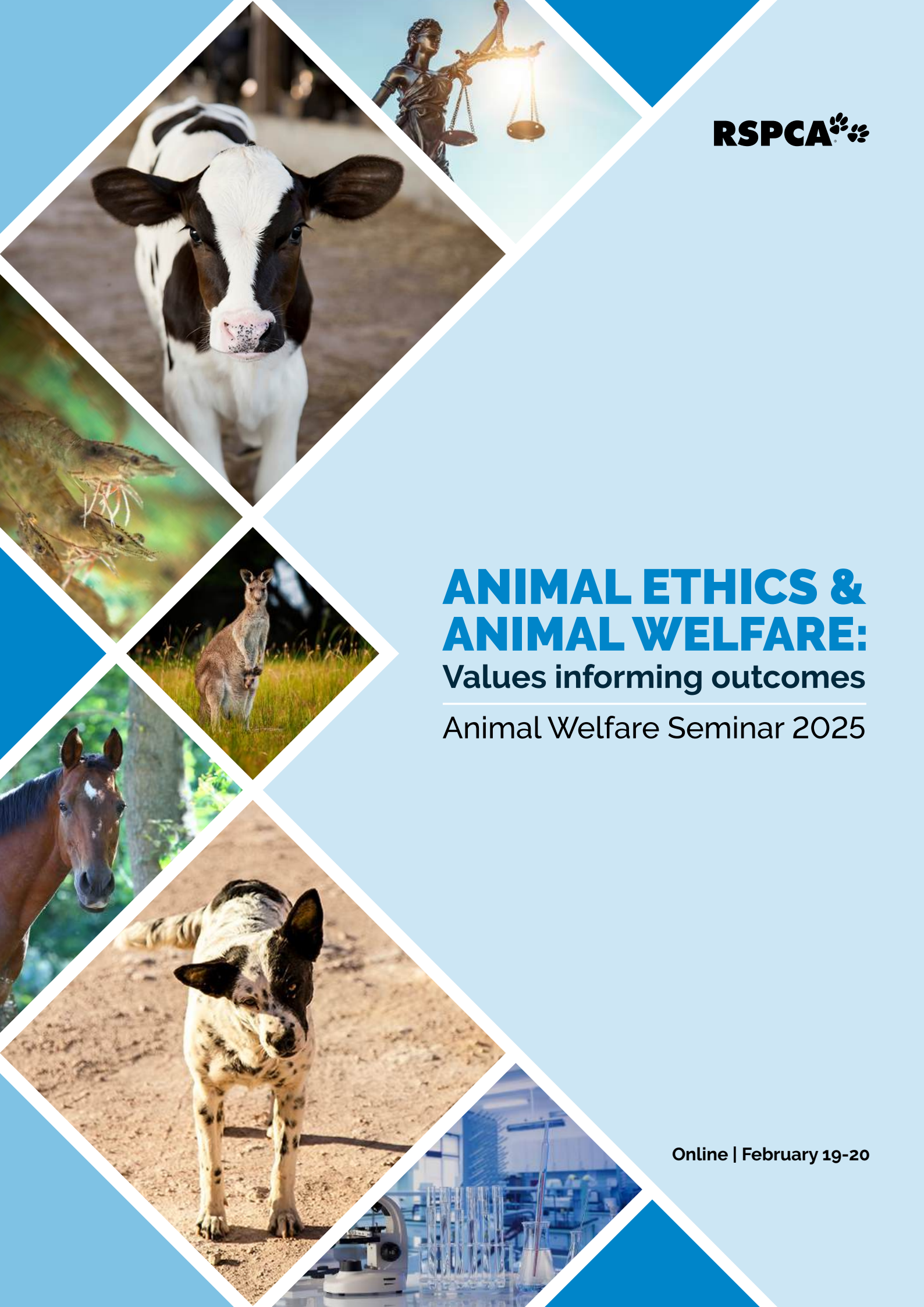




ANIMAL ETHICS & ANIMAL WELFARE:

Values informing outcomes

Animal Welfare Seminar 2025



Online | February 19-20

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Understanding animal ethics – foundations, principles and context

Wednesday 19 February 2025 (All times are in AEDT)

12:00 Welcome to Day 1

Official welcome: Richard Mussell
Chief Executive Officer, RSPCA Australia

Chair: Dr Suzanne Fowler
Chief Science Officer, RSPCA Australia

12:15 A short history of animal ethics

Speaker: Prof David Fraser
University of British Columbia

12:55 Crossing the divide: The psychology of animal ethics

Speaker: Dr Tim Dean
The Ethics Centre

13:35 Camp Dogs: Ethical relationships between western discourses and Aboriginal worldview

Speaker: Prof Bindi Bennett
Federation University

Speaker: Dr Clare Archer-Lean
University of the Sunshine Coast

14:15 Break

14:30 Is the legal recognition of animal sentience reflective of changing animal ethics?

Speaker: Assoc Prof Jane Kotzmann
Deakin University

15:10 How much do people really care about animal welfare?

Speaker: Prof Peter Sandøe
University of Copenhagen

15:50 Panel discussion: Animal ethics – where to from here?

Panel: Day 1 Speakers

16:30 Close

Applied animal ethics – ethical aspects of animal welfare problems

Thursday 20 February 2025 (All times are in AEDT)

12:00 Welcome to Day 2

Chair: Dr Suzanne Fowler
Chief Science Officer, RSPCA Australia

12:10 Ethics, efficacy, and decision-making in animal research

Speaker: Prof Lawrence Hansen
University of California San Diego

12:55 Ethics versus economics: Early life killing of surplus dairy calves and the Wicked Problem it presents

Speaker: Dr Sarah Bolton
Greenham/The University of Melbourne

13:35 Ethics of aquatic invertebrate management and farming

Speaker: Dr Sarah Wahltinez
Nautilus Collaboration

14:15 Break

14:30 Wild animals, welfare and ethics: Traditional versus compassionate conservation

Speaker: Dr Simon Coghlan
University of Melbourne

15:10 There will always be too many: “Overbreeding” of animals in racing industries

Speaker: Prof Phil McManus
University of Sydney

15:50 Ethics versus aesthetics: Ethical challenges of human interactions with brachycephalic dogs

Speaker: Dr Rowena Packer
University of London

16:40 Close



SPEAKERS



PROFESSOR DAVID FRASER

University of British Columbia

BIO

David Fraser is Professor Emeritus in the Animal Welfare Program, University of British Columbia. His 50-year career has focused on the behaviour and welfare of farm, companion and wild animals.

He has served as a scientific advisor on animal welfare to many international organisations and is the author of the popular textbook *Understanding Animal Welfare: The Science in its Cultural Context*.

ABSTRACT

A short history of animal ethics

How should we treat non-human animals? This question has been answered in many different ways since pre-history. Many indigenous cultures saw animals as equal or superior beings that should be treated with respect. Pastoralist cultures typically saw animals as having been entrusted to people for appropriate care and use. Agrarian cultures tended to see animals as fellow participants in the natural cycles of rural life. Industrial cultures tended to assume that efforts to increase productivity and efficiency would lead to a better life for all. The Romantic Movement, reacting against industrialisation, emphasised emotions and valued naturalness as important for a good life.

Since ancient Greece, various formal theories of animal ethics have been promoted. These have based ethical decisions on the consequences of actions, or on adherence to fundamental rights and rules, or on respecting the relationships we have with animals, or on the virtuous intentions of the person, or on the principle of conserving animals and nature.

With the complexity of issues that now arise over the many effects we have on animals, I argue that no single tradition or principle provides adequate guidance, and that a “practical ethic”, based on several different principles provides the best way forward.



DR TIM DEAN

The Ethics Centre

BIO

Dr Tim Dean is Senior Philosopher at The Ethics Centre and hold the Manos Chair in Ethics. He has a Doctorate in philosophy from the University of New South Wales on the evolution of morality and specialises in ethics, critical thinking and public philosophy.

He is an Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney and the author of *How We Became Human* published by Pan Macmillan. He is the recipient of the Australasian Association of Philosophy Media Professionals' Award for his work on philosophy in the public sphere and teaches philosophy, ethics and critical thinking to children through Primary Ethics and in high schools around Australia.

He has delivered keynotes and workshops across Australia and the Asia Pacific for the likes of Facebook, Commonwealth Bank, Aesop, Clayton Utz, Art Gallery of NSW, the Sydney Opera House and the University of Sydney.

ABSTRACT

Crossing the divide: The psychology of animal ethics

This talk will explore the moral psychology of how people come to think about animal ethics, with a focus on people who don't think it is important.

It can be difficult to understand and engage with people who hold different ethical views to our own, so this talk will focus on helping you understand multiple perspectives and find ways to bridge the gap and persuade others that animal ethics is important.



PROFESSOR BINDI BENNETT

Federation University

DR CLARE ARCHER-LEAN

University of the Sunshine Coast

BIOS

Dr Bindi Bennett (she/her) is a K/Gamilaroi woman, mother, and social worker and is a Professorial Research Fellow at Federation University living, playing and working on Jinibara lands.

She is a social justice scholar, a compassionate radical and activist requesting transformational change who is committed to improving and growing cultural responsiveness; re-Indigenising Western spaces; understanding and exploring Indigenous Knowledge Systems in research; and exploring the human-animal bond.

Dr Clare Archer-Lean is a senior lecturer in English literature at the University of the Sunshine Coast, working and living on Kabi Kabi Country. Clare's work specialised in animal narratives and transdisciplinary, anticolonial research and is widely published in various disciplines concerning animal representation.

Clare is a chief investigator on the transdisciplinary ARC-funded *Reading Climate 2024-2026* project to develop innovative anti-colonial approaches to stories of sustainability in senior school English curriculum.

Clare led the competitive category 2 funded, K'gari Dingo project (2015-2018) which interpreted existing and new K'Gari-Fraser Island visitor and human-dingo interaction QPWS data and expectations around dingoes.

ABSTRACT

Camp Dogs: Ethical relationships between western discourses and Aboriginal worldview

In this presentation, we consider the ways canine existence is often determined by cultural and discursive frames. The ethical considerations of this positioning are no more acute than with the management of dogs within remote and regional Aboriginal communities. Canines have always been integral to Aboriginal social, family, and environmental relationships; however, colonisation brought fundamental changes to these established relationships, with ramifications that have prompted welfare concerns about camp dog populations.

We have reviewed existing research discourses and epistemological positioning of the supposed camp dog problem, veterinarian, public health and others. Our work surveys current literature to identify ways forward in facilitating Aboriginal self-determining of camp dog interactions in communities. The work is both anticolonial and focused on relational multispecies justice. From here, we have begun interviewing some of the key stakeholders operating at the coal face of animal management in remote and regional Aboriginal communities to see what people need on the ground for effective, anticolonial and ethical practice.



ASSOC PROF JANE KOTZMANN

Deakin University

BIO

Jane Kotzmann's research focuses on both animal rights and human rights. This includes the potential extension of international human rights to non-human animals, and what this tells us about the theoretical underpinnings of human rights law.

Jane's article titled 'Recognising the Sentience of Animals in Law: A Justification and Framework for Australian States and Territories' (2020) (42(3) Sydney Law Review 281) was given an Australian Legal Research Award in 2022 for Best Early Career Research Article.

Jane is an Associate Professor in Deakin Law School and was previously an Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow. She obtained degrees in Commerce, Law (with Honours), and a PhD in human rights law from Deakin University, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (Teach for Australia) from the University of Melbourne.

ABSTRACT

Is the legal recognition of animal sentience reflective of changing animal ethics?

Some jurisdictions in Australia have followed, or appear to be following, the legal trend of recognising animal sentience in the law. This talk will explore the extent to which these legal reforms may be considered as attempts to dereify animals and as reflective of changing animal ethics. In this respect, reification refers to the legal treatment of animals as things rather than as living beings with their own personal qualities and individuality.

It is contended that, although some provisions recognising animal sentience may be considered minor attempts to dereify animals, sentience provisions in general fail to provide a significant challenge to the legal status of animals as things. Nevertheless, there is some evidence to suggest that public animal ethics are changing.



PROFESSOR PETER SANDØE

University of Copenhagen

BIO

Prof Peter Sandøe was originally trained as a philosopher at the University of Copenhagen and at Oxford University. He has been professor of bioethics at the University of Copenhagen since 1997, presently with his chair divided between the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences and the Department of Food and Resource Economics.

Since 2020, he has been director of the Centre for Companion Animal Welfare. He is committed to interdisciplinary work combining perspectives from natural science, social science and philosophy. Besides co-authoring more than 200 scientific papers, covering a wide range of issues relating to animal welfare, he has written a number of books, including *Ethics of Animal Use* (2008, co-authored with Stine B. Christiansen), *Companion Animal Ethics* (2015, co-authored with Clare Palmer, and Sandra Corr), and *Wildlife Ethics* (2023, co-authored with Clare Palmer, Bob Fischer, Christian Gamborg, and Jordan Hampton), all published by Wiley-Blackwell.

For more information about his research in the field of animal ethics, animal welfare, human-animal relations, and veterinary ethics see www.animaethics.net.

Peter is also an active participant in public outreach and debates, both nationally and internationally.

ABSTRACT

How much do people really care about animal welfare?

In this talk, I'll present two answers to this question. The first, is that it depends a lot on who you ask. Empirical studies on animal ethics orientations undertaken in Denmark and other countries in Western Europe show that people's views on what is owed to animals range from being 100% anthropocentric, according to which only human interests matter, to an animal rights view according to which animals deserve treatment similar to that of humans. The first part of the talk will present these studies, the distribution of views across different groups of people, and how the views found match with positions found in academic animal ethics.

The second answer is that, in most cases, people display a gap between what, asked in the abstract, they think is owed to animals, and what, in practice, they express through their behaviour as consumers or animal owners. The second part of the talk will discuss this gap between saying and doing when it comes to animal welfare, centred around two cases: consumption of welfare-friendly animal products, and the breeding and buying of dogs with extreme conformations.

A portrait of Professor Lawrence Hansen, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark shirt. The portrait is set within a decorative graphic of overlapping blue and white diamonds.

PROFESSOR LAWRENCE HANSEN

University of California San Diego

BIO

Prof Hansen graduated from medical school in 1977. He completed various post-graduate training programs over 11 years, including an internship in psychiatry, a residency in combined anatomic and clinical pathology, and fellowships in neuropathology, geriatric neuropathology, dementia, and surgical pathology.

In 1988, he secured a position as a neuropathologist at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine, where he has worked for the past 36 years. During this time, he has authored or co-authored over 100 research articles in neuropathology and received 28 teaching awards.

ABSTRACT

Ethics, efficacy, and decision making in animal research

Those whose ethics countenance harming animals simply because they taste yummy or because animal research (AR) advances scientific knowledge cannot be logically convinced into thinking otherwise. Some supporters of AR, however, are squeamish about it and condition their endorsement with a “the ends justify the means” morality, believing that vivisection is efficacious in improving human health care. Such conditional supporters of AR might be logically persuaded to oppose it if presented with data proving that most AR does not lead to medical advances. However, most vivisectionists don’t care if AR lacks relevance to human health and they will continue harming animals until decisions about animal welfare are taken out of their hands.

All institutional “protections” for animals in research, inadequate as they are, have been forced upon vivisectionists from outside the research-industrial complex. American Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) were mandated by Congress in response to public outrage over animal abuses in AR, but were quickly neutered by stacking the IACUC membership deck with overwhelming majorities of animal researchers; wolves entrusted with guarding sheep. Laws protecting animals from those who profit by harming them have succeeded in the past, and more laws passed by those who care about animals are the only hope for the future.



DR SARAH BOLTON

Greenham/The University of Melbourne

BIO

Sarah is a veterinarian who has held roles in private and government veterinary practice and has previous experience in dairy farm management and calf rearing. More recently, she has held animal welfare management roles in both the dairy industry and in commercial beef production and processing.

After completing a Nuffield Scholarship on surplus dairy calves and cow-calf separation in 2018, Sarah completed her PhD thesis, 'Towards sustainable management of surplus dairy calves', in 2024. Her research in this thesis utilised participatory methods, including deliberative engagement, to identify and integrate the needs of a wide range of stakeholders in addressing the complex challenge of surplus calf management.

ABSTRACT

Ethics versus economics: Early life killing of surplus dairy calves and the Wicked Problem it presents

Early life killing of surplus dairy calves (males and females not intended as future milking cows) is commonly identified as being out of step with community values and a threat to the dairy industry's social license to operate. However, implementing alternatives to early life killing that are both socially acceptable and economically viable is a complex challenge that fits many characteristics of a 'Wicked Problem'. Addressing such complex challenges requires understanding and accounting for the needs of all stakeholders, including those that work in animal agriculture, the public, and the animals themselves.

This discussion will describe some of the complex social and economic factors that contribute to how surplus calves are managed and highlight opportunities for working towards sustainable management of these animals in the future.



DR SARAH WAHLTINEZ

Nautilus Collaboration

BIO

Sarah Wahltinez is an aquatic animal welfare veterinarian for Nautilus Collaboration, an aquaculture consultancy dedicated to promoting and achieving responsible business practices in aquaculture. She is based in Sydney but travels to fish and invertebrate farms across Australia for her role.

She holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Ohio State University and a PhD in Veterinary Medical Sciences from University of Florida. Her PhD evaluated the health and welfare of sea stars exposed to environmental stressors.

Sarah is a Certified Aquatic Veterinarian through the World Aquatic Veterinary Medical Association and is a resident in the American College of Animal Welfare. She has dedicated her career to aquatic animal health and welfare – and has a particular interest in the welfare of aquatic invertebrates.

ABSTRACT

Ethics of aquatic invertebrate management and farming

Aquatic invertebrate welfare is often overlooked, yet it is an important consideration for the management of free-ranging and farmed animals. While our knowledge of the experience of invertebrates currently lags behind that for terrestrial mammals, there is exciting research evaluating the cognitive capacities of this diverse group of animals with implications for understanding their sentience and ability to perceive pain.

This talk will cover some ethical dimensions of invertebrate management, including the challenges with evaluating aquatic invertebrate sentience and pain perception, performing welfare assessments for invertebrates and practical considerations for safeguarding invertebrate welfare. The complex challenges of balancing ecological integrity with human interests will be discussed, using the crown-of-thorns starfish in the Great Barrier Reef as a case study. Additionally, the presentation will discuss animal welfare considerations for farmed crustaceans, focusing on humane slaughter methods.

By examining these case studies, this talk aims to stimulate critical thought about the ethics of aquatic invertebrate management and farming, and to promote the development of practical ways to improve invertebrate welfare.



DR SIMON COGLAN

The University of Melbourne

BIO

Dr Simon Coghlan is a moral philosopher and a veterinarian. He is Deputy Director of the Centre for AI and Digital Ethics (CAIDE) and Senior Lecturer in Digital Ethics in the School of Computing and Information Systems (CIS) at the University of Melbourne. Simon's research covers bioethics, animal ethics, conservation ethics, and digital ethics.

He is currently working on a range of projects including conservation, digital technologies and animal welfare, AI and ethics, and robot philosophy.

His work has appeared in various veterinary journals, applied ethics and philosophy journals, medical journals, and information technology journals. He has also written for The Conversation.

ABSTRACT

Wild animals, welfare and ethics: Traditional versus compassionate conservation

What are our obligations to wild animals, introduced species, and their welfare? Traditional conservation tends to prioritise the protection of wild animal and plant species and environments over the welfare of sentient animals, such as those from introduced and non-native species. Traditional conservationists believe that harming and killing sentient animals that are ecologically damaging is often justified, even when the suffering caused is high and the numbers of animals killed is large.

Recently, a movement in conservation biology called 'compassionate conservation' has challenged this traditional practice. Compassionate conservationists argue, controversially, that conservation should abandon strategies that involve deliberate killing and harming and instead find alternative ways of protecting plants and animals.

This presentation will discuss the traditional conservation versus compassionate conservation debate. This will allow us to appreciate some of the difficult issues and topical disagreements related to ethics and welfare in contemporary conservation.



PROFESSOR PHIL MCMANUS

University of Sydney

BIO

Phil McManus is a Professor in Urban and Environmental Geography at the University of Sydney and a current Vice-President of the International Geographical Union (IGU). Phil's research interests span thoroughbred breeding and racing, sustainability, urban and rural environments and tourism.

Phil is the author of over 100 publications, including journal articles on thoroughbred breeding regions, jumps racing and the use of whips in horse racing. These issues form chapters in McManus, P., Albrecht, G. & Graham, R. (2013) *The Global Horseracing Industry: Social, economic, environmental and ethical perspectives* (Routledge). Phil's most recent thoroughbred article is Stallones, L., McManus, P., McGreevy, P. (2023) 'Sustainability and the thoroughbred breeding and racing industries: An enhanced One Welfare perspective'. *Animals* 13 (3), 490. Phil's most recent co-authored book is Connell, J., McManus, P. & Ding, X. (2024) *Chinese Tourism in Australia: Koalas, Selfies and Red Dresses* (Palgrave MacMillan).

ABSTRACT

There will always be too many: "Overbreeding" of animals in racing industries

The number of thoroughbreds and many other racing animals born each year has declined recently due to concerns about "overbreeding". This may prevent the birth of some animals with limited chances of winning races but it reinforces the structure of success in racing as being the basis for the breeding industries, which vary significantly depending on the rules of each animal-based industry.

The structure of all animal-based racing industries is a pyramid, with many animals at the base and a few elite athletes at the apex, usually for a short period of time. There will always be too many animals bred because structurally not all of them can become champions, or "pay their way".

What happens to those animals that do not get to the track, or are unsuccessful in their racing careers? What future is there for animals that are gelded and cannot be used for breeding? Animals that have a successful racing career may struggle in the breeding industry, where the same competitive logic operates. Given the competitive structure of both the racing and breeding industries, inevitably most animals will still not be successful even when breeding numbers are reduced.

Therefore, if animal-based racing industries such as thoroughbred racing are to continue, then welfare initiatives such as the holistic education of young horses prior to racing, appropriate care during their racing careers and industry-funded off the track programs to enable horses to enjoy a longer life should be prioritised.



DR ROWENA PACKER

University of London

BIO

Rowena is the Senior Lecturer in Companion Animal Behaviour and Welfare Science at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. Rowena leads a research group exploring diverse topics in this area, including the impact of chronic and inherited disorders on dog behaviour and welfare, and the impact of owner knowledge, attitudes and behaviour on canine welfare. She has received >£1.9 million of research funding to date, of which ~£750,000 has been held as Principal Investigator.

Rowena has co-authored >90 peer reviewed papers and book chapters since 2012 and co-edited the textbook *Health and Welfare of Brachycephalic (Flat-faced) Companion Animals* (2021).

Rowena holds a PhD from the Royal Veterinary College (2013) which explored the impact of extreme conformation on canine health, a 1st Class BSc (Hons) in Animal Behaviour and Welfare from the University of Bristol (2009), and a PGCert in Veterinary Education from the Royal Veterinary College (2021).

Rowena is a founding member of the Brachycephalic Working Group and the Legal Advisory Group on Extreme Conformation in Dogs. She is an Editorial Board Member for the journal *Scientific Reports*, a Coordinating Group Member for the Animal Welfare Research Network and a Canine Scientific Advisory Committee Member for Guide Dogs.

ABSTRACT

Ethics versus aesthetics: Ethical challenges of human interactions with brachycephalic dogs

Brachycephalic dogs have dramatically increased in popularity over the past decade. Their paradoxical rise is despite the burgeoning veterinary literature documenting the range of common and severe disorders they are affected by, and public education campaigns attempting to reduce their acquisition. This conflict has instigated several legal cases internationally, challenging the legality of breeding, showing and/or owning brachycephalic dogs.

This session will explore the ethics of human interactions with brachycephalic dogs, from multiple stakeholder perspectives including breeders, owners, veterinarians and animal rescue organisations.

Exploring the supply of these challenging breeds, we will consider the ethics of breeding brachycephalics, reflecting on contemporary strategies to improve breed health, including disorder screening, changing breed standards and outcrossing, and their efficacy in protecting canine welfare. Exploring the demand for brachycephalic dogs, we will consider the ethics of owning a brachycephalic dog, reflecting on anthropocentric motivations for their acquisition, and the ethics of acquisition source, including purchasing from breeders and adopting from rescue organisations.

Finally, as veterinarians play a key role in maintaining and improving the health of current brachycephalic dogs, we will consider the ethics of treating brachycephalic-related disorders, including conformation-altering surgery, and reproductive interventions including elective and emergency caesarean sections and assisted reproduction.



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