



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](#)

“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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The Animal Care Expert is expanding.

Invitation: We are inviting you to have your news included in the newsletter. We are opening up the newsletter to our members and supporters. If you would like to have your articles* or even your Club's events included and promoted in ACE, then simply submit them to us via our email address.

The Animal Care Expert Blog:

Our animal care experts' articles and up to date news from Animal Care Australia is here:

animalcareaustralia.org.au/ace-blog/

*Articles printed at the discretion of the editor and/or Committee.



The Future of Australia’s Animal Industry: Why Regulation Matters Now More Than Ever

By: Kylie Gilbert. Dog Representative.

HEADLINE ARTICLE:



Australia’s animal care and training industry is at a pivotal crossroads. As demand for companion animal services continues to grow—spanning pet care, training, breeding, grooming, boarding, and assistance animals—the absence of consistent, enforceable national regulation is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

While many dedicated professionals operate with integrity, skill, and a genuine commitment to animal welfare, the reality is that the industry remains largely unregulated in key areas. This creates significant risks—not only for animals, but also for workers, businesses, and the broader community.

An Unregulated Future: What's at Stake?

Without meaningful and consistent regulation, the industry faces a number of escalating challenges:

1. Inconsistent Welfare Standards

Animals may be exposed to varying levels of care depending on who is providing the service. Without minimum standards, there is no safeguard against poor handling practices, inadequate housing, or inappropriate training methods.

2. Unqualified Operators

Currently, in many sectors of the industry, individuals can operate without formal qualifications or demonstrated competency. This opens the door to misinformation, outdated practices, and, in some cases, significant harm to animals.

3. Workforce Vulnerability

Workers in unregulated environments often face unclear expectations, limited protections, and a lack of structured career pathways. This contributes to burnout, high turnover, and a workforce that is undervalued despite the complexity of the work.

4. Consumer Confusion

Pet owners are increasingly seeking professional services but have little guidance on how to identify reputable providers. Without regulation or accreditation frameworks, trust becomes difficult to establish and maintain.

5. Reputational Risk to the Industry

A small number of poor practices can have widespread consequences, damaging public trust and undermining the credibility of the many professionals doing the right thing.

“As an industry, we have a responsibility to advocate for standards that reflect the value of the work we do — and the lives entrusted to our care.”

The Case for Regulation: Raising the Bar Across the Industry

Regulation is not about restricting the industry—it is about strengthening it. When implemented effectively, it provides a framework that supports both animal welfare and professional integrity.

1. Improved Animal Welfare Outcomes

Regulation establishes minimum standards of care, handling, and training. This ensures that all animals—regardless of where they are housed or handled—receive appropriate, humane, and evidence-based care.

2. Professional Recognition and Career Pathways

A regulated industry recognises skills, qualifications, and experience. It creates

clear entry points, progression pathways, and professional identity for those working within the sector.

3. Safer Workplaces

With defined standards comes improved Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) practices, better risk management, and clearer reporting frameworks—protecting both workers and animals.

4. Consumer Confidence

Regulation provides transparency. Pet owners can make informed decisions, knowing that providers meet recognised standards and are accountable for their practices.

5. Industry Sustainability and Growth

A regulated framework supports long-term growth by attracting investment, improving workforce retention, and aligning the industry with broader national expectations around animal welfare and professional standards.

Finding the Balance: Practical, Industry-Led Regulation

It is essential that any move toward regulation is industry-informed, practical, and proportionate. Over-regulation or poorly designed frameworks risk placing unnecessary burden on small businesses and limiting accessibility.

The goal should be a nationally consistent approach that:

- Recognises existing qualifications and experience
- Supports upskilling and transition pathways
- Engages industry bodies, training organisations, and employers
- Focuses on outcomes, not just compliance

A Shared Responsibility

The future of the animal industry in Australia will be shaped by the decisions we make now. Regulation, when done well, is not a barrier—it is an opportunity.

An opportunity to:

- Protect animal welfare at a national level
- Elevate the professionalism of the workforce
- Provide clarity and confidence to consumers
- Ensure the industry continues to grow with integrity

As an industry, we have a responsibility to advocate for standards that reflect the value of the work we do—and the lives entrusted to our care.

Important Pet News

Australia: Federal Authorities are clamping down on Dubia Roaches - official update.



Federal Authorities are clamping down on Dubia Roaches - official update. Notice from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's (DCCEEW) website:

"Permits cannot be issued for Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches. These species are not on the Live Import List. It is illegal to possess, trade or breed them in Australia."

For more information: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/wildlife-trade/live-import-list?>

Animal Care Australia is aware many reptile, amphibian and bird keepers have been using these insects - sold through pet stores and by private traders. We note the website was only just updated on 29th May 2026. Following recent raids, we had been checking the DCCEEW website for statements relating to this issue, and until yesterday - no such statements had been posted.

Why or how the trade has been permitted to exist for some time and is only now being shut down is not included in any explanation on the departments website. At the time of this article, the Pet Industry Association of Australia had lodged an application to have the Dubia Roaches added to the Import List: [Amend the live import list](#)

(Image of Dubia Roach: By Nicky.Animals - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4793239>)

In this section

Live Import List

Last updated: 29 May 2026

Permits cannot be issued for Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches. These species are not on the Live Import List. It is illegal to possess, trade or breed them in Australia.

See [Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches](#) for more information.

Plant and animal specimens considered to be suitable for live import into Australia are listed in the Live Import List:

- [Live Import List](#)

[show all | hide all]

About the Live Import List

Amending the Live Import List

Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches

Hybrids

Biological control agents

Outcomes to requests to amend the list

Animal Care Australia has written (*click pdf icon*) to the Federal Environment Minister, Senator Murray Watt, as well as to the department. Our correspondence was to condemn the actions of the officers that seized roaches from traders, as well as to support the PIAA application.



The next step in this process will be a public consultation IF the department agrees to move the application forward. Animal Care Australia will respond to that consultation in support of the trade, possession and breeding of the Dubia Roaches for the purpose of a source as a live-feeder insect.

Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches

Only species included on the [Live Import List](#) can be legally imported into Australia. This means a permit cannot be issued for the import of any species not listed. Dubia and Madagascar Hissing cockroaches are not on the Live Import List. It is illegal to possess, trade or breed them in Australia.

Section 303EK of the EPBC Act makes it an offence to import a regulated live specimen that is not on the Live Import List.

In addition, section 303GN of the EPBC Act makes it an offence to possess, breed, or trade specimens that have been illegally imported. This includes the progeny of such specimens.

The EPBC Act applies irrespective of whether individual states and territories regulate the possession of Dubia cockroaches.

Massive seizure of illegal exotic cockroaches prompts warning

[MEDIA RELEASE](#)

[ENVIRONMENT](#)

[WILDLIFE TRADE](#)

5 June 2026

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) has issued a warning to pet-related businesses and reptile keepers after more than 100,000 live exotic cockroaches were seized this week from a commercial breeder in Bathurst, New South Wales.

This is the largest seizure of illegal exotic invertebrates in Australia, with an estimated value of up to \$200,000. The seizure included dubia cockroaches and Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

These species cannot be legally imported into Australia. This also means they cannot be legally kept, bred, or sold no matter how they were obtained.

Exotic cockroaches have not been subject to an environmental risk assessment, and their presence in Australia may spread disease and harm native wildlife and agriculture.

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) Biosecurity Collections are managing the euthanasia and disposal of the seized cockroaches.

Only species included on the [Live Import List](#) can be legally imported into Australia.

Quotes from a Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) spokesperson

"We take our job protecting Australia's unique biodiversity and breaches of national environment law very seriously.

"We're seeing illegal breeding and trading of exotic cockroaches and we're putting pet businesses and pet owners on notice.

"If you are found to possess, breed or trade exotic cockroaches such as dubia cockroaches and Madagascar hissing cockroaches they will be seized and you could face penalties under federal law.

"Reptile owners who have been using dubia roaches as feeders are encouraged to seek legal alternatives such as crickets and wood roaches.

"For more information you can call 1800 110 395. To report illegal wildlife activities visit the DCCEEW website."



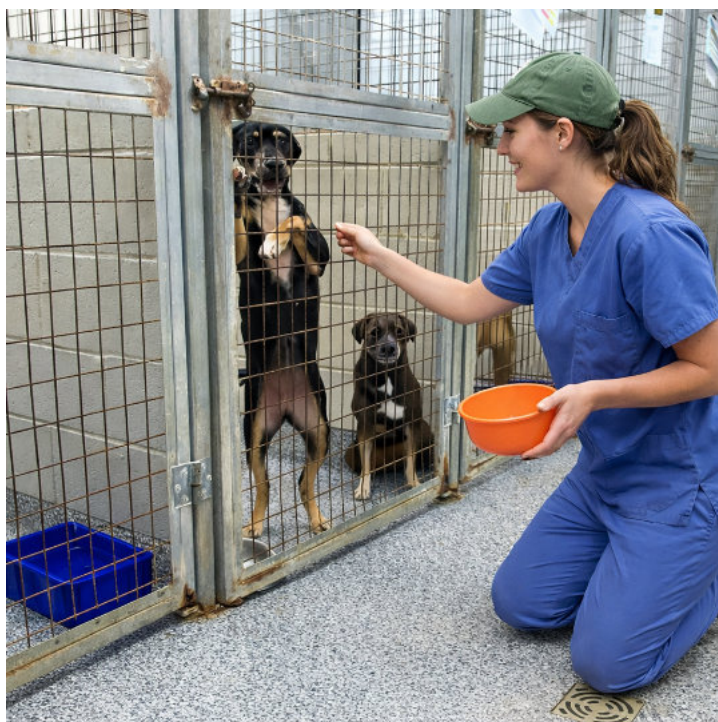
DCCEEW website:

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/wildlife-trade/live-import-list?>



Does the rescue industry/ sector need regulating? I believe so!

By: Tracey Dierikx - Exhibited Animals Representative



Anyone interested in animals will have seen the social media posts put out by rescues about their animals for adoption, needing surgeries, needing food or supplies, etc... yes? Many of these posts pull at our heart strings and many of us might even donate money, resources, or even our time and homes to foster animals.

But how often are we really looking at what may be going on behind the scenes?

Recently, I have come across at least 2 instances where seemingly lovely and caring rescues may have gotten well out of their depth by taking on far more animals than they could responsibly care for, and the

animals have suffered because of this need to “save them all” at all costs.

The cat rescuer who takes cats from street colonies, desexes and tries to rehome them, but now has far too many cats housed in a residential property... to the point that numerous cats have fallen gravely ill and are requiring ICU veterinary treatment, not to mention the ones that have died. The GoFundMe’s for all of those cats bills totals well over \$20,000 to date.

Then there is the recent case of 53 dogs from a rescue being “boarded” at a facility (and ostensibly run by another rescue) that was raided by the RSPCA, and dogs were found crammed into small wire crates stacked atop each other, and too many dogs crowded into outdoor kennels living in their own filth. Both the rescue that owned those 53 dogs and the rescue that owned the “boarding” facility were actively fundraising while these animals were certainly not receiving much in the way of actual care.

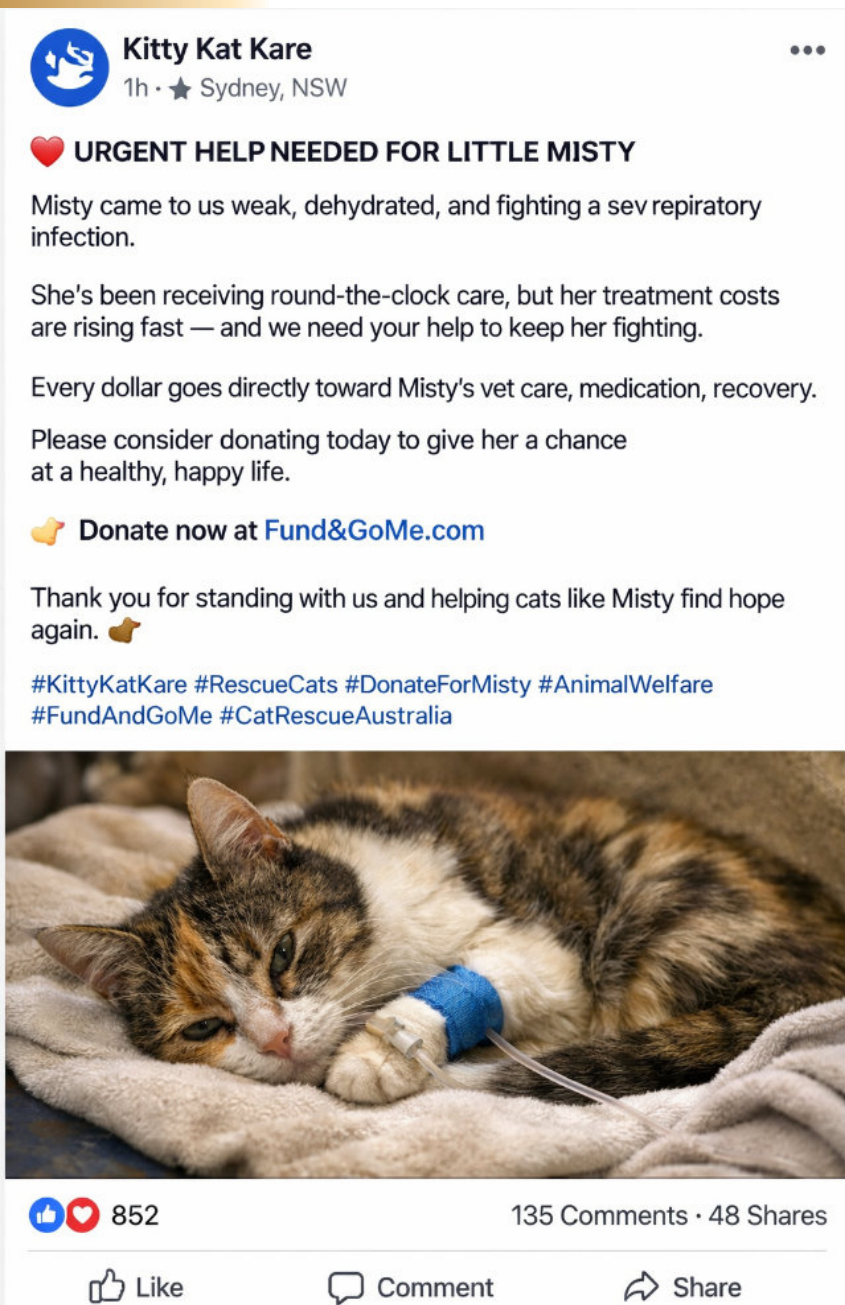
I have been involved with rescue for over 20 years in Sydney, and over those years have seen some pretty dodgy operators hanging out a shingle and calling themselves “rescues”. Rescues that overload foster carers with too many animals, those that rehome as quickly as possible to “make room” to “save” more animals, those rehoming unsuitable animals to unsuspecting families then refusing to take said animals back if it doesn’t work out, etc...

It's pretty easy for someone to become a rescue really... just make up a cool name for said rescue and start posting to social media about animals in your care. Some source from "free to good home" advertisements or surrenders from the general public, some go to the trouble of registering as a business and/or a charity and register with government so they can source animals from pounds, but even these rescues can be dodgy with their practices, and animals are actually suffering poor welfare conditions as a result.

The reality is that there are very few checks and balances that need to be followed for anyone involved in rescue. Registered charities submit annual reports about their activities, but they are fairly vague and focuses more on how any money is earned or spent. Those registered with government also submit annual reports, but as in the case of the 53 dogs above (the rescue that owned them was registered with government and as a charity and still is today), one might surmise that those reports are either woefully inadequate to ensure actual animal welfare, or they aren't being read or acted on when anomalies arise.

Breeders across Australia are being legislated/regulated more and more strictly, yet the numbers of animals finding themselves needing the rescue industry keeps growing – but no-one is monitoring what happens to them once they end up in rescue. Breeders are subject to audits by authorities at regular intervals, but rescues aren't. Breeders must follow strict (and enforceable) Codes of Practice, but rescues don't. Breeders are pilloried as the cause for needing a rescue industry, but rescues are often painted as lifesaving saints who can do no wrong – let me tell you, they can, and they are!

Unfortunately, Government don't seem to be willing to address this serious gap in our animal welfare legislation, and animals are suffering at the hands of dodgy operators, or those who are just simply getting out of their depth. It takes much



Kitty Kat Kare 1h · ★ Sydney, NSW

❤️ **URGENT HELP NEEDED FOR LITTLE MISTY**

Misty came to us weak, dehydrated, and fighting a sev respiratory infection.

She's been receiving round-the-clock care, but her treatment costs are rising fast — and we need your help to keep her fighting.


Every dollar goes directly toward Misty's vet care, medication, recovery.

Please consider donating today to give her a chance at a healthy, happy life.

👉 **Donate now at Fund&GoMe.com**

Thank you for standing with us and helping cats like Misty find hope again. 🐾

#KittyKatKare #RescueCats #DonateForMisty #AnimalWelfare #FundAndGoMe #CatRescueAustralia



👍❤️ 852 135 Comments · 48 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

more than a big heart to do rescue in a way that truly benefits the animals that find themselves needing that rescue.

I am a foster carer for a local rescue group, and my “specialty” is mumma dogs and pups – a sad indictment that my “specialty is required, yes? Even though I do not have to follow any specific codes of practice, I adhere to the Breeders codes to produce the best outcomes for the animals in my care... it’s not all that difficult really, and my rescue coordinator loves that I always have all the required information at hand when animals go up for adoption.

What I love about the rescue I work with is that all foster carers are communicated with at regular intervals, and are supported with all food and resources that we may require to care for our fosters. There are many rescues that drop off foster animals to carers and expect them to provide all food and other resources, and in some cases vet bills also, then the rescue pockets the adoption fee once the animal is rehomed.

There are no set “rules” for how rescue should operate, so each rescue has its own systems in place. The only thing many rescues agree on is that they should all operate on the smell of an oily rag and not attempt to turn any sort of profit for the work that they do, which is quite frankly ridiculous. At the very least, any business (rescue) should be striving to recoup as much of the money they spend as possible, rather than constantly relying on the goodwill of strangers to fund their activities. Only taking in as many animals as you can adequately care for if no donations are forthcoming might be a good idea too.

Another huge problem that I have come across is that when a rescue is solely operated via social media, under a pseudonym, and with no physical address attached, if a welfare issue is identified, there is no way that the authorities can investigate. This means that there may well be thousands of animals squirreled away in dead-end “rescue” situations who are actively suffering, and there is absolutely nothing anyone can do about it as the current system stands.

It’s time for rescue to be officially regulated... do you agree?



The Animal Care Expert

Watch out for our next issue in
September 2026.

Click to read our [previous issues](#)

CALLING ALL CAT OWNERS!



IF YOU:

- Are over 18
- Own or care for a cat
- Live in Australia



HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE INTERPRET
CAT BODY LANGUAGE!

COMPLETE THE SURVEY

- Anonymous and voluntary
- Takes 15-20 minutes
- Receive a FREE 6-month subscription for The Pet Diaries app when you complete the full survey!*

THE
Pet
diaries



Scan me!



CSU Ethics Approval: H26071

*For the full terms and conditions on how to claim, scan the QR code above!

Do you really understand what your cat is trying to tell you?

We're running a research project exploring how cat guardians interpret feline body language — and we'd love your help!

If you're 18+, live in Australia, and own or care for a cat, you're invited to take part in our survey. Your responses will help us understand how people interpret cat behaviour and improve future education for cat owners.

- Takes 15–20 minutes
- Completely anonymous and voluntary
- Receive a FREE 6-month subscription to The Pet Diaries App upon completion

Approved by the CSU Human Ethics Committee (H26071)

Scan the QR code or click the link below to get started!

https://csufobjbs.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dhXy8ndFOBF9bll



Why Cats Choose Boxes Over Expensive Beds

By: Michelle Grayson - Cat Representative



The Great Cat Mystery... Solved

Every cat owner has experienced it: you buy a luxurious plush cat bed, place it proudly in the lounge room... and your cat immediately climbs into the empty cardboard box it came in.

As strange as it seems, this behaviour actually makes perfect sense to cats. Choosing a box over a fancy bed is rooted in instinct, comfort, warmth, and security.

The “Perfect Fit” Effect

Cats are famous for squeezing into spaces that seem impossibly small. Tight spaces apply gentle pressure around the body, which can have a calming effect similar to a weighted blanket for humans.

Boxes provide:

- Firm boundaries
- Predictable surroundings

- A secure enclosed feeling

Many soft cat beds simply don't provide that same structure.

Hidden Hunter Instincts

Even while relaxing, cats instinctively prefer spaces that allow them to stay concealed while observing everything around them.

A box lets them:

- Stay partially hidden
- Watch movement safely
- Launch surprise "attacks" during play



To a cat, a cardboard box doubles as both a safe retreat and a perfect ambush station.

So Why Ignore the Fancy Bed?

Most cat beds are:

- Too open
- Too exposed
 - Too soft to feel secure
 - Placed in busy areas

Meanwhile, a simple box checks nearly every feline requirement:

- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Warm
- ✓ Enclosed
- ✓ Predictable
- ✓ Comfortable

Bottom Line

Cats don't choose boxes simply to be quirky — they choose them because boxes perfectly match their instinctive need for safety, warmth, comfort, and control.

So the next time your cat ignores the expensive bed and climbs into a delivery box instead... just remember..... in their mind, they picked the better option.

Why do cats love boxes more than expensive beds?

EXPENSIVE BED VS CARDBOARD BOX

- EXPENSIVE BED: Ignored. (X)
- CARDBOARD BOX: Instant favourite. (✓)
- Safe (✓)
- Warm (✓)
- Perfect hiding spot (✓)
- Cat approved (✓)

Cats choose **comfort** and **security** over luxury every time.

Award-winning cover, backed by real stories

Michelle & Maximo



“ When Maximo was five years old, he was diagnosed with Addison’s disease. At first, I was devastated, but thanks to ongoing treatment and support, he’s now a very happy dog.

I decided to insure Maximo with Petcover as soon as I brought him home as a puppy after a previous experience with another dog who was diagnosed with a brain tumour at just six years old. Without pet insurance, his treatment ended up costing me more than \$30,000. It was an incredibly difficult time and made me realise how important pet insurance truly is.

Over the years, Maximo has needed treatment for Addison’s disease, allergies, arthritis, a back injury, eye emergencies and ongoing medication and supplements.

Having Petcover has meant I’ve never had to worry about getting him the care he needs.

The claims process has always been smooth and supportive, and after more than 12 years with Petcover, I’m incredibly grateful for the peace of mind they’ve given me and my boy. ”

Michael & Charlie



“ I joined Petcover when Charlie was just a puppy, and for eight years I never needed to make a claim. Then Charlie was diagnosed with a mast cell tumour, and suddenly emergency veterinary care became very real.

What stood out to me most was the support I received from the Petcover team. When I called to make my first claim, they reviewed my policy history and even helped identify additional claims I could have made from the previous 12 months without me having to ask.

Emergency vet treatment can become expensive very quickly, but when it’s your best friend, all you care about is getting them the treatment they need.

Petcover paid out \$15,000 in claims, the process was fast, and reimbursements were back in my account within days.

During a very stressful time, the support and care I received made all the difference. I couldn’t have asked for a better experience. ”

Click here to
[Get a quote](#)

Get your pets covered today

1300 731 324

PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Our Partnership Continues

Proudly continuing our partnership with **VentraIP**
to support animal welfare, education and
responsible pet ownership across Australia.



We're excited to have VentraIP renewing as a sponsor of Animal Care Australia! We welcome their support.

As a national organisation, Animal Care Australia relies on access to email communication and VentraIP provide a secure and reliable service backed by 100% Australian Support.

It is great to see a digital service provider recognising the importance of pets in our lives by partnering with us.

With VentraIP's support, we're able to achieve more in promoting responsible pet ownership and ethical breeding practices.

Michael Donnelly
President, Animal Care Australia.



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Date: June 2026



Dear Pet Diary,



Hewoo hoomans. My name is Rain, and you may remember seeing me in the last issue of ACE? I wanted to share my story with you.

I live with ACA Exhibited Animals Representative Tracey Dierikx (Mummy). She says I has to tell everyone my life story ... which will be pretty short, 'cos I'm only 7 months old... haha!

My real mummy found herself pregnant and homeless sometime back in September of 2025, and spent some time waiting for someone to come get her from a local pound. The pound hoomans were awesome, and looked after her extra good, but no one came.

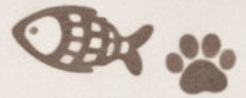
By October 2025, we were born in the middle of the night at the pound. Imagine the nice pound hoomans' surprise when they came in the next morning!

The nice pound sent emails to all the nicest rescue groups they could find and asked if anyone had room at their place for mumma and us. All 9 (yes NINE) babies.





Mummy Tracey's rescue group coordinator called her and asked if she had the room, time, and willingness to take in our family... and she said yes!



Next thing we knew, we were all packed up snug and going on a road trip from the pound to a new house. Scary and very exciting at the same time!

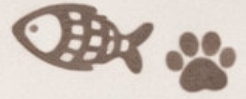
Mummy Tracey looked after us all until it was time to find new homes of our own. We were all very popular and were finding lovely families left, right, and centre until one day, I just looked at Mummy Tracey with my very best puppy dog eyes and asked her if I could live with her forever. She said yes ... yay!!

Since then, I've been living my best life. I have lots of toys in a box that I can take and chew anytime I like, and I'm allowed on the furniture whenever I want too. My favourite trick is looking at her and barking in her face while she's trying to watch TV or working on her computer. She says it's a bit annoying, but I think it's fun. I has a best friend named Phoebe, and she came to stay with us for 2 weeks when her mummy needed a holiday. We had the BEST time playing, rumbling, and digging holes in the back yard.





I love everyone and everything and want to jump up and give kisses all the time. Mummy Tracey says I need to sit nicely and wait for pats and kisses, but I'm still way too excitable.



Apparently I need more brain cells to grow before I might learn such restraint, but Mummy Tracey say it WILL happen. We just don't know how long it will take.



Me, with my best friend Phoebe. She's all grown up but I'm not yet.





3 days old - I'm facing the front.



Me at 2 weeks old - already learned to walk.



Me at 5 weeks old being cheeky



With the bros and sisters at 4 weeks old





Me now taking up all the floor.





To sign the petition scan the QR Code or follow the petition Link: <https://c.org/JgWcwBCftk>



"Protect Bird Keeping in Victoria" petition and why your support is crucial at this time.

Background:

A review of the Victorian Wildlife Act (1975) commenced in 2021, with input from the community and stakeholders being requested.

MPAS, along with other bird clubs, Animal Care Australia and the Victorian Avicultural Council all sent in submissions to the Review Panel.

The Review Panel presented their report to the state government on the 20 December 2021, with the state government responding in October 2025.

Current Situation:

As many of you are aware, bird keeping has a long and cherished tradition within our community, providing not only joy and companionship to thousands of Victorians but also supporting vital conservation efforts and educational Programs.

It is our belief that the government's response wording indicates that they plan to create further regulations that could severely restrict responsible bird

keeping practices across the state. These changes could undermine the work of dedicated hobbyists and organizations that contribute significantly to both animal welfare and community life.

The petition aims to recognise the positive impact of ethical bird keeping and to ensure that any new regulations are developed in consultation with those who are most knowledgeable and passionate about aviculture. By supporting this petition, you are helping to safeguard a valued pastime, protect the interests of responsible keepers, and ensure that future regulations are fair and informed by those with experience in the field.

We encourage you to review the petition and add your support. Your voice is vital in demonstrating to policymakers that this issue matters to a broad and engaged community. Please also consider sharing the petition with your networks, as wider awareness will strengthen our collective efforts.

Together we can make a difference.

Online Petition Link: <https://c.org/JgWcwBCftk>

The Worldwide Reptile Super Survey

The Worldwide Reptile Super Survey received 7,650 responses from 74 countries, documenting 140,566 animals across 1,366 species.

This is the most detailed global dataset focused on the reptile-keeping community, covering the species people keep, keeper demographics, sourcing activity, long-term keeping outcomes and more.

The summary report is now available here:

<https://responsiblereptilekeeping.org/worldwide-reptile-super-survey-report-2025?>

This data is vital. It helps reptile advocates worldwide speak to policymakers, journalists and other stakeholders, using real data from real keepers.



What Makes a Good Dog Breeder? Setting the Standard in Australia

By: Kylie Gilbert - Dog Representative



In Australia's growing companion animal sector, few roles carry as much responsibility — or as much scrutiny — as that of the dog breeder. With increasing public awareness around animal welfare and ethical sourcing, the expectations placed on breeders have never been higher.

But what truly defines a *good* breeder? Beyond registration numbers and marketing claims, ethical breeding is grounded in welfare, transparency, and a long-term commitment to both the dogs produced and the families they join.

Breeding with Purpose, Not Convenience

A responsible breeder does not produce litters to meet demand alone. Every mating is carefully planned with clear goals—whether that is to preserve breed integrity, improve health outcomes, or produce dogs suited to specific roles such as companionship, sport, or assistance work.

In Australia, many reputable breeders align with organisations such as state canine bodies and adhere to codes of ethics that guide breeding decisions. However, true quality goes beyond membership—it is reflected in daily practices and long-term accountability.

Health Comes First: Evidence-Based Breeding

At the core of ethical breeding is a commitment to **health testing and genetic responsibility**.

Good breeders:

- Conduct relevant breed-specific health testing (e.g. hip and elbow scoring, DNA screening, eye certifications)
- Understand hereditary conditions and actively work to reduce their prevalence
- Select breeding pairs based on both physical health and temperament—not just appearance

Importantly, these breeders are transparent. They are willing—and able—to provide documented health results and explain what those results mean for the puppy's future.





This level of diligence protects not only the individual dog, but also the long-term sustainability of the breed.

The Condition and Welfare of Breeding Dogs

The standard of care provided to breeding dogs is one of the clearest indicators of a breeder's ethics.

Breeding dogs should:

- Be in **excellent physical condition**, with appropriate weight, muscle tone, and coat health
- Live in environments that provide **enrichment, social interaction, and appropriate housing**
- Be treated as valued animals—not production units

In well-run Australian breeding programs, dogs are part of a managed, welfare-focused system where rest periods between litters, veterinary oversight, and behavioural wellbeing are prioritised.

If a breeder cannot demonstrate how their dogs are cared for day-to-day, this should raise immediate concern.

Raising Puppies for Life, Not Just Sale

The early weeks of a puppy's life are critical. Ethical breeders invest significant time into **raising well-adjusted, resilient puppies**.

This includes:

- Early neurological stimulation and age-appropriate enrichment

- Exposure to household environments, sounds, and handling
- Beginning foundational socialisation to set puppies up for success in their future homes



Puppies should leave for their new homes:

- Vaccinated, microchipped, and health-checked
- With clear feeding, care, and behavioural guidance
- At an appropriate age (generally no earlier than 8 weeks, often later depending on breed and development)

Ongoing Support and Accountability

A hallmark of a good breeder is what happens *after* the puppy goes home.

Ethical breeders:

- Provide ongoing advice and support to new owners
- Take responsibility for the lifetime of the dog, including rehoming if circumstances change
- Maintain genuine interest in the development and wellbeing of the dogs they produce

This ongoing relationship reflects a breeder's commitment—not just to the sale, but to the life they have created

Transparency Builds Trust

In an industry where consumers are often navigating conflicting information, transparency is critical.

Good breeders:

- Welcome questions and provide clear, honest answers
- Allow potential buyers to see where and how dogs are raised (in person or through appropriate means)
- Do not rely on pressure sales tactics or convenience-driven transactions

They understand that informed buyers are not a threat—they are part of raising standards across the industry.

Raising the Bar Together

Australia has many breeders who are deeply committed to animal welfare, breed preservation, and ethical practice. However, inconsistent standards across the broader sector continue to create confusion for consumers and risk for animals.

By promoting clear expectations of what good breeding looks like—and encouraging education, transparency, and accountability—we can collectively lift the standard.

Because at its core, responsible breeding is not just about producing puppies. It is about protecting the future of dogs, supporting the people who care for them, and ensuring every animal has the best possible start to life.



Reptiles are not low maintenance pets.



By: Joanne Payne - Reptile & Amphibian Representative

Reptiles are often advertised as easy or “low-maintenance” pets, but this misconception can lead to poor welfare outcomes for the animals.

While reptiles can become relatively easy to care for once their enclosure and husbandry are properly established, they still require specialised care, research, and an understanding of their natural behaviours and environmental needs.

One of the most important aspects of reptile welfare is ensuring the enclosure is correctly set up from the beginning. Different species have very different requirements for temperature, humidity, lighting, diet, and space. A snake from an arid environment will require very different conditions to a tropical lizard or a semi-aquatic turtle. Unfortunately, many reptiles suffer because owners rely on incorrect or outdated advice, or assume all reptiles can be cared for in the same way.

Heating and lighting are particularly important for reptile health. Lizards, for example, require access to UVB lighting during daylight hours to help them metabolise calcium and maintain healthy bones. During the cooler winter months, lighting times can be shortened to better reflect natural seasonal daylight cycles, while heat sources may also need to be adjusted. Snakes generally do not require UVB lighting in the same way many lizards do, but they still require appropriate temperatures and seasonal management.

Many reptiles also naturally undergo a period known as brumation during winter. Brumation is similar to hibernation and occurs in many healthy adult snakes and lizards when temperatures and daylight hours decrease. During this time, reptiles become far less active and often stop eating altogether. When done correctly and with healthy, appropriately sized animals, brumation can be a natural and beneficial process. However, improper cooling or lack of knowledge can create serious health risks, which is why reptile keepers should thoroughly research the specific requirements of their species before attempting it.

Although reptiles may not demand the same daily attention as dogs or cats, they are far from “set and forget” pets. Their welfare depends heavily on correct husbandry, observation, and ongoing learning from the keeper. Owners should always seek information from reputable sources such as reptile societies, qualified exotic veterinarians, and books written by experienced long-term keepers rather than relying solely on social media or pet shop advice.

With the right knowledge and preparation, reptiles can thrive in captivity and become rewarding animals to keep. Responsible reptile ownership begins with education, patience, and a commitment to meeting the specific needs of each individual species.



Feature Story

Guest author: **Melanie Martin.**

Burmese Cat Society of Australasia

Rescuing and Rehoming Cats In Need

The Burmese Cat Society of Australasia Inc (BCSA) is an affiliated cat club with NSW Cat Fanciers' Association Inc and has been assisting with the rescue and rehoming of cats in need for over 50 years in some way. Whilst the BCSA is not a registered cat rescue group, there is a gap which they feel they can assist with.

Whilst the focus is on Burmese cats in need, there are occasions where the foster carers will assist other cats in need (pedigree or not) where owners have nowhere else to turn. BCSA have helped rescue, rehabilitate, treat and rehome in excess of 80 cats over the past 6 years.

Like many rescue and rehome groups, BCSA is self funded as they do not meet the criteria set by the NSW Government to be eligible to apply for any grants available.

The primary carer Melanie and other club members or foster carers that assist her will take in the cats, assess, rehabilitate and get all the required veterinary work that is needed completed before they are advertised and suitable homes found. Melanie works with new owners to ensure the cats settle in and adjust to their new homes, and hopefully have their happily ever after story.

Many of the cats surrendered need considerable care and veterinary attention including dental treatments and extractions, vaccinations, desexing, microchip, flea and worming treatment, anxiety medication, special dietary requirements and sometimes surgery. Many of the cats taken in by BCSA are in care for months in rehabilitation and retraining programs.

It can be overwhelming trying to make a difference with rescuing cats and rehoming them, but when a cat community comes together to support each other, the results can be amazing.

BCSA are thankful and appreciative to all the amazing people out there with huge hearts willing to give these cats a chance and open their hearts and home to take on these cats in need.

BCSA gratefully accept all donations, and if you wish to donate, please contact the BCSA directly for more information.



These are a couple of Melanie's favourite and memorable cases over the years.

THE ORIENTAL SISTERHOOD:

One of my favourite cases over the past year or so was two Oriental kittens that were dumped on a sporting field on the south side of Sydney. Not microchipped or desexed we had no way of knowing who owned or bred these gorgeous girls. They were advertised in the hope that the owner would come forward. Sadly, this did not occur so I arranged to have blood tests done to ensure they were healthy and from there we desexed, microchipped, vaccinated, flea treated and wormed them.



DOMESTIC SHORTHAIR STRAYS

Back in 2021, BCSA were working closely with a lady who had a local stray neighbourhood cat give birth in her next-door neighbour's bin. Sadly, this lady has been trying to find an organisation to take in these Domestic strays for months and she was continually being turned away despite phoning numerous organisations and rescue groups hoping for some assistance. She was stressed and overwhelmed.

BCSA worked with her offering to at least get the cats desexed given they were at breeding age when she contacted us. The lady was doing the best she could to care for the cats, but the financial burden was considerable and permanent homes were needed urgently.

We partnered with Normanhurst Vet and our BCSA members rose to the challenge.

The BCSA put together 6 Kitten/Cat Packs including Scratching poles, Carry Boxes, litter and litter trays, vet recommended wet and dry food, beds and toys to go with these lovely kittens and mummy cat in need. Lyn made beautiful cat beds, Barry from Creature Features provided the scratching poles at a discounted price and Melanie Martin donated the other items in the packs.

We have received a beautiful letter from Normanhurst vet thanking the BCSA for the contributions made. All the cats have now found wonderful homes and the feedback from the new owners and Normanhurst Vet staff has been amazing. The packs have been so appreciated, and it was a lovely way to give these gorgeous cats in need the best start in their new homes.

SENIOR BURMESE BOYS

This case was one that really stood out to me as to the wonderful difference that the BCSA is making to the lives of humans and cats alike and why I do what I do.

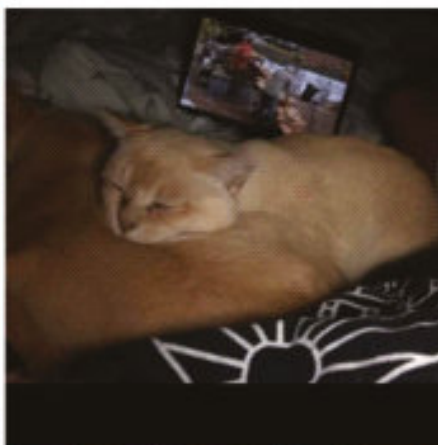
A very distressed lady who lived interstate contacted me. The woman was one of 4 siblings and her single, elderly father had been hit by a car in Sydney and sadly passed away because of his injuries.

His two beloved Burmese were left in his empty home and given the Covid border closures at the time she was unable to come up to care for them. Her sister who was living the USA was distressed and was originally hoping to foster the cats but with the current Covid travel restrictions it was decided that the cats just needed immediate care and ultimately a new forever home.

There were some challenging family dynamics involved and sadly one of the cats had managed to escape the day before I was contacted. I took in the boy that remained in the home and he needed some veterinary care resulting in an aesthetic for a dental and a dental extraction, vaccination and flea and worming treatment. This gentle boy was such a smooch, and I was told he was a real lap cat that spent much time on the owner's lap.

I was initially unsure that we would be able to get the other boy that had gone missing so I found a home that would be willing to consider taking on the other boy if we were able to get him. The young couple offered the most amazing home with the male owner working from home and keen for some feline company. They took the first boy home, and he settled in right away making himself right at home from his first night there, but there were signs he was missing his brother.

Thankfully it was only a matter of days, and we were able to get the other boy. He also needed a dental extraction, vaccination, flea and worming treatment but he also arrived with a wound on his leg that required veterinary care and antibiotic treatment. We suspected his wound was from his outdoor adventures.



The new owners were over the moon that the second boy was found safe and could go home with them to his brother. There was the risk that the boys' smell would have changed and a different environment and the stresses involved could create tension between them but thankfully the owners followed the advice I offered and the boys were snuggled up again together in no time. The wound on the leg healed beautifully and these handsome boys now have a happily ever after home.



Pets In Winter

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 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.)



Winter Comfort Ideas for Indoor Cats



Keep your feline friend warm, happy and healthy this winter.

CREATE WARM SLEEPING ZONES

- Soft beds and cosy blankets
- Sunny spots and cave beds
- Avoid direct heater contact




WINTER-PROOF YOUR HOME

- Block draughts
- Add rugs on cold floors
- Watch for heater and cord hazards



SUPPORT HYDRATION

- Fresh water in multiple locations
- Consider a cat fountain
- Wet food can help increase fluid intake



KEEP CATS ACTIVE

- Interactive toys
- Food puzzles and treat hunts
- Sunny window perches



WATCH FOR COMFORT CUES

- Increased stiffness
- Excessive heater-seeking
- Dry skin or dandruff
- Reduced activity



A warm bed, fresh water and daily enrichment can help keep your cat cosy all winter long.

Do you support what Animal Care Australia stands for? We need sponsors to help keep us going.

We need your help to continue to advocate for pet owners and keeping in Australia.

We need sponsors today!

Contact Amanda our Media & Sponsorship Coordinator:
media@animalcareaustralia.org.au





Response to Yarra City Council's draft Local Laws

Animal Care Australia responded identifying previous communication attempts with the Council in relation to their unacceptable restrictions on pet numbers.

More concerning this time around was Council's intention to further restrict numbers of social and colony species, introducing unacceptable animal welfare concerns.

Animal Care Australia's responses to these proposals prompted a meeting with the Mayor who agreed to address our concerns with the other Councillors and to consider a similar legislative approach to that applied in NSW.

Shared below are the three separate documents responding to this issue.

Aviary and bird restrictions



Summary response



Follow-up to the Mayor



Consultation with the NSW Agriculture Minister

Animal Care Australia provided consultation on two separate proposed changes to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

These changes will be presented in the coming months.

The first will be changes to the Breeding Code of Practice for Dogs and Cats in NSW. Changes being implemented will be adjusting the Code to allow for the new limits of 20 to 50 fertile bitches.

NOTE: At this point, this consultation is confidential until a final draft of the Code is presented.

The second consultation was in relation to amendments to update POCTAA and close some loopholes in the Act. Some of the issues to be dealt with included leaving dogs in hot vehicles, banning prong collars and tightening clauses around the use of glue traps, and animal fighting.

Again, at this point in time our responses are confidential until the Bill is discussed in Parliament.

Copies of these submissions will be posted on our website in the future.

Read more: <https://www.animalcareaustralia.org.au/aca-library/>

Want To Join Our Team?



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.

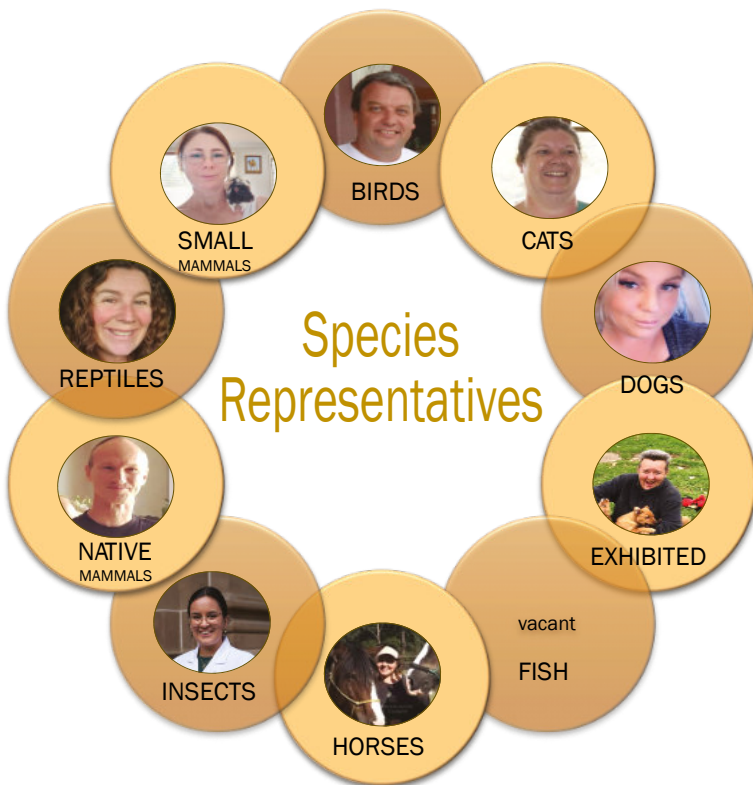
If you would like to join the Animal Care Australia Team or you know someone who would be ideal for the position please apply via [SEEK Volunteer](#) or email us at: aca@animalcareaustralia.org.au





Animal Care Australia

About Us



Species Representatives:

BIRDS: **Sam Davis**

CATS: **Michelle Grayson**

DOGS: **Kylie Gilbert**

EXHIBITED: **Tracey Dierikx**

FISH: vacant

HORSES: **Karri Nadazdy**

INSECTS: **Michaela Storen**

NATIVES: **Michael Donnelly**

REPTILES: **Joanne Payne**

SMALL MAMMALS: **Rachel Sydenham**

Executive:

PRESIDENT & TREASURER:

Michael Donnelly

VICE PRESIDENT: **Sam Davis**

SECRETARY & PUBLIC OFFICER:

Michelle Grayson

The Team:

VETERINARY REPRESENTATIVE:

Dr Tanya Phillips BVSc

SPONSORSHIP & MEDIA COORDINATOR:

Amanda Webb

SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM:

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Burmese Cat

