

COMPANION ANIMALS IN A CHANGING WORLD CONFERENCE









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A Changing World for Companion Animals

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Companion Animals New Zealand PO Box 27273 Marion Square Wellington 6141 New Zealand



Companion Animals in a Changing World Conference 2024



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We are extremely pleased to present the 29th Companion Animals New Zealand Conference. The theme of this year's conference is:

Companion Animals in a Changing World

With more than two thirds of New Zealand households being home to one or more companion animals, a statistic that's mirrored across many countries around the world, promoting responsible companion animal guardianship is a priority. This involves owner commitment to ensuring the best quality of life for their animal(s), an understanding of their physical, behavioural, and mental needs, and being able to provide for them. As sentient creatures - our pets feel emotions - both negative and positive. The quality of an animal's life can be judged according to the balance of these emotions, with more opportunity for experiencing positive emotions ensuring a Good Life. In addition to being provided with a good quality of life, companion animals must remain accepted in society by being viewed as 'good animal citizens' - assets rather than liabilities. In our changing world, with changing societal values and expectations, animal guardians need to ensure their animals are well socialised, ethically and effectively trained, sustainably managed, and safe in their interactions with people, other animals and the environment.

This year's conference will consider how we can ensure a sustainable and humane future for companion animals in our society through consideration of how we manage our companion animals in their interactions with us, others and our fragile environment.



A note from the Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the full proceedings for our 2024 Companion Animals New Zealand Conference, "Companion Animals in a Changing World".

As Chair of our charitable organisation, I am so proud that the theme of our 29th companion animals conference is one which aligns profoundly with our vision of fostering a harmonious relationship between companion animals, people, and the environment, while ensuring optimal welfare for all our companion animals.

We are honoured to convene both in person and online for this year's conference, along with distinguished guests and experts from New Zealand and around the globe. I would like to thank our speakers for taking the time to share their insights and participate in these important conversations. Of course, it would not be possible without generous sponsors, and I'd also like to thank each and every one of them for their incredible contributions to bring this event to life. Through out the years, our conferences and workshops have served as a platform to provoke thought leadership and awareness around animal welfare, bringing together experts, professionals, and enthusiasts in the field, while fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration. I am confident that this year's event will do just that.

At Companion Animals NZ, our mission is clear: To promote a Good Life for animals. As custodians of New Zealand's largest national pet microchip database, we are dedicated to reuniting lost pets with their families and advocating for responsible pet ownership. Leveraging data-driven insights, we champion necessary changes to secure a Good Life for animals across our nation.

We are immensely enthusiastic about the positive impact ahead and extend our sincere appreciation to all attendees for being a part of these proceedings. I also express gratitude to everyone involved in organising the conference for this year.

Steven Thompson Chair, Companion Animals New Zealand

About Companion Animals New Zealand

Companion Animals New Zealand's vision is for a 'Good Life for Animals', and to this end we have recently established a collaborative research and education centre to develop applied research to address gaps in our knowledge and support human behaviour change projects, aimed at raising the bar for all companion animals so that they can live a Good Life.

Companion Animals New Zealand is an animal welfare charity that was formed on the basis of collaboration between all those working in the companion animal sector. Some of the ways we support the animal industry is through disseminating research, including our triennial Companion Animal Survey, our management of the NZCAR microchip database with more than 1 million animals, grants to other animal charities and research groups to support animal welfare initiatives, industry and community workshops and our free lost and found website. However, our biennial conference is a unique event that brings all parts of the Companion Animal sector together; researchers, veterinary professionals, rescue shelters, breeders and industry and more come together to talk, listen, collaborate and learn about new research and new directions.

This year's conference theme is particularly pertinent given there is increasing awareness that we are living in a time of significant global challenges and changes. Our changing climate, changing societal expectations and changing knowledge about animals and their welfare needs, means that there is a need to consider how we manage these changes to ensure a positive future for companion animals.

We are delighted to gather such a remarkable group of individuals together for this event.

Professor Nat Waran Director (A Good Life for Animals Centre) **Companion Animals New Zealand**

David Lloyd General Manager, Companion Animals New Zealand

Companion Animals in a Changing World TECHNOLOGY PARTNER



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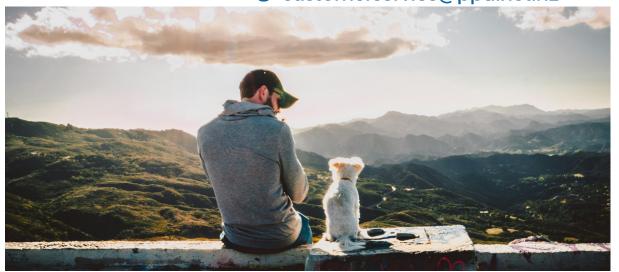


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Every two years, the unwavering dedication of individuals who champion the cause of animal welfare are celebrated through the prestigious Assisi Awards, presented by Companion Animals NZ.

Named in homage to the revered Patron Saint of Animals, St. Francis of Assisi, these awards embody the spirit of compassion and stewardship that defines his legacy. They stand as a testament to the profound impact that individuals can have when guided by principles of kindness, empathy, and respect for all living beings.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Insights HQ for sponsoring this year's Gala Awards dinner.





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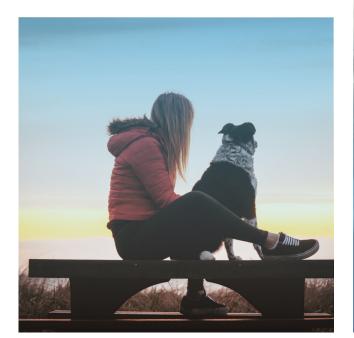
Conference Details

Four themed sessions - A Plenary followed by shorter research presentations:

1. CHANGING EXPECTATIONS SPONSORED BY SPECTRAVET

Research has shown that human expectations of our companion animals are changing. Perceptions about the (dis)advantages of 'pet' ownership and owner commitment, tolerance of an animal's normal and problematic behaviours, perceived vs actual cost of care, and owner satisfaction with the animal may change over time. Those who choose not to own a companion animal may be less tolerant towards their needs than animal owners. Society's tolerance of companion animals is changing. So, what does that mean for the future of companion animal guardianship? How can we provide for the needs of our companion animals and safeguard their welfare where expectations may be unrealistic and where the human-animal relationship is at risk? In this session we will hear from experts who will consider how we can ensure that companion animals are provided with what is required for them to be good citizens, to cope with their changing living environments and owner expectations and to be able to live a Good Life.

Plenary Speaker – Dr Orla Doherty (Ireland) Invited speaker – Prof Madeliene Campbell (UK)





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2. CHANGING CLIMATE

SESSION SPONSORED BY ZIWI

We are increasingly concerned about climate change, and how it impacts human and animal health, welfare and safety. Past and recent weather events in New Zealand have heightened awareness of the need to not only take action to lessen environmental impact and carbon footprint but also to be prepared for natural disasters and emergencies. Being an owner of a companion animals involves making choices in relation to its management and care, and sometimes these decisions might not necessarily be best for the environment. These might relate to type of food, packaging of food, source of food, animal facilities and space use, disposal of animal waste, purchase/disposal of manufactured non-bio-degrade able products (such as plastic products, and cat litter). In addition, there are questions raised about the environmental impact of keeping certain animal species and how this practice might conflict with other societal concerns such as the conservation of native flora/fauna. In this session we will address the important questions of how to be a sustainable companion animal guardian, how can we reduce our animals' carbon footprint, what we can learn from recent weather events and what is required to be prepared for an emergency.

Plenary Speaker – Asst Professor Alexandra Protopopova (Canada - recorded talk) Invited Speaker – Dr Hayley Squance (NZ) Invited Speaker - Dr Heather Bacon (UK - recorded talk)



Proudly sponsoring Companion Animals 2024 'Changing Climate' session





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3. CHANGING LIFESTYLES SPONSORED BY BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM

Companion animals enrich the lives of their owners in numerous ways including; increased physical activity, improved physical health outcomes, benefits to mental health and recovery, increased self-esteem in children, and increased social engagement. It's not surprising that so many households in New Zealand include at least one companion animal and often more. However, whilst we enjoy sharing our lives with them, we need to consider 'what's in it for them?'. What do we know about the secret life of animals, what are their perceptions of their life experiences, how can we improve their welfare and what do they need to enjoy positive emotions and to minimise negative ones? Providing companion animals with a Good Life is essential if we are to continue to have a social licence to keep them. Being able to define a Good Life for each of the species we have in our lives and ensuring that we are able to assess and provide for their physical and emotional health and welfare will be discussed during this session.

Plenary Speaker – Professor Kathalijne Visser (Netherlands)



The lives of animals and humans are interconnected in deep and complex ways. We know that when animals are healthy, humans are healthier too. By using the synergies between our Animal Health and Human Health businesses and by delivering value through innovation, we enhance the health and well-being of both.



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4. A GOODLIFE FOR ANIMALS SPONSORED BY ANIMATES VETCARE

Alongside developments in the way in which scientists assess animal welfare, there has been increasing societal concern about ensuring animals live 'a good quality of life'. Quality of life is a human concept that has been applied to animals particularly in the veterinary field where owners are being helped to make end of life decisions about their pets. Increasingly researchers and veterinarians are focusing on addressing quality rather than quantity of life, and developing methods and scoring systems for being able to understand whether an animal has a life worth living, or even better - a good life. Being able to determine what constitutes a good life for our companion animal species is challenging due to the subjective nature of an animal's emotional state as well as our lack of knowledge with respect to the things that are important to them. Yet the opportunity to enjoy a good quality of life, is important for animals for a whole range of reasons, especially in relation to the way an animal is housed, managed and handled for companionship, recreation and sport.

This session will consider the concept of a Good Life for companion animals.

Plenary Speaker – Dr Susan Hazel



Our purpose is to make our world a happier place through the love of pets.

"We'll be applying the science of human behaviour change to achieve positive animal welfare."

Professor Nat Waran Director - A Good Life for Animals Centre

A Good Life for Animals

5. CONFERENCE PANEL DISCUSSION SPONSORED BY ROYAL CANIN

'Pet-keeping will have no place in tomorrow's society'.

The Panel will consist of the Conference Plenary speakers who will share their perspectives in relation to questions such as:

- Is pet-keeping at risk of losing its social licence (public acceptance)?
- What are the ongoing challenges for pet guardians (owners) in relation to our changing world?
- What (if anything) needs to be addressed to ensure that pets have a place in our society?

Chaired by Dr Helen Beattie (NZ)



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2024 ISES Conference

"A Good Life for Horses"

We are proud to be sponsoring the 2024 International Society for Equitation Science conference being held in Cambridge, NZ.

This event will be livestreamed tickets can be purchased via the link below: https://events.humanitix.com/ises

> INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EQUITATION SCIENCE NEW ZEALAND A GOOD LIFE FOR HORSES



LIVESTREAMING

We are happy to announce the 2024 ISES Conference "A Good Life for Horses" will be available via livestream for those unable to join us in Cambridge.

Tickets can be purchased via the link below from the 26th of February.

https://events.humanitix.com/ises







Programme



8.00 – 8.50	Registration
9.00 - 9.10	Welcome to the 2024 Conference Chair of Companion Animals New Zealand – Steven Thompson
9.10 – 9.20	Welcome from Hon Minister Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister for Agriculture (Animal Welfare) and Environment and Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety
9.20 – 9:25	Introduction to Changing World Conference and First Session - Chairperson Prof Nat Waran (Director, A Good Life for Animals)
SESSION 1	Theme: Changing Expectations SESSION SPONSOR – Spectravet Chairperson: Dr Arnja Dale (Chair of the CANZ Animal Welfare Subcommittee and Chief Scientific Officer RNZSPCA)
9.25 – 9.45 20 mins	<u>Plenary Speaker: Dr Orla Doherty - Pets in a Changing World – Past, Present</u> and Future
9.45 – 10.00 15 mins	<u>Abstract Speaker: Christine Roseveare - The Landscape of Companion Animal</u> <u>Rescue in NZ</u>
10.00 – 10.20 20 mins	Invited Speaker: Professor Madeleine Campbell - Providing a 'good life' for retired greyhounds – factors influencing successful homing and proposed mitigations.
10.20 – 10.35 15 mins	<u>Abstract Speaker: Marie McAninch - Improving companion animal regulation in</u> <u>line with the expectations of New Zealanders</u>
10.35 – 10.55 20 mins	<u>Abstract Speaker: Jodie Wainwright - Ensuring Dog Owners use ethical training methods.</u>
10.55 – 11.10 15 mins	<u>Guest Speaker: Dr Jess Beer - Pets & Problem behaviour - Why you should</u> consult Companion Animals NZ Accredited trainers & behaviour consultants.
11.15 –11.45	MORNING TEA
SESSION 2	Theme – Changing Climate SESSION SPONSOR – Ziwi Chairperson: Amy Ross (CANZ Board Member and President NZVNA)

Programme cont.





11.50 – 12.05 5 mins	Plenary Speaker: Asst Professor Alexandra Protopopova - Companion animals and climate change: Identifying links and opportunities for our field (Recorded)
12.05 – 12.20 15 mins	Invited Speaker: Dr Hayley Squance - Unveiling the unspoken heroes: Harnessing the power of connection in emergencies through the human- animal bond and community unity
12.20 – 12.35 15 mins	Invited Speaker: Dr Heather Bacon - Sustainability and companion animals – from breeding and shelter management to veterinary practice (Recorded)
12:35 - 12:50 15 mins	Abstract Speaker: Sarah Brittain - Paws and progress: The disruptive shift towards pet sustainability
12.50	 Flash talks (I minute; 1 slide) <u>Speaker: Buda Szerelem-Tolnay - I don't see him as just an animal':</u> <u>Uncovering and interpreting relationships of significance with companion cats through phenomenological case study</u> <u>Speaker: Christine Roseveare - Companion animal fostering as health promotion</u> <u>Speaker: Niloofar Solhjoo - Informed living, loving and learning with companion animals</u> <u>Speaker: Katja Isaksen - A longitudinal study of lifelong health in searchand-rescue dogs recruited in the aftermath of 9/11</u> <u>Speaker: Leonie Lee - A more holistic life for our equine companions by design: A review of the evidence and practice of equine environment design and construction</u>
12.55	Main sponsor: PD Insurance
1.00 – 1.55	LUNCH
SESSION 3	Theme – Changing Lifestyles SESSION SPONSOR – Boehringer Ingelheim Chairperson: Dr Gosia Zobel (CANZ Animal Welfare Programmes Coordinator)
2.00 – 2.20 20 mins	<u>Plenary Speaker: Professor Kathalijne Visser - Beyond companionship:</u> <u>Unravelling the dynamic bond between humans and their animal friends</u>
2.50 – 3.10 20 mins	Abstract speaker: Caralyn Kemp - Who's having fun at the dog park?
2.35 - 2.50 15 MINS	<u>Abstract Speaker: Kristie Cameron - The state of cavy welfare in New Zealand</u> and current research of behaviour to provide 'a good life'

Programme cont. pd.co.nz svs



SESSION 4 ANIMATES VOICORD	Theme: A Good Life for Animals SPONSOR FOR SESSION – ANIMATES Chairperson: Prof Natalie Waran (CANZ Director – A Good Life for Animals Centre)
2.50 – 3.10 20 mins	<u>Plenary Speaker: Dr Susan Hazel - A good life for companion animals</u>
3.10 – 3.25 15 mins	Abstract Speaker: Dr Alison Vaughan - The role of animal welfare certification in providing a good life for companion animals
3.25 – 3.40 15 mins	<u>Abstract Speaker: Julie Fiedler - Organisational Behaviour Change – Horse</u> <u>sentience and use of the 5 Domains</u>
3.40 - 4.00	AFTERNOON TEA
SESSION 5	Theme – Panel Discussion + Q&A SPONSOR FOR SESSION – Royal Canin
4.00 – 4.45	<u>'Pet-keeping may have no place in tomorrow's society?'</u> <u>Panel facilitator: Dr Helen Beattie and Panel Participants (drawn from plenary</u> <u>and invited speakers):</u>
	Questions will include:
	 Is pet-keeping at risk of losing its social license (public acceptance)? What are the ongoing challenges for pet guardians in relation to a changing world? What (if anything) needs to be addressed to ensure that we continue to have pets in our society?
	Pets will have no place in tomorrow's society - Yes/No/Abstain
4.50 – 5.00 15 mins	Wrap Up, Housekeeping & Close – Prof Nat Waran (CANZ Director – A Good Life for Animals Centre) and Steven Thompson (Acting Chair of CANZ Board)



Workshop

"Good Animal Citizens - Creating a Blueprint for Pet Guardianship"

Facilitated by Sarah Brittain (Companion Animals NZ Vice Chairperson) and

Prof Nat Waran (A Good Life Director, Companion Animals NZ)

Workshop Sponsored by Animates Vetcare

9.00 - 9.15	 INTRODUCTION Welcome and Objectives: Introduce the workshop, outline the objectives, and explain how the day will run. Icebreaker: 'Pet Meet and Greet' - Participants share stories about their pets.
9.15 - 10.10	 SESSION 1: PET PERSONA CREATION Activity 1: Building Pet Personas: Briefing: Explain the concept of a pet persona and its importance. Group Work: Divide into small groups and assign each a different animal (dog, cat, horse, etc.). Each group creates a detailed persona for a 'Good Animal Citizen' of that species. Presentation: Selected groups present their personas, focusing on the animal's characteristics, behaviours, and needs.
10.10 - 10.30	 COFFEE BREAK Interactive 'Pet Gallery Walk': Personas are displayed around the room for participants to view, discuss, and add notes to during the break.
10.30 - 11.15	 SESSION 2: GUARDIAN'S BLUEPRINT Activity 2: The Guardian's Toolkit: Discussion: What are the guardian's responsibilities and what do they need to know and provide for their pet to be a 'Good Citizen'? Description: Groups assemble a virtual 'toolbox' with items (Information, knowledge and provisions) that every pet guardian should have. Presentation: Selected Groups present back the contents of their toolbox.
11.15 - 12.00	 SESSION 3: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS Activity 3: Overcoming Obstacles: Problem Identification: Groups discuss and list potential barriers to achieving 'Good Animal Citizenship'. Solution Brainstorming: Using the personas, groups brainstorm solutions to these barriers. Priority Mapping: Groups identify short-term and long-term priorities
12.00 - 12.20	 SESSION 4: CANZ'S ROLE Activity 4: CANZ'S Facilitation: Group Discussion: Based on the personas, barriers, and solutions, groups discuss where CANZ can play a role. Idea Generation: Groups develop actionable ideas on how CANZ can support pet guardians and overcome barriers. Sharing Session: Selected groups share their ideas for CANZ's facilitation.
12.20 - 12.30	 CONCLUSION Feedback and Commitment Cards: Participants fill out feedback forms and write down one commitment they can take back to their practice/organisation. Closing Remarks: Thank the participants and close the workshop.



Dr Orla Doherty

'Pets in a changing world – Past, Present and Future'

Orla's plenary talk 'Pets in a changing world – Past, Present and Future' will explore 'the changing expectations of pet owners and wider society around companion animals, what that means for those animals, and how we might best ensure that in this rapidly changing world, the animals under our care are given the best opportunity possible to live a Good Life.'

Dr Orla Doherty is veterinarian with postgraduate qualifications who specialises in companion animal behaviour and welfare. As founder of the Animal Behaviour Clinic based in Ireland, she uses her considerable experience for treating animal behaviour problems, as well as working with animal guardians to improve their understanding of animal behaviour and problematic behaviours. She is regularly invited to lecture at Universities and professional veterinary groups around the world.



Professor Madeleine Campbell

'Providing a 'good life' for retired greyhounds – factors influencing successful homing and proposed mitigations'

Professor Madeleine Campbell is a European and RCVS Recognised Specialist in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law. She was the first veterinary surgeon to be awarded a Wellcome Trust postdoctoral fellowship in bioethics, and in 2021 was appointed a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in recognition of her contributions to the field of veterinary ethics.

As Professor of Veterinary Ethics at Nottingham University's School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, her activities have included Chairing the British Veterinary Association's Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel, sitting on Ethics Review Boards for organisations including the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Zoological Society of London, and advising organisations such as the Greyhound Board of Great Britain, the British Equestrian Federation, the British Horseracing Authority and the Federation Equestre International on veterinary ethics and animal welfare. She is widely published and is a frequently invited speaker at international and national conferences.

We are looking forward to hearing Madeleine talk about the fate of greyhounds after retirement from racing, and the results of her recent study regarding factors influencing successful homing. During what is described as a canine '(re)homing crisis' due to knock-on impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic combined with a 'cost-of-living' crisis, there is a need to address any barriers that may reduce the chance of a dog (greyhound or other breeds) finding a new home. Madeleine will consider the factors that may negatively impact an individual greyhound's chance of being offered a home and/or increase their chances of being returned to a shelter, to inform mitigation strategies. She will discuss the importance of ensuring early life experiences familiarise dogs with the domestic environment, positive promotion of the breed, addressing owner misapprehensions and providing education for new owners to ease the dog's transition to a 'good life' in a domestic environment upon retirement.



Asst Professor Alexandra (Sasha) Protopopova

'Companion Animals and Climate Change: Identifying Links and Opportunities for our Field' (Recorded talk)

Sasha gained her MSc and a PhD in Behavior Analysis from the University of Florida. She is currently Assistant Professor in the Animal Welfare Program at the University of British Columbia in Canada, and the NSERC/BC SPCA Industrial Research Chair in Animal Welfare. Sasha's research aims are to learn more about dogs, improve animal shelter practices, improve companion animal welfare in shelters,

pet homes, and in assistance roles – all within a One Welfare framework. Recently, Sasha has been shifting her research focus on connecting climate change and other societal issues to companion animal welfare.

Sasha's talk will consider the impact 'on and of' companion animals of climate change and the opportunities for animal guardians to reduce these impacts through alterations in the management of their pets, including breeding practices, as well as the role of education regarding zoonosis and disaster preparedness. She will explain how building climate resilience through decreasing inequity in companion animal fields is paramount; and suggests a good start place relates to the animal shelter environment. Finally, she will consider how risk mitigation in relation to companion animal management will involve consideration of carbon 'paw/hoof prints' and improving our understanding of the way we make use of finite resources.



Dr Hayley Squance

'Unveiling the unspoken heroes: harnessing the power of connection in emergencies through the human-animal bond and community unity'.

Hayley is a veterinary technologist, emergency management practitioner, researcher and educator. She completed her BAppSci Veterinary Technology at the University of Queensland, and then in 2011, she graduated with her Masters in Education followed in 2022 with a PhD in Emergency Management from Massey University. She is now an internationally recognised emergency management expert

and managing director for BML Veterinary Consulting Ltd. She founded the Massey University Veterinary Emergency Response Team and was the national animal welfare emergency management coordinator for five years for the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand coordinating animal welfare for over 50 disaster events including earthquakes, floods, wildfires, terrorist attack, and the COVID-19 pandemic. She currently works with international organisations such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Hayley's talk titled; "Unveiling the Unspoken Heroes" - Harnessing the power of connection in emergencies through the human-animal bond and community unity, will describe the unwavering strength of the human-animal bond and the resilience found in community connections as pivotal pillars in response and recovery efforts. She will discuss with real-life examples the often underestimated role that companion animals play during emergencies. From providing solace and emotional support to becoming invaluable partners in rescue and recovery operations, she will describe how their presence is more than just companionship, but also significantly shapes the resilience of individuals and communities alike.



Dr Heather Bacon

'Sustainability and Companion animals – From Breeding and Shelter Management to Veterinary Practice' (Recorded talk)

Heather graduated from the University of Liverpool in 2003 with an intercalated honours degree in conservation medicine and from the University of Bristol in 2005 with her veterinary degree. She is the Dean of Veterinary Medicine at the newly established School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Central Lancashire UK. She gained her PhD from the University of Edinburgh, holds a post-graduate certificate in zoological medicine, is a Senior Fellow of the Hight Education Academy,

and in 2021, was awarded an OBE for services to veterinary education and animal welfare. Her previous roles have included Veterinary Director at the Animals Asia Foundation, an NGO working to end the trade in bear bile across Asia, and the Veterinary Welfare Education and Outreach manager at the University of Edinburgh's Jeanne Marchig International Centre for Animal Welfare Education (JMICAWE). Heather lectures internationally on companion animal and captive wildlife ethical and welfare issues; she has published on a variety of topics and has received numerous national and international awards for her work in animal welfare and veterinary education.

In her presentation, Heather will discuss the role of companion animals in sustainability, with a particular focus on sustainability in companion animal care in relation to breeding, sheltering, feeding, veterinary care and re-homing of companion animals. She will consider how such practices may influence the 'social licence' regarding the keeping of companion species and the opportunities where companion animal guardians, welfare organisations and veterinary practices can contribute positively to the SDGs, and to sustainability more widely.



Professor Kathaliijne Visser

'Beyond Companionship: Unravelling the Dynamic Bond Between Humans and Their Animal Friends'

Professor Kathaliijne Visser is an animal behaviour and welfare scientist who graduated from the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands, and then obtained her PhD in 2002 on the personality of horses ('Horsonality') at Utrecht University. She has continued to work at Wageningen as a senior animal welfare scientist managing national and international projects for governments and businesses. She is an Hon. Fellow and was a board

member of International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) and co-organized the annual ISES conference in the Netherlands in 2011. Since 2015, she has been working at Aeres University of Applied Sciences in Dronten. In 2020 she became Professor of Human-Animal Interactions, leading a research team working on animal welfare projects and in particular exploring the human-companion animal bond.

In her plenary talk titled 'Beyond Companionship...' she will unravel the dynamic bond between Humans and their animals, and consider the complex relationship we have with our companion animals and the beneficial impact that both parties can have on each other's lives. She will discuss how interacting with a pet can benefit a person's health though reduction in stress, lowered blood pressure, and is even associated with a decrease in the risk of heart disease. In addition, she will explore the psychological benefits such as comfort, reduced loneliness, and increased feelings of happiness and well-being. As the understanding of the importance of human-animal relationships grows, so does the recognition of the ethical responsibilities that come with keeping companion animals. Professor Visser will explain the importance of taking responsibility for ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of our companion animals, providing them with a safe and nurturing environment, and respecting their natural behaviours and needs.



Dr Susan Hazel

'A good life for companion animals'

Dr Susan Hazel is a veterinarian with previous experience in veterinary practice and medical research. She is the inaugural Program Director for the BSc (Animal Behaviour) degree. She teaches animal behaviour, welfare and ethics into all four undergraduate degree programs in the School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

Susan leads the Animal Behaviour Welfare and Anthrozoology research group, with projects that include animal behaviour and welfare, human-companion animal interactions, and animal management (cat management, dog barking and nuisance and dog attacks). Apart from an extensive publications list, Susan has considerable community engagement as a Board Member of the Dog & Cat Management Board of South Australia, RSPCA South Australia, and the South Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, as well as engaging internationally as a Scientific Advisor for the Center for Companion Animal Welfare at the University of Copenhagen.

Susan's talk – A Good Life for Companion Animals – will explore our current understanding of what animals need for positive welfare, particularly for dogs and cats. In her invited talk Susan will provide an insight into how we can tell if our companion animals have 'A Good Life', where they have more positive experiences than negative ones and the factors that are associated with positive and negative experiences, along with the indicators we can use to assess them. Using examples of how we interact with our pets in training, management and social interactions, she will explore the notion of animal happiness and ask whether our pets need to be 'happy' all the time and if indeed, it's possible to remove all negative experiences.



Dr Helen Beattie

Theme – Panel Discussion + Q&A

Dr Helen Beattie graduated in 1998 from Massey University School of Veterinary Science, her extensive career has included being a mixed animal clinician on high country stations, working on the 2001 UK foot and mouth response, companion animal practice ownership, an educator for veterinary nurse programmes, a warranted animal welfare inspector and shelter veterinarian during her time as the SPCA Otago's

Director of Animal Welfare and the New Zealand Veterinary Association's Chief Veterinary Officer. She is currently the inaugural Managing Director for the charity, Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa, an organisation offering a unique new voice for animal welfare advocacy in Aotearoa, promoting a good life for animals.

Helen will act as the session facilitator for a panel discussion involving the conference plenary speakers to explore questions related to 'Pet-keeping in the future'. They will be asked about whether there is a risk to social licence regarding companion animal keeping, what the challenges (if any) may be and what may need to change to ensure we can continue to enjoy companion animal guardianship into the future.

SESSION 1 THEME: CHANGING EXPECTATIONS SESSION SPONSOR – SPECTRAVET

Plenary Speaker: Dr Orla Doherty

Pets in a changing world – Past, Present and Future O. Doherty The Animal Behaviour Clinic & University College Dublin orladoherty@live.ie

The role of Companion Animals has changed significantly in recent years. Companion Animals now include a wider group of species than ever before, with dogs, cats and in recent years horses, the main species classified in this way. Companion animals, particularly small animals, live in closer physical proximity to their human family than ever before. The number of pet-owning families has increased steadily during the past 40 years; approximately 62% of households in the western world share their home with one or more pets. Strong social bonds develop, with greater affluence and advances in veterinary medicine increasing pet lifespans -pets are seen as important family members. During Covid, the number of pet-owning families increased further, including many first-time owners, in an unprecedented world event resulting in increased stress levels, reduced social interactions and increased amount of pet-human contact time. The high number of pets relinquished to shelters post-Covid will undoubtedly have had a major negative impact on the welfare of those surrendered companion animals. Traumatic world events, climate change, increased global connectivity via social media and the impact of improved technology has resulted in enormous changes in human lifestyle, pressures expectations and behaviours. Selective breeding addressing specific trends in pet selection, and enormous increases in the ranges of pet care products available bring with them both positive and negative impacts on the possibility of companion animals having their behavioural, health-related and ethological needs met. Extensive research into the human-animal bond and interactions has identified significant beneficial impacts of pet ownership on humans, in mental and physical health and also social interactions. However, the demand for popular recently developed breed combinations, in a world of smartphones, rapid technological developments and busy lifestyles may coexist with an unrealistic expectations by owners for their chosen companion animals to have greater flexibility in adapting to present-day lifestyles, which, when not met, contribute to high rates of relinquishment of dogs to shelters, and incidence of problematic behaviours displayed by pets.

Seen through the perspective of 30 years working as a veterinary behaviourist in Ireland, this presentation will address changing expectations of pet owners and wider society around companion animals, what that means for those animals, and how we might best ensure that in this rapidly changing world, the animals under our care are given the best opportunity possible to live a Good Life.

Lay Persons Message: Animals have played an increasingly important role as pets or companion animals in recent years. The world is changing rapidly in many ways, and with these changes the well-being of companion animals can in some cases improve but in other situations, deteriorate. Covid, designer dogs, faster and more pressured lifestyles and technology have all contributed to challenges to pet owners to ensure that their pets live a good life.



Abstract Speaker: Christine Roseveare

The Landscape of Companion Animal Rescue in NZ

C. Roseveare Massey University c.roseveare@massey.ac.nz

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of companion animal ownership worldwide, with animal rescue organisations playing a pivotal role in facilitating companion animal rehoming and adoption. However, despite their significance there is much we don't know about the animal rescue landscape. New Zealand does not have a national database for rescue organisations and there is a lack of published studies of New Zealand animal rescue organisations. This study aimed to address this gap. The objectives were to (1) describe the characteristics of Companion Animal Rescue Organisations (CAROs) (2) to describe current capacity, resource limitations and challenges of CAROs with a focus on cats and dogs and (3) To explore support for creating a national database of CAROS in New Zealand to make it easier to understand capacity and provide support. A cross sectional on-line survey was carried out with 108 CAROs. CAROs were asked about (i) the characteristics of their organisation (ii) types and numbers of animals they cared for, main services provided, intake and euthanasia policies, resources available, including access to veterinary services, and main challenges faced. A second section asked about attitudes towards a national database for rescue organisations - the likelihood they would register, the kind of information they would be comfortable sharing, and with whom, and any concerns about such a database. The CAROs who participated were providing services to an estimated 60,000 animals a year, relying heavily on voluntary labour and highlighting the pivotal role of volunteers in the sector. Nearly half (47%) had a workforce of less than 10. Many faced significant challenges. A prevailing theme was feeling consistently pressured for time with insufficient resources to meet the constant flow of animals needing their services. The likelihood of registering on a national database was high, with 78 (72%) of all 108 respondents replying that they would be extremely or somewhat likely to register. The study sheds light on the challenges and capacities of New Zealand's companion animal rescue organizations, emphasising the need for funding, resources, and policy changes to support their work, and the well-being of companion animals in New Zealand. The results will also contribute to the establishment of a national database of CAROs. Lay Persons Message: In New Zealand organizations dedicated to rescuing and rehoming companion animals are crucial in helping thousands of animals find new homes each year. This research which surveyed 108 rescue organisations aims to draw attention to the important work of these organizations, highlighting the need for funding, resources, and policy changes to ensure the well-being of companion animals in New Zealand.

Seen through the perspective of 30 years working as a veterinary behaviourist in Ireland, this presentation will address changing expectations of pet owners and wider society around companion animals, what that means for those animals, and how we might best ensure that in this rapidly changing world, the animals under our care are given the best opportunity possible to live a Good Life.

Lay Persons Message: Animals have played an increasingly important role as pets or companion animals in recent years. The world is changing rapidly in many ways, and with these changes the well-being of companion animals can in some cases improve but in other situations, deteriorate. Covid, designer dogs, faster and more pressured lifestyles and technology have all contributed to challenges to pet owners to ensure that their pets live a good life.

Invited Speaker: Professor Madeleine Campbell

Providing a 'good life' for retired greyhounds – factors influencing successful homing and proposed mitigations.

M.L.H. Campbell[1] and M.A. Charteris[2], Dept of Pathobiology and Population Sciences, Royal Veterinary College, Herts AL9 7TA UK.

[1] Current address: School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, Nottingham University, Sutton Bonington, LE12 5RD, UK

[2] Current address: Sunderland Animal Hospital at 52 Amherst Rd. Sunderland, MA, 01375, USA Madeleine.Campbell@nottingham.ac.uk

The fate of greyhounds after retirement from racing is a matter of concern both to the general public and within the sport . Provision of a suitable home after retirement is a core requirement of providing a 'Good Life for Every Greyhound' as described in the Greyhound Board of Great Britain's 2022 Welfare Strategy. Currently, the UK is experiencing a generalised canine 'homing crisis' due to knock-on impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic combined with a cost-of-living crisis. This study aimed to elucidate factors which negatively impact an individual greyhound's chance of being offered a home and/or increase their chances of being returned, to inform mitigation strategies. Nine British stakeholder greyhound homing organisations participated in semistructured interviews. They ranged from small centres working primarily using fostering to large, national organisations; some dealt only with greyhounds, some also with other breeds of dog. Participant responses were analysed using Nvivo software (Lumivero Ltd, London, UK) and thematic analysis following the method of Braun & Clarke (2006). This showed that some of the barriers to homing a greyhound are also barriers to homing other dogs: size, colour, failure to interact with potential homers and known behavioural issues. Similarly, some of the reasons why greyhounds get returned to centres having initially been homed are also reasons why other breeds get returned, including separation anxiety and issues which are specific to homers rather than to the dogs themselves. However, greyhounds also face additional challenges which may either prevent them from being offered a home to start with or cause them to be relinquished after initially successful rehoming. These include misapprehensions amongst potential owners about how much exercise they require, unrealistic understanding amongst homers about a greyhound's innate prey drive, and the challenges which greyhounds face around moving into a domestic environment as adults, which are not commonly faced by dogs of other breeds. Key amongst mitigations which will improve the success of efforts to home greyhounds and ease their transition to a 'good life' in a domestic environment upon retirement are providing education for potential and actual homers, and behavioural programmes to familiarise a greyhound with the domestic environment and other animals in it, early in the greyhound's life. Positive promotion of the breed and of individuals via social media may increase public interest in offering a home to greyhounds, who typically have many years of life ahead of them at the point of retirement.

Abstract Speaker: Marie McAninch

Improving companion animal regulation in line with the expectations of New Zealanders

M. McAninch, A. Vaughan, C. Sumner, J. Walker, B Lahman and A. Dale Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals marie.mcaninch@spca.nz

According to the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealanders have high expectations that animals under human care are well looked after. It is often stated that New Zealand has a reputation for high animal welfare standards which has helped us to secure access to markets internationally – and one of the aims of the National Animal Welfare Strategy is explicitly to add value to our exports. Our country was one of the first countries to acknowledge animal sentience in our legislation in 2015, and the first to entirely ban livestock export by sea. But how has New Zealand been progressing standards related to companion animal care? While exports have been the focus, our Codes of Welfare (sets of minimum standards issued under the Animal Welfare Act 1999) for cats and dogs have not been updated for more than a decade. New Zealand does not have any standards for rabbits, our third most popular companion animal. World Animal Protection's Animal Protection Index graded New Zealand a "D" in 2020 for protecting companion animals, noting that there are no regulations for buying, selling, or breeding companion animals, and that the standards which are in place are largely not directly enforceable.

The expectations of the public, and organisations like SPCA, are rapidly changing. So are the expectations of independent rescues and their supporters. Other like-minded jurisdictions like Australia, the European Union, and the United Kingdom have set requirements around companion animal breeding. Some governments have gone further with innovative non-regulatory interventions such as desexing grants to rescues and community support and education for companion animal guardians. SPCA has been increasing our focus on legislative advocacy. We are particularly concerned that New Zealand's current approach to dealing with irresponsible companion animal breeders (both large-scale operations breeding primarily for profit, and accidental breeding) is ad-hoc and does not result in good welfare outcomes. We provide an overview of our current and future advocacy work in this area: including the ways in which we rely on other organisations like CANZ and the ways in which others can get involved.

Abstract Speaker: Jodie Wainwright

Ensuring dog owners in Aotearoa New Zealand use ethical training methods: a com-b analysis to inform intervention design

J. Wainwright

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute, Easter Bush Campus, Midlothian, EH25 9RG, Scotland, UK jodiefwainwright@gmail.com

Owner expectations of dogs have changed over time. Dogs are increasingly expected to adapt to our human lifestyles and behave according to our social rules. Where our expectations are unrealistic and dogs display behaviours considered problematic, the relationship between owner and dog can break down, leading to relinquishment to shelters or even euthanasia. Owners are responsible for training their dog to meet these expectations, and the methods they use can influence their dog's success. Aversive-based methods are commonly used and can negatively influence dog welfare by inflicting pain, discomfort, or fear to change behaviour and may lead to development of problem behaviours. To ensure that dogs can meet our societal expectations, whilst experiencing a good life, we need to ensure that owners are training them ethically and effectively. Interventions to change owner behaviour must be based on evidence to be effective. The aim of this study was to investigate what needs to change for owners to use reward-based methods more, and aversive-based methods less, to provide an evidence basis to inform future intervention design. An online survey of 269 dog owners in Aotearoa New Zealand asked closed-ended multiple choice questions split into sections according to the COM-B model. COM-B recognises that a person's capability (C), opportunity (O), and motivation (M) are an interacting system which determine their behaviour (B). Owners were asked about their behaviour when training their dog then scored on their use of reward-based methods, and use of aversive-based methods. The remaining questions asked about knowledge (psychological capability), skills (physical capability), social norms (social opportunity), practicalities (physical opportunity), perceptions and beliefs (reflective motivation), and emotional responses (automatic motivation). Analysis determined which COM factors predicted behaviour scores, and stepwise linear regression identified which had the strongest effect on behaviour. Intervention designers should prioritise improving owner skill in using reward-based methods as this had the strongest effect on predicting increased use of reward-based methods (β =0.389, p<0.001), and decreasing use of aversive-based methods (β =-0.170, p<0.05). To increase use of rewardbased methods interventions should then focus on practicalities (β =0.244, p<0.001), social norms (β =0.203, p<0.001), and knowledge (β =0.180, p<0.001), respectively. The COM-B model facilitated the identification of important dog owner factors influencing choice of training method. This is the first study to apply COM-B to dog welfare and provides an evidence basis to inform strategic design of human behaviour change interventions which have the potential to improve the welfare of companion dogs.

Lay Persons Message: Owners are responsible for training their dog to meet society's expectations but the methods they use can have negative welfare effects. An online survey of 269 dog owners in Aotearoa New Zealand aimed to understand their behaviour related to the training methods they use, to understand what needs to change for owners to use ethical methods. It was found that interventions would be most effective if they improve dog owner skill at using reward-based methods.

Speaker Overview

Guest Speaker – Dr Jess Beer

Pets and Problem behaviour - Companion Animals NZ Accredited trainers and behaviour consultants

J. Beer Kiwi Vet Behaviour jess@kiwivetbehaviour.co.nz

In 2017, companion animal organisations met to discuss the risk that our unregulated behaviour and training industry posed to New Zealand's animals. The Companion Animals New Zealand Animal Behaviour and Training Accreditation scheme was subsequently established to provide surety to animal guardians and protection to the animals in the care of trainers and behaviour consultants. The scheme also provides a platform for collaboration among professionals operating in the New Zealand pet industry.

This talk outlines the benefit of having a national, independent accreditation scheme for New Zealand's pet professionals and the animals and human clients in their care.

SESSION 2 THEME: CHANGING CLIMATE SESSION SPONSOR – ZIWI



Plenary Speaker: Asst Professor Alexandra Protopopova

Companion Animals and Climate Change: Identifying Links and Opportunities (Recorded)

A. Protopopova The Animal Welfare Program, Faculty of Land and Food Systems, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada a.protopopova@ubc.ca

Companion animals both impact and are impacted by the changing climate through their intrinsically linked relationships to human society. I will identify several anticipated climate change outcomes, such as an increase in extreme weather events, human migration, disasters, and an increase in human inequity, and connect these outcomes to identified or hypothesized impacts on companion animals and the human-animal bond. I will further suggest opportunities to reduce climate change impacts on companion animals that include alterations to owner care-taking behaviours and breeding practices, and education of owners and governments on zoonosis and disaster preparedness. Furthermore, building climate resilience through decreasing inequity in companion animal fields is paramount; and a good starting place is in animal sheltering. I will also summarize how companion animals and owners' care-taking behaviours are impacting climate change through the use of finite natural resources as well as pollution and carbon emissions. Replacement, reduction, and refinement, that guide laboratory animal research, can also be useful to mitigate the effects of companion animals on the environment. After the talk, the audience will be called upon to actively consider their role in mitigating the impact of companion animals on the climate and preparing for the fallout of climate change in their communities.

Invited Speaker: Dr Hayley Squance

Unveiling the unspoken heroes: Harnessing the power of connection in emergencies through the human-animal bond and community unity

H E Squance Palmerston North, New Zealand hayley.squance@gmail.com

In times of crisis, consider the unwavering strength of the human-animal bond and the resilience found in community connections emerge as pivotal pillars in response and recovery efforts. This presentation delves into the transformative potential of these interwoven connections in navigating the turbulent landscape of emergencies. Exploring the profound influence of the human-animal bond, I seek to illuminate the often-underestimated role that companion animals play during emergencies. From providing solace and emotional support to becoming invaluable partners in rescue and recovery operations, their presence transcends mere companionship, significantly shaping the resilience of individuals and communities alike. Moreover, the presentation underscores the indispensable essence of community cohesion and solidarity in times of crisis. By fostering a sense of collective support, unity, and shared responsibility, communities become formidable forces capable of swift and effective response, and sustained recovery following adversities. Drawing on real-life examples and multidisciplinary insights, in this talk I aim to inspire and equip attendees with a deeper understanding of how fostering the human-animal bond and nurturing community connections are fundamental to preparedness, response, and recovery in the face of emergencies. Join me as I delve into the transformative potential of these connections and uncover the latent strength they offer in creating more resilient communities, better equipped to navigate the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Invited Speaker: Dr Heather Bacon

Sustainable companionship - what are the challenges? (Recorded)

H.J. Bacon School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Central Lancashire. Preston, UK hbacon@uclan.ac.uk

There are estimated to be over a billion companion animals globally and an increasing focus on the interaction between animal welfare and sustainability. It has been suggested that the integration of animal welfare into the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) would support their achievement, and that effective work towards achieving the SDGs could also enhance animal welfare. In particular SDG3: Good health and wellbeing, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, provide an opportunity for considering the role and value of our companion animals in a sustainable future. Whilst the benefits of companion animals in human wellbeing, service and companionship are well recognized in the literature their inclusion in SDG 3 in particular, could provide a great opportunity to showcase this, however their inclusion in SDG 11 and 12 also potentially poses some challenges. In the UK, as in many parts of the world, the estimated dog population has risen overall from 8.3 million in 2011 to 11 million in 2023, and pet ownership in general has also increased, with 53% of UK adults owning a pet in 2023. However, there's also been an increase in pet relinquishment, especially for pets owned by younger owners. 53% of those owning new pets are <34 years old. Almost one quarter (23%) of owners in this group have been unable to keep their pet, and 71% of all pet relinquishments can be attributed to this group. Considering which pets were relinquished; 60% were dogs, 45% cats and 4% another type of animal. This surge in pet ownership has to be supported by increased animal breeding - often driven by commercial opportunities rather than a desire to improve dog and cat health and welfare, and the increased relinquishment places an increased burden on animal shelters, rescue and re-homing organisations. In this presentation we will look specifically at the sustainability challenges created by these two 'ends' of the companion animal ownership journey.

Sustainability in companion animal care is an emerging challenge. In the UK environmental sustainability has become a key part of veterinary practice, with sustainability now an educational accreditation requirement for veterinary education from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and this aligns with the desire to support SDG 11 and 12. As such veterinarians are encouraged to consider the environmental impact of their clinical and non-clinical activity. However, in a landscape where veterinarians are increasingly faced with high proportions of poorly-bred and unhealthy dogs, bred for commercial or aesthetic priorities, that is challenging. There are numerous studies showing this to be the case; examples include; brachycephalic breeds, which have dramatically increased in popularity, suffer from significantly more health and welfare problems and require more clinical intervention than many other breeds. This increase in dogs requiring veterinary intervention as a result of aesthetic selection, contributes to a number of sustainability challenges faced by veterinarians including increased PPE, clinical waste, anaesthetic gas use, etc.

The financial and emotional burden that dealing with unhealthy dogs places on their owners is suggested to be one of the factors driving relinquishment, with increasing numbers of brachycephalic dogs being given to shelters. Whilst these dogs may also be considered more adoptable due to their aesthetic appeal, the overall increase in dogs given up by pet owners creates a sustainability challenge. It has been suggested that SDG 12 could be supported by responsible animal production and consumption practices. Whilst the increase in pet ownership does not appear to be driven by responsible production of companion animals, this increasing pet population creates sustainability challenges in other areas of the animal sector. Increased pet populations drive the need for increased pet food manufacture and the production and consumption of food of animal origin – something which directly undermines sustainability objectives. The negative environmental impacts of animal-protein diets are increasingly recognized, and yet the cost:benefit of producing these diets to sustain a population of companion animals that have been relinquished is rarely acknowledged.

(H.J. Bacon, cont.)

This ethical dilemma becomes more complex when we consider that we are potentially producing and slaughtering livestock animals and thus creating welfare as well as sustainability challenges, in order to support a population of cats and dogs that have been relinquished by pet owners. These cats and dogs may themselves require complex veterinary interventions (generating clinical waste and consuming anaesthetic gas), as well as heat, housing and waste disposal, which all contribute negatively to their environmental footprint. Whilst alternate approaches to managing stray or relinquished animal populations may also be ethically challenging, if we're aiming to address the wicked problems of climate change and sustainability in companion animals, we must start to wrestle with these uncomfortable questions. Research efforts should focus on better understanding the impact that unsustainable breeding and relinquishment of companion animals has on the environment, and other animal production systems, using a systems based one health-one welfare approach, and resource allocation should be rationalized. Whilst the important role that companion animals play in our lives should not be undervalued, we also should be mindful that the impact of maintaining their populations, on the welfare of other animals and the environment, cannot be overlooked.

Speaker overview

AbstractSpeaker: Sarah Brittain

Paws and Progress: The Disruptive Shift Towards Pet Sustainability

S. Brittain (Vice Chair) Companion Animals New Zealand sas.brittain@gmail.com

In this talk I will discuss questions related to pet sustainability and potential consequences. This will include the following:

- Why disruptive innovation? The urgency for disruptive changes in the pet industry for both animals and the environment.
- Examples of disruptive innovations in the pet industry e.g., lab-grown pet food, digital and virtual pet adoption platforms, eco-design and material science, decentralized breeding control with blockchain, AI and data analytics for animal welfare.
- Challenges and considerations for disruptive innovations e.g., market acceptance, regulation and oversight, economic implications.
- How might we engage the ecosystem e.g., cross-industry collaboration, crowdfunding and venture capital, pet owner education. empowerment, a visionary future, call to action.

Flash talks (I minute; 1 slide)

Speaker: Buda Szerelem-Tolnay

I Don't See Him as Just an Animal' Uncovering and Interpreting Relationships of Significance with Companion Cats through Phenomenological Case Study

B. Szerelem-Tolnay Victoria University Wellington buda.szerelemtolnay@vuw.ac.nz

Research has consistently demonstrated the value of relationships with animals for human health and wellbeing. Attachment to animals can fulfil fundamental human needs to connect with others and to develop relationships of significance. This research will demonstrate the value of an applied phenomenological method for understanding people's relationships with their companion cats. Using a single case study of three interviews and six weeks of journalling, this study sought to understand what a cat can be for their companion human. Applied phenomenology uses phenomenological principles such as epochè to bracket assumptions and eidetic reduction to identify essential components of a phenomenon. Using this method, three categories were identified in the data: perception of the cat; perception of the relationship; perception of the self. These three categories were intertwined in the data, revealing the ways the cat was perceived was foundational to the relationship as experienced; this relationship also shaped how the person understood themselves – their characteristics, their needs, and their reactions. Using this method reveals how what a cat can be for someone depends upon their own understanding of the relationship as fulfilling their needs for connection and repair. The findings go beyond the literature that suggests the human-animal bond provides deeply meaningful relationships of care, nurturance and support, and shows how these are experienced as embedded within a network of relationships, human and animal, across the life course.

Lay Persons Message: We know things are changing for animals, however we expect the human animal bond to remain a core component of our relations with companion animals. This study explores the human animal bond via through an analytic approach delving into the dynamics of people's relationships with their companion cats. Using three interviews and six weeks of journaling, the study identifies three intertwined categories in the data: cat perception, relationship perception, and self-perception. These findings unveil the foundational role of psychology in shaping the relationship and self-understanding, expanding beyond conventional views of the human-animal bond as meaningful care and support.

Speaker: Christine Roseveare

Companion animal fostering as health promotion

C. Roseveare Massey University c.roseveare@massey.ac.nz

There is growing interest in the health promoting potential of human-companion animal relationships from a broad public health perspective while acknowledging barriers to ownership, particularly for older adults. Caring for and having a meaningful connection with companion animals does not necessarily require ownership. An increasing number of rescue organisations run companion animal foster programmes where stray or surrendered animals are placed in temporary homes with human fosterers at a time of transition until they are ready to be adopted or in some cases until they can be reunited with their original human guardian. Animals may be fostered because they are too young to rehome, would benefit from socialisation, medical or behavioural rehabilitation because of lack of capacity in an animal shelter, or in response to an emergency. Companion animal fostering is an alternative to pet ownership that aligns with the Ottawa Charter health promotion principle that caring for others in everyday settings promotes health. To determine if fostering is health promoting, we considered what is known about its potential to create or support health and promote equity. We first explored the health promotion potential of companion animal fostering for both humans and animals drawing on Te Whare Tapa Whā an Indigenous model of health influential in New Zealand and consistent with the broad conception of health represented in the Ottawa Charter. Te Whare Whā describes health as having four inter-related dimensions physical, mental, social, and spiritual. We then turned to considering equity aspects of fostering before highlighting important areas for future research. We found companion animal fostering can be considered health promoting for human and non-human animals, using a broad and multidimensional understanding of health. As well as improving long-term outcomes for homeless animals, companion animal fostering has the potential to promote the health of the individuals, families, and communities who provide foster homes. Our review highlights the importance of health promoters considering the reciprocal relationship between human and animal health. Future research should explore different aspects of human and non-human health, perspectives of different types of fosterers in different settings and communities, barriers to fostering and methods that explore the role of caring for a wide range of companion animals in creating and sustaining well-being.

Lay Persons Message: Caring for animals can positively impact health, but is this the case for temporary guardians? This review explored the health impacts of companion animal fostering, where animals in need are temporarily placed with foster caregivers during times of transition. Our findings suggest that companion animal fostering benefits both humans and animals, improving outcomes for homeless animals and potentially enhancing the well-being of foster caregivers and their communities.

Speaker: Niloofar Solhjoo

Informed living, loving and learning with Companion Animals

N Solhjoo

School of Information Management, Te Herenga Waka/ Victoria University of Wellington niloofar.solhjoo@vuw.ac.nz

The primary focus of Information Science is on how information, in various forms, shapes the social texture of people's lives. However, humans share their lives not only with other humans but also with animals, such as companion cats and dogs, playing a distinct role in our homes and cities. Our strong bonds formed with these animals create special relationships and alternative ways of understanding and living for both human and animal family members. However, a lack of understanding about living well with and caring for animals can lead to unmet needs, resulting in behavioral problems that impact the overall well-being of the entire family, especially the non-human members. In my doctoral research project, I aimed to understand how members of multispecies families (i.e., humans, cats, and dogs) experience information to inform their daily shared interactions and perceptions of each other. Over three years, I explored information experience within these families, adopting phenomenological and posthumanism perspectives. Ten families in Aotearoa New Zealand participated in this research, comprising 13 humans, 7 cats, and 11 dogs, recruited and selected from an online survey of cat/dog guardians across New Zealand (n=1409). Incorporating animals into research presented challenges, and to address them creatively, I adopted a playful methodological approach. I employed subjective strategies, including speaking for the animal, listening differently, walking and sensing, video recording, and photo diaries for collecting experiential material. A reflective approach, drawing from thematic and visual analysis, was used to uncover the meanings embedded in the material. The findings cover various meanings of what is information in living, loving, and learning with cats/dogs. It explores affective information in human-animal interactions, perceptions of bodies and actions, the role of non-living objects, and social interactions across species in shaping information within the family. The research also highlights the cognitive information of humans and animals, transcending their individual minds and promoting unity through mutual communication, play, and empathy. By combining affective-cognitive, biological, embodied, and social information, this study makes a substantial contribution to understanding and designing with/for animals in our changing world.

Lay Persons Message: Better understanding between companion humans and animals leads to better loving and caring for each other. As an Information Scientist, I explored the lives of ten families in Aotearoa, each comprising humans, cats, and dogs, to understand how these multispecies families become informed in their shared daily lives. I found various aspects of information shaping human-animal living, loving, and learning.

Speaker: Katja Isaksen

A longitudinal study of lifelong health in search-and-rescue dogs recruited in the aftermath of 9/11

K Isaksen Massey University k.isaksen®massey.ac.nz

Search-and-rescue (SAR) dogs are key to locating victims of disasters, and they require robust health and targeted preventive care during development and training and while on deployment. While most SAR dogs are also pets, they are also highly performing athletes. The requirements of their work mean that studies examining the health of pet dogs may not adequately reflect their health challenges or needs. Additionally, the types of work SAR dogs do differ from those of other working dogs previously studied, such as police, military or working farm dogs. After the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11 2001, 95 responding and 55 non-responding SAR dogs were recruited for a longitudinal study. In total, 150 SAR dogs were recruited, with owners completing annual questionnaires about the health of their dogs. Six hundred sixty-eight surveys were completed over 15 years, with all dogs but one having a known date of death. The median age of dogs at enrolment was five years, the median retirement age was 10, and the median age of death was 13. Fifty-six percent were males, and 79% were neutered. Thirty-six percent of dogs were German Shepherds, 36% were Labradors or Golden Retrievers and 27% were other breeds. At enrolment, 16% of dogs were reported to be full-time SAR dogs (typically associated with law enforcement or a fire department). Thirty-four percent of dogs had been on at least one deployment before 9/11. During the study period, 95 of the 150 dogs (63%) had at least one non-surgical health event, with an incidence rate of 26.7 events per 100 dog-years (95% CI: 21.9 -32.7). Events were usually inflammatory (affecting 68% of dogs), degenerative (43%) or traumatic (43%), and the musculoskeletal (48%), integument (35%) and gastrointestinal (29%) systems were most commonly affected. Sixty-seven dogs (47%) had a surgical health event during the study period, with an incidence rate of 14.4 events per 100 dog-years (95% CI: 11.3 - 18.3). Events were usually traumatic (33% of dogs), neoplastic (28%) or inflammatory (16%), and the integument (37%) and musculoskeletal (16%) systems were most commonly affected. No significant differences in incidence rates could be detected based on sex, neuter status, breed or whether dogs had been deployed to the 9/11 disaster response. This study contributes to our understanding of health in SAR dogs. It emphasises the need for collaboration between veterinarians and handlers to prioritise prevention and optimise the lifelong well-being of these remarkable working dogs.

Lay Persons Message: The health of search-and-rescue dogs has not been well studied. 150 SAR dogs were followed from 11 September 2001 until they died. Half the dogs had surgery in their lifetimes, and two-thirds had at least one health event that did not need surgery. Common problems affected the skeleton and muscles, skin or intestinal tract, and included arthritis, infections, injuries and tumours. This study can help handlers and veterinarians prevent disease and injuries in SAR dogs.

Speaker: Leonie Lee

A more holistic life for our equine companions by design: A review of the evidence and practice of equine environment design and construction

L. Lee Equined, 7 Lower Duneed Rd, Mt Duneed, 3217 Victoria, Australia leonieleeemail@gmail.com

In the horse-keeping world, although we've made strides in some areas like ventilation and daylight, facility design and development focus is still very human-centric. We're missing a crucial element: the impact on a horse's mental well-being. Horse management traditions are deeply rooted and facilities are bound by outdated methods of design, construction, and use. Imagine a scenario where horses and humans coexist seamlessly, where their needs are met equally in a well-thought-out space. It sounds challenging, but by combining equitation and animal welfare science with an innovative architectural approach, we could make it happen. Current practices tend to prioritise the physical aspects of horse health, overlooking the unique mental and behavioural characteristics of their species during the design phase. And while there's a growing consensus that the welfare of horses involves both their physical and mental states, our practices still focus primarily on physical aspects, while their foraging, movement and social agency are seldom considered during the planning of their living spaces. Research tells us that a horse's physical and mental development can thrive in environments tailored to their unique characteristics-how they sleep, learn, socialize, move, adapt, and digest. We know what environmental conditions contribute to their overall health and function, and which ones pose risks. There are, however, challenges in shifting these long-standing practices. Education and compliance are hurdles, especially for designers tasked with challenging two entrenched traditions: construction and horse management. Nevertheless, the zoo industry has already moved past the conventional enclosure model; why should progress in horse facility design be met with scepticism? Our goal is to prove that change is necessary and feasible. The scientific literature reveals which conditions imposed upon horses affect their welfare. To improve their lived experience, we must consider every aspect of architectural design, from scale and layout to materials and functionality. The Five Domains Model guides us in systematically assessing the equine experience, and lays the foundation for improved facility models. It's not about ignoring the past but carefully selecting historical references and enhancing them through an equinecentric lens. Our study proposes a holistic design approach that evolves with equitation science. The aim is not just to break free from traditional design constraints but to genuinely enhance the lives of our equine companions.

SESSION 3 THEME: CHANGING LIFESTYLES SESSION SPONSOR – BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM



Plenary Speaker: Prof Kathalijne Visser

Beyond Companionship: Unravelling the Dynamic Bond Between Humans and Their Animal Friends

E.K. Visser and S.C. Haven-Pross Aeres University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands k.visser@aeres.nl

The bond between humans and companion animals represents a unique interspecies relationship that has evolved over thousands of years. This relationship is not merely a product of domestication but also a result of complex emotional, psychological, and social factors that have influenced both human and animal behaviours and well-being. Understanding this dynamic relationship is crucial for the welfare of companion animals and the humans who care for them, as well as for the broader understanding of human-animal interactions in a societal context.

The history of human-animal relationships dates back to the domestication of animals. Early humans formed bonds with animals for practical reasons, such as hunting, protection, and agriculture. However, over time, these relationships evolved beyond utilitarian purposes, leading to the development of emotional and social bonds. The domestication of dogs, for instance, is believed to have occurred over 30,000 years ago, and since then, dogs have played various roles in human societies, from working animals to beloved family members.

The benefits of human-animal relationships are not one-sided; they are mutual. While companion animals receive care, affection, and stability from their human caregivers, humans in turn gain emotional support, companionship, and often improved physical health and psychological well-being. Studies have shown that interacting with pets can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and even decrease the risk of heart disease. The presence of a pet can provide comfort, reduce loneliness, and increase feelings of happiness and well-being.

In a study with veterans it was demonstrated that veterans that owned dogs experienced less anxiety, fewer sleep disturbances, and a lower risk of alcohol abuse. Additionally, these veterans had fewer instances of sleep disturbances, significantly less severe symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and an overall positive influence on both physiological and psychological wellbeing.

The rapidly expanding domain of animal-assisted interventions (AAI) is a testament to the growing recognition of the beneficial roles animals can play in human health. This field focuses on the therapeutic effects stemming from human-animal interactions. Research in this area has shown that AAIs can effectively reduce stress indicators, including cortisol levels, heart rate, and blood pressure. Moreover, in environments like hospitals and mental health facilities, animals can significantly enhance social interactions and emotional connections. This often results in improved overall mood and a decrease in feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Although a significant number of studies point to a positive association between human-animal interaction and mental health improvements, there remains considerable scepticism about the definitiveness of these conclusions. The inconsistency in research results regarding human-animal interactions is largely due to varied methodologies and the associated shortcomings in the research approaches used. Additionally, the intrinsic complexity and variability inherent in the dynamic relationship between humans and animals also play a role in producing diverse research findings.

(E.K. Visser and S.C. Haven-Pross, cont.)

The psychological impact of human-animal relationships on companion animals is profound. Animals, like humans, are capable of experiencing a range of emotions, including joy, fear, and anxiety. The quality of their relationships with humans can significantly affect their emotional state. For example, dogs that receive regular affection and attention from their owners tend to show signs of happiness and contentment. It has been demonstrated that when individuals stare into the dog's eyes the 'cuddle hormone' (oxytocine) increases significantly in humans. This increase gives humans feelings of joy, happiness and relaxation. At the same time, the close interaction, for example, petting a dog, results in a significant increase in the oxytocine levels in the dogs as well. Similarly to dogs, cats, although more independent by nature, also display attachment and affection towards their human caregivers, affecting their emotional well-being.

The physiological impacts of human-animal relationships on companion animals are equally significant. Animals that enjoy positive interactions with humans often have better physical health. Regular play, exercise, and proper veterinary care, typically provided by caring owners, contribute to the overall physical well-being of companion animals. Conversely, animals that lack human interaction or are exposed to negative interactions may suffer from health problems related to stress, poor nutrition, and lack of exercise.

The behaviour of companion animals is greatly influenced by their interactions with humans. Positive reinforcement, training, and socialization play critical roles in shaping the behaviour of pets. Well-socialized animals that receive consistent and positive interactions with humans tend to be more well-adjusted, displaying fewer behavioural problems such as aggression or anxiety. In contrast, animals that experience inconsistent or negative interactions with humans may develop behavioural issues, which can impact their ability to interact safely with humans and other animals.

Human-animal relationships also have broader social and cultural implications. In many societies, pets are considered part of the family, reflecting the deep emotional bonds formed between humans and animals. This relationship can influence human social behaviour, such as increased social interaction and community involvement. Pets often serve as social facilitators, helping individuals connect with others in their community. A popular example is the improvement of reading skills in children. It was found that children who read aloud to dogs showed improvements in their reading skills and attitudes towards reading. This effect is attributed to the relaxed environment created by the dog's presence, making it easier for children to engage with reading material.

As the understanding of the importance of human-animal relationships grows, so does the recognition of the ethical responsibilities that come with keeping companion animals. These responsibilities include ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of pets, providing them with a safe and nurturing environment, and respecting their natural behaviours and needs. The ethics of breeding, ownership, and the use of animals for human purposes are also important considerations in the context of human-animal relationships.

The relationship between humans and their pets is complex, touching on emotional, physical, and social elements. Over time, these connections have grown from simple living together to strong emotional and social ties that deeply affect the health and happiness of both people and animals. It's crucial to understand and care for these relationships to ensure the well-being of pets and to help build a caring and responsible community.

Abstract speaker: Caralyn Kemp

Who's having fun at the Dog Park?

C. Kemp Unitec-Te Pukenga ckemp2@unitec.ac.nz

Off-leash dog parks are public spaces commonly utilised by guardians as opportunities for their dogs to be exercised and socialised. However, these spaces are rarely purposely designed; as a result, they may hold little benefit for dogs. Furthermore, dog guardians may not follow appropriate dog park etiquette due to poor knowledge of dog behaviour, disinterest in following leash rules, and a misunderstanding of the needs of dogs. As a result, dog trainers often do not recommend using dog parks as a primary source of socialisation, and there are anecdotal reports of increasing numbers of aversive events occurring in these spaces. Understanding how people and their dogs use dog parks is important for providing insight into any potential welfare benefits, and ultimately reducing negative impacts. We have been investigating the perceptions and behaviour of dog guardians at four dog parks, two fenced and two unfenced, in Auckland, to help inform appropriate dog park design and development of educational resources for users. We surveyed 100 dog guardians at each park on their use and opinions of the space, and observed a further, separate, 100 dog guardians for time spent in the dog park, play engagement with their dog, and use of leash in the on- and offleash areas. While guardians typically believed they spent 40-60 mins in the dog park, we found that the actual average time was only 24mins. There were common misconceptions as to what space constituted the dog park, although most survey participants were reasonably confident of their knowledge of the boundaries. However, over 50% of guardians had their dogs off leash in the on-leash spaces. As many dog parks are adjacent to reserves, this is a concern for conservation efforts. Furthermore, only just over a quarter of guardians were observed playing with their dog in the off-leash dog parks despite 91% of survey participants claiming they at least sometimes play with their dog. Our results indicate that dog parks are not being used in a way that ensures that dogs are experiencing the potential benefits of these spaces, and unengaging design certainly plays a key role. We are now beginning observations of dog social behaviour in these four parks and will be tracking dog movements to determine how much of each park is utilised.

Lay Persons Message: Off-leash parks are considered important spaces for dogs to exercise and socialise. However, they are often only flat grassy spaces, with little consideration given to design or dog safety. Still, guardians can create positive experiences for dogs by engaging in play and managing appropriate dog interactions. However, guardians spend little time playing with their dogs in off-leash parks. They may be relying on social interactions between dogs to give the park visit a purpose.

Abstract Speaker: Kristie Cameron

The state of cavy welfare in New Zealand and current research of behaviour to provide 'a good life'

K Cameron Unitec Te Pukenga kcameron@unitec.ac.nz

Guinea pigs (Cavia porcellus) are touted as an 'entry-level' pet and are members of approximately 32,000 households in New Zealand, however, there is no code of welfare for these animals. Owners should provide opportunities for natural behaviour in the housing and husbandry of the animals but there is a lack of consistent guidance in how to assess welfare or ensure their animals experience more than the adequate and have a 'good life'. This was evidenced in a recent survey, a third of guinea pig owners (n = 329) provided a smaller cage than recommended by the RSPCA (1m2), a third of owners provided daily cleaning (109/329, 33.1%) with indications that not all guinea pigs were provided hay, an important behavioural and nutritional need. Therefore, this research programme was developed to measure guinea pig behaviour and best-practice welfare and inform baselines for the care and wellbeing of guinea pigs. In Experiment 1, the time to move up an adjustable sloped ramp to obtain food (grass) was measured in four adult guinea pigs. For all animals, the average top gradient was when line-of-sight with the food was impeded by the angle of the ramp. In Experiment 2, a mirror was attached to the top of the ramp to ensure line-of-sight, which resulted in guinea pigs (n = 10) reaching the steeper gradients with the mirror (M = 50.4, SD = 5.5) compared to no mirror (M = 36.3, SD = 7.0; t (9) = 1.41, p = .193). Climbing speed increased at a similar rate as gradient increased with (α = -.063), and without the mirror (α = -.068), however, initial climbing durations (Q0) were lower without the mirror (M = 10.6, SD = 16.8), versus with it (M = 7.8, SD = 6.1) indicating the mirror provided line-of-sight or safety, thus faster acquisition of the task. In Experiment 3, systematic preference assessments were used to determine a rank order of foods for each animal, which was then tested as a reinforcer for ramp climbing. Unanimously, guinea pigs moved faster for most preferred food compared to least preferred. This data shows that ramp climbing is a valid and reliable method for measuring commodities of value to guinea pigs. Further research is planned to use the ramp to measure demand for substrate, enrichment and even conspecifics and expand the lab to measure the effect of housing size and shape on welfare.

Lay Persons Message: Guinea pigs are popular pets in New Zealand, but there is currently no code of welfare for these animals, leading to inconsistent husbandry and management. This initial research provides a method to measure what a guinea pig might value, and what should be provided to them to enhance welfare and provide 'a good life'. The first series of experiments utilize ramp climbing as a tool for measuring the demand for different commodities.

SESSION 4 THEME: A GOOD LIFE FOR ANIMALS SESSION SPONSOR – ANIMATES

ANIMATES

vetcare

Plenary Speaker: Dr Susan Hazel

A good life for companion animals

S.J. Hazel

School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences, University of Adelaide, Roseworthy Campus, Roseworthy, South Australia, 5371, AUSTRALIA susan.hazel@adelaide.edu.au

As a rule of thumb, companion animals have 'A Good Life' if they have more positive experiences than negative ones. While we still have a long way to go, we are beginning to better understand our companions and what they need, especially dogs and cats where most research has been focussed. But what factors are associated with positive and negative experiences, and what markers can we use to assess them? Choice and agency is becoming increasingly recognised, particularly in animal training. The emphasis has shifted from preventing distress to enhancing positive emotions. But do they need to be 'happy' all the time, and can we even remove all negative experiences? Even more importantly we cannot focus on animals in isolation without considering their interactions with the humans who take care of them.

Assessment of welfare in animals, while not routinely performed, is possible. Models such as the Five Domains can be used as a framework to assess the main inputs affecting welfare (Nutrition, Health, Environment and Behavioural Interactions) which then affect the 5th domain, the Mental State. Although this does not translate into an easy to administer checklist, the Five Domains model can be used to pick up major risks to poor welfare, or to systematically devise options to increase positive experiences. More work is needed though to develop objective measures of positive welfare, and to determine threshold levels or durations of negative experiences we should not go above. Validated scales for companion animal QoL are available and can be useful clinically, or in cross-sectional studies to determine factors associated with high companion animal QoL. However, their main limitation is that they need to be completed by humans, usually the guardian of the animal, and their responses may not reflect the true experience of the animal.

John Webster, who helped develop the Five Freedoms, has stated that our goal should be to align the peoples' perception of an animal's welfare with the actual experience of the animal. If people believe that two cats are getting on well in a household and do not recognise the subtle behavioural signs of conflict, they will rate the experience of these cats as being far more positive than it is. If a guardian does not believe their Labrador is overweight despite having a body condition score of 5/5, they will not recognise the negative impacts on welfare. In some ways education into the welfare needs of agricultural species has progressed more than the animals most of us live more closely with.

A focus on the companion animal is important, but we also need to think more holistically. People take care of companion animals, and the One Welfare model demonstrates how the wellbeing of people and pets is inextricably linked. Raising a puppy, while something we usually look back at with fondness, is something that at the time can be linked to high levels of stress, analogous to parental stress when raising human babies. Playing with cats is associated with higher QoL scores in the cats and a stronger cat-human bond. When companion animals age, or develop illnesses, the burden of care felt by their guardian can create both physical and psychological ill health, analogous to caring for family members with significant illness or disability. Anything that negatively impacts people is likely to in turn negatively impact the animals they live with. Veterinary social work is an expanding discipline likely to revolutionise animal care in the future.

(S.J. Hazel, cont.)

We are entering a phase of rapid societal changes that will also impact our companion animals. Dogs are now as likely to sleep in the bedroom as in the backyard, and keeping cats indoors has become a unified message to protect wildlife and their own welfare. Despite, or even because of, these changes we should strive each day to do better science and provide better caregiving to non-human animals. Losing sight of this goal will not only risk the welfare of the animals we live with, but also our own.

Lay person message: A Good Life for companion animals involves more positive than negative experiences. Our understanding of what animals need for positive welfare is expanding, particularly for dogs and cats. A focus not only on the animals but also on human caregivers is needed to maximise welfare for human and non-human animals.

Keywords: welfare; burden of care; Five Domains; dog; cat; veterinary social work

Abstract Speaker: Dr Alison Vaughan

The role of animal welfare certification in providing a good life for companion animals

A. Vaughan, K. Drake, and A. Dale Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals alison.vaughan@spca.nz

Attitudes and practices towards companion animals are constantly evolving. Increasingly, many guardians are concerned about providing a Good Life for their companion animals through meeting their needs for social interaction, mental stimulation and physical exercise. In New Zealand, 75% of dog owners consider enrichment - defined as socialisation, toys and outings - very important elements of dog ownership. Emerging companion animal services, such as doggy daycares, have expanded over the last decade in response to this demand.

The companion animal services sector is currently poorly regulated in New Zealand. The current lack of regulation, in combination with rapid growth of this sector, has resulted in negative consequences for animal welfare, including high profile cases of dogs becoming ill, injured, or dying while in the care of companion animal services. The Code for Temporary Housing for Companion Animals (2018) was an important step towards regulation of these industries but does not contain detailed requirements relating to specific companion animal services and relies on reactive reporting of animal welfare concerns. This poses challenges both for animal guardians looking to safeguard their animal's welfare and businesses who wish to distinguish themselves as prioritising welfare.

In the absence of specific regulations, some animal welfare organisations have developed certification programmes for companion animal businesses. These programmes provide guidelines for those in the industry looking to improve welfare, and provide assurances of the safety and quality of services for guardians.

SPCA Certified® is a voluntary programme that provides an avenue for both farms and companion animal service businesses to show their commitment to animal welfare. SPCA Certified® standards are developed based on SPCA policy, animal welfare science, current legislation, and advice from veterinarians and technical specialists, as well as industry best practice and practical experience of companion animal professionals.

All SPCA Certified® members are independently audited by a third party auditing company (at least twice a year) to ensure they are consistently meeting certification requirements and receiving the support they need to keep improving animal welfare. Joining the programme and becoming SPCA Certified® allows animal guardians to identify certified business as a provider of high-level animal care that meets SPCA Certified® animal welfare standards.

Evidence-based certification programmes, such as SPCA Certified® have an important role to play - alongside robust government standards and proactive industry bodies - in driving improvement in animal welfare in New Zealand.

Abstract Speaker: Julie Fiedler

Horses are worthy of care: Insights into horse sector participants' attitudes towards sentience and animal welfare

J. Fiedler [1], M. Ayre [2], S. Rosanowski [1], J. Slater [1]

[1] Melbourne Veterinary School, Faculty of Science, University of Melbourne, 250 Princes Highway, Werribee, Victoria 3030.

[2] School of Agriculture, Food and Ecosystem Sciences, University of Melbourne, Gratton St, Parkville, Victoria 3010

jmfiedler@student.unimelb.edu.au

Organisations for which sentient animals are central to their business model need to demonstrate safeguarding of animal welfare to remain sustainable. Responsiveness to the changing public attitudes towards sentient animals, and demonstrating a commitment to providing a Good Life, is critical to maintaining the social licence to operate. Before policy updates can occur, understanding the attitudes of participants about sentience and welfare is necessary. We surveyed experienced participants in horse-related activities about sentience and welfare. Eligible responses were received from 681 participants: the majority were Australian (91%), female (85%) and over 50 years of age (56%). Most respondents (99.9%) believed horses were sentient. Analysis of open-text responses identified two themes: (1) Sentience is a pathway to understanding mental state and wellbeing; and (2) A moral obligation to consider sentience. Observing that horses reacted to stimuli and responded to their surroundings led respondents to believe that horses were sentient. There was recognition that horse behaviours were a combination of instinctive reactions and more complex emotional states, such as a sense of psychological safety. By referring to behaviours, respondents could infer the horse's mental state and, from this, develop more a holistic sense of the animal's welfare and wellbeing. Respondents frequently assigned anthropomorphic labels to horse behaviours which we interpreted as facilitating a means of connecting with the sentient horse (Theme 1). A moral obligation was believed to exist towards horses because humans manage their environment and interactions with them. These obligations were perceived as responsibilities, including the responsibility to consider sentience when deciding what is good welfare, when interacting with horses and when training and competing with horses (Theme 2). The results showed a sophisticated understanding of sentience existed among experienced horse sector participants, who recognised the sentient horse as a subject, worthy of care. The results provide the first insights into attitudes towards, and understanding of, sentience and animal welfare by experienced horse sector participants. The results will make a valuable contribution to updating current welfare-related policies and practices. We propose that implementing the Five Domains Model and a Good Life for horses in organisational contexts is achievable because of the tacit knowledge of sentience possessed by experienced horse sector participants. Leveraging this knowledge will be essential to the implementation and updating of policy. Future research is needed to define and describe sentience-informed practices for organised activities such as equestrian sports and racing.

Lay Persons Message: Understanding experienced horse sector participants' attitudes to sentience and welfare is essential before updating current welfare policies to incorporate the Five Domains model, mental state and a Good Life. We surveyed 681 participants and found that 99.9% believed horses were sentient. They recognised that sentience is a pathway to understanding mental state and that a moral obligation existed to consider sentience. Horses were recognised as worthy of care

Panel Discussion + Q&A

SESSION 5: Panel Discussion + Q&A

Panel facilitator: Dr Helen Beattie

'Pet-keeping may have no place in tomorrow's society?'

H. Beattie Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa info@vawa.co.nz

A Panel Discussion to explore whether pet-keeping has a future.

Panel Participants (drawn from plenary and invited speakers):

Questions will include:

- Is pet-keeping at risk of losing its social license (public acceptance)?
- What are the ongoing challenges for pet guardians in relation to a changing world?
- What (if anything) needs to be addressed to ensure that we continue to have pets in our society?

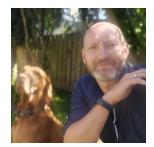


Notes

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Say Hi to the Companion Animals NZ team when you see us around:















Prof Nat Waran Director, A Good Life for Animals Centre

Talk to Nat about our new AGL Centre, grants, research opportunities, and human behaviour change projects. <u>nat@companionanimals.nz</u>

David Lloyd

General Manager, Companion Animals New Zealand

Talk to David about partnerships with CANZ, Companion Animals in NZ data, and opportunities to work with the NZCAR. <u>david@companionanimals.nz</u>

Dr Gosia Zobel

Animal Welfare Programmes Coordinator, A Good Life for Animals Centre

Talk to Gosia about our new AGL Centre, ongoing research, and the latest Companion Animals data. <u>gosia@companionanimals.nz</u>

Sarah Clements

Manager, NZ Companion Animal Register

Talk to Sarah about our LostPet service, becoming an Approved User of NZCAR to create registrations, buy equipment, and reunite animals. sarahc@companionanimals.nz

Dr Nic McDonald

Animal Welfare Operations Officer, A Good Life for Animals Centre

Talk to Nic about EQuiChip, our Training & Behaviour Accreditation, and CANZ events. <u>nicola@companionanimals.nz</u>

Bec Cameron

Marketing and Communications Manager

Talk to Bec about media enquiries regarding Companion Animals NZ, A Good Life, or the NZ Companion Animal Register. <u>rebecca@companionanimals.nz</u>

Tamera Ketika NZCAR Customer Support & 2024 Conference Administrator

Talk to Tamera about what a great job she has done with the 2024 Conference! Plus any questions about how the NZCAR service gets lost pets home, fast. <u>conference@companionanimals.nz</u>

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We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our sponsors, presenters, attendees and organisers for their invaluable contributions to bringing this conference to life.

Thank you to:

Our wonderful sponsors for making this event possible.

The esteemed speakers who came from near and far to share their insights and expertise, including Minister Hon Andrew Hoggard for taking the time to open the conference.

All participants who have registered and contributed to the success of the conference.

Those who took the time to nominate people for the Assisi Awards and, of course, the winners who we look forward to celebrating.

The Companion Animals NZ and Venue staff who helped organise the many facets of the conference.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to the future of Companion Animals in New Zealand.



CONTACT

Companion Animals NZ PO Box 27273 Marion Square Wellington 6141

