.2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aim, for the benefit of emergency managers and animal welfare managers, to clearly identify roles and responsibilities within command-and control structures in sufficient detail to allow for effective implementation of animal welfare measures.	45.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be communicated in language that is accessible to all stakeholders including the general public.	25.6%

Process Principles

Key points:

- These are 3 of the 8 process Planning Principles.
- Low recognition of the need to integrate animals into planning.
- Low description of how animals/animal welfare sits within command-control emergency response.
- Very low use of accessible language in animal planning process.

Survey findings

PLAN (final documents/frameworks)	% Fully implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Specify that the individual in charge of an animal is ultimately responsible for its welfare in disasters.	46.1%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Include consideration of animals at all stages of the disaster cycle including preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.	47.4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Include a system for formalising arrangements with animal welfare support organisations.	28.9%

Plan Principles

Key points:

- These are 3 of the 16 Plan Principles.
- Low communication of ultimate responsibility for animal welfare
- Low consideration of animals across all disaster stages
- Very low inclusion of formal arrangements with animal welfare organisations.

Interview findings

Stakeholder interviews

-
- **Aim:**
 - **Explore perspectives** of different types of individuals and organisations on where animals fit into emergency management planning—including responsibilities and welfare concerns.
 - **Design:**
 - Informed by literature and survey responses.
 - Semi-structured (mostly video) interviews – transcripts thematically coded by two researchers.
 - **Sample:**
 - 23 respondents in roles with a **stake in planning, policy, and response for animals** in disasters.
 - Covered all states and territories, and multiple government organisations.
 - Roles of interviewees primarily related to animal emergency management, animal welfare, general emergency management, land management, and communication or education.
 - Practically, roles crossed these categories.

Interview findings - themes

1. Need for National Planning Principles
2. Awareness barriers
3. Implementing the principles
4. All hazards, all species
5. Human-animal welfare link
6. Animal welfare consultation
7. Communicating animal integration and responsibility
8. Ongoing gaps and needs

Themes

Need for National Planning Principles

- Stakeholders understood the purpose and need for the NPPAD, their relevance to emergency response, and role in informing state and territory arrangements:
 - *E.g., I've certainly seen them and been involved with them, and I think a lot of the really important tenets of that, i.e., that animals need to be included in disaster response not just for their welfare but for the welfare of people..., [help to] to make sure that all of these different components that fit together that involve animals actually work under a disaster situation. (animal welfare, non-profit, NAT)*

Awareness barriers

- Low or no awareness of the Principles was often due to position in organisational structure, jurisdictional or industry decisions about planning information for animals:
 - *E.g., There's a bit in public warning messaging about animals that may be coming through, but it is very people focused. It's [like], right, we're leaving it up to you as the owner of either livestock, domesticated animals, companion animals, to manage your own situation.... Our warning and advice systems are still very people focused, and the animals are not considered. (emergency management, emergency services, SA)*

Themes

Implementing the Principles:

- Need to improve application across jurisdictions, and mapping the Principles more closely to practical actions for animal emergency management downstream:
 - *E.g., I think Principles arrive, and then you're cascading down to that [action]. So, I'd like to see the Principles cascading to a practical component, because at the end of the day... [we look at this as] a holistic approach. (emergency management, industry/private, NSW)*

All hazards, all species:

- Few stakeholders noted an all hazards, all species approach, due to org focus (e.g., smaller pets, wildlife), planning that accounts for species most likely to be affected in their jurisdiction:
 - *E.g., A lot of people are critical of the single species approach, but the fact is that doing that [work] for that animal [type] actually benefits many others. (land management, government, NSW)*

Themes

Human-animal welfare link:

- Interviewees confirmed that integrating animals into emergency planning improves human and animal welfare and safety in disasters, and although this is becoming integrated into planning and response, improvement is needed:
 - *E.g., Well for me, being in animal welfare, it's the fact that animals are sentient beings and they do need to be protected. But that doesn't float for most people. So, from a policy perspective, it's about human safety. Yes, so the human behaviours... impact not only that person, but also the animals that they're connected to. (animal emergency management, government, WA)*

Animal welfare consultation:

- As extent of animal welfare consultation for disaster planning varies across jurisdictions and sectors, the need for central animal welfare information points and committees for consultation was reinforced:
 - *E.g., Most of that happens within the industry groups... [and] there is a lot of consultation in terms of certainly planning for any situation that might involve [animal] population or any kind of impact on the food chain.... So, I know our farm animal people consult quite a lot with industry on those kinds of things... I'd say in regard to [companion animals], it's more likely that people consult with [veterinary bodies]. (animal welfare, non-profit, NAT, 19)*

Themes

Communicating animal integration and responsibility:

- When asked directly about integration of animals, interviewees described a need to communicate about this more effectively with the public, and with relevant organisations:
 - *E.g., It does vary, and what we do is we get the sector, rather than the [government] and rather than emergency management. The sector representatives are the ones that write it in the language that they feel their community will take. So, it's putting that responsibility down to them because they are the experts in their area. (animal emergency management, government, WA)*

Gaps and needs:

- Stakeholders revealed research and practice gaps to address via the Principles, including unifying approaches to animal welfare planning in Australia, and explicit integration of this in standard emergency management systems (e.g., AIIMS):
 - *E.g., And we still haven't pulled animals into that structure anywhere... [by] having it pulled into there, it then flows into everything else as well, because if the incident controller knows that they have to answer questions about animals, they're going to make sure that the plans... can answer those questions. (animal emergency management, government, WA)*

Implications/future?

Implications for animal disaster planning in Australia

- **Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements:**
 - Australian Bushfires 2019/2020 – impacts on animals are increasing in scope
 - Need for consistency in response between States/Territories, and stakeholder organisations
 - Recommendations address needs around animal evacuation and sheltering – recurring issue.
 - Recommendations largely focus on wildlife, lesser focus on owned animals (e.g., livestock, pets)
- **Role of the National Principles:**
 - Tool offers a central guide to increase consistency in State Emergency Responses
 - So far, best highlighted by VIC, WA, and SA State Animal Emergency Planning Arrangements.
 - Need to further adopt, extend, and apply the Principles.
 - Not actively promoted at Commonwealth Level – Need to do so again.
- **Translation:**
 - Provided to Dept of Home Affairs (Crisis Planning Coordination), acknowledgment letter
 - Dept provided Report to DAWE and National Resilience and Recovery Agency.
 - Publicly available at conferences, provided to participating research orgs/individuals.

Thank you

Feel free to get in touch if you have any questions later on. Follow World Animal Protection to get notified about the release of the report.

Read the National Planning Principles for Animals in Disasters here: bit.ly/2Z8Puva

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