



Faculty of
Science



Animal Welfare
Science Centre

Communication to improve animal welfare outcomes.

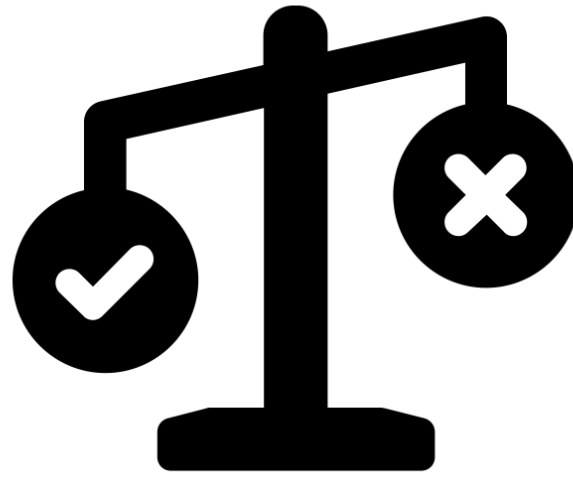
Dr Mia Cobb

Chaser Innovation Fellow
Animal Welfare Science Centre

> science.unimelb.edu.au



Animal welfare matters



Animal welfare is increasingly important, globally.

Importance of communication

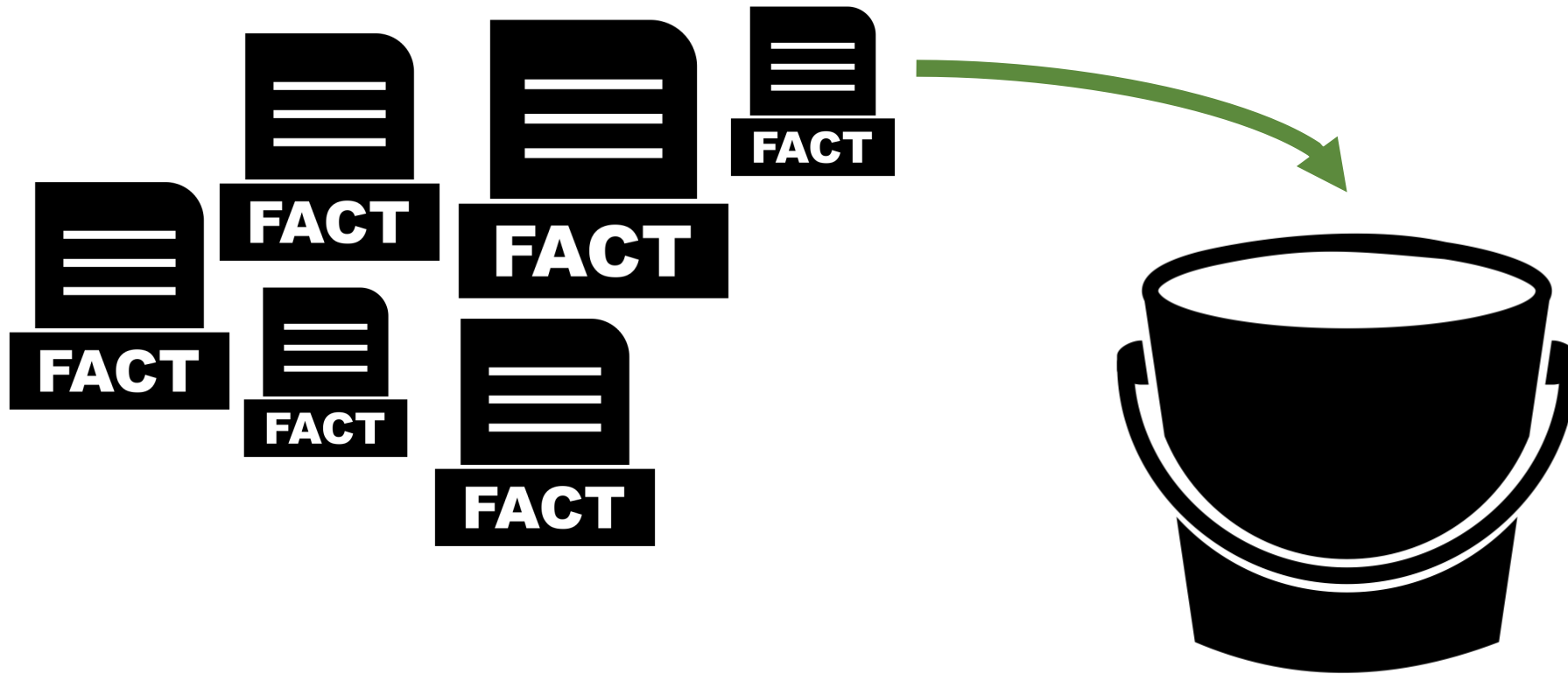
Animal welfare matters pose complex challenges in our society.

We need to explain problems and ideas in ways that are accessible to everyone.

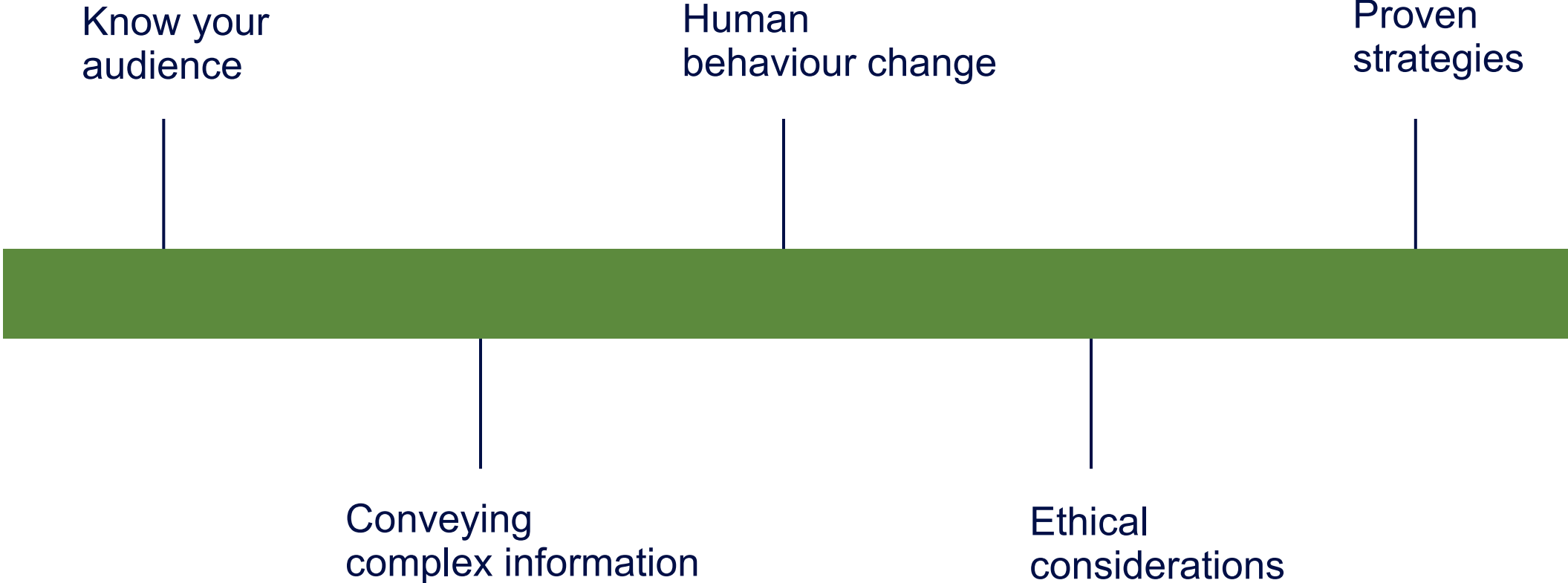
Inform evidence-based decision-making, based on accurate and reliable information.

Good communication \neq filling a bucket

The information deficit model of communication isn't the most effective.



What I plan to share today



Know your audience

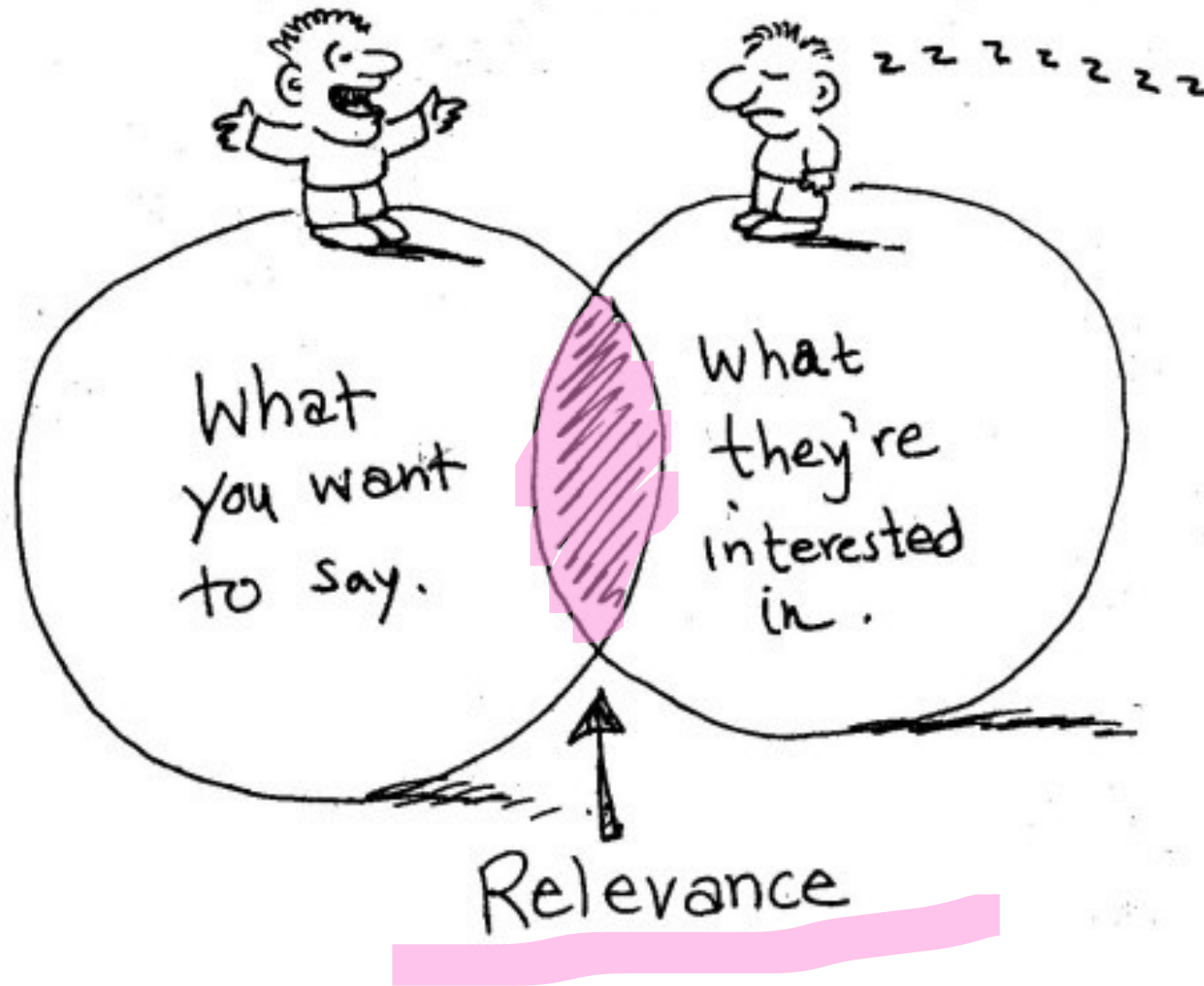
Human behaviour change

Proven strategies

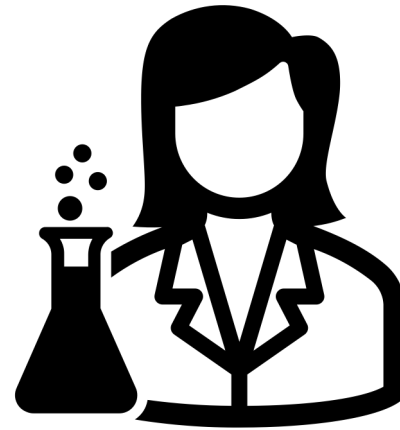
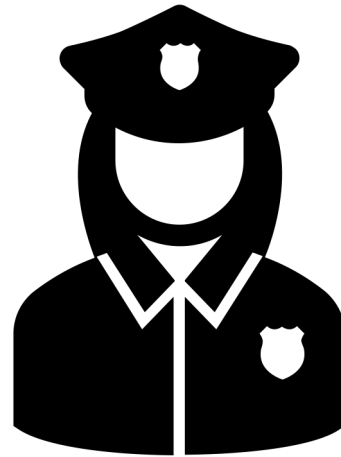
Conveying complex information

Ethical considerations

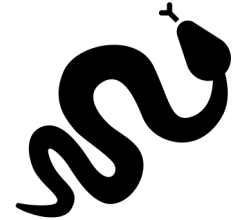
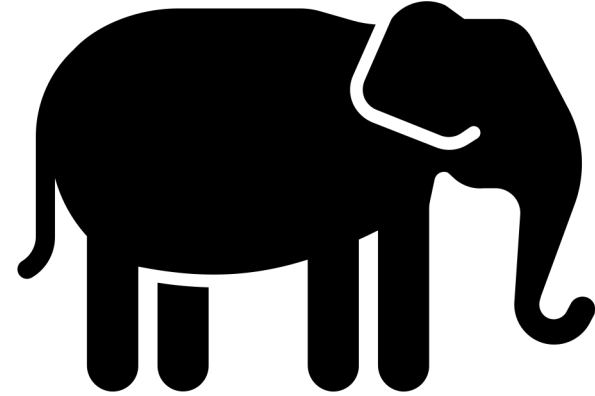
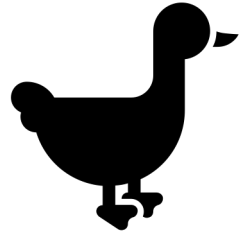
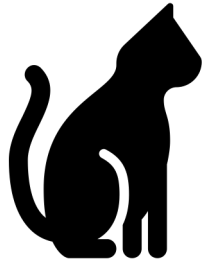
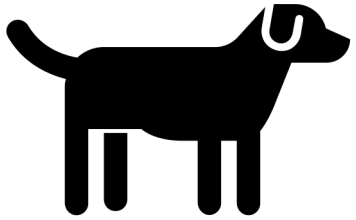
Know your audience



Animal welfare values vary



Animal welfare attitudes vary

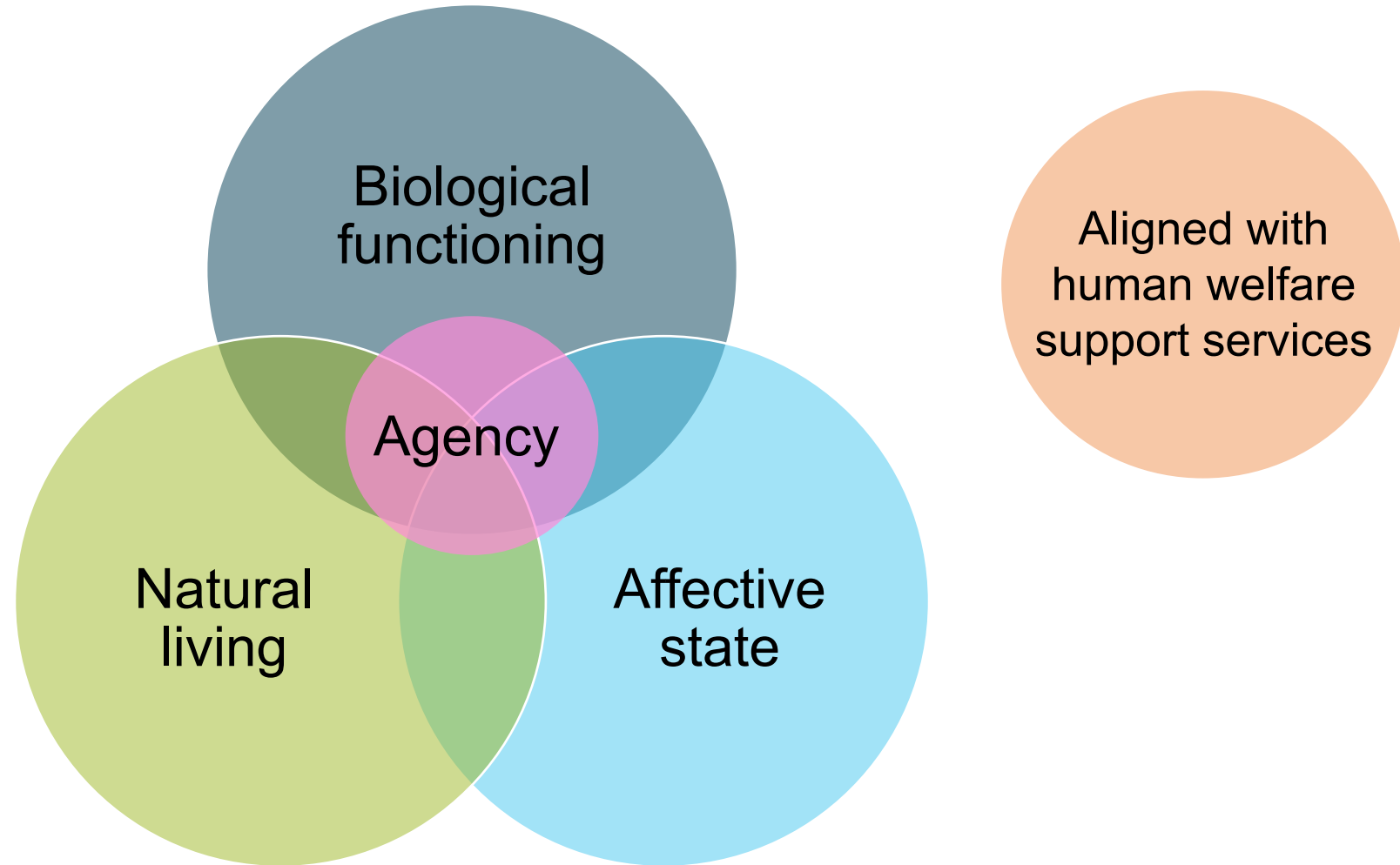


Animal welfare attitudes vary



Serpell, J. A. (2004). Factors influencing human attitudes to animals and their welfare. *Animal Welfare*, 13(S1), S145-S151
Cobb, M. L., Lill, A., & Bennett, P. C. (2020). Not all dogs are equal: Perception of canine welfare varies with context. *Animal Welfare*, 29(1), 27-35.

How we consider 'welfare' differs





“Animal sentience refers to the ability of animals to experience pleasurable states such as joy, and aversive states such as pain or fear”

Proctor. (2012). Animal sentience: where are we and where are we heading?. *Animals*, 2(4), 628-639.

Tensions can offer opportunities

Sometimes roundtables can feel like stalemates.

Try to identify the **opportunities**:

- It's OK to acknowledge uncertainty / the need for compromise
- Can you cultivate openness?
- Keep learning from perspectives that differ to your own
- Issues may require an element of time to progress

Conveying complex information

Top 5 Tips

1. Explain concepts using details they already know
2. If new ideas, use metaphors and analogies
3. Be concise (leave out unnecessary details)
4. Use different methods (visual, verbal, written, etc.)
5. Make sure you include the *why* (value add / risk reduction)

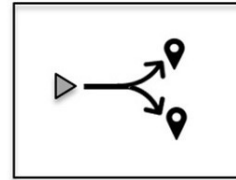
Fostering understanding

Animal agency

Agency is the capacity of individual animals to engage in voluntary, self-generated, and goal-directed behavior that they are motivated to perform.

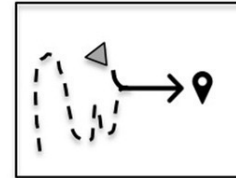
Agency is when animals have the choice and power to interact with the environment, other animals and people as they want to.

Living through Melbourne's strict COVID lockdowns (where we couldn't go where we wanted to see who we wanted to for over 250 days) helped me understand the importance of agency to animals. Having choice and control over what I do impacts my mental health.



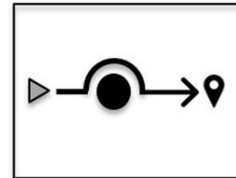
Choice

act of choosing or selecting from more than one alternative



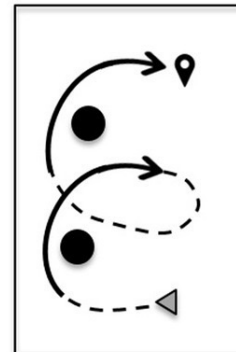
Control

ability to predictably and effectively produce desired results in a given situation



Challenge

opportunity that requires use of some skill and attentional focus to achieve a goal



Agency

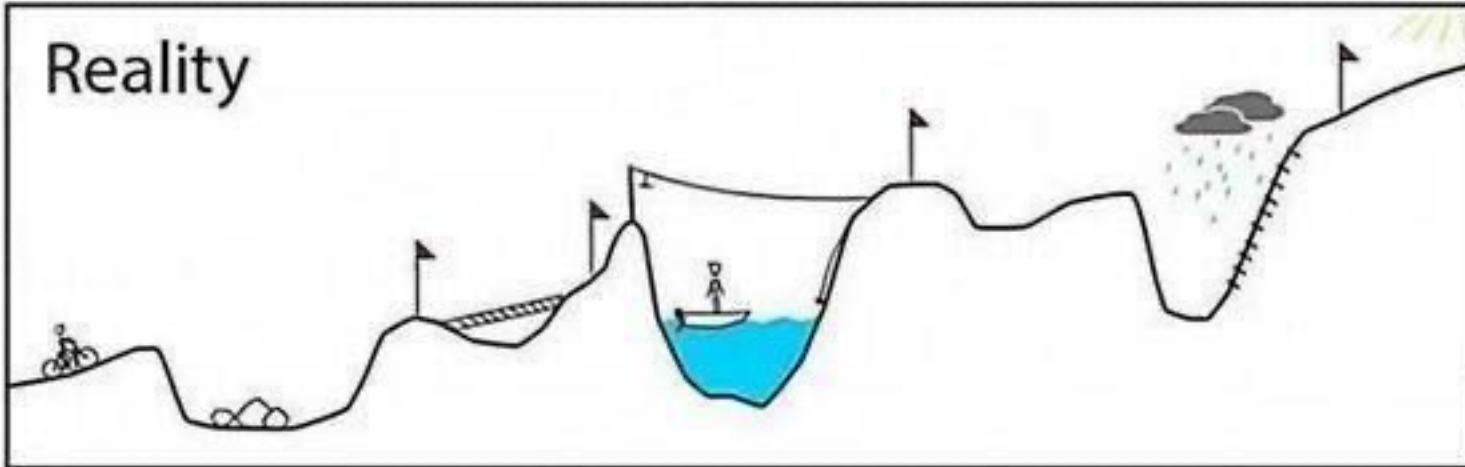
ability to exert control and overcome challenge in one's environment to gather knowledge and enhance skills for future use

Know what success looks like

Your plan



Reality



Human Behaviour Change

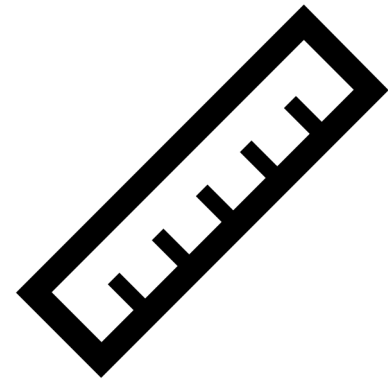
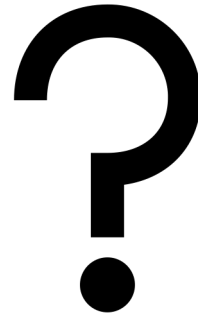
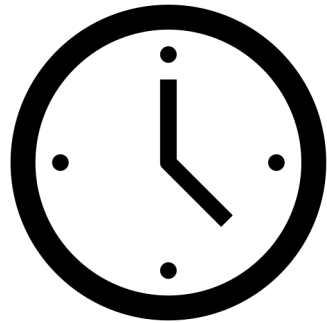
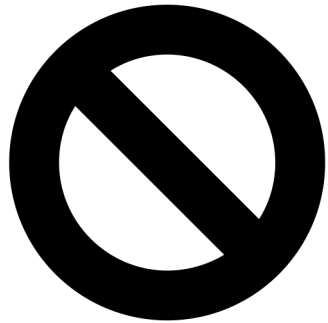
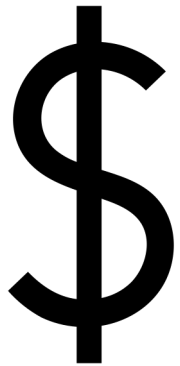
Works best when:

You target a very specific behaviour by your focal audience that is proven to relate to the problem.

Examples:

- Increase booster vaccination compliance to prevent disease.
- Choose a higher welfare alternative in the supermarket.

Tailoring communication to audience



Promoting good/best practices

- **Authentic change with motivation and rationale explained**
- **Role models from within the industry share experience**
- **Independent review (e.g., audit/certification)**
- **Transparency in reviewing and reporting outcomes**
- **Further change as indicated (continuous improvement)**

Nutley, S., Walter, I., & Davies, H. T. (2009). Promoting evidence-based practice: Models and mechanisms from cross-sector review. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19(5), 552-559.

Walter, I., Nutley, S., & Davies, H. (2005). What works to promote evidence-based practice? A cross-sector review. *Evidence & Policy*, 1(3), 335-363.

Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A., & Kemper, J. A. (2020). Brands taking a stand: Authentic brand activism or woke washing?. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 39(4), 444-460.

Welfare washing:

The presentation of inaccurate, false or misleading information about animal care practices to improve public reputation by appearing to take responsibility for animal well-being.^{5,6}



Jes Lynning Harfeld
@harfeld

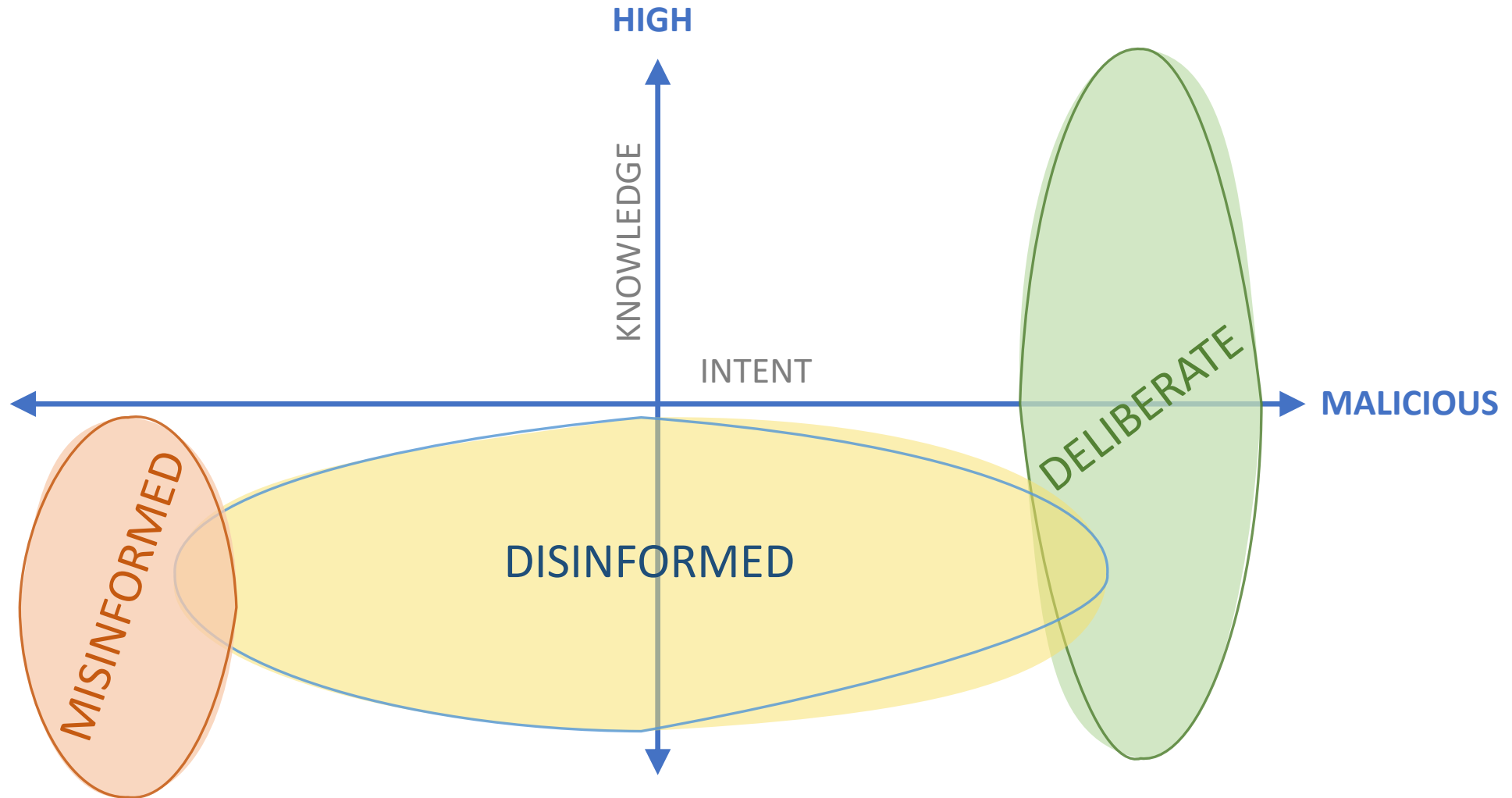


I et land, hvor meget tæt på 0% af grise ser himlen i deres korte liv, vælger [@fvmdk](#) at illustrere deres nye eksportbehandlingsplan med dette billede. Welfare-washing som national statslig understøttet strategi? [#dyrevelfærd](#) er i øvrigt nævnt 0 gange i planen.



4:54 PM · Sep 14, 2022

Ethical considerations



Proven strategies

MESSAGE FRAMING

IF YOU
DONATE
MONEY, THIS
CUTE BUNNY
WILL LIVE
HAPPILY
EVER AFTER.



[POSITIVE
FRAME]

v.s.

IF YOU DON'T
DONATE MONEY,
THIS CUTE
BUNNY WILL
DIE.



[negative
frame]



Proven strategies

Tell people what you want them to do,
focus on positively positioned language.

Proven strategies

Don't think of an elephant

Proven strategies

People are motivated to reduce losses, maximise gains.

Desexed dogs are cheaper to register with local council.

Proven strategies

People are influenced by the majority.

Proven strategies

**70% of people don't walk
their dog**

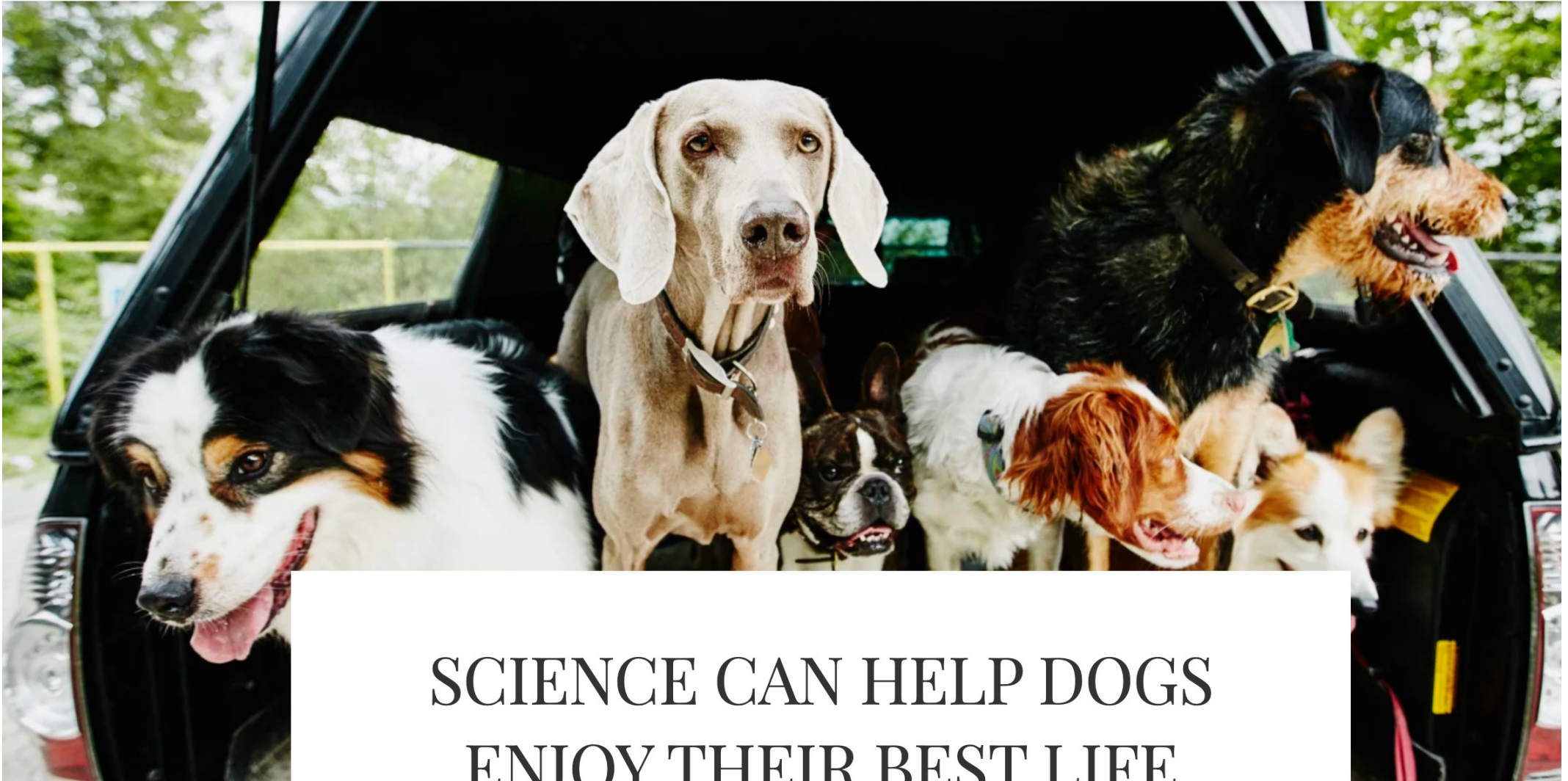
Examples of communication

Wiview
AUSTRALIA



 YouTube

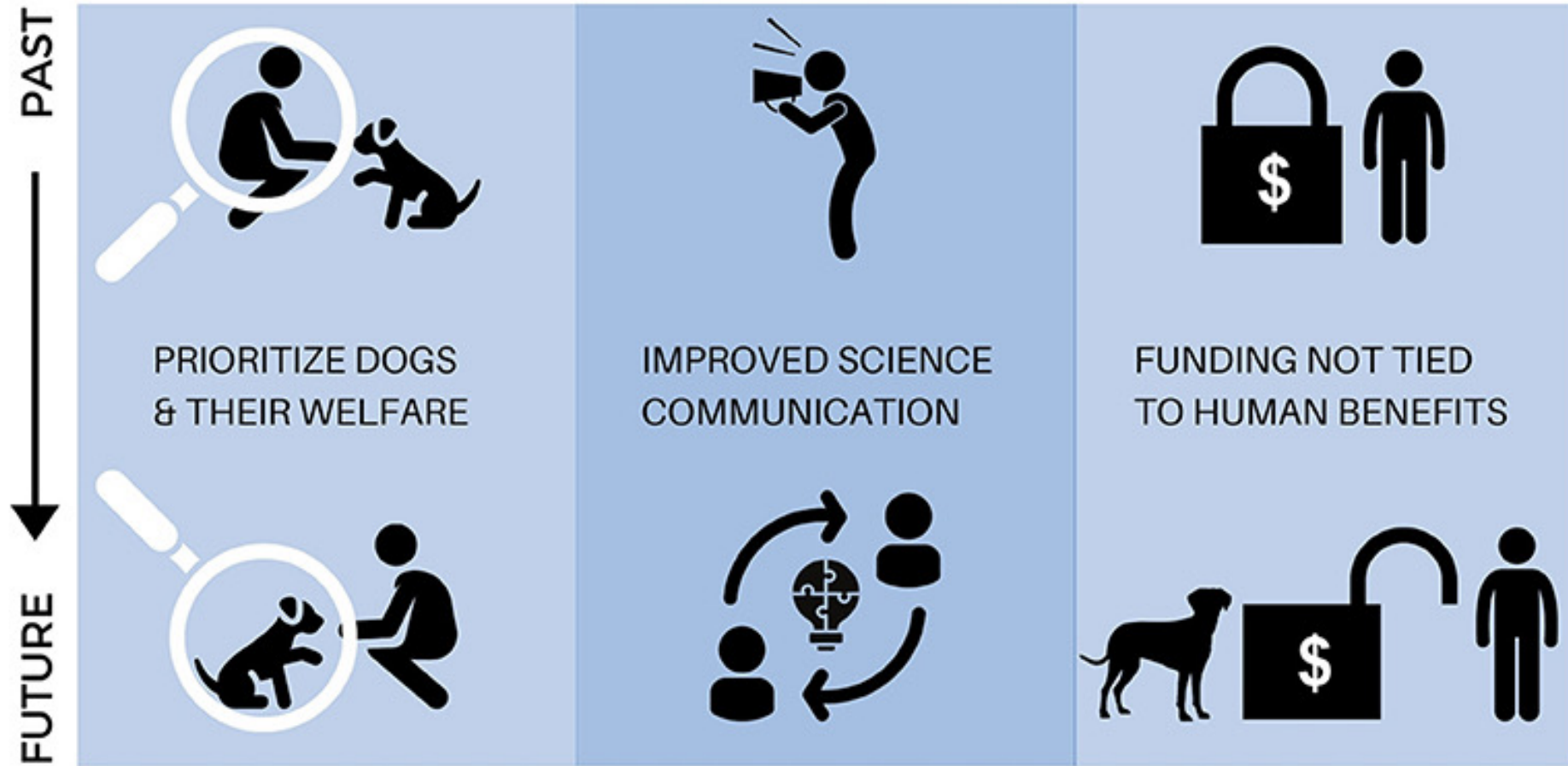




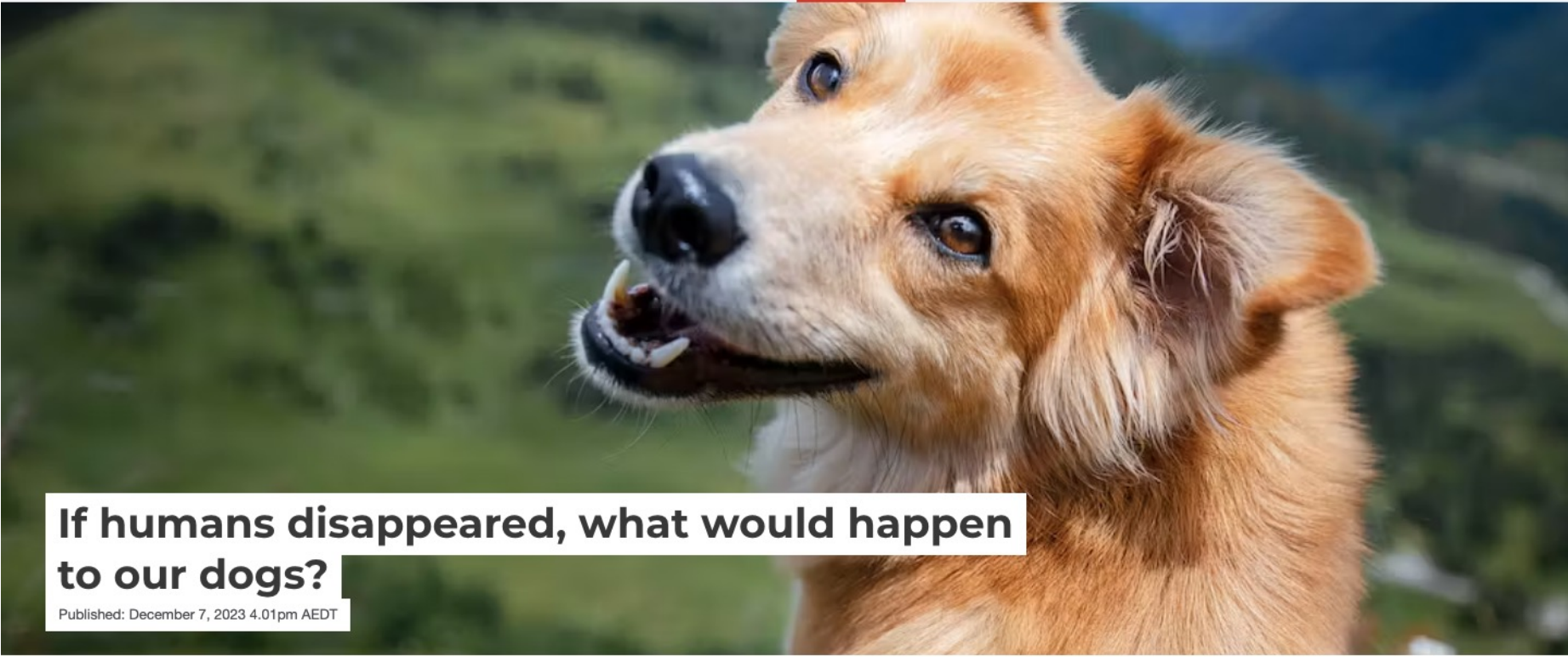
SCIENCE CAN HELP DOGS ENJOY THEIR BEST LIFE

A new TV series explores the journey of dogs, but science is giving us new insights into how we can help our canine friends thrive

The future of Animal Welfare Science



Communication is key



If humans disappeared, what would happen to our dogs?

Published: December 7, 2023 4.01pm AEDT

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- LinkedIn

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For many of us, dogs are our best friends. But have you wondered what would happen to your dog if we suddenly disappeared? Can domestic dogs make do without people?

At least 80% of the world's one billion or so dogs actually live independent, free-

Authors

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Want to learn more?



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**BEHAVIOUR CHANGE:
ACHIEVING IMPACT
USING BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE**



MON 26 - THU 29 FEB 2024



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Thank you. Questions?



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