

RSPCA Australia Animal Welfare Seminar | Feb 2026

Respecting Data, Strengthening Care

Integrating digital solutions for remote animal health

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers please be aware that this presentation may contain images of deceased peoples. Some viewers may find some of the images depicting poor animal health confronting.



Acknowledgement of Country

AMRRIC acknowledges all First Nations Peoples of the beautiful lands on which we live, and celebrate their enduring knowledge and connections to Country.

We honour the wisdom of, and pay respect to Elders past and present and emerging.

I am privileged to live and work on Wakka Wakka Country.



Acknowledgement of Positionality

Overview: Respecting Data, Strengthening Care

- About AMRRIC
- Remote context & digital divide
- AMRRIC guiding principles in digital development
- AMRRIC's existing tech utilisation



What is AMRRIC?

Our vision:

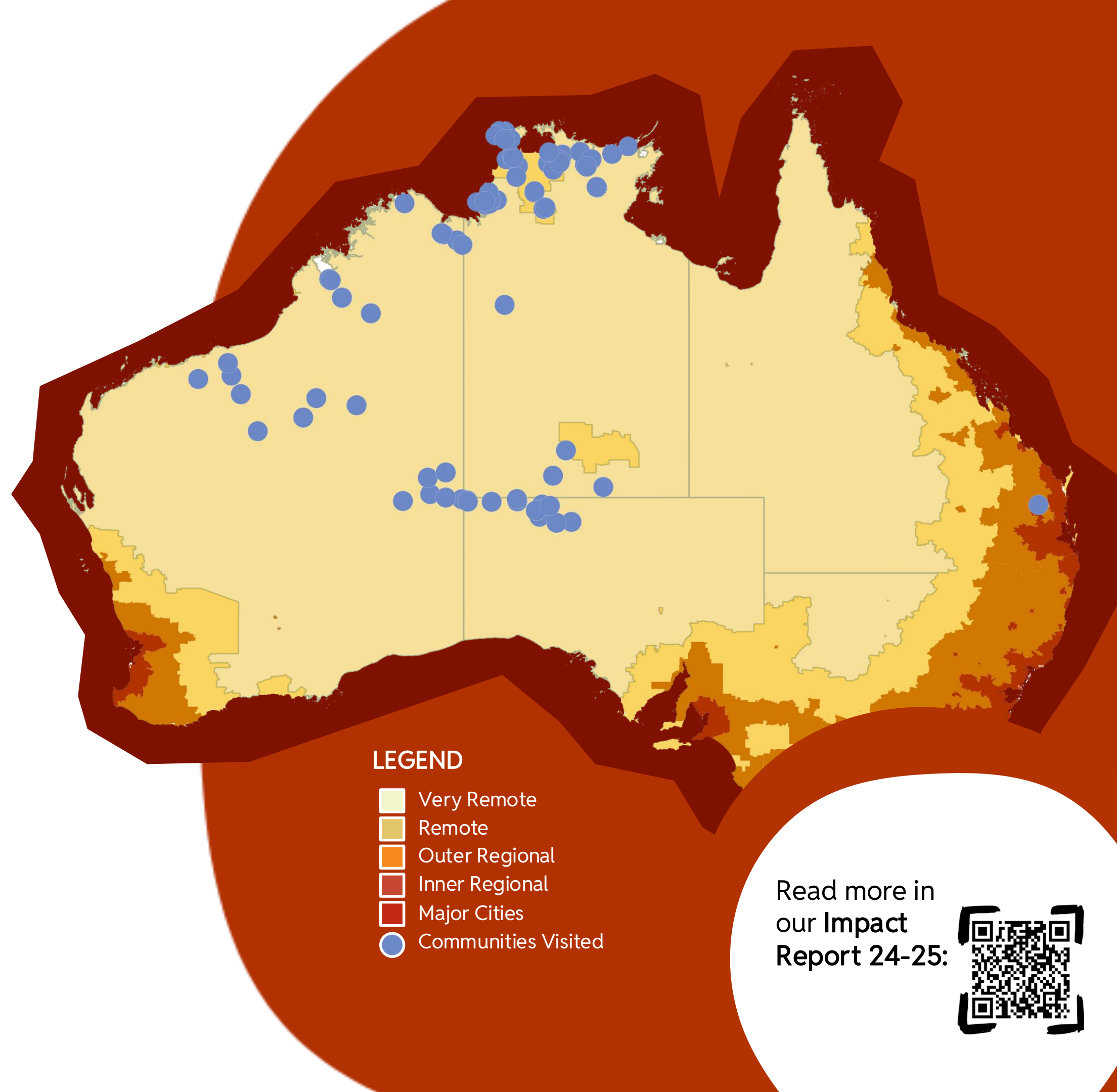
**Healthy animals,
healthy proud communities**

Our core programs:

- **animal health services**
- **education and training**
- **research and advocacy**



Map developed from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
1270.0.55.005 Australian Statistical Geography Standard
(ASGS): Volume 5 – Remoteness Structure, July 2016
(Published 16 March 2018).



LEGEND

- Very Remote
- Remote
- Outer Regional
- Inner Regional
- Major Cities
- Communities Visited

Read more in
our Impact
Report 24-25:



AMRRIC's One Health Approach

- holistic perspective that views 'health' as the physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual well-being of individuals, communities and Country
- recognition of the impacts of social determinants of health and how these can support or undermine the human-animal bond





Value of animals in remote communities

- Companionship & emotional wellbeing
- Hunting, pest control & protection
- Cultural & spiritual significance
- Community & social structure



The context...





Systemic barriers

Geographic and climatic barriers





**Limited access to
animal health services**

Mapping the Digital Gap

- Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII)
- Measures **Access, Affordability, and Digital Ability**
- Scores digital inclusion on a 0–100 scale
- Includes a dedicated First Nations Digital Inclusion dashboard



Featherstone D, Ormond-Parker L, Thomas J, Parkinson, S, Hegarty K, Hawkins, L, Louie YM, Barton A, Johnson Y, Kennedy J, Bawden, S, Ganley L (2025) Mapping the Digital Gap: 2025 Outcomes Report, Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society.

<https://doi.org/10.60836/1dhh-2e31>

The First Nations Digital Divide

- Lower digital inclusion across all indicators
- Gap widens in remote and very remote areas: ~75% digitally excluded in very remote areas
- High cost of data and devices is a major barrier
- Digital exclusion intersects with broader systemic disadvantage.



Featherstone D, Ormond-Parker L, Thomas J, Parkinson, S, Hegarty K, Hawkins, L, Louie YM, Barton A, Johnson Y, Kennedy J, Bawden, S, Ganley L (2025) Mapping the Digital Gap: 2025 Outcomes Report, Melbourne: ARC Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making and Society.

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AMRRIC's principles guiding digital tool development

- No survey without service
- Accessibility
- Indigenous Data Sovereignty and cultural safety
- Remote-rugged

Existing tech utilisation: Health promotion digital resources

- Social media tiles
 - Digital lesson plans and resources
 - Animations, music and educational videos
- *Wishlist: digital games*
- Ongoing and regular engagement drives uptake



Visit our
resource
library:



Existing tech utilisation:

Remote training



- Videoconferencing tools can enable delivery of training where F2F training is not economically feasible
- Self-directed **online modules** allow broader access to educational content
- **Connectivity and engagement** = barriers to widespread uptake

Existing tech utilisation: Telemedicine

- Requests for remote veterinary advice and support received to AMRRIC
- AMRRIC's veterinary staff triage requests, provide veterinary advice where possible
- **Legislative** and **logistical** barriers are a major hurdle





Existing tech tool: **AMRRIC App**

- Developed to support consistent, community-led data collection
- Designed for **offline use** in remote contexts
- Captures animal signalment, health, and **treatments**; utilised as a **registration system** by some remote community LGAs
- Supports **local decision-making**, planning and reporting
- Use incorporates **Indigenous Data Sovereignty**

AMRRIC's Biosecurity Pilot Project

- 3 yr pilot (2022 – 2024) across 25 remote Indigenous communities
- Focused on companion animal health and biosecurity risk
- Combined service delivery, training and surveillance
- Reached almost 8000 animals across 3700 households and trained 126 local staff





AMRRIC App within AMRRIC's Biosecurity Pilot Project

- Provided a common digital platform for the Biosecurity Pilot
- Enabled standardised indicators and data collection methods across communities and teams
- Supported scalable delivery of community-wide censuses
- Underpinned biosecurity-relevant insights, not just activity counts

AMRRIC App – Tech Learnings

- Intuitive, highly visual interface quickly picked up by training participants
- Finite platform longevity; plan for ongoing costs for maintenance, hosting separate to development costs
- Data governance; tension between IDS and legislated biosecurity obligations



One Health benefits of improved access to animal health services

- Health & wellbeing of animals and people and their communities
- Environmental & economic benefits
- Emergency Preparedness & Response



Tech as part of the access solution – not the whole answer

- Inclusive design
- Appropriate governance
- Embedded in existing services





Questions?

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**Learn more
at amrric.org**

