



Animal Care Australia

NEWSLETTER

# The Animal Care Expert

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



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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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# Changes for dog breeders in NSW

From Friday 30 May 2025, dog breeders across NSW can apply for exemptions to new puppy farming regulations to ensure they comply with changes that will come into effect for existing breeders from 1 December 2025.

In November 2024 changes were made to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, and the Companion Animals Act 1998, which apply in stages to all breeders and occupiers of dog premises across NSW.

For a full overview of the changes – see the Department of Primary Industries and Regional development website.

(<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare/animal-care-and-welfare/other/dogs-and-cats/breeding-a-dog>)

The NSW Government has implemented several actions to support breeders and occupiers of dog premises across NSW through the legislative transition period.

## **Applications for an exemption to maximum cap of female adult dogs**

The requirement limiting the maximum number of female adult dogs at any dog premises to 20, commenced on 21 November 2024. The new laws allow for breeders that had more than 20



# Headline Article

female adult dogs on a premises at 24 October 2024 to keep up to this number until 1 December 2025.

From 1 December 2025 until 30 November 2035 a limited exemption will be available for certain breeders who had more than 20 female adult dogs on 24 October 2024, subject to additional conditions.

Breeders can apply for an exemption online at the Office of Local Government:

(<https://www.petregistry.olg.nsw.gov.au/changes-dog-breeding-laws/temporary-exemption-application>) A \$550 fee is payable to process applications.

**Applications for an exemption opened on 30 May 2025 and will close on 13 July 2025.**

If granted, the exemption period is for 10 years subject to certain conditions. For example, compliance with the Breeding Code, submitting an annual report and an audit every 2 years.

- Breeders with more than 50 female adult dogs who are granted an exemption must transition to 50 or less female adult dogs per dog premises by 1 December 2026.
- All exemption holders must have 20 or less female adult dogs on their premises by 1 December 2035 (when the exemptions will expire)



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**Niall Blair**

Minister for Primary Industries  
Minister for Regional Water  
Minister for Trade and Industry

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 18 April 2018

### MINISTER DIRECTS NEW APPROACH FOR BREEDERS AND PET SHOPS

The NSW Government today announced that it will start again on the development of new draft welfare standards and guidelines (S&G's) for pet shops and breeders of cats and dogs.

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair said that after listening to the feedback from stakeholders he has directed his department to go back and to develop a new way forward, which will be spearheaded by a newly created role of NSW Chief Animal Welfare Officer.

"Over the last four months, we consulted stakeholders across the board and what we heard was that the draft S&G's proposed were missing the mark," Mr Blair said.

"I want the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to start again. I have asked them to work from the ground up and to make sure we are clearer about the objectives we are trying to meet.

"The draft S&G's aimed to improve welfare outcomes for pets. Despite DPI's best intentions, they acknowledge that the drafts, as they were presented, would have had unintended consequences for some pet owners, breeders and traders.

"My department is committed to a renewed approach and the new Chief Animal Welfare Officer will drive engagement and ensure a meaningful discussion is had with all stakeholders.

"This change in approach does not diminish our commitment to ensuring that companion animals breeding practices are safe, ethical and meet community expectations."

The NSW Government has committed to launch a new and improved pet register later this year, which will streamline registration and improve how animal welfare agencies track and record pet breeding businesses

DPI will also review the advisory committees that provide advice to the Government on animal welfare issues to ensure they're structured properly and most importantly, meeting community expectations.

In the interim, the existing codes, which have been in place for a decade, will continue to apply.

**MEDIA: Evie Madden | Minister Blair | 0409 682 163**



How it all began

How it all began - back in 2018.

The 'win' that resulted in the creation of Animal Care Australia Inc - 7 years ago.

By this point Animal Care Australia's founding members had already held a symposium, along with some first meetings and the NSW Government saw that pet owners were not going to let the Department get away with some of the most ill-conceived (at the time) standards & guidelines.

While the landscape changed, it could easily be argued that ill-conceived standards and guidelines haven't ceased being proposed. The difference is now Animal Care Australia challenges them, and advocates for common-sense, right approach animal welfare right across the country.

Animal Care Australia will continue to advocate for pets and pet owners.

You can help and support us by [joining](#) as a member or by [donating](#). Every person and every amount counts.

**“...It seems the underlying agenda is to stop people owning pets - and animals - outright...”** Michael Donnelly.





PUBLIC OUTCRY

# Pet owner draft plan goes to the dogs

Julie Power

NSW Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair has abandoned highly controversial changes that many pet owners say would have subjected them and their homes to the same rules as commercial pet shops.

Mr Blair said he had asked his department to start again on draft welfare standards for pet shops and breeders of cats and dogs, adding that the proposals had "missed the mark" and had "unintended consequences".

More than 22,000 pure-breed dog owners plus owners of birds and reptiles had protested against the proposed changes and launched petitions.

The changes would have required the owner of any animal (including fish, birds, mice, rabbits, cats or dogs) who sold or donated or traded animals from their home or online to have the same training and complete similar paperwork as a commercial pet shop.

Mr Blair's release was critical of his department, pet owners said. They had complained that some public servants had a "hidden agenda" of trying to end pet ownership and any kind of pet breeding in NSW.

After listening to the feedback from stakeholders, Mr Blair said he had directed his department to go back and develop a new way forward. It would be led by a newly created role of NSW chief animal welfare officer.

Mr Blair also said the department would review advisory committees on animal welfare issues, which had provided advice on the new standards and guidelines.

This review would ensure "they're structured properly, and most importantly, meeting community expectations", he said.

In his statement, Mr Blair said stakeholders had said the "draft standards and guidelines [S&Gs] proposed were missing the mark".

"I want the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] to start again. I have asked them to work from the ground up and to make sure we are clearer about the objectives we are trying to meet," he said.

"The draft S&Gs aimed to improve welfare outcomes for pets. Despite DPI's best intentions, they acknowledge that the drafts, as they were presented, would have had unintended consequences for some pet owners, breeders and traders.

## In the doghouse

### 22,000

Pure-breed dog owners plus owners of birds and reptiles had protested against the proposed law changes and launched petitions.

"My department is committed to a renewed approach, and the new chief animal welfare officer will drive engagement and ensure a meaningful discussion is had with all stakeholders."

Pet groups said the abandonment of the new guidelines would conveniently avoid it becoming an election issue.

"It seems the underlying agenda is to stop people owning animals - and pets - outright," said Michael Donnelly from the Herpetocultural Co-operative of NSW.

Like other pet owners and breeders, he was "very, very pleased" with the changes and glad that the minister had listened.

"This has proven that he has listened," he said. And it had shown that "you can convince a minister that a decision by the department they oversee can be wrong. And they can't be signed off without some form of consideration of the community as a whole."

But Mr Donnelly warned the agenda to prevent pet keeping and breeding was unlikely to be dropped, and had been put on hold until after the NSW election in March.

Under the original proposal, pet owners and breeders who sold, traded, donated or advertised the sale of an animal would be classified as "pet shop owners" and subject to onerous health, safety and training rules.

The changes were in response to the parliamentary inquiry into puppy farms, but were said to be a "massive overreach", particularly as they extended onerous regulations to all pets, not just dogs and cats.

Pure-breed dog owners had said that, if the changes were implemented, they could have destroyed a beloved hobby for many Australians. They were so alarmed by the draft proposal that 22,000 people participated in a Dogs NSW meeting streamed live to discuss the rules.

A spokesperson for industry group Dogs NSW applauded the minister for making the changes and the decision to create the role of animal welfare officer.

Mr Blair's office said the new role would better enable the animal welfare programs within NSW DPI to increase the focus on "ongoing reform to improve standards around animal welfare, as well as working with key stakeholders to ensure balance in relation to appropriate welfare standards".

Pet owners stressed that they backed moves to crack down on illegal and inhumane puppy farms.



Nicole de Mestre's Sculpture

## Can't see for the

Nick Galvin

For the 43 artists selected for this year's Sculpture at the Sydney Biennale, being invited to show in the Blue Mountains' iconic Valley as a temporary installation is not without its challenges.

Should you try to work stand out by contrasting with the extraordinary beauty of the valley to subtly blend in to the surroundings?

Both approaches have been used in the 38 works on show in the seventh year of the biennale.

For instance, not far from the work of mid-century modernist Nick Warfield, who won the piece *Calling Upon* from car bumpers, is a \$2000 Scenic Works Award. Meanwhile



If you have adopted a pet please check the microchip details TODAY

Adopted a pet from RSPCA QLD, or other rescues in Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, NSW or as a retired greyhound? The microchip details are likely no longer able to be read when scanned.

**HomesafeID**, the company that these services registered their dogs and cats with has ceased to operate online.

If your pet goes missing or is found by someone, vets/councils/animal shelters will no longer be able to view your pet's ownership details listed on their microchip, making it difficult to reunite you!

This means that there are now potentially thousands of pets with no trackable microchips. PLEASE check your pets details and update them to another chip registry.

More info can be found on the RSPCA QLD website, including how to change to a new Registry: <https://www.rspcaqlld.org.au/news-and-events/news/homesafeid-pet-microchipping?>

More info relating to NSW, SA & Victorian pets: <https://www.petrescue.com.au/library/articles/important-update-homesafe-id-microchip-registry-is-closing-here-s-what-you-need-to-do>

Tasmania: <https://pulsetasmania.com.au/news/thousands-of-cats-in-limbo-as-microchip-provider-ceases-operations/>

HomeSafeID: <https://www.homesafeid.com/>

# Important Pet News



## The Animal Care Expert

Watch out for our next issue in  
September 2025.

Click to read our [previous issues](#)



# Need for regulation in Australia's animal industry

Australia's animal industry plays a significant role in the nation's economy and culture. From livestock farming and wildlife management to pet care and veterinary services, this diverse sector impacts millions of lives—both human and animal.



However, the lack of standardised qualifications and comprehensive regulation across various facets of the industry has raised significant concerns. To ensure ethical practices, animal welfare, and public safety, there is an urgent need to implement stringent regulations and mandate qualifications for those working in the animal industry.

### **The Current State of the Animal Industry**

The animal industry in Australia operates under a patchwork of regulations that vary between states and territories. While some sectors, such as veterinary medicine, are highly regulated, others—like animal training, breeding, and farming—lack uniform standards. This inconsistency leads to gaps in animal welfare, ethical practices, and the quality of services provided.

For instance, anyone can currently claim to be an animal trainer or breeder without needing formal qualifications or experience. This not only puts animals at risk of mistreatment but also jeopardises public safety.

### **The Case for Mandatory Qualifications**

Introducing mandatory qualifications for individuals working in the animal industry is a critical step toward addressing these issues. Generally speaking, qualifications for







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hobbyists who breed animals can be provided some exemptions to specific qualifications, the need for uniform standards still applies.

Here are some key benefits:

1. **Improved Animal Welfare:** Qualified professionals are more likely to understand and adhere to best practices in animal care, reducing instances of neglect and abuse.
2. **Professional Accountability:** Mandatory qualifications establish a clear standard of expertise, making it easier to hold individuals and businesses accountable for misconduct or negligence.
3. **Economic Benefits:** A regulated industry with skilled professionals can boost consumer confidence, leading to greater demand for high-quality, ethical services.

### Regulatory Models to Consider

Australia can draw inspiration from successful regulatory frameworks in other countries. For example:

- **The United Kingdom:** The UK has stringent licensing requirements for animal breeders, trainers, and pet shops, including mandatory inspections and welfare standards.

- **New Zealand:** Their Animal Welfare Act sets clear guidelines for animal care across industries, supported by robust enforcement mechanisms. Adapting similar models to suit Australia's unique context can ensure that regulations are both effective and practical.

## Challenges and Considerations

Implementing mandatory qualifications and regulations will not be without challenges. These may include:

- **Industry Resistance:** Some people may resist change due to perceived increased costs or bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Enforcement Difficulties:** Ensuring compliance across a vast country with diverse industries and practices will require significant resources.
- **Training Accessibility:** Providing affordable and accessible training programs will be essential to avoid excluding individuals from the industry.

To address these challenges, a phased approach to regulation, coupled with government subsidies for training programs, could ease the transition for businesses and workers alike.

## Conclusion

The animal industry is a cornerstone of Australia's economy and culture, but its lack of comprehensive regulation and mandatory qualifications presents significant risks. By introducing uniform standards and requiring formal training for industry participants, Australia can improve animal welfare, enhance public safety, and build a more ethical and sustainable sector. Now is the time for policymakers, industry leaders, and the public to unite in support of a regulated animal industry that upholds the highest standards of care and professionalism.



The cooler weather is here. Here are a few tips to keep your pets happy and healthy throughout winter.

### **Continue to exercise your pet**

As dog owners, we know it's our responsibility to walk our pooches come rain or shine. Getting some fresh air and strolling in the great outdoors provides important mental stimulation and exercise for your dog. Other pets (cats and horses etc) also need to be exercised. Find interesting ways to ensure they are kept active.

### **Upgrade your pet's bedding and shelter**

Winter is snuggle season, and just as you like to pull out the flannel sheets and thicker doona to keep warm, your dog or cat may need extra layers on their bed too. Think about giving them extra blankets to sleep with or a thicker bed to help keep them warm overnight.

Be sure to provide plenty of shelter for your pet outside. Make sure they have somewhere they can escape the rain and wind that are more prevalent in winter.

Think about rugging your pet up in some extra layers, especially if they're a short haired breed.

### **Maintain a healthy diet**

If diets aren't adjusted when we exercise our pets less their metabolism can change and they can gain weight. If you aren't able to exercise your pet as much, be sure to adjust their food accordingly.

### **Take extra care of young, old or ill pets**

If your pet is a puppy, kitten, older pet, or if they're suffering from illness, remember that they may feel the cold more strongly than other pets.

Puppies and kittens have less fat, fur and insulation on their bodies, and many older pets suffer from arthritis, which can be exacerbated by cold temperatures. Consider postponing your adventure outdoors if the weather is especially cold!

### **Fresh Water**

If you keep a water bowl for your pet outside, be sure to check that the water hasn't frozen over, or put it under cover to help prevent this.

If your pet is allowed indoors they can get dehydrated quickly with heating systems on, so make sure you check and fill up their water bowls often.

### **Keep small animals, birds, reptiles and fish at their preferred**



# Pets in Winter



## Temperatures

Remember that animals like guinea pigs and rats can feel the cooler temperatures too. If your small animals are kept outside, you might need to move their enclosure. The ideal location for their enclosure in summer might not be the best location in winter.

**The same goes for birds** – ensure they are kept out of draughty areas and consider a cover for their cage.

**For cold-blooded animals like reptiles and fish**, make sure that you maintain an ideal temperature for them by monitoring their environment with fish tank thermometers, aquarium heating and reptile heat lamps.

## Brumation

Several species of reptile will have headed into brumation. During this time, do not feed while they are brumating. Leave the UV lighting on throughout this time.

(Brumation is a natural process that allows healthy reptiles to handle stressful environmental conditions such as cold temperatures, drought, and/or extended periods of extreme heat.)

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**Pet&HobbyFarm** is an Australian owned platform created to bring together the people and organisations that care deeply about animals, ethical practices & supporting local Australian businesses.

Our secure and regulated platform is being built to solve real problems – from safer rehoming and responsible breeding, to giving independent regional businesses a way to bridge the digital divide.

Proudly working together with Animal Care Australia, we're committed to advancing animal welfare & promoting better wellbeing for all animals across the country.

Pet&HobbyFarm will connect communities and provide a secure marketplace to find all your pet & hobby farm needs in one place.



100% Australian  
Owned & Operated



Secure, regulated,  
responsible & ethical



Supporting Australian  
Businesses, Ethical  
Breeder & Rehoming  
Organisations



Community of Pet  
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- ✓ Connect with volunteers & supporters
- ✓ Increase & diversify your revenue
- ✓ Sell branded products for fundraising
- ✓ Promote ethical, responsible rehoming
- ✓ Increase adoption visibility nationwide
- ✓ Trusted, safe online adoption space

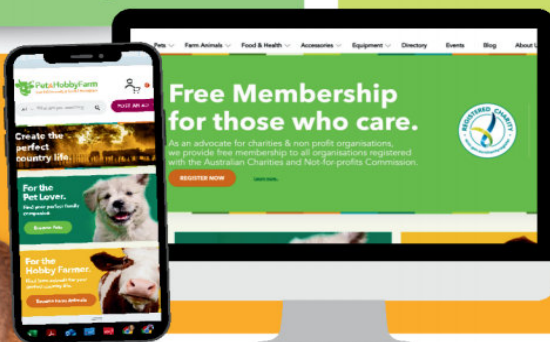
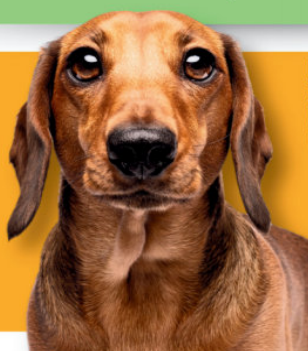
For Animal Rescue Groups & ACNC Organisations

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For Pet Owners, Hobby Farmers & Animal Lovers



## FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS



@pethobbyfarm





*Image: Rachel Sydenham & Raga Muffin with 2GB Radio Presenter, Michael McLaren*

It was the first day of the 2025 Sydney Royal Easter Show, and I hit the ground running as soon as I had arrived at 7am in the Pet Pavillion.

It is that one big mega event of the year that the NSW Fancy Rodent Society really get to showcase the rodents to a larger audience, and share the love and passion that we have for keeping rats and mice as pets.

A week before the event opens media is contacting club representatives for pre-show articles, interviews and to book us



## Sydney Royal Rodents



with radio talk show hosts, TV news teams, and other media. So, the schedule for the days event ahead is already hectic and time tight.

My day starts with setting up the judging area and getting all of our club signage displayed while exhibitors start to arrive with their animals to line up for vetting in. Steve Smith, ( the club's public officer and RES liaison) has already done most of the work with setting up the exhibitors tables and delegating the show schedule along with the lineup of officials that will be meeting with us throughout the day.

Each year seems to bring more media attention for the rodents at the Sydney Royal and the NSWFRS are more than happy to use these opportunities to promote not only rats and mice as pets but also responsible pet ownership and animal welfare. The club is more than breeding rats and mice for show, its members aspire to ensure that the animals they breed are done so responsibly and ethically with great emphasis on health and temperament.

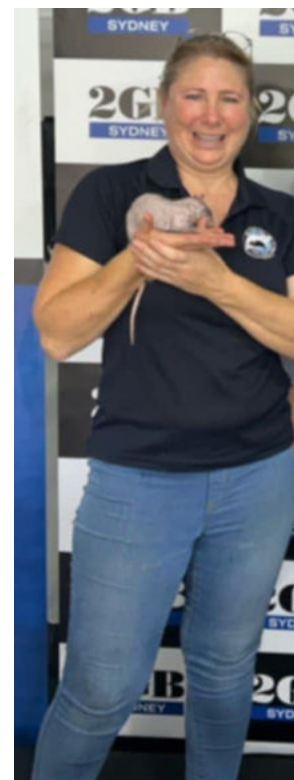
With all the animals vetted in and exhibitors displays all set up, the Sydney Royal officially opened to the public at 9am and the crowds did not disappoint! We kicked off judging about 10am with myself judging rats, Jennifer Birkett, guest judging the mice, and Wendy Culshaw judging the Pet classes. Throughout the judging all three of us were also talking to media for radio and TV, answering a myriad of questions by media and the public whilst we critiqued the rodents. There were not many moments that we did not have a camera of sorts pointed at us and the rodents for filming and photos.

The morning brisked by very quickly and I had finished judging all of the rats in time to start heading for the Officials Luncheon where we all enjoyed an amazing meal. I had only enough time after our lunch to stop at two stalls on our walk back to the Pet

Pavillion before stowing away with one of Sandra McLean's rats, Raga Muffin, for an interview with 2GB Radio.

After the 2GB interview It was power walk back to the NSWFRS display area for presentation as well as to chat to the public and prepare for the Rodent segment with Farmer Dave. This is where we are introduced by Farmer Dave to an audience with our pocket pets in a fun and informative show, however, I could not stay too long as I was scheduled for my final radio interview with ABC.

Before we knew it, our day was coming to an end and we were packing away our displays and animals ready for the trip back home. I may not have been able to see much outside of the Pet Pavillion at the Sydney Royal this year amongst the media, judging and public, but it was indeed a fantastic day for the NSWFRS, its exhibitors and the animals. It is always a wonderful thing to be able to have the opportunity to educate the public about how amazing rats and mice are as pets and to help dispel the negative stigma that surrounds these awesome little animals.



Listen to the 2GB interview or watch the NINE News interview here:





Image: [Wallpaperflare.com](http://Wallpaperflare.com)



## International Import/Export - why does Australia make it so hard?

I've recently returned from the Bali Bird Congress organised by ABT (PT. Anak Burung Tropikana) and run at the Prama Sanur Beach Hotel. Fantastic conference at a terrific venue. Well done to all involved. ABT has an amazing collection of Lories, Lorikeets, Cockatoos, Eclectus, and Fig Parrots, but for us Australians it's the collection of Hornbills that really impresses.

ABT is a commercial operation able to export to most countries but not to Australia. The owners of ABT, Johan and Marcel, would love to export to Australia and would also love to import many of our Australian species. But no, they cannot do so.



Image: [Wallpaperflare.com](http://Wallpaperflare.com)

There is substantial commercial value in the trade of CAPTIVE bred birds. Note the use of capital letters for the word captive, this is important. In my view, the majority of the issues, obstacles and hurdles involved in opening Australia's borders boil down to proving all birds traded are CAPTIVE bred.

Our Australian legislation and regulation is deliberately restricting trade. There are ways to export some non-CITES listed species and other Appendix 1 CITES species can be exported if part of approved CITES breeding programs. Natives that are listed on CITES must only go to approved breeding programs or for exhibition. Commercial sale is excluded. The paperwork and regulation is convoluted, and the reality is that currently export permits are nigh impossible and import permits are impossible.

What is so different about trade in captive bred birds compared to trade in other species such as dogs, cats, sheep, cattle, horses, etc.? So long as welfare and quarantine can be assured what is the problem?

The problem, in my view, is the media—and consequently, public perception—misusing the term 'exotic' to mean unusual rather than non-native. This leads to the incorrect belief that all birds are wild caught. Many readers will recall a series of articles in the Guardian newspaper some years ago. These articles and other like them continue to imply all native birds being exported were or are wild caught. I wrote to the authors and editors on each occasion requesting they make it clear all birds exported were CAPTIVE bred. They did not edit their articles.

CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, it is about facilitating trade not preventing trade. The aim is to protect wild populations by regulating trade in such a way as to discourage illegal trade and ensure the protection of species in the wild. CITES includes 3 appendices. Appendix I lists birds (and other animals) that are threatened with extinction hence trade must be closely monitored,

Appendix II lists species where there is some concern that illegal poaching may cause extinction and Appendix III lists species of concern in particular jurisdictions. However, when the birds are CAPTIVE bred, and the exporting country guarantees as much then the majority of the controls no longer apply, and export is greatly simplified.

***Where a Management Authority of the State of export is satisfied that any specimen of an animal species was bred in captivity or any specimen of a plant species was artificially propagated, or is a part of such an animal or plant or was derived therefrom, a certificate by that Management Authority to that effect shall be accepted in lieu of any of the permits or certificates required under the provisions of Article III, IV or V.***  
***CITES Article VII paragraph 5***

Unfortunately Australian law does not implement CITES Article VII paragraph 5 as it was intended, and to be fair, until recently determining definitively that birds are captive bred was not a simple task.

Today DNA parentage testing is a relatively simple process. It proves beyond doubt that birds are CAPTIVE bred. On behalf of bird clubs in Australia (in my previous role as President of the Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia) we developed a substantive "Proposal for a DNA Parentage-based Export Protocol". The proposal was presented to government but is yet to be progressed further.

In my view, the only way we will ever progress commercial trade in birds is to prove that all birds destined for export are CAPTIVE bred. Even if such proof is not required by CITES and not required by our government's regulations, it is required by the media and hence it is required by the general public. This is the only way we will ensure borders can remain open when under the lens of public scrutiny.

For import, I'd suggest similar proof birds are captive bred is required to pass media scrutiny and the pub test. Similar DNA parentage proof is not difficult when purchasing from a commercial facility such as ABT in Bali.

Australia is in a somewhat unique position compared to the majority of other countries.



- Australia has an amazing array of native bird species,
- Aviculturists in Australia are breeding most of these species routinely in captivity and have done so for numerous decades,
- Many of the birds desired for export are mutations (colour morphs) which are clearly captive bred,
- Australia has sustainable captive populations of most species suited to export, and
- Australians, including significantly the avicultural community, not only opposes trapping of wild birds but actively discourages such practices.

There is a substantial global market for our captive bred birds. What is wrong with making our amazing birds available globally? A commercial trade in captive Australian bred birds – what is wrong with that? Importing captive bred birds (with suitable quarantine controls) – what is wrong with that?

Let's all get behind a DNA Parentage-based Protocol for both Export and Import so we prove birds are CAPTIVE bred and can get away from this wild caught innuendo nonsense forever. Only then can we hope for a sustainable import export industry.

(First published in Volume 38 Issue 8 of Australian BirdKeeper magazine)



# Insect Expo in October

The National Insect Expo, will be held from October 3-5th 2025, at the Buffalo Sports Stadium in Woodend, Victoria, and is Australia's largest entomological exhibition, captivating visitors with the diverse world of insects and their relatives.

The expo will feature over 100 exhibitors from Australia and New Zealand, including entomologists, researchers, breeders, and educators. Attendees can explore live insect displays, static collections, and interactive workshops, offering insights into the roles insects play in ecosystems and their importance in biodiversity.







Adult female feeding on a scarab beetle; Spinifex hummocks (*Triodia* spp.) where *G. gajarrangarnang* sp. nov. is usually found. Photos: [Aust. Journal of Taxonomy](#)

*Gorareduvius gajarrangarnang*, is a newly discovered species of Australian assassin bug that prowls amongst the insect community, crafting traps using sticky plant resin to capture unsuspecting prey!

This has the scientific community (like myself) a buzz (buzz...get it?), as it is one of the rare examples of tool use among insects.

These devious little creatures can be found in arid grasslands of the east Kimberly region, and these findings will contribute to our understanding of behavioural ecology and evolutionary mechanisms.



Australia has a new Serial  
killer in our midst.





Image: [Parrishlab.org](http://Parrishlab.org)



## Adopt - Don't Shop! The pros and cons of the unregulated rescue industry

How often are we hearing the mantra “Adopt, don’t shop” when we are looking to add a furry friend to our family? Generally, this means that it is becoming somewhat “fashionable” to source our new pets from a pound, a shelter, or a privately run rescue organisation/group, rather than from a breeder – registered (with a governing body such as Master Dog Breeders Association, DogsVic, NSW Cat Fanciers Association, etc) and reputable - or not registered and mostly just a pair of dogs that got together in a suburban back yard





Image: [Wallpaperflare.com](https://wallpaperflare.com)

and produced puppies that now need to find homes – or even a commercial breeder (often mis-labelled as “puppy farms” by animal rights groups).

Generally when one sources a puppy or kitten from a registered and reputable breeder, they are receiving a pet with a traceable genetic line, some guarantees of health and temperament (due to various tests for genetic faults prior to selecting a breeding match), and many also include post adoption support for new puppy/kitten owners, and/or a return to breeder guarantee if the pup/kitten can no longer stay with the new family for whatever reason. Registered breeders are also subject to keeping meticulous records of all their animals, spot checks by their governing body or other authorities (such as RSPCA) and may also be held to account by other breeders in their breed group if their standards fall short of optimum.

So, let’s consider what we are getting when adopting a puppy/dog or cat/kitten from a rescue source – be that a pound, shelter, or rescue organisation...

1. The rescue industry in Australia is NOT regulated in any way by ANY authority, except basic oversight by the RSPCA – but only if they are alerted to an animal welfare issue by a member of the public. This leaves it open to a myriad of possible animal

welfare related problems – from foster carers taking in more animals than they can care for to a high (or even decent) standard, sloppy or non-existent paperwork detailing such things as parasite control, vaccinations, puppy weight gains, etc, haphazard re-homing practices designed to turn over numbers in order to “save” more... the list goes on of the possible issues that could arise from the lack of regulation or reporting to any regulating authority.

2. Stray animals are actually a government responsibility under every state law in Australia. Stray animals should be presented to the local pound in case their owners are looking for them. Private rescue groups often have partnerships with pounds to take excess animals to remove the pressure from those pounds once animals have finished their mandated hold times (varies by state). Once a pound has reached full capacity, some of the longer-term animals may be euthanised to make space for more strays to come in – this is not optimal but is often the only recourse if there are no other options available. Rescues are increasingly being relied upon to move animals out of pounds – effectively outsourcing the responsibility to an unfunded and unregulated industry of big hearted people who have the best intentions but may not be adequately resourced to do the job to the highest standard.

3. Pounds and registered shelters (RSPCA, AWL, etc) are actually regulated to some extent, and must follow specific codes of practice, record keeping, and other animal welfare related procedures. They must report their activities to a government body at least annually. In some states, some rescues (based on an opt-in process) may need to report to a government body, but the records required to be reported are fairly superficial, and don't actually give a good insight into the day-to-day workings of each group. This leaves the vast majority of private rescues not regulated in any way at all.

All of the above considered, the issues go further when rescue groups are left to operate in whatever way they see fit with essentially no boundaries.



When rescues take in a homeless animal, they have no history about that animal, and no 100% idea of breed mix, long term temperament or health problems, etc. Everything they know about any given animal is what presents in front of them while they have that animal in their care. The longer they have the animal in care, the more they might understand about that animal, but there will be no absolute certainty about the animal's history, breeding, genetic traits, long term temperament, triggers, or possible health issues that may present as that animal ages. This also applies to puppies/kittens born in rescue care – the only thing truly known about those puppies/kittens is what presented during their time with the rescue (foster carer), and thus, long term guarantees of health or temperament, or even such things as adult size cannot be given.

Some rescues are registered as charities and fundraise to continue their business – and let's face it, it IS a business, no matter what spin you want to put on it. Selling an animal, no matter from what source is a business transaction, and if that is what you do day in day out, then you are effectively an animal re-homing business. Regardless the financial sources or amounts, many rescues are still operating on a loss-making business model, rather than a profit-making one, which really makes little sense, but seems to feed into



Image: [Wallpaperflare.com](https://www.wallpaperflare.com)

the “do-gooder” feelings of those that tend to gravitate towards this industry. Big hearts are definitely a requirement to work in the rescue industry, but a reasonable business sense should be factored in also.

So – knowing that rescues really have very little understanding of the full range of traits in an animal they are looking to re-home, how do they manage to make the best matches for that animal when looking to place them with a new family? The reality is that they are generally doing matches as best they can based on the knowledge they have of that animal whilst in their care, so the longer an animal has been in care, the better understanding they may have, but not always. Some rescues, after making an unsuitable match, may happily take back the animal if it is not fitting in... but not all rescues have this policy, and adopters may be left with a pet they cannot live with, and may have to pass that animal on to another rescue, a shelter, or a pound, and so the cycle repeats for that animal. This is NOT an optimal outcome for that animal, is it?

There is also the problem of certain rescues re-homing animals with issues that require new owners to put in a lot of work or training (often at their own cost) to address issues that the animal has – be those health or temperament issues. This is not desirable, but as many smaller rescues do not have the resources to rehabilitate animals in their care properly before re-homing them, this is becoming a more prevalent problem. Some smaller operators are so focused on “saving” more and more animals, that they are re-homing unsuitable animals to unsuspecting adopters and giving the entire industry a bad reputation... and perpetuating the myth that all rescue animals are somehow “broken” in some way. In reality most rescue animals are perfectly suitable as family pets with few health or temperament issues, but it only takes one bad experience with a rescued pet for the public to come to the conclusion that this is not the case.

Adopting a rescue pet is a lottery... sometimes you lose, but when you win, you win the best prize possible. Are you willing to play the lottery? Regulation of the industry may well increase your chances of winning.

# A Spotlight on ... Kylie Gilbert.

## Dog Representative

**Kylie, much of your life has been devoted to animals and dogs in particular – how did that come about?**

I was born into a family of dog exhibitors and breeders - my grandmother, uncle, mum and dad all kept Irish setters and Collies. This led to me becoming a Junior Dog Handler at the age of just five years, managing, training and caring for dogs. Surrounded by this passion, animals were always going to be my calling in life.

Today I have four Welsh Springer Spaniels at home and another who is currently living with my parents. Given my keen interest and prior studies in genetics, I find it fascinating having to work in different ways to maintain the health of rare breeds. I am still very involved in the purebred dog world as an exhibitor and breeder.

**You've been involved in a professional capacity in the animal industry for more than 25 years, including in animal technology, vet nursing, education, research and compliance. With that wide range of expertise, what led to you joining Animal Care Australia in 2019?**

I was on the Board of Directors at Dogs Victoria at the time; and had been following Animal Care Australia's work during that period. I was impressed with Animal Care Australia's action-oriented approach and I felt our philosophies on animal welfare were well aligned. After discussions with Michael (our President), I joined as the Dog Species representative.

**What are some of the key submissions and government consultations you have been working on at Animal Care Australia?**



I have been heavily involved in puppy farm legislation changes in regard to breeding. Ideally, all the states would be on the same page on this issue, but each state has their own legislation. It is therefore challenging navigating the various regulations, some of which are still evolving. The state governments want an end to breeding, but they don't understand that in stopping it, the gene pool will become very small, which in turn will limit access to dogs for those who need them, including Assistance and Guide Dogs. These dogs play a major role in people's lives. I strongly believe that activism should not form a basis for legislation. We should be focused on animal welfare, but at the moment it seems to be based on ownership rights.

**What have you most enjoyed about your time at Animal Care Australia?**

I enjoy the camaraderie of working with a group of like-minded people – being there for the same purpose, we can vent and share experiences with other Committee members, who are also facing challenges in their respective areas.

**You're also currently helping to shape the future of the animal industry through education, training and health – what does this involve?**

I am currently the National Education Manager at Hanrob Education, an industry-based RTO. We work with Councils and students: what I love about Hanrob is our hands-on, practical



approach to learning. Concurrently, I am also a Director of the Canine Research Foundation, part of a Committee which reviews and makes decisions on grant funding for projects relating to genetic and medical disorders.

**Your life has been dedicated to furthering animal and dog welfare in Australia – how do you make time for other activities?**

My youngest daughter is into BMX riding and competes at events around Australia; and my older daughter is a netballer – so I have to try and squeeze in attending dog shows on non-competing weekends.

**What would you like to see in relation to dog welfare in the future in Australia?**

My aim is to make sure that everyone has the ability to own a family dog. I believe welfare should never be about numbers, it should be about how well those animals are looked after. In a perfect world, legislation like the Residential Tenancies' Act would be based on welfare, rather than just on numbers.

*Photo of Kylie with one of her Welsh springer spaniels, Gracie, who is 3.5 years old*



# Want to join our team?

## Position available:



### *Fish & Aquatic Species Representative*

#### **Experience:**

Animal Care Australia is seeking a person who has reasonable advocacy experience and an understanding of the differences between animal rights and animal welfare. Animal Care Australia is seeking a person who has reasonable experience in the keeping & breeding of fish – tropical, freshwater and marine.

#### **Essential skills:**

- Communication skills (oral & written)
- Time management
- Able to work as part of a Team

#### **Desirable – but not essential:**

The inclusion of cephalopods in animal welfare legislation will result in Codes of Practice needing to be examined and in some cases to be drafted. Knowledge of keeping these species will be of great benefit.

Having a membership of an Association for the keeping & breeding of fish species or contacts to groups.

#### **Responsibilities include:**

- Represent all species specific member organisations to communicate current animal-related community and welfare issues.
- Undertake work including drafting of policy advice, project work of a specialist nature, research and analyse current legislation and policies and prepare associated reports for consideration by our Committee.
- Assist us to work with government, non-government & community stakeholders to ensure policy issues are coordinated and effectively communicated as per community and government expectations.



If you would like to join the Animal Care Australia Team or you know someone who would be ideal for the position please apply via **SEEK Volunteer** or email us at: [aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au)



**Animal Care Australia's  
GENERAL MEETINGS 2025**

**7.30 to 8.30pm**

**JULY 14th**

**SEPTEMBER 8th**

**NOVEMBER 10th – AGM**

**Meetings in 2025 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](mailto:aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au) with your details. A link for the meeting will be emailed to you.

**Contact Amanda our Media &  
Sponsorship Coordinator:**  
[media@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:media@animalcareaustralia.org.au)

***Become a  
sponsor!***

# Luigi's Spinal Surgery Recovery with Petcover

**W**hen playful black Moodle (Maltese x Poodle) pup Luigi entered Stephanie's life in January 2021, she never anticipated the emotional journey ahead. Luigi's joyful spirit filled every room. Until one afternoon in November 2024, when a fun day of backyard play turned into a medical emergency.

With veterinary care and the support of Petcover, this is a story of healing, hope, and the vital role of pet insurance.

## A sudden turn: The onset of Luigi's symptom

It was a typical spring afternoon when Luigi, full of energy, began chasing a ball. Moments later, Stephanie noticed something was off. Luigi had suddenly stopped moving and was struggling to walk. His usual confident stride was replaced with an unsteady, "wonky" gait. Alarmed, she rushed him to the Animal Emergency Centre in Mount Waverley.

The emergency team couldn't pinpoint the cause but referred Luigi back to his regular vet for further investigation. The following day, his condition worsened. Luigi became more withdrawn, showed signs of pain when being handled, and refused to walk altogether. Stephanie immediately booked him in with his trusted vet, who, recognising the severity, referred them to the specialist team at VRH. There, a neurologist suspected Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD), a condition that can cause severe pain and even paralysis in dogs.



## The diagnostic journey

At VRH, Luigi underwent a series of neurological tests and imaging to confirm the initial suspicions. The neurologist noted significant ataxia, uncoordinated movements, and back pain consistent with spinal cord compression.

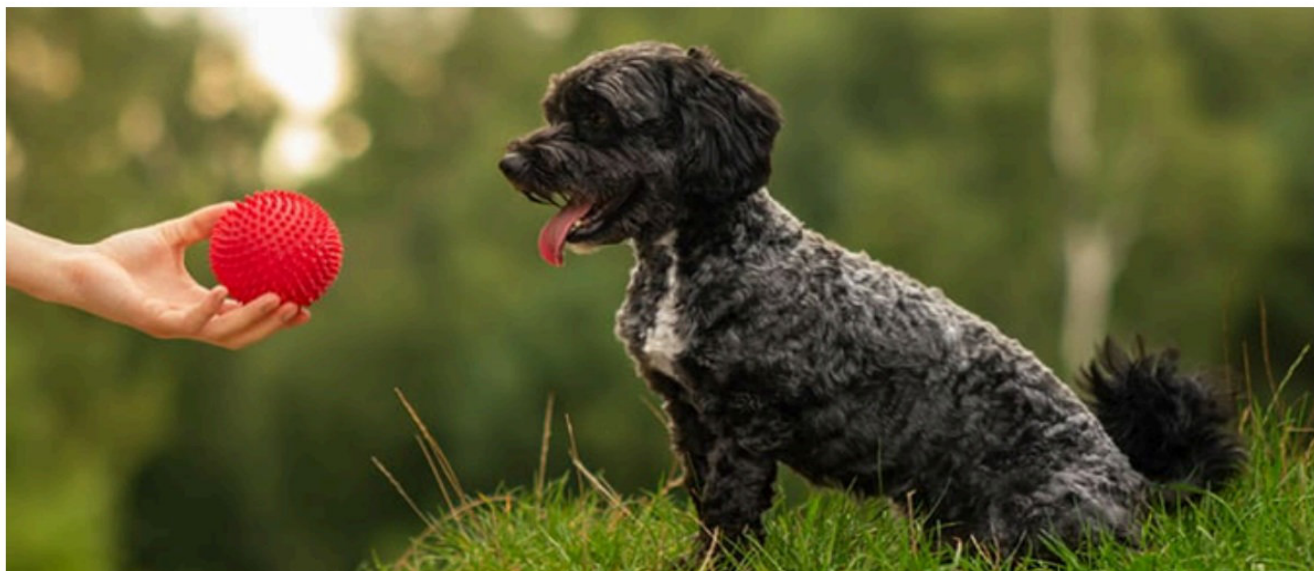
An MRI scan confirmed the diagnosis: Luigi was indeed suffering from IVDD, and the compression on his spinal cord was severe enough to require urgent surgical intervention. Despite the worry, Stephanie felt reassured knowing Luigi was in capable hands. Thanks to her Petcover policy, she could focus on making the best decisions for his health and not worrying about the financial burden.





## Surgery and post-operative care

Just days after his diagnosis, Luigi was booked for spinal decompression surgery, specifically, a hemilaminectomy. Thankfully the surgery was a success, and Luigi remained under close observation at VRH for several days. Three days later he was discharged with a detailed post-operative care plan that included physiotherapy, pain management, and plenty of rest.



*"The claiming process has always been so easy with Petcover," Stephanie shared. "They've never questioned any of my claims, big or small. I really felt they had our backs."*

She was especially grateful for the flexibility Petcover offered. The policy allowed her to use her preferred vets, covered Luigi's physiotherapy sessions, and reimbursed a significant portion of the surgical costs.

In a time of uncertainty, Petcover delivered peace of mind. Something no pet parent can put a price on.

## Final thoughts from Stephanie

Looking back, Stephanie speaks with quiet confidence about her experience. When a pet faces something as serious as surgery, having the right support makes all the difference.

*"They've never questioned any of my claims and I've made a few over the years for all my dogs," she shared. She described the process as "easy and efficient" and appreciated that it was "transparent and honest."*

She remains dedicated to Luigi's care and continues to insure her dogs with Petcover. When asked if she would recommend Petcover to others, Stephanie responded:

*"Yes already has because of the different levels of cover available and knowing physio can also be looked at being covered. With other insurers they sometimes will only cover things if you go to their chosen vets but with Petcover, you can go to your chosen vet and the cover is ongoing too."*





By: Karri Nadazdy — ACA Horse and Livestock  
Representative



# Do horses need rugs in winter?



Image: Shutterstock ID:1516020182

Most of Australia has very mild winters compared to other parts of the world, and most healthy horses do not need rugs through the winter at all.

Horses have a much wider thermoneutral zone than people do. Humans feel comfortable (not too warm and not too cold) between 25-30°C. While horses are comfortable in a much wider range of 5-25°C. They prefer much cooler weather than we do, and we shouldn't assume they are cold, just because we start to feel cold.

All horses need access to shelter (man-made or natural) to protect them from cold winds and rain. High fibre feed (such as grass hay) warms horses from the inside due to their digestive system which ferments fibre in the large intestine to break it down, generating heat. All horses should have access to fibre throughout winter for this reason. A horse's winter coat will stand up and trap warm air keeping them warmer than a horse with a light rug on that flattens the hair. Horses in Australia do not need to be stabled, and most horses will be happier living outside.

Of course we all know someone who is too hot or too cold when everyone else in the room is comfortable, and horses have exceptions too.

Horses grow their winter coats in response to shorter daylight hours, not temperature. And this means horses with thick winter coats can be way too hot through Australian autumn and winter, sweating even on cold days, and they need partial clipping to help them cool down and be comfortable.



Image: [Ethically Equine](#)

Horses and ponies that are overweight or obese should not be rugged and be partially clipped to help them burn energy to lose weight over winter. It's common to clip these horses leaving to hair on their backs to allow rain to run off them without having to rug in wet weather, aiding more weight loss.



They will not feel cold as long as they are provided access to fibre to eat. As horses cannot be left without access to fibre (grass or hay), winter is often the only time these horses **can** safely lose weight, without starving them, which is dangerous for horses, even for short periods. Horses evolved to lose weight over winter, ready to safely eat the high energy spring grass. Horses that are overweight or obese when spring comes are at very high risk of laminitis and founder, a life threatening metabolic condition, that is becoming an avoidable, but common problem. Its best to let these horses lose weight and rug them only once their goal weight is achieved.

Horses that will feel the cold and need some rugging include those that have been fully clipped (to keep them cool during exercise), have very fine coats, or are elderly, unwell or underweight. Most of these horses just need a mid-weight rug and a waterproof one during wet weather. Heavy winter rugs designed for snow and below freezing conditions in European winters are commonly sold in Australia but are generally unnecessary here. Horses shouldn't feel warm or damp under their rugs.

It's good practice to only rug horses when bad weather is expected. Horses that are soaked through in prolonged wet and windy weather will be very cold indeed. Especially if they do not have a roofed shelter to protect them and hay to keep them under that shelter.

Over rugging and over heating horses in our mild winters is a common problem in Australia - we feel the cold and assume our horses are cold too. The Bureau of Meteorology's *Feels Like* temperature predictions can be very helpful when deciding whether to put a rug your horse or not, especially





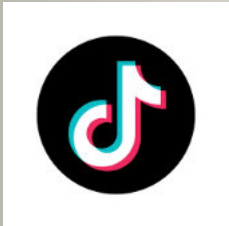
leading into winter when the weather is not really cold enough to rug, but we are really feeling that cold change.

Once deciding to rug a horse, then the next decision is how warm a rug do they need? It's always less than you think, and having layers you can add or remove on different nights is better than just owning just one too-warm winter doona that your horse is sweating under.

Some people even buy adhesive aquarium thermometers (that are flat, and usually stick to the glass) to stick inside a horse's rug to ensure they are not too hot, which is a cheap, safe and practical way to check.

If in doubt, it's always better to under rug than over do it. A healthy horse won't mind one bit! And let those fat ponies burn some extra calories while they can.

Temperature	Stabled/Clipped	Stabled/Unclipped	Turned out/ Unclipped
15C and warmer	Zero fill	Nothing	Nothing
10C to 15C	Light weight (100g) or zero fill	Nothing or zero fill	Nothing
5C to 10C	Medium weight (250g)	Light weight (150g)	Nothing or light weight (100g)
Zero to 4C	Heavy weight (300g)	Medium weight (200g)	Nothing or light/ medium weight (150-
-10C to zero	Heavy weight (300-400g)	Medium weight (200-300g) with liner	Light or medium weight (150-300g)
-10C or colder	Heavyweight (300-500g) plus liner and	Medium or heavy weight (300-400g) and	Heavy weight (300-500g) and hood





# Advocacy News

## Response to Yarra City Council Local Laws review

Animal Care Australia raised the following concerns:

- The numbers listed for species within The numbers listed for species within Part 18 – Animals & Birds are contradictory to the animal welfare needs of the species. These will lead to animal welfare issues which leads us to believe they have simply been ‘made up’ – likely based on personal bias rather than facts.
- Animal Care Australia specifically called out the existing number restrictions for birds and small mammals.
- Animal Care Australia also called for exemptions to permits where animals are being kept in accordance with species specific Codes of Practice.

Animal Care Australia requested to meet with Council to discuss these matters further.

You can read our full response here:



# Advocacy News



## Response to Maroondah City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Animal Care Australia raised the following concerns:

- The numbers listed for species within Local Law 11, Section 40 are contradictory to the animal welfare needs of the species. These will lead to animal welfare issues which leads us to believe they have simply been 'made up' – likely based on personal bias rather than facts.
- Animal Care Australia also notes Domestic Animal Management Plans are for the management of dogs and cats ONLY and other pets should NOT be included in Domestic Animal Plans.
- Animal Care Australia specifically called out the existing number restrictions for birds and small mammals.
- Animal Care Australia also called for exemptions to permits where animals are being kept in accordance with species specific Codes of Practice.

Animal Care Australia requested to meet with Council to discuss these matters further.

You can read our full response here:







# Advocacy News



## Response to Maribyrnong City Council Local Laws review

Animal Care Australia had no objections to the proposed license for commercial dog walkers.

However, Animal Care Australia raised the following concerns:

- The numbers listed for species within Part 15 – Animals & Birds are contradictory to the animal welfare needs of the species. These will lead to animal welfare issues which leads us to believe they have simply been ‘made up’ – likely based on personal bias rather than facts.
- While we acknowledge the numbers for dogs and cats in the 2015 Local Law does align with State legislation, we STRONGLY question Council’s ethics in proposing to reduce these numbers further – especially given by their admission more people will be living in multi-residential and high-density buildings.
- Animal Care Australia also questions the ability to enforce reductions on dogs and cats ‘that are not registered.’

Animal Care Australia requested to meet with Council to discuss these matters further.

You can read our full response here:



# Advocacy News

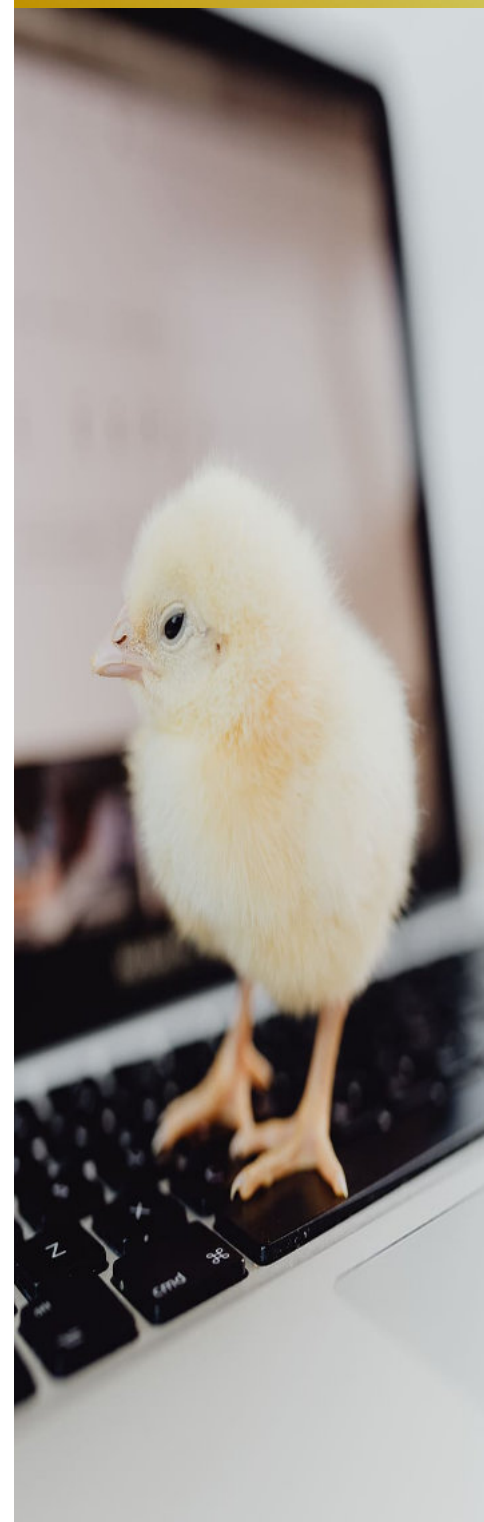


## Response to National Principles for the regulation of Assistance Animals

Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of a national consistent approach to the rights of those who rely on assistance animals.

Animal Care Australia made the following points and recommendations:

- clarification of the definition of “Assistance Animal” is needed
- supports that animals (not just dogs) will continue to be recognised (and protected) under the definition in the Act.
- supports nationally consistent accreditation requirements for assistance animal trainers and/or training organisations. Although noting implementation of these would still be up to the states/territories.
- strongly supports minimum education requirements for individuals training assistance animals.” is needed
- conditionally supports the establishment of a national standard for verifying the handler’s disability and their need for an assistance animal.
- supports a nationally recognised identity card and logo for assistance animals and their handlers.
- supports a national approach to the ongoing welfare of assistance animals, including standards for their care, before and



during their working life and post-retirement.

- supports the introduction of a national Public Access Test (PAT), ensuring national consistency in the evaluation of assistance animals.

You can read our full response here:



Make a  
Difference

by donating today

***You can donate via our website:***

***<https://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/donate-to-aca/>***



# DRIVE **WILDLIFE** AWARE



## **WILDLIFE IS ABOUT**

- At **dawn** and **dusk**
- On **rural roads** and near **crooks, waterholes, and vegetation**
- When you see **wildlife crossing signs**

**SLOW DOWN** ALLOW TIME TO REACT

**STAY ALERT + SCAN ROADSIDES**

**USE HIGH BEAMS (WHEN SAFE)**

**IF SAFE, BRAKE (DON'T SWERVE)**

**REPORT INJURED WILDLIFE**

Download IFAW app to  
call local wildlife rescue  
group for assistance



# Species Representatives



**BIRDS:**  
Sam Davis



**CATS:**  
Michelle Grayson



**DOGS:**  
Kylie Gilbert



**EXHIBITED:**  
Tracey Dierikx



**HORSES & LIVESTOCK:**  
Karri Nadazdy



**INSECTS & ARACHNIDS:**  
Michaela Storen



**NATIVE MAMMALS:**  
Michael Donnelly



**REPTILE & AMPHIBIANS:**  
Joanne Payne



**SMALL MAMMALS:**  
Rachel Sydenham

## Executive



**Michael Donnelly**  
President/Treasurer



**Sam Davis**  
Vice-President



**Michelle Grayson**  
Secretary/Public Officer

**Animal Care Australia Inc.**

**PO Box 314 Macarthur Square**

**Post Office NSW 2560**

**Website:**

[animalcareaustralia.org.au](http://animalcareaustralia.org.au)

**Email:**

[aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au)

**ABN 36 438 686 995**

**Tax File No 508 268 553**

**CFN: 25599**





# Sue Kowalczyk 2025

*A loved member of the Animal  
Care Australia family*