



Inside this edition:

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"Animal Care Australia acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we reside, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present."

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Watch out for our next issue
in December 2023.

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Headline Article:

Is Veticare or Vet-E-Care a solution to the Veterinary Workforce Shortage in Aust?

By Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse & Livestock Representative



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Veticare or Vet-E-Care?

A year ago, Andy Meddick MP of the Animal Justice Party passed a motion through the Upper House in Victoria introducing “Veticare”. Mr Meddick has since retired from politics, but with Georgie Purcell MP newly elected for the AJP, she will continue the progress on this Motion.

In relation to Companion Animals, the motion is to establish a stronger framework for the Wellbeing of companion animals, open publicly funded vet clinics and create incentives for the veterinary industry to address workforce shortages.

Sounds great! But could it work in NSW? Well, we really have no way to know.

The motion didn’t provide a budget, nor even a suggestion for where the funding for the clinics or the vet industry would come from. There is no actual plan, such as which government department will be responsible for the free clinics, where they will be located, who will be working in them, and whether the vets and support staff will receive fair compensation or be a volunteer, or student/trainee workforce?

NSW is very different to Victoria, particularly in its geography and size. An enormous government funding boost, the likes of which we have never seen before, would be necessary to achieve similar goals. Making it very unlikely to happen.

But something needs to be done – something that is actually attainable, and can ease some of the pressure on our veterinary industry.

That is where Vet-E-Care comes in. For one, we can spell vetErinary! But the E also stands for Electronic.

A telehealth model, rather than a Medicare model, could be achievable in NSW.

Video calls (or straight phone calls) to a centralised, statewide Vet-E-Care would be beneficial for all animal owners, not just suburban ones. It could link veterinary services, streamlining existing services, rather than create a new one.

Semi-retired or part-time veterinarians and vet nurses could be employed through a work from home model to retain talent, experience and specialised skills within the vet industry.

A vet-on-call would help sift through the people who really do need urgent vet care, help those undecided if it can wait until morning (with some first aid advice from an expert) and sort out those worrying about nothing.

Proper First Aid advice from a veterinarian could prevent many cross species first aid errors. As well as proper advice and instruction for urgent euthanasia to end an animals suffering, when there are no other viable options. The

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reassurance a vet can provide to help guide an owner to make that hard decision is invaluable.

Animal owners wouldn't have to do the after-hours panicked ring around, trying to find a veterinarian that is currently available, but also one that is actually nearby – a centralised service would have that information on hand, and redirect calls to an available or nearest vet that can help. They could also have contacts for specialised advice, or vets that specialise in certain species, such as wildlife.

No purpose built clinics would need to be built – NSW is a large place – and this is unlikely to help regional and rural animal owners.

A telehealth service that links existing services across different animal keeping sectors would be more cost effective than building a whole new system.

Tele-scripts by veterinarians that could be collected at local chemists or hospitals could be made more accessible (with very obvious drug access exceptions). Common veterinary

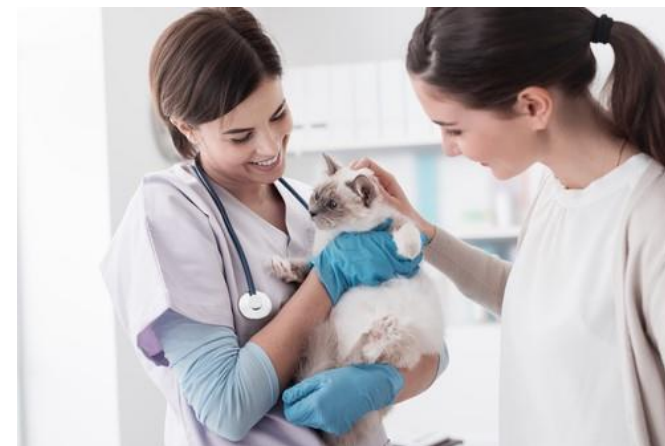
medicines that can be administered by owners can be stocked by chemists, particularly those open 24 hours.

It is inevitable that most animal owners will need to either access emergency vet care, or at least follow up with their usual veterinarian following contact with Vet-E-Care. Having spoken to a Vet-E-Care vet, that call log can be transferred to the appropriate vet, with any relevant medical notes, concerns, or follow ups. No need to rely on the animal owner's memory or understanding (or lack there-of!) of the situation, saving on the next vet's valuable consultation time.

Vet-E-Care can also follow up to ensure that the necessary care was received.

While a free emergency service would be wonderful, it could be free for those on government assistance, or low incomes and a low rate for everyone else.

Perhaps most importantly, Vet-E-Care would not be in competition with veterinary clinics,



causing further closures, and discouraging new clinics from opening and creating more black spots without vet care.

Establishing Vet-E-Care would need some careful and thoughtful consideration. Particularly to ensure that Vet-E-Care always prioritises animal welfare over everything else – cost, convenience and even customer service should always come second to the primary goal of promoting positive animal welfare outcomes.

Animal Care Australia would like to see Vet-E-Care government funded and operated, perhaps overseen by the Chief Veterinary Officer within the Department of Primary Industries, with

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sound legislation to ensure transparency and accountability. This would effectively be the veterinary equivalent of the Australian Government Electronic Health Records. Animal Care Australia would like to see the call centre vet nurses and on call veterinarians paid retainers and fees that are at least at award rates. Underpaying vets the way Medicare underpays doctors would not be acceptable. There are already several private practice veterinarians with working models of telehealth operating today, and it would provide an easier path for the government to get something started.

Animal Care Australia doesn't think this - or any other - model of Vet-E-Care will solve all the issues in the vet industry, we suggest this as a practical and inexpensive way to ease some of the burden – supporting both vets and animal owners to do better for their animals.

Private vet practices across Australia have earned themselves a great reputation. Through Animal Care Australia's submission process to



the current NSW Inquiry into Veterinary workforce shortages, NSW Pounds Inquiry and SA's Animal Welfare Act and Biosecurity reviews, we have seen our members reporting their faith and trust in their Veterinary clinics' dedication and integrity to their animals' welfare.

We should not be setting up new subsidised vet clinics to compete with existing clinics, and underpay its employees. We should be supporting the veterinary industry to adapt private practices to function under Vet-E-

Care, if they wish – to reward their years of thankless service with fair compensation. They will then employ more part time and after hours work-from-home vets and nurses.

What we're suggesting, is a streamlining of services, reporting, emergency first aid support, and supportive funding for our wonderful veterinary industry. We have an opportunity right now to help our vets develop a supplementary system that actually supports them as well as our companion animals.

What would we do without our vets? We have a current NSW Inquiry into Veterinary workforce shortages to hear from vets themselves what they need – from all of us – to help them continue to be the incredible people that they are. Let's not just listen, but respond to what they say as well.

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Submissions & Correspondence Reports



ACA Responds to Snowy Valleys Council Draft Companion and Non-Companion Animals Policy.

May 2023: ACA responds to the Draft Companion and Non-Companion Animals Policy

ACA highlighted our ongoing concerns with Councils placing number restrictions on the keeping of pets.

It is clear the proposed changes are based on ideological views rather than animal welfare or neighbourhood amenity.

Specific points of concern:

* Automatic exemptions should apply to those who already have more than the

proposed number of cats & dogs registered with council.

* How the requirements of bird keeping will be scrutinised for purpose of compliance

* Questioned restrictions on keeping of goats.

* Questioned wording restricting the keeping of cross bred dogs — this should read ‘restricted or banned’ dogs and their crosses.

There were more concerns, so ACA requested to meet with Council to discuss the changes and more appropriate measures than restrictions.

You can read ACA's full response here:



ACA requests inclusion on Federal Animal Welfare Standards Review

Animal Care Australia acknowledges the primary focus of the development and revision of Standards & Guidelines is for the commercial keeping of livestock species, however sheep, pigs and horses are kept as pets by many people.

The development of National Standards and Guidelines for Animal Welfare will be of great interest for our organisation as we have seen the incursion of animal rights ideologies at state & territory level, and we would be looking to provide a more balanced input at the national level.

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Animal Care Australia is also consulting as part of the development of the National Horse Traceability Register.

Animal Care Australia is seeking assurances of our inclusion as a stakeholder who are to be consulted during the reviews of all upcoming Model Codes of Practices — Standards and Guidelines.

You can read our full request here:



ACA Responds to Hilltops Council Animal Management Policy

June 2023: Some highlights of ACA's feedback:

- * The maximum time frame of 4 weeks for fostering is unreasonable.
- * "The keeping of ferrets is not recommended": It is legal to keep ferrets in NSW therefore this statement **MUST BE** removed from your Policy.

* "The keeping of snakes may cause concern to neighbours": This statement is completely inappropriate, therefore the statement **MUST BE** removed from your Policy.

* ACA strongly recommends Council invest in and implement extensive education of its residents prior to permitting its enforcement of the policy.

* Restrictions on the number of animals on a property is not supported by ACA without full consideration of the animal welfare impacts

* Numbers determined for horses and cattle are out of line with modern land management standards.

There was a lot more to comment on so ACA requested to meet with Council to discuss the changes and more appropriate measures than restrictions.

You can read our full response here:



ACA responds to proposal to delete unassessed parrots from the Live Import List

June 2023: The Federal Government's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is proposing to delete unassessed parrots (psittacines) from the Live Import List. Animal Care Australia opposes the proposal.

Animal Care Australia supports the submission from the Canary & Caged Bird Federation of Australia who have highlighted major flaws in the proposal including the questionable data and researchers use to provide justification.

Animal Care Australia is disappointed that the DCCEEW has disregarded and ignored such a vital stakeholder as the CCBFA the proposal will directly impact aviculture and aviculturists.

All of the birds proposed to be banned, including 15 native species, are already in the

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Country and their risk of creating escaped feral populations is miniscule.

The removal will only incentivise the illegal import of the species and/or their eggs, creating a greater biosecurity risk.

ACA supports education over restriction.

You can read our full response here:



ACA Responds to Rockhampton Regional Council

July 2023: ACA responds to the Council's Animal Management Strategy Review

ACA highlighted our ongoing concerns with Councils placing number restrictions on the keeping of pets.

ACA commended Council on recognising the importance of having pets in peoples lives.

ACA commended Council on it's intention to educate residents on 'responsible pet ownership'

Specific points of concern:

- * Restrictions on dog & cat numbers are not supported
- * Dollar value of Permit & Registration fees is not supported
- * Bird keeping should be permitted under the guidance of the QLD Dept. of Agriculture and Science (DAS) Code of Practice— Aviculture and not the proposed restrictions.

ACA requested to meet with Council to discuss the changes and more appropriate measures than restrictions.

You can read our full response here:



ACA responds to Inquiry into Veterinary Workforce Shortages in NSW

July 2023 — The Inquiry will investigate workforce shortages across all aspects of veterinary practice.

Several aspects of the Terms of Reference fall outside of ACA's purview, however, some Committee members have personal experience having worked within the veterinary industry — our submission responses are based around that lived experience.

Some recommendations include:

- * Community expectations need to be reset. Customer facing roles are undesirable due to the behaviour of customers. Our vet industry deserve respect.
- * Implement Education based incentives to enter the industry.

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* Consider taking the nursing education structure back to a traineeship. Nurses learn on the job.

* Initiatives to improve and manage mental health issues. Free access to and use of all mental health services.

* Financial Incentives and better regulation of the Industry. Update the Animal Care and Veterinary Services Award to increase the base wage rate.

* Introduce financial benefits to working in rural, regional and remote areas.

To read our full submission go to our website:



ACA responds to Yarra City Council's Council Order Review

August 2023: The Yarra City Council is reviewing their Council Order, which outlines the requirements for people owning domestic cats and dogs within Yarra.

ACA supports the reviewed Council Order – with added caveats:

* ACA supports cat curfews/containment that require cats to remain on their owner's property (and not just indoors)

* Nighttime curfews have a limited impact on the issues relating to roaming cats.

* ACA supports containment laws that have exceptions for cats that are 'walked' on harness and lead in the same manner as applies to dog owners.

* ACA has noted that when introducing a curfew or containment laws many Councils have failed to provide appropriate notice and education on proper containment methods, as well as insufficient 'phase-in time frames'

* ACA strongly recommends that some form of assistance is provided by Council for cat owners to construct appropriate containment enclosures, as necessary for the containment laws to be effective .

You can read our full response here:



ACA responds to the International Homeless Animals Day

19th August 2023: ACA held an online event.

You can view that event here:



ACA responds to Victoria's Biosecurity Strategy Consultation Draft – 2023

August 2023: Animal Care Australia has responded to the consultation.

Animal Care Australia commends Agriculture Victoria for reviewing agricultural biosecurity via Victoria's Biosecurity Strategy.

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The majority of the consultation topics sat outside of ACA's purview. In light of this ACA provided the following: recommendation:

Agriculture Victoria urgently invests resources into biosecurity education campaigns directly to horse owners and the broader equestrian community. ACA recommends utilising the existing Unit of Competency ACMINF502 Manage equine biosecurity and infection control in full, or at least adapting this Unit of Competency to deliver the following:

Both in-person and online access and offer a certificate of completion or similar to incentivise attendance by industry professionals and club volunteers. Simply publishing a website FAQ would be inadequate considering recent events.

The education should be delivered in tandem with reputable equestrian organisations or equine veterinary clinics for in-person workshops, that are free for all horse owners to attend, not just club members.

Additionally, free online resources in the way of online workshops, or self-paced online courses, based on the Unit of Competency above, for those who cannot attend an in-person course should be made available to all horse owners.

You can read our submission here:



ACA responds to Improving NSW rental laws consultation

August 2023: Animal Care Australia responded to the consultation.

Part of ACA's feedback includes: :

* Animal Care Australia opposes the use of a pet form as part of a tenancy application. a landlord **SHOULD NOT** be able to refuse a pet without going to the Tribunal.

* Animal Care Australia cannot imagine situations where no animals at all could be

kept on a specific property. It is more likely that specific persons will be prevented from keeping animals based on breaches of other legislation.

* Animal Care Australia opposes special conditions requiring specific cleaning simply because pets are kept.

* Any amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 should reflect the default position in favour of pet keeping that is now within the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015

You can read our full response here:



ACA responds to Inquiry into pounds in New South Wales

August 2023: Animal Care Australia submitted to the Inquiry.

For the purpose of this submission, Animal Care Australia recognises that pounds,

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shelters, rescues, and rehoming organisations are all different but inextricably linked.

Therefore, Animal Care Australia provides the following:

- recommends all future government funding is based solely on where it is actually needed and not any one particular political agenda.
- does NOT recommend redirecting funding towards currently unregulated and unmonitored privately-run rehoming organisations.
- STRONGLY recommends an urgent Inquiry into the regulation and monitoring of animal rehoming and rescue organisations in NSW is referred to the Legislative Council's Animal Welfare Committee.
- recommends councils should be placing a greater emphasis on utilising recognised professional trainers/animal behaviourists.
- does not support "getting to zero" for euthanasia rates, as it is an indicator of poor welfare outcomes.

To read all of our recommendations and full submission



ACA responds to QLD Strong dog laws: Safer communities – Discussion paper 2023

August 2023: Animal Care Australia has responded to the Discussion Paper.

Part of ACA's feedback includes :

- supporting community education and awareness campaigns.
- recommends key stakeholder consultation on the development and messaging of the campaigns.
- supports a grandfather clause for ANY new regulation, as well as an amnesty associated with that clause.
- questions the need to ban breeds that are already restricted in the country.

- recommends a legal requirement identifying restricted breeds via DNA-matching.
- recommends a review of the definitions of 'Regulated dogs'.
- does not support the RSPCA QLD or council rangers being designated enforcers without appropriate oversight, accountability and appeal processes in place.
- does not support limiting appeals on destruction orders.
- notes the absence of the inclusion of animal rescue and rehoming organisations in the Paper.
- strongly recommends a review into currently unregulated rescue & rehoming organisations

And much more.

You can read our full submission here:



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Meetings with Governments and Politicians

- 3rd May: Emma Hurst MLC — NSW Animal Justice Party
- 3rd May: Mark Banasiak MLC — NSW Shooters, Fishers & Farmers
- 16th June: Tara Moriarty MLC — NSW Agriculture Minister
- 27th June: Emma Keely MP — VIC Shadow Agriculture Minister
- 10th July: David Hodgett MP — VIC Shadow Planning Minister
- 11th July: Brendan Byron Policy Advisor for Ron Hoenig — NSW Minister for Office of Local Government
- 21st July: Kellie Sloane MP — NSW Shadow Minister for Environment
- 28th July: Gareth Ward MP — NSW Independent
- 3rd August: Tania Mihailuk MLC — NSW One Nation
- 17th August: Clem Harris, Director Policy & Industry Insights, NSW Department of Primary Industries
- 23rd August: Aileen MacDonal MLC — NSW Liberal Party, member of the Animal Welfare Committee (for Parliamentary Inquiries)
- 4th September: Office of Roy Butler MP — NSW Independent

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Animal Care Australia Inc

Contact

Online organisation
Sydney, New South Wales
Australia

aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au

www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/

4 volunteer opportunities found

Fundraising Coordinator

📍 Remote Only 🦋 Animal Welfare 🗳️ Fundraising & Events

Animal Species Representative – Insects & Arachnids

📍 Remote Only 🦋 Animal Welfare 🗳️ Governance, Boards & Committees

State & Territory Advisory Team (STAT) Representative

📍 Remote Only 🦋 Animal Welfare 🗳️ Governance, Boards & Committees

Animal Species Representative – Fish/aquatic species

📍 Remote Only 🦋 Animal Welfare 🗳️ Governance, Boards & Committees

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ACA appears at Inquiry into Veterinary Workforce Shortage in NSW.

The Portfolio Committee 4's Inquiry into the Veterinary Workforce Shortage in NSW was held on the 29th and 30th August 2023.

Animal Care Australia was invited to testify about the issues faced by pet owners due to the shortage..

Animal Care Australia President, Michael Donnelly and Horse & Livestock Representative, Karri Nadazdy, appeared on Tuesday 29th August 2023.

Opening statement:

Good afternoon,

I am Michael Donnelly – President of Animal Care Australia and I am joined today by Karri Nadazdy – the Animal Care Australia Horse & Livestock Representative.

Animal Care Australia represents keepers and breeders of pets and companion animals

nationally and our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

Our members rely on the veterinary industry for everything from checkups on litters of puppies and kittens, to assisting with impactions in reptiles, or colic in horses and the most painful of all helping us to say goodbye to a pet who has over the years become a part of the family.

Their commitment, dedication and empathy is what most of us respect.

In return they endure long hours, poor wages, an ever increasing level of abuse from a changing society and this clearly takes a toll.

Yet this is not unheard of, we know emergency workers and health system workers all experience the same.

During the Covid pandemic those workers rightfully received a lot of praise and recognition. Strangely despite the veterinary industry also being listed as essential workers – that hasn't carried through after the pandemic. Yet they are essential. They help us protect the well-being of our pets and animals.

We need to educate society on how to respect those who help protect us and our loved ones and that includes the vets.

We need to help the industry accelerate the education of new workers. We need to improve access to veterinary services.

We need to improve the services that the vets rely on – housing, improved wages, and safer, free access to mental health assistance when they need it.

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As any other essential worker will tell you – the experiences they have in one day are more than most of us face in our lifetime.

We are here today to support the veterinary industry and to share how vital they are to us - pet owners - and to offer some solutions for this Committee and the government to consider.

We would like to thank the Chair and the Committee for inviting us to appear today and welcome your questions.

Animal Care Australia's proposed solutions to the Inquiry are:

- ⇒ Community expectations need to be reset. Customer facing roles are undesirable due to the behaviour of customers. This is a widespread issue and needs to be urgently addressed.
- ⇒ A concerted educational effort outlining the role of vets, nurses, other staff and the issues they face daily. Making the general public aware that vets and their staff are also only human. They deserve respect.

- ⇒ Implement Education based incentives to enter the industry. Subsidies or scholarships to study veterinary medicine should include a period of time that the recipient works in veterinary medicine, particularly in rural areas where education costs are waived or discounted in return for a number of years working in the industry after graduation.
- ⇒ Some shorter, free courses, ideally in animal emergency care (animal first aid) and animal

training. To educate and provide an insight for people considering, but not yet sure about a career in veterinary medicine.

- ⇒ Consider taking the nursing education structure back to a traineeship. Nurses learn on the job - reducing over enrolments and run similarly to other trades where traineeships include a requirement of TAFE/ Uni attendance at least one day per week.



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- ⇒ Initiatives to improve and manage mental health issues. Veterinary Medicine courses must include core subjects on mental health management and resources made available for those working in the field to access mental health support easily and free, or very cheaply.
- ⇒ Access to and use of all mental health services should be free for all members of the industry. Prevention is better than cure!
- ⇒ A Veterinary Telehealth Service. For animal owners to find and access urgent care for emergencies and euthanasia advice as well as for remote locations. A single number to call that could link an owner to an available veterinarian would be enormously beneficial.
- ⇒ Financial Incentives and better regulation of the Industry. Update the Animal Care and Veterinary Services Award [MA000118] to increase the base rate of pay for all sectors of the industry. Amend conditions within the Facilitative Provisions of the Award to prevent empowered abuse by employers and improve the minimum working conditions.
- ⇒ Recommend the amalgamation of the two existing union representative bodies (Professionals Australia and the United Workers Union) to create a standalone veterinary industry union that is dedicated to representing and improving conditions for the veterinary industry.
- ⇒ Appoint a governing body responsible for representing the people of industry – one that is actually supported by all the industry.
- ⇒ Introduce financial benefits to working in rural, regional and remote areas. Provide the same housing benefits, financial bonuses, etc as the government already provides to other essential workers.
- ⇒ Veticare Program? While it is well intended, Animal Care Australia cannot currently support or oppose such a proposal.

Our submission can be found here:



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ACA appears at Inquiry into vulnerable road users in Victoria

The Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee Inquiry into vulnerable road users in Victoria invited Animal Care Australia to testify about the issues faced by horse and carriage drivers on their roads.

Animal Care Australia Horse & Livestock Representative, Karri Nadazdy, appeared on Thursday 24th August 2023.

Opening statement:

Good morning, my name is Karri Nadazdy and I am the Horse & Livestock Representative for Animal Care Australia.

ACA is a national incorporated association established to advocate for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

I am here today, on behalf of all Victorian Equestrians, whether they are ACA members or not.

ACA was concerned to learn that the laws for vehicles passing ridden and driven horses on our roads are so lax, they are effectively non-existent. The current rules put the responsibility of staying safe on the equestrian, and

not the motorist.

In 2019, Melbourne City Council reacted to an issue with how motorists were behaving around horse drawn carriages. Instead of resolving the issues, they decided it was just easier to ban the horses. This is NOT the answer. The horses were not hitting the cars, the cars were hitting the horses. The elderly, the disabled and children are also hit by cars but I doubt anyone on this Committee would agree that all vulnerable road users should be banned from using the roads. It sounds ludicrous to say that, but that's exactly what the Council did to the carriage horses.

The problem was not solved and 3 years later, we are still discussing the same issues.

Despite horses sharing the roads since the very early days of settlement there has been no substantial changes to protect them. Currently there is a recommendation to slow down when there is a horse on the road ahead but there is no enforceable law. We cannot re-educate drivers on laws that don't exist.

I hope that today, we can make some progress to include and protect

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horses and their humans under Victoria's legislative umbrella, and ensure that bans and restrictions of horses and their humans isn't repeated.

ACA thanks you for the opportunity to speak today and for recognising that equestrians deserve to be safe on our roads too.

I welcome your questions.

Animal Care Australia, appeared before the Committee to discuss the experience of equestrians when on roads in Victoria.

Animal Care Australia appeared alongside Bitless Inc. Both organisations had previously worked together on a survey that was promoted to all

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Victorian equestrians to gather real time feedback in readiness for their submissions and testimony.

Animal Care Australia and Bitless Inc provided testimony that motorists are failing to safely pass by horses on the roads, usually driving too fast, not leaving enough space, or deliberately provoking the horses to react.

Potential solutions to improve equestrian safety were discussed, from signage that tells drivers to slow down to 40km/hr when passing equestrians, to whether helmets and hi viz should be a requirement to ride or drive horses on roads.

The Committee is expected to complete their report and publish their recommendations by 31 March 2024.

You can read our submission here:



ACA is currently seeking funding support

“Animal Care Australia has grown. We have formed new subcommittees of volunteers to help keep pace with the ever-increasing workload. Our membership and supporter base continues to increase, and yet this still does not feel strong enough to take on the ever-increasing rhetoric of animal rights extremists. Being a small team of unpaid volunteers is a huge challenge, and without substantial funding will remain so. Animal Care Australia would benefit from a kind, animal loving benefactor, with some funding support.”

REMINDER — HAVE YOU RENEWED?

ACA needs you!



IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

So we can support you and
your pets!



"Animal welfare is animal care"

www.animalcareaustralia.org.au

Animal welfare by the experts — those who keep, care for and breed animals



Notice of AGM!

ACA's AGM will be held on Monday 13th November 2023 via Zoom commencing at 7.30pm.

Any member wishing to join this meeting will need to RSVP by no later than 5pm Monday 13th November via email:

aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au with:

* The name of the member organisation and the representative of your organisation who will participate on behalf of the organisation

* Individuals may also attend – but do not have any voting rights – please RSVP your name.

A link for the meeting will be emailed to you shortly before the starting time.

All end of term Committee members (Species representatives) have indicated their intent to re-stand for their positions.

Office-bearers positions are elected by the newly elected Committee.

Committee positions to be re-elected (current representative in brackets)

- ⇒ Birds (Sam Davis)
- ⇒ Exhibited Animals (Tracey Dierikx)
- ⇒ Small Mammals (Rachel Sydenham)

Vacant Committee positions available

- ⇒ Fish & Aquatic Species Representative
- ⇒ Insects & Arachnid Species Representative

Nominations for positions will open on 16th October 2022. You can download a form here: [Nomination Form](#)

Completed Forms must be delivered to the Secretary by no later than midnight 5th November 2023. Email: secretary@animalcareaustralia.org.au

If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies the candidates nominated are taken to be elected.

AGM Agenda will be provided closer to the time of the AGM on our Facebook Events Page or by request or upon RSVP.

Michelle Grayson

Secretary

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Grayson Secretary – Animal Care Australia — secretary@animalcareaustralia.org.au

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ACA participates in NSW Environment Roundtable

By Michael Donnelly — President



Animal Care Australia was invited by the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC (NSW) to join 30 other environmental-based organisations, including Greening Australia, representatives from marine conservation, land conservation, fauna conservation, land care, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, RSPCA, WIRES, preservation volunteer organisations and many more.

For me, I felt like a little fish in a pond with very big fish, but this highlights just how far Animal Care Australia has progressed in recognition as a key stakeholder for government. A quick overview of the important points relating to Animal Care Australia (and our members):

- ⇒ Animal Care Australia's presence was highlighted in the room for animal welfare. This was greatly appreciated given the presence of the RSPCA.
- ⇒ There will be more topic-focused consultation meetings that Animal Care Australia will be invited to attend.
- ⇒ Animal Care Australia (& those in the room) will all receive the Report from the Biodiversity Conservation Act Review and key stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback.

⇒ I managed to work in the importance of licensed wildlife keeping, and the fact the department sees us as 'those bad people who keep natives as pets' and Penny welcomed the fact I said they should be working with us - as we are all conservation minded and a resource that is un-tapped.

⇒ I also managed to highlight the department has wanted nothing to do with attempts to start preservation breeding programs etc and I used the Black-throated Finch and Oenpelli Python as two examples.

After almost 2 1/2 hours of meeting and chatting and making some new friends - Animal Care Australia is in a great position to progress matters relating to native wildlife licensing, and private-run preservation projects.

Things will need to wait until after the government releases it's response to the [Report from the Biodiversity Conservation Act Review](#) which was tabled in the NSW Parliament on 24th August 2023.

Let's hope with a new government and a new Minister we can finally get things moving in the right direction.



Where is the education?

By Kylie Gilbert — ACA Dog Representative

Animal welfare is animal care.

In a world that is ever changing, with new restrictions and new laws, where is the education to ensure everyone can be compliant? Where is the education on basic responsible pet ownership?

The average person going out to buy their next animal, isn't always buying from a reputable breeder who will be there for the life of that animal to offer support and advice, so where are they getting this advice to ensure people, have the right information to meet the needs of their animals? Dr Google perhaps?

Why are there no education programs for the public on owning animals? How does the general person know who to turn to when they need help e.g., training? Probably a Facebook community page.

Instead of the government continuously going after the registered and responsible breeders and dictating numbers that apparently equate to the welfare of animals, they need to put that time and effort into educating people on the rights and wrongs of pet ownership. This may go a long way to seeing a reduction in the number of animals in shelters and pounds and those that think breeding equals money.



When purchasing an animal from a shelter or pound where is the after care and education? The average shelter may enquire about the home environment and food etc. but what about when you walk out of those gates? Is there a number you can call when you need help?

We saw this during the covid lockdowns when shelters were adopting out animals in record numbers, there was no support, no ongoing training for those animals that probably required it, so the majority ended up back in the shelters But, if there was that ongoing educational opportunity then there may have been a chance that those numbers would have greatly reduced.

I know this is an issue with lots of species not just dogs, if you go to a pet shop as an example to buy a fish or a rabbit you would hope those people whose job it is to sell that animal would know all of the requirements and provide the right advice? But there is no requirement of minimum education for these people and no rule that says they have to be trained. Again we see it time in and time out with people on forums provided with the wrong information that puts the welfare of the animals at risk. This could be easily solved with mandated education requirements, and yet again the government isn't interested in this. They stay focused on the push to end the sales on

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animals.

Gone are the days where you could say you knew someone who had a “Whoops” litter with their dogs and they were going to sell the puppies for \$100 to cover vet work or the pups were going to family members. Today a lot see breeding as a business. They see buying two dogs and breeding them as a money making scheme. But what happens when it all goes wrong and their bitch needs an emergency C-section in the middle of the night, or the puppies don’t want to latch and you are bottle feeding, and then come 8 weeks you can’t sell your puppies that you have priced at \$6000 because they are a “unique color”? Where is the education to show the average person that breeding isn’t about money and that it’s about preservation. Yes there will always be that “whoops” litter but 99% currently are not that. Where is the education to show them how hard it can be? Yes a lot of the time it is smooth sailing but sometimes it isn’t — would this change their minds about adding extra dogs to the population?

We need to ensure that everyone has access to education and courses and this is where government funding should be going. Not on expensive census’s that end up asking you how many times you groom your fish! It needs to go to ensuring people have access to information and resources and that they are set up for success. We have discounted desexing why don’t we have discount training?

Governments don’t even try to help industry itself with changes and compliance.

As an industry any changes to codes are not communicated by the government, as it is an expectation that we constantly go and look at these documents to ensure compliance. That may be good when the documents are easy to find, but how hard can it be to send communications to industry groups to ensure everyone is aware and can adjust as required?

It seems we need to educate the government on how to educate the public!





Fostering for rescue can be rewarding... but not entered into lightly.

By Tracey Dierikx — ACA Exhibited Animal Representative



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About 3 months ago, a friend who runs a Sydney dog rescue group messaged me to say that another rescue was looking for a foster carer with a certain skillset ... they were getting a small breed dog from a local pound who was quite pregnant, and needed a foster carer with whelping experience, as the pregnancy was too far along to be terminated.

Having previously worked with a special needs dog rescue where a large portion of our work was with pregnant dogs, I have the whelping experience, so I volunteered to foster the mother-to-be.

Charlotte (I call her Lottie) arrived as a timid and confused little lady. She had found herself homeless and pregnant, had spent a few days in a pound, then was transferred to the rescue's vet clinic for a checkup and x-ray, and then she was given to me. No wonder she wasn't too sure about things!

The x-ray showed that she was about 5-6 weeks into her pregnancy, and the best guess as to number of pups was "up to 6", based on what could be seen on the x-ray.

Now it was my job to make sure she had the very best food and care to ensure those babies had the best start, and would be born healthy.

As Lottie is a tiny 5.5kg Maltese/Jack Russell crossbreed, and we had no idea of what breed/mix the father was, we needed to be mindful of any signs during her birthing process that she may need a caesarean.



During the next 3.5 weeks Lottie blossomed – both in her figure, and in her personality. She is the most delightful and even tempered girl, and loves lots of cuddles and tummy rubs. She is fully toilet trained, rarely barks (and her bark is not loud), allows me to brush her and trim her nails, and is easy to give tablets to (she had to be wormed). All in all, the perfect little houseguest.

At around midnight on the 28th June, it was time to meet her babies, and Lottie gave birth (with only a little help from me) to 4 healthy pups – 2 girls and 2 boys – over about 4 hours. She took to motherhood with an instinct only mothers have, keeping them clean and warm and fed like a complete little pro. A few days later when the little family had their post-whelp checkup, the vet was very happy with how well Lottie and the babies were coming along and they all passed with flying colours.

Naming the pups was done with the help of some of my friends, and we ended up with Frankie and Douglas for the 2 boys, and Brie and Scout for the 2 girls. Watching them grow and develop their own individual personalities is the

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best part of raising pups bar none ... and each pup certainly has their own distinct personality!

Scout is aptly named, as she will be the first one to explore new things. Douglas likes to sit and watch before joining in, and loves cuddles. Brie is somewhere between Douglas and Scout, was the first to recognise her name when called, and comes running to you with a look of pure joy on her face. Frankie is a "typical boy", loves a bit of rough and tumble, digging holes in the lawn, and generally being a goofball. All of them will come when their names are called... if they aren't doing something more interesting... *grin*

The pups are now nearly 9 weeks old, and will be ready to go to their forever homes from 10 weeks of age. They will have had their first 2

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puppy vaccinations, and will be microchipped and desexed (as per most rescue group protocols). The pups have also been wormed at 2 weekly intervals, and Lottie at 4 weekly intervals.

Lottie has already got a new family waiting for her to be desexed before she goes to them, and one of the pups also has a forever home waiting for him. I'm sure that once the other 3 pups are advertised, the rescue will be swimming with applications, as they are stunning pups – the hard part will be selecting the right homes for them.



For anyone thinking of fostering, there are a few things you should look for when deciding which rescue group you will foster for:-

- ◇ Does the rescue have formal paperwork outlining your responsibilities, and their responsibilities?
- ◇ Does the rescue supply you with anything – food/bedding/etc?



- ◇ What is their rehoming process?
- ◇ How often do they touch base with each foster carer, and are they easy to reach if you need them?
- ◇ Do they have a preferred vet clinic they want you to use, and do they cover the expenses? If not, do they reimburse you for vet bills incurred?

I must stress that not all rescues are the same – and some are less "reputable" than others. Red flags would be:-

- ◆ Fast turnaround/rehoming of animals – remember that you should really get to know

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your foster animal, so you can make sure that you will rehome them to people whose lifestyles they will fit in with. If the rescue you are with is sending you potential adopters within days of taking in the animal, then my advice would be to look for a rescue that allows you the time to fully get to know your fosters before they go up for adoption.

- Expecting foster carers to pay for everything. At the very least, the rescue should have at least one vet clinic that they work with that they will have an account with – and you do not pay anything to take the animal there for a checkup, vaccination, desexing, or any other issue that may arise. Some rescues may expect the foster carer to supply bedding and food, but that is fairly normal, and not a huge ask if you only have 1 or 2 small foster animals.
- Asking you to take on more animals than you are comfortable with, or can afford to feed or exercise effectively.
- Not getting the foster animal desexed until they get a deposit for it from a prospective



new family. If the rescue cannot afford to desex an animal before they get a deposit, then will they have the funds to pay for any other vet treatment that may come up?

- No formal paperwork or rehoming process. If the rescue seems to be playing everything by ear, then maybe you would be better to find

one that does have formal processes in place.

- Poor communication. As a foster carer, you need to know that you can contact someone able to make decisions if necessary, and if you can't get hold of anyone reasonably quickly in a pinch, then I'd look for a rescue group where you do have that backup/support.

Every animal in care has a "sob story" about how bad its life was before coming into rescue. Yes, some animals have a back story that may curl your toes, but that should never be used as an excuse for certain behavioural traits such as biting, resource guarding, not liking other dogs or some people. All of those issues should be retrained so that the animal is suitable to go to a family environment and lifestyle where it can interact socially with others. Rescue animals should never be seen or regarded as "less than" any other animal from any other source.

In NSW, the rescue industry has seen an explosion of new groups pop since legislation was changed to have pounds try to rehome more or release animals to rescue, rather than

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having to euthanise when they run out of space.

As a result, there may be a number of rescues out there who are still learning what is really involved in doing that job well.

The fact that rescue is not regulated in any way also means that rescues are pretty much free to operate in any way they see fit, and unless reported for breaching animal welfare laws, they fly under the radar of any authority.

This is why it is so important that potential foster carers set their own boundaries as to what they can commit to and how they would like to see it done, so that the animals they care for don't end up in a cycle of being rehomed, then surrendered due to issues that arise later – if the animal is not properly rehabilitated before rehoming.

Rescue should NEVER be about how MANY animals have been rehomed by any group, but how WELL those animals have been rehomed.



International Homeless Animal's Day Online Event

ACA's online event for International Homeless Animal's Day was a success, with a series of 13 videos published with tips, ideas and solutions to prevent animals becoming homeless and save money on animal care. While the day is normally focused just on dogs and cats, ACA covered all the companion animal species kept by our Members, including horses, livestock kept as pets, reptiles and birds. You can see all the videos on ACA's [TikTok](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#)



Meet the Members — Illawarra Reptile Society

By Joanne Payne — ACA Reptile & Amphibians Representative



ILLAWARRA REPTILE SOCIETY

Promoting the care and enjoyment of reptiles and amphibians through education

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People often wonder about our ACA members so let's meet one of our member organisations, the Illawarra Reptile Society.

In 1998, the South Coast Reptile Society was formed by a small group of local herpetologists. As the group grew, a name change happened when another group in the Shoalhaven was established, and the South Coast Reptile Society became the Illawarra Reptile Society.

Over the years, the progression of the society has seen it turned into the "family club" with events being aimed to cater for the whole family. We found that most people get into reptiles early, with a love of dinosaurs as children. With the expansion of the hobby and the easier access to keeping these living dinosaurs, more families are getting into reptiles through the children's obsession. Children are the future of this hobby, and their love of reptiles will, in turn, lead to conservation of the species with people having a renewed respect for the preservation of habitat as well as the animals.

With members having access to information from experienced keepers, where else would be better for children to learn how to take care of their animals!

The society holds educational events open to the public with the largest ribboned reptile show in Australia held biannually. Members, volunteers and other reptile societies, all come together to help to educate the public about reptiles and promote good welfare for the animals and it's a

great place to chat with others regarding your passion. Proceeds from the show go toward events for the society members, which includes 2 family days a year and the society sponsor conservation programs that align with their values. In the past, the society has sponsored the Manning River Turtle conservation effort and displays in zoos.

More information about the club can be found online at illwarrareptilesociety.com.au.

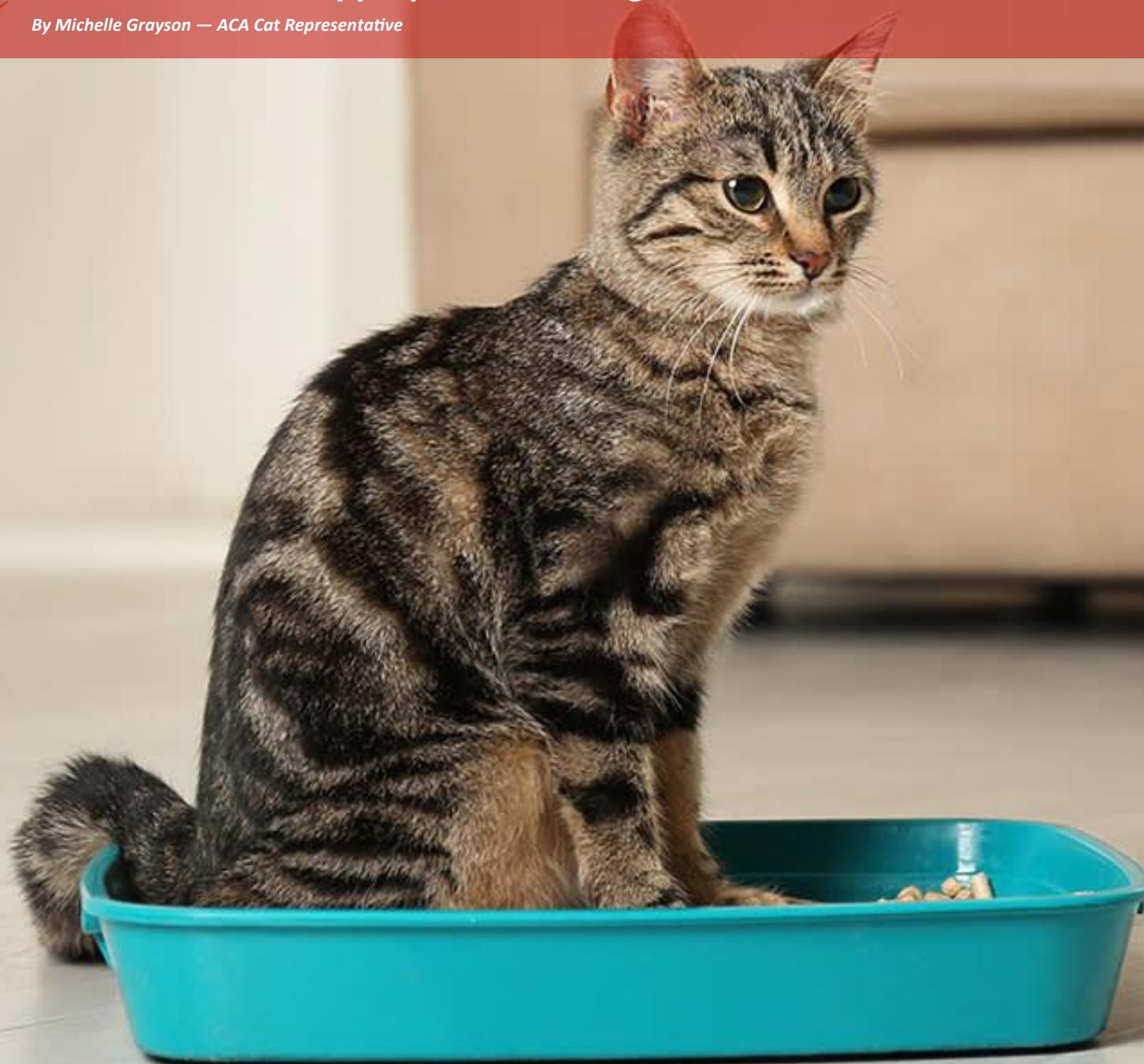
Meetings are held most months and bring your kids along as once a year, they hold a kid's night where the younger members bring along their much-loved pet to chat to the rest of the society about.





Cat Behaviour – Inappropriate Toileting Behaviour

By Michelle Grayson — ACA Cat Representative



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Cats don't stop using their litter tray because they are trying to "get back" at you, and they aren't holding a grudge because you accidentally stepped on their foot or were late with their breakfast or dinner.

If your cat has been a resident of the home for a while, a vet checkup is the best first step. Once you rule out health issues, put on your Sherlock Holmes hat and consider what has changed in the house recently. Even little things like furniture changes or their owner leaving the house spontaneously a lot lately can stress a cat and lead to territorial, marking-type behaviours.

- Stress can be caused by several things, including a new pet or baby in the home, a move to a new home, or changes in the litter box itself (such as a new type of litter).
- Dislike of the litter or litter box. If a cat dislikes the litter or litter box, it may avoid using it altogether.
- Changes in the home, such as a new baby or pet, can cause a cat to feel stressed and act out by missing the litter box.

It is important that you seek advice from your Vet if you notice any abnormal changes (such as more frequent urination, straining to go to the toilet, change in texture of their stools). It may turn out to be nothing serious, but it is better to get it checked to make sure your cat is happy & healthy.



The good news is that there are some easy remedies for some of the more common reasons.

1. The litter box could be small:

The conventional thumb rule is to ensure that your kitten's litter box is at least one-and-a-half times its body length. If your cat is toileting outside the litter box, your cat may be uncomfortable when sitting in the litter box especially if they have gone through a growth spurt or

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gained some weight. Similarly, there's a chance that the kitty's litter box is shallow or inadequately filled to satisfy digging to bury the evidence.

2. The litter box location is difficult to access:

Most of the seniors and aged cats will poop outside the litter box because of its location. If your senior cat is pooping outside the litter box, she may be suffering from arthritis and joint pains. Be sure to provide your older cats with litter boxes that they can access with ease. Kittens may be struggling with accessing the litter box in some rooms. Consider moving the litter box if it's located in a high-traffic area, near the door, or in a location with a lot of noise.

3. The cat box is smelly and unhygienic:

Is the litter box clean? If not, this is a problem, and your cat won't go to the toilet in the litter box anymore. Cats are clean animals and they like their litter boxes kept clean. Your cat may turn up their nose if the conditions, particularly the smell, don't meet their hygiene standards.

4. Territorial Dominance:

Do you have a multi-cat household?

Even amongst bonded cats, tension can occur when it comes to sharing an important resource such as the litter box. When a cat feels as if he can't use the box without being threatened or ambushed, they will find alternative places to do their business. You can be sure that the place (or places!) that they deem safer (under the dining room table, in your left running sneaker, etc.) won't be desirable to you.

Enclosed litter trays in multi-cat homes can fuel the tension between cats, as they limit a cat's awareness of lurkers and only provide one route for escape if



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threatened. Where in nature do cats search out hollowed out logs to go to the toilet in? Hint: They don't. An uncovered litter box will allow your cat to determine and act upon the safest way to escape and will subsequently make him feel safer while using the box. If you prefer a covered box as a way to avoid litter being kicked around the room, consider a box with taller sides (assuming your cat is able enough to easily step over).

Increasing and dispersing litter boxes throughout the home can actually decrease territorial thinking between your cats and help them get along better.

5. Insufficient Litter Trays & Poor Location:

Are your cats outnumbering the litter boxes? This can trigger your many cats to look for alternative places to relieve themselves. The rule of thumb is one litter box for each kitty plus one extra box. The litter boxes need to be placed in areas that are easily accessible with at least one per floor if your house is multilayered.

It is also important to place your toilet trays in appropriate locations. Instead of placing them all in one room, spread them throughout your home in easily accessible and well-lit areas. Spreading them throughout your home will give your cat more options if another cat is standing guard over a litter box. Finally, make sure that the boxes are placed in a way that

allows your cat the ability to see as much of the room as possible (including the door), so he can anticipate threat.

What is the best way to remove the smell of urine?

An enzymatic cleaner will help to break down the uric acid and will not encourage marking the area again the way that the ammonia would.



Using a citrus spray may keep your cat away from the area, but do your research and make sure it is nontoxic for you and your cat. Cats dislike the smell of citrus.

Should I discipline my cat for toileting inappropriately?

Some cat owners have been known to use a water spray, or simply make their displeasure known the way another cat would – with a loud hiss. Unless you can catch them in the act, they won't even know why you are angry. Cats most often urinate in the house when they are new to it, stressed, or ill.

Cats touch you and other cats lightly with their nose as a friendly type of communication, and if you touch their nose lightly then it's generally well-received. Rubbing their nose in an area they have urinated in, however, is NOT recommended and will only make your cat think that you are being cruel.



Imagine managing brumbies better — it would be worth the hard work!

By: Rachel Sydneham — ACA Small Mammal Representative

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From a young age I had an affinity for horses, no doubt about it!

I was your typical horse mad child and grew up watching the romantic high country and wild horses in the movie *The Man from Snowy River* and reading the many chronicles of the Silver Brumby Novels written by Elyne Mitchell. I also grew up with a deep respect and admiration for the history and the role that horses played in WWI and WWII, in particular the Australian Light Horse Infantry. It is this marvelous heritage of the Brumbies that many Australians have fallen in love with and rightly so. Horses have played such an important part in human history as a whole and Australia is no exception. They were our mode of transport, our workers, soldiers of war, our way of living and life, but importantly they were also our comrades and companions, and in many ways they still are today.

Currently Brumbies are literally in the firing line as the Government declare the wild horses an ecological threat and are considering aerial culling practices in an attempt to reduce the populations that are residing within Kosciuszko National Park. This has indeed divided the country into pro and anti-brumby groups each pushing their views on the fate of the wild horses.

As a conservationist I understand the need to protect our unique wildlife and environment, and that the wild horses, along with other non-native animals, do not belong in our National Parks and fragile native environments. As a horse lover I am in awe of the wild horses' spirit and resilience, and find their social structure and behaviour within the herds fascinating and insightful. Ultimately the wild horse population does need to be managed, and it should be done so ethically and

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humanely.

For years now, NSW Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) have been using passive trapping methods and the horses that are not shipped to slaughter are transported out to Brumby Rescue Groups and Sanctuaries for handling and then, sale. Generally the NPWS will move brumbies out in groups of no less than five horses to a rescue group or buyer. While this sounds great for welfare and moves larger numbers out to make way for more incoming, most buyers, unless they are a horse dealer or someone with land to spare, find this impractical. Most are only looking for one or two horses to work with, given that the horses have only had minimal basic handling and are essentially wild. There are also simply not enough homes prepared to take on a wild horse let alone five, and not all will find forever homes as human circumstances often change.

It was because of a change in human circumstances that I was able to purchase two Kosciusko Brumbies. I was simply looking to buy a horse for my horse and it was always a plan that my next horse would be a Brumby as their type would be very suitable for my riding interests. Well, I came home with two!

The story of these two little horses had a rather sad beginning, as they had been trapped together as babies, one a foal and the other a few months older. From the Sanctuary where they were kept, they were then sold to a horse dealer who did not have the best reputation for caring for his horses. Perhaps the Rescue could have screened their buyer a bit more before agreeing to the sale?

It was not long before the two horses were loaded up and shipped to their 2nd home to save the emaciated pair from further neglect and starvation. The new owner thought they would lose the younger of the two as she was very thin and very sick, but with a lot of love and care the two horses' health and condition returned and they were allowed to roam hundreds of acres with 11 other horses and a mob of cattle. Soon enough the owner was needing to sell their property and move to a smaller one. This now meant reducing the number of livestock and horses. I did not feel it was in the best interest to separate the two, and as I liked them both equally,

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I bought them together.

Now these horses had very minimal handling, and anything done with them was basic and not exactly had the necessary time put into “preparation and training”. It was simply, ‘This is what you are doing and you will need to do it’. For someone like myself who had only a small amount of knowledge and experience in starting horses, and that was in the Racing Industry, it was a little daunting to now be face to face with starting two Brumbies. Thankfully I had a plan and fundamental tools in place, and that was being dedicated to my preferred method of training I was going to be using, Patience, a basic understanding of horse behaviour, empathy, and an experience equestrian friend and mentor for support and guidance.

I have worked with and owned horses for most of my life, and to be honest, I did not start out with good horsemanship as I was initially taught and knew only the traditional methods of ‘Show the horse who is boss!’ Over the years I have learnt so much more about the science of horse behaviour, having patience, and the power of positive re-enforcement training.

Thankfully, aside of a bit of neglect, the two brumbies have not known harsh treatment, and I am always astonished at how accepting they are of what I ask of them and how forgiving they are when I make a mistake. These two little horses have been teaching me so much on this journey and are not only giving me confidence in my skills and knowledge but are also expanding my horsemanship skills even further. Even with years of horse experience, I have never experienced horses like these Brumbies and they definitely do not behave like a typical domesticated horse.

As the two little horses are still young and growing I am in no hurry to be riding them, so instead taking my time building a relationship with them to instill trust and to form a strong

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partnership. Their personalities are polar opposite, so the training is adjusted to suit them individually. I look forward to many adventures with these two little horses.

There really does need to be a better wild horse management plan that is beneficial for the long term of the Park, the wildlife and the horses. Periodical slaughter via aerial shooting will result in costing the government more in the long run and will not eradicate horses from the Park.

In Tasmania, deer are partly protected under states wildlife regulations to ensure a healthy population for recreational deer hunting. With deer population blowing out of control, I can't imagine that protecting these animals is doing the environment any favours either, but hunters pay for the privilege, so money is made to incentivise the protection.



Perhaps government could be incentivised to find more ethical and humane alternatives to aerial shooting of brumbies if they could be monetised by the government into tourism and recreation. Careful planning of gradually moving horses to parts of the park that are not so ecologically fragile where facilities are set up for soft trapping, wild horse workshops, educational trail rides and horse riding camps within the park on brumbies that were born and raised in the Kosciusko ranges.

Imagine the possibilities of a long term solution to managing horse numbers and containing them to more suitable and accessible areas where they can not do further damage. Obviously there are not enough homes for all of the park horses, there never will be, but we have a responsibility to the horses we put there as well as the park and therefore should find a better long term solution that benefits both the environment and the horses.



Aviculture, Social Media, Video Conferencing and Streaming

By: Sam Davis — ACA Bird Representative



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I guess many of you are thinking “what a weird and strange title for an article, what has aviculture got to do with these new-fangled internet technologies?” Please bear with me, grab a coffee, beer, wine or whatever your poison might be and read on.

Internet technologies, as we are all aware, have become ubiquitous. They influence most areas of our lives, our vehicles are connected and rely heavily on microprocessors, banking and business is all online and reliant a range of ever more complex integrated computer-based devices and software. All communication that is not in-person is digital. Letters and cheques are a thing of the past, and even phone calls are now sent over the internet. Analog copper phone lines have been largely replaced by fibre optic high speed internet connections like our NBN in Australia. Not so many years ago we viewed Dick Tracey style video phones as impossible fiction, now commonplace on our wireless smart phones.

Has aviculture kept pace? Have aviculturists kept pace? Have bird clubs kept pace? Sadly, in general, we are lagging behind, in my view, this is to the detriment of aviculture. It's not all doom and gloom, there are some shining lights, that present plenty of opportunities to embrace.

Social Media

Social media is a collective term, describing online community-based interaction. Facebook is probably the most well-known with Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn well known, but there are numerous others. Social media enables groups with similar interests to discuss, share and link a whole range of text, audio and video transparently. In recent years

businesses have infiltrated social media in a big way to market and promote their products and track customers within and across multiple platforms.

Let's focus on Facebook. There is close to 3 billion members globally of this popular social media application – a substantial proportion of the total population on the planet. Clearly optimising one's presence on Facebook has the potential for massive returns, in our case massive promotion of aviculture.

Facebook includes three major components: profiles, groups and pages. A Facebook profile is an individual's personal account. Profiles have a timeline where users can share updates, photos, videos, and interact with their friends. A Facebook group is a space for community interaction and discussion based on shared interests, which can be quite specific, mutation Gouldians, for instance, or more general such as Australian parrots. Facebook pages represent public entities like a bird club, or organization like CCBFA, pages allow for branding, promotion, and analytics.

Groups or pages?

Members of Facebook groups can post directly to the group, whilst only the administrators of pages can create new posts of a page. A page is likely a better solution for a bird club to promote its activities.



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Have a look at CCBFA's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/CCBFA>, it contains posts advising of our meetings, directing people to submissions, advising when new editions our journal are released and more critically sharing affiliate club flyers regarding their upcoming sales, shows, conferences and other events. Contrast with a typical group which allows all members to create posts. In both cases users are free to comment on posts.

The power of Facebook to get messages out lies in the ability to share posts, and then shared posts get shared and they get shared and so on. This results in posts going "viral", meaning they have been shared exponentially, perhaps to hundreds of thousands, or even millions of users. The number of views and the number of users liking a post results in Facebook ranking the post higher, and hence is it is displayed to more users. Security options can be specified to prevent sharing, however enabling public sharing is the best way to get your messages out.

Consider an event, maybe a bird show, sale or expo. If the club advertises on its website then it is unlikely many will see the advertisement. If they advertise on their Facebook page without any sharing and few likes then much the same, few viewers. Same occurs



when we advertise in our club magazines, only a select few readers. If we share widely to a range of Facebook groups and then members of those groups share to further groups, then thousands can be contacted at no cost. Social media is a fantastic tool for getting our message out to the masses.

Clubs can pay to boost posts, this enables the post to reach targeted members of the general public who are otherwise unaware of your club. When boosting, you are able to specify quite specific attributes of your intended audience, parameters such as location, age, gender, interests, family details, etc. can all be specified. The boost can occur immediately or over a period of days or even weeks.

Video conferencing and streaming services

If there was one positive as a result of COVID, it forced business, government and education to adopt video conferencing such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. On a personal note video conferences have changed my life. Previously I would routinely travel into the city or fly interstate to attend a single business or government meeting. Attendance at a 1 hour meeting essentially took a complete day, with video conference a 1 hour meeting requires 1 hour! Of course, online meetings are not the same as in person for a range of reasons,

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particularly for initial contact, so a balance is needed.

Streaming services such as YouTube are now commonplace with apps available on smart phones and now on most internet connected televisions as well as on computers. The ability to watch video such as TV and movies streamed over the internet using services such as Netflix, Stan or Prime has become commonplace. Our bird clubs can do similar using YouTube, Twitch and other services.

Should bird clubs embrace video conferencing and streaming for their meetings are other events? It depends. Let's consider a few examples.

A number of bird clubs are now live streaming their in-person meetings. I was involved in sorting out the system used by the Finch Society of Australia that is now working well. Optimising the audio and video quality at minimal cost takes some initial work. I'm aware there are other clubs such as the Avicultural Society of South Australia and the Queensland Finch Society doing similar. If clubs require assistance setting up, please don't hesitate to make contact.

The Finch Society of Australia

I can only speak from experience with the Finch Society of Australia. Initially the committee was concerned that members would no longer attend in person, preferring to stay home and watch online. Such concerns have not eventuated. In reality the bulk of viewers online are from areas too distant to travel to meetings, so in fact we are increasing our reach plus enabling remote members to engage. We use Zoom so online attendees can contribute, and we also stream the Zoom meeting live on YouTube. The YouTube version is retained so anyone can watch into the future. We often edit to remove the main meeting and retain just the presentation. For example, the May 2023 Finch Society of Australia meeting featured Bob Barnes speaking on foreign finch and softbill species we have lost in Australian aviculture or that we are in danger of losing. This presentation now features on the club's YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@TheFinchSocietyofAustralia>

Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia (CCBFA) meetings

During COVID, CCBFA decided to trial running our meetings via Zoom.

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This has proved to be a real success. Prior to the availability of video conferencing such as Zoom, our meetings were in person at the Ashfield RSL club close to the centre of Sydney. CCBFA represents the interests of some 240 clubs nationally. Obviously only club delegates within an hour or so of Ashfield ever regularly attended, were we truly representative of the nation? No, not really. Using Zoom, delegates from all clubs from all over the Australia are able to attend and have their voice heard. We don't yet have regular attendance from many clubs, but the opportunity now exists. Mind you, I'm not sure how we'd cope if 200 plus delegates logged in, but it would be a good problem to have. Please encourage your club's CCBFA delegate to attend our meetings – all are emailed details for all meetings. I consider our CCBFA Zoom meetings to a real success. Zoom is well suited to administrative type meetings, particularly when attendees are physically distant from one another such that attending in person is difficult.

CCBFA did run a few composite meetings where we ran both in-person at Ashfield RSL and online via Zoom. In my opinion this was difficult to manage, as discussion with all delegates is common in

such



meetings (unlike most club level meetings). It is difficult to manage both in terms of the technology so that all present online and in person can hear and speak equitably. My preference is for Zoom only in terms of meeting management. CCBFA has floated the idea of having some separate social events for delegates – lunch in different regions, for example, as online meetings can never compete in a socialising sense.

The Avicultural Society of Australia conference online speakers

I attended the recent Avicultural Society of Australia conference in Shepparton, which was a fantastic event. I encourage all aviculturists to attend such conferences if they can. Amazing events where you get to live and breath aviculture for days and nights on end – what's not to like? Many thanks to all involved in organising, presenting, opening their aviaries, etc. – very much appreciated.

There was some understandable concern by the organisers when two of their overseas presenters were unable to attend in person due to illness and work commitments. Video conferencing came to the rescue. I think all present would agree that both these streamed presentations were fantastic and in no way detracted from the overall conference experience. In fact, the online presentation by Dr Luis Neves describing and showing incredible footage of the new Bird Paradise attraction in Singapore opening as an upgraded Jurong replacement was certainly motivational. I think all conference delegates are keen to visit Singapore as soon as the new park is fully operational. Tony Silva's online presentation was also, as one would expect, full of expert titbits to

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consider. Would in-person have been better? Yes, but video conferencing is now such that the difference is of less significance. In my experience, the use of social media, video conferencing and streaming services by bird clubs and representative organisations is to be encouraged. We need to utilise such technologies wisely to get our amazing expertise out to the wider bird keeping community and to enable real time communication regardless of physical location. Encourage your club to embrace the possibilities.



President's Roundup

By Michael Donnelly

Time flies when you're having fun— NOT!

There has been so much happening in the pet and companion animal space right across the country.

I'm not sure there are too many species not part of the focus of either one government department or a local council.

For some reason in the past few months we have seen local councils trying to place limits on the numbers of rabbits, mice, guinea pigs, and birds. Each time there have been added permit requirements — clearly a profiteering motivated venture because it certainly has nothing to do with local amenity or animal welfare. Yet, they just keep proposing more restrictions.

Luckily we had wins in two NSW council shires with those councils going back to the drawing board. They both had the most restrictive numbers that ACA has seen to date. Really glad no precedent has been set there — yet! Sadly, a council in the gold coast area of Queensland and one in Victoria pushed forward with their restrictions and now permits are required if you want to have more than 20 birds on your large sized property (greater than

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300msq).

Also on the bird front we saw attempts to stop the importation of Australian (native) parrots! I mean seriously, we cannot bring birds that are native, and already in our aviaries into the country. What is happening here?

Horses have been the forgotten subjects of an Inquiry in Victoria and yet thankfully our submission saw them added to the agenda.

Also in Victoria, the Animal Justice Party attempted to claim that rabbits are excluded in the animal welfare legislation and in local council animal management plans and they wanted more focus on pet rabbits because they are over-looked. Clearly Ms Purcell overlooked the local council Animal Management Plans because trust me Ms Purcell they ARE indeed included.

Cats are the focus in Victoria with a Cat Management Strategy being reviewed, and in the Western Australian area of Vincent Council with changes to how your cats can (not) wander from your property as well as in the NSW Lane Cove Shire where cats are to be contained under new proposals to designate

wildlife protection areas, as well as back in Victoria with the Yarra City Shire introducing containment laws.

Dogs, dogs and more dogs! Well at least that's the claim from Queensland with proposed dog control legislation to prevent dog attacks, in Western Australia with proposed strategies to reduce dog ownership and sales, and in NSW where Sentient are claiming our veterinary industry wouldn't be overworked and over-stressed if we simply banned all brachycephalic breeds!

Oh yes — you know who Sentient is right? Like they are a major voice of the veterinary industry right?

Just in case you didn't — Sentient are the Veterinary Institute for Animal Ethics.

"Sentient offers recommendations to improve the lives of animals based on best practice in animal welfare within an ethical framework. This framework is informed by the recognition of animal sentience and the moral obligation to address the fundamental interests of

animals, allowing them to live according to their natures."

"Animal welfare within an ethical framework ..." Not within a welfare science-based framework — an ethical (read ideological) one.

But I digress!

As you hopefully read in this edition ACA has submitted to a number of Inquiries into the Veterinary Industry, Pounds/ Shelters, Vulnerable Road Users, and we know there are more to come with a look at the powers of local councils in Victoria, Rodeos in NSW, aerial culling in NSW, the accountability of the RSPCA & Animal Welfare League, and likely more.

Following the elections in both NSW & Victoria, we have continued to meet with politicians from across the Parties and there are still a few more we are yet to sit down with. It is vital to develop working relationships with as many as we

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can.

The great news for ACA is we received a generous donation from Julie Nelson from the Master Dog Breeders & Associates — which is so gratefully appreciated and we have a new Sponsor!

Petcover Insurance have very kindly agreed to become ACA's first sponsor — of which I hope are many — and we welcome the support and new friendship .

This will also be of a benefit to our members — who will receive discounts on insurance cover for a range of species. These discounts will be promoted over the next year and will only be available to financial members & supporters of ACA. Another reason to ensure you have renewed your membership with us!

I extend a huge thank you to Anita and Aroha from Petcover Insurance.

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of the Animal Care Expert and look forward to your continued support.



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The Regional - horse news

5h · 🌐



News briefs for the week. Shout out to Animal Care Australia for working their butts off advocating for the horse sector at a range of government inquiries you probably wouldn't even know were happening.



theregional.com.au

Bits: Road users hearing, pony trots and endurance news

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MISSION STATEMENT

“Animal Care Australia (ACA) is the Peak Animal Welfare Body representing the keepers and breeders of pet and companion animals in Australia”.

ACA encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care. To encourage responsible pet ownership, and the respectful treatment of all animals in our community ACA continues to promote welfare education over regulation



OBJECTIVES

- To represent Animal Care Groups as the peak animal welfare body
- To engage and advise Government and legislators on welfare issues relating to pets and companion animals.
- To protect the rights of ethical hobbyists & animal keepers to breed and keep pets and companion animals.
- To clarify the difference between animal rights and animal welfare
- To promote higher animal welfare outcomes



ACA GENERAL MEETINGS 2023

7.30 to 8.30pm

MARCH 13th

MAY 8th

JULY 10th

SEPTEMBER 11th

NOVEMBER 13th — AGM

Meetings in 2023 will continue via Zoom to ensure members nation-wide can attend..

Any member wishing to join a meeting will need to RSVP by no later than 5pm on that Monday via email: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au with your details. A link for the meeting will be emailed to you.

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