
WHEN YOU'RE NOT WELCOME: THE NOT SO 'FOREVER' HOME

Fiona De Rosa, PhD Student





When you're not welcome: The not so 'forever' home.

IMAGINE.

Imagine you are moving to a new home, but to secure a place you have to leave your dog or cat behind.

This is the sad reality for many older people moving into residential aged care.

- Only **18%** of residential aged care homes in Australia consider older pet to bring their pets with them (AWLA, 2018).



**Pet Friendly
Aged Care**



STRUCTURE

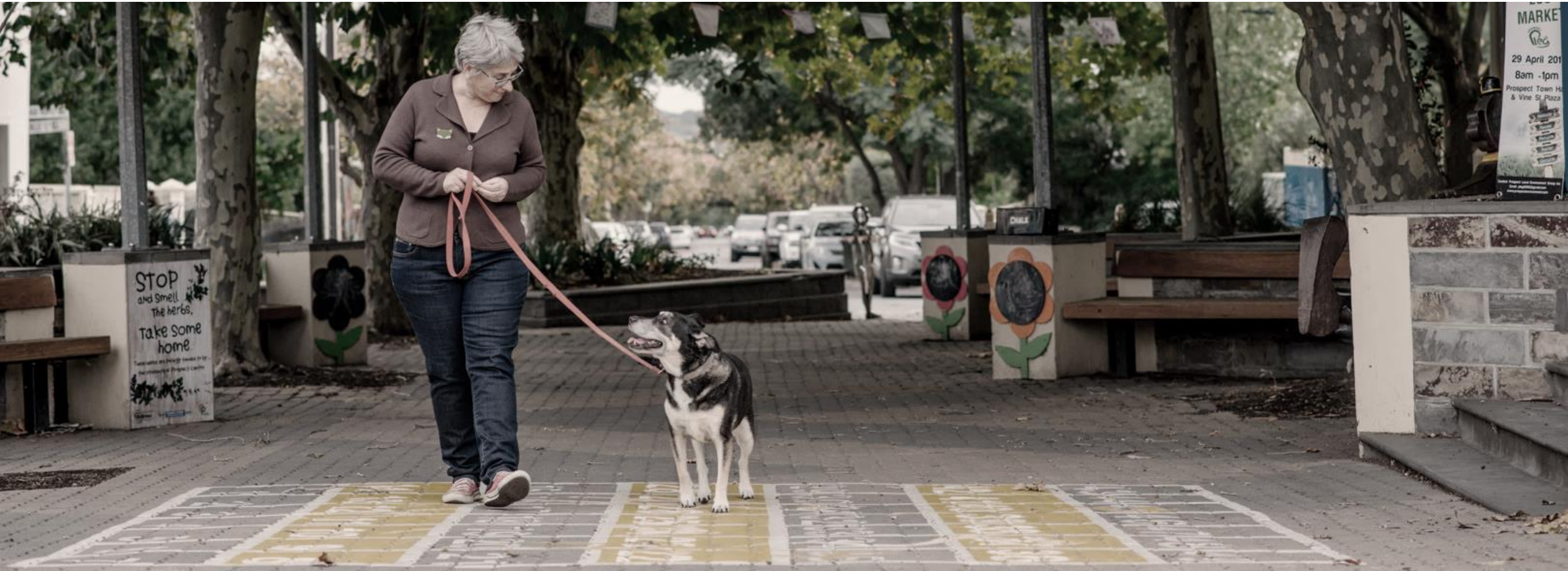
My talk is about the **inclusion & exclusion of companion animals or pets (personal pets) in residential aged care homes.**

Three sections:

- 1. Context:** PhD Project & rationale
- 2. Changing Places:** moving from the family home into residential aged care
- 3. Methods:** including animals

Photo credit: Companion Animal Network, Australia

SECTION 1. CONTEXT - PHD RESEARCH & RATIONAL



RESEARCH FOCUS

My focus is on **older people and their pets in residential aged care** homes in Australia.

Research around residential aged care homes has largely focused on visiting and facility animals, and the benefits of the interactions **to humans.**

My focus is on the **interconnections of human-animal relations** with a **focus on the animal's perspective/experiences.**

My research is not about animal or pet therapy or the benefits of pets to humans.

WHY AN ANIMAL FOCUS?

Human-animal studies generally focus on the human.

This means we are telling only one side of the story of human-animal relations – the human side.



“The study of human-animal relations is “overwhelmingly focused on the human benefits” (De Mello, 2102, p. 209).



“Research often overlooks the needs of the animal side of the human-animal interaction equation” (Gee and Galik, 2019, p. X).

SECTION 2. CHANGING PLACES – FROM THE FAMILY HOME TO RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE



PETS & THE FAMILY HOME

(i) Place of animals in society

- kennel to couch, pets entered the human home, family members, part of social rituals

(ii) Changing animal status

- human expectations, changing human circumstances

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**“many loving relationships with animals do not endure:
when life changes and unexpected situations pose
obstacles to the human-animal love, the people involved
redefine or terminate it”**

”

(Dafna Shir-Vertesh 2012, p. 420).

PETS & RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE

(i) Exclusion of companion animals (personal pets)

Forced separation & implications for human & animal

(ii) Inclusion of companion animals

Policy & practice at discretion of service providers



'INTERESTING' EXAMPLES OF VISITING ANIMALS IN AGED CARE HOMES.



Travelling petting zoo, chicken hatching program, fishing experience with real fish

VIDEO – BOB & DARCIÉ

<https://youtu.be/2tEDW8MnFx8?feature=shared>

SECTION 3. METHODS – INCLUDING ANIMALS





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“What does the worldview of a dog look like? Can you imagine what it is like to see through a dog’s eyes? Or smell through a dog’s nose?”

Whether or not we can truly answer these questions (we certainly cannot use surveys or other traditional methods to answer them)”

(De Mello, 2012, p. 19-20).



METHODS TO INCLUDE ANIMALS

More-than-human or multispecies ethnography
(Hamilton & Taylor, 2017)

Enable greater visibility of animals, and understanding
of the animal experiences

Capture the complexities of everyday human-animal
relations in aged care homes

Insights into daily life, spatial qualities of place, human-
animal relations



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KEY MESSAGES

1. Have a greater focus on animals when exploring human-animal relations.
2. Explore alternative methods to capture animal experiences and perspectives.
3. Provide greater support for older people and their pets to live well in aged care homes.

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THANK YOU

Fiona De Rosa
E. dero0039@flinders.edu.au

