

# The Animal Care Expert

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



## *In this issue*

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- National Register for horses
- Animal welfare or animal rights?
- *Plus lots more.*



## General Meetings

*Held bi-monthly*

Our next General Meeting is Monday May 13th,  
7.30pm.

Bill Spilstead Complex, Luddenham Road Orchard  
Hills—Amenities Building.

**General Enquiries:**

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



# Welcome

By Michael Donnelly (Editor)

Welcome to our first edition of “The Animal Care Expert” (ACE).

ACE will be published quarterly providing information on current issues, and the progress of Animal Care Australia, to our members.

Within each issue we will announce guest speakers for our upcoming General Meetings, which are of course open to the public and we look forward to seeing you in the near future.

I do hope you enjoy The Animal Care Expert.

## Secretary’s Report

By Hugh Gent OAM

Since its inaugural meeting in June 2018 ACA has made great progress with its individual group representatives working together to form an alliance which now represents over 200,000 Hobbyists and pet owners which will make it hard for legislators to ignore our advice, and will counter the pressure being applied to Government by organisations concerning themselves with enforcing the physical requirements of the POCTA standards with no real concern for the health and wellbeing of the animals, in reality, the only people who understand the nuances of breeding and keeping of individual species are now represented by ACA.

A good relationship has been developed with the NSW Minister for Primary Industries the Hon.Niall Blair MLC and the NSW Chief Animal Welfare officer Dr. Kim Filmer who have both indicated that ACA will be consulted during the drafting of Legislation rather than being asked for comment after Department Officers have presented a document as a fait accompli, this co-operative arrangement will be of mutual benefit to the Government and Hobbyists in ensuring that legislation is “fit for purpose” for individual species, resulting in healthy welfare outcomes, rather than a “one size fits all” approach which only works to the benefit of the Enforcement Agencies.

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# Emma Hurst - a politician or an animal rights activist? Perhaps you can be both.

*Synopsis of ACA meeting 11/3/2019*

Earlier this week the Animal Care Australia held a General Meeting and the agenda for the evening was Animals and Politics.

With the NSW state election just around the corner on March 23rd the committee decided to be proactive and invite political parties to speak on their policies relevant to animals. This would give the ACA committee and meeting attendees the opportunity to assess impacts of proposed policies on the tens of thousands of NSW voters represented by our member organisations.

We appreciate Animal Justice Party (AJP) candidate Emma Hurst attending to share her party's objectives and her views regarding companion animal ownership, breeding and husbandry.

Emma is an intelligent educated candidate whose background in psychology enables her to quickly adjust her presentation and responses to incorporate the needs of the groups she addresses. She read the meeting well, toning down more controversial Animal Justice Party policy and avoiding direct conflict.

It was clear from the start that the conversations were going to be passionate.

The evening started with Emma outlining the Animal Justice Party's views on companion animals; Emma was articulate and confident in her message, "The party is not an animal

"I've been involved in animal rights for about 17 years. I've worked for Animal Liberation for over a decade and I've also worked for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)."

*Emma Hurst at ACTIVEx Sydney, 25/11/2018.*

welfare party and not an animal rights party either." This left the committee with the question - if the AJP is neither of these ..... then what are they?

The committee and guests focussed on analysis of the Animal Justice Party's Companion Animal Key Objectives; their relevance and likely impacts should these objectives be implemented via state legislative changes. Those present were intent on uncovering the true meaning of these objectives.

Responses from Emma contradicted the AJP key objectives which she stated were about the bigger picture. Emma indicated that legislation that the AJP would work on would be about reduction, not phasing out or abolition of domesticated/companion animals.

All committee members noted the significance of this glaring contradiction.

Emma's view on Australia's current overabundance and wastage of animals completely aligns with the ACA's view – it is the AJP's proposal to introduce a bill into parliament to "phase out" the sale and breeding of companion animals that is problematic.

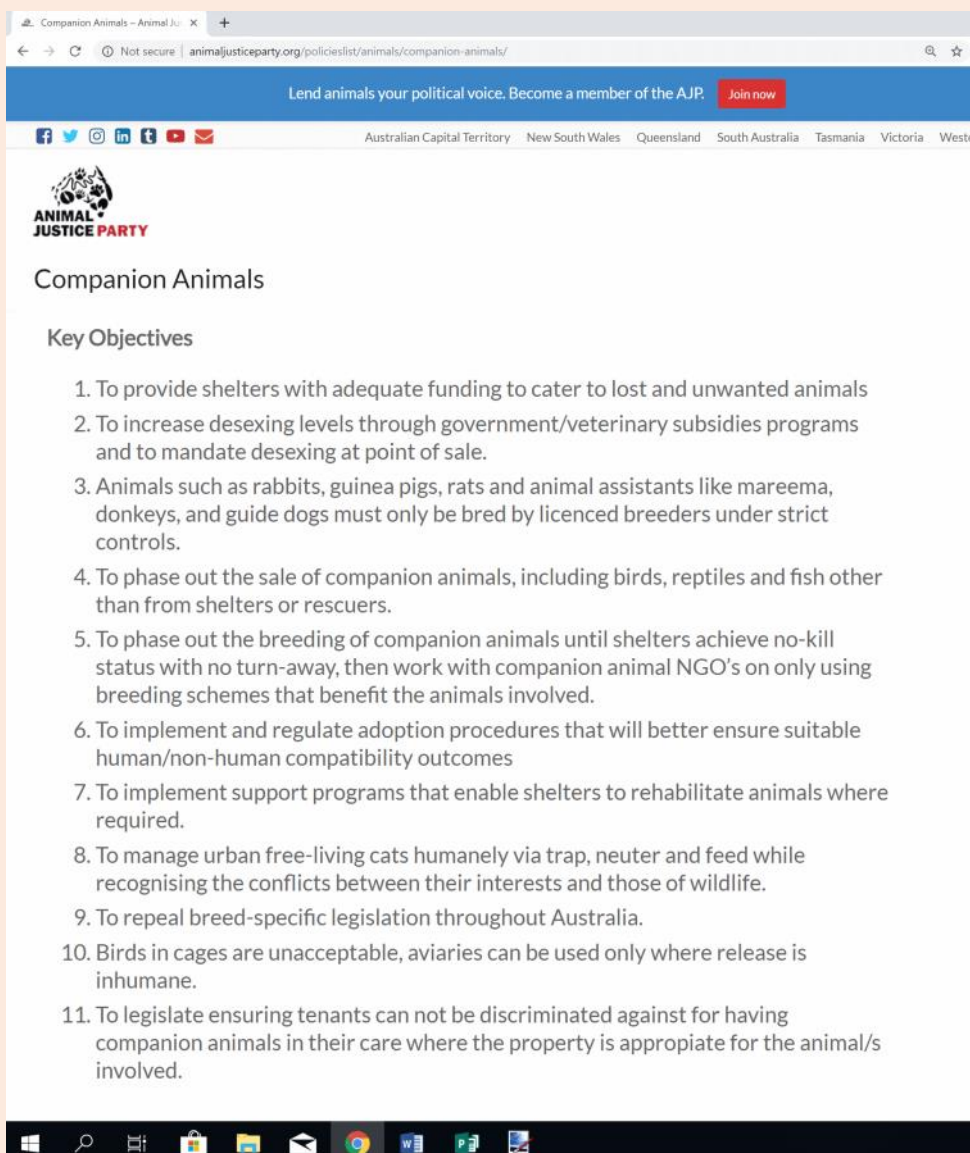
4. To **phase out** the sale of companion animals, including birds, reptiles and fish other than from shelters or rescuers.

5. To **phase out** the breeding of companion animals until shelters achieve no-kill status with no turn-away, then work with companion animal NGO's on only using breeding schemes that benefit the animals involved.

Responding to Emma the committee noted the "phasing out" gave no thought to what we would do when



**Emma HURST**



Lack of clarity by AJP's lead candidate on policies that if implemented will shut down pedigree dogs, aviculture and all other animal groups ACA represents is concerning, to say the least.

Emma was asked from the committee why the need to create a new bill when the current Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (POCTA) simply needs to be enforced. This would go a long way to improving animal welfare and resolving over-breeding issues. When asked about current state licensing for native wildlife such as birds and reptiles, Emma admitted not having enough knowledge of the licensing provisions for these specific animals, and that if she planned to work on any legislative changes in this area she would need expert opinion and consultation.

It was clear Emma was not fully informed of the current POCTA Act and the current wildlife licensing reforms.

Finally, Emma strongly agreed on educational and community awareness programs being the way forward for better animal welfare outcomes however these do not figure in the Animal Justice

Party's key objectives which is of concern to the ACA.

animals are so old they can no longer breed. The reproductive life span of each species is different, ranging from less than twelve months to a decade. "Phasing out" will lead to extinction of numerous companion species and individual breeds. Emma indicated she would take the ACA's concerns on this back to the National AJP committee for consideration

The ACA committee feels it is important to recognise the positive impacts on companion pet ownership, and the community psychotherapeutic benefits of owning animals, as well as the national economic value that the pet industry represents.

Dogs NSW President, Lyn Brown, made it clear pedigree dogs are simply unheard of in rescue shelters and pounds – Emma did not respond, was AJP aware of this fact? Sam Davis, representing bird keepers (aviculturists) was advised that Emma thought key objective 10, "Birds in cages are unacceptable..." referred to wild birds or maybe it was about cockatoos confined solely to small cages? Emma said that wild, rescued/injured birds should be released, but that birds that could not be released should be in aviaries. It was clear here that Mr Davis and Ms Hurst disagreed on the intent of this objective.

At a recent event in Sydney on 25/11/2018 Emma made the following comment.

*"If there was potential to form a government with Labor and the Greens and the Animal Justice Party we could potentially get some bills though."*

If the AJP gains another seat or two in the NSW upper house then it is likely the AJP will hold the balance of power in the upper house. Based on AJP objectives, this would be a disaster for all who keep, care for and breed animals.

Emma said she would take this feedback to the National AJP committee.

It would behove the AJP to consider the expertise that the constituent groups of Animal Care Australia bring -such as herpetology, aviculturists, equine hobbyists, small animal societies, feline and canine regulatory bodies, to name a few.

The ACA committee looks forward to the opportunity of developing and being involved in further conversations advocating for our animals with the Animal Justice Party.

Image below: Shutterstock

## Animals Welfare or Animal Rights?

Animal welfare and animal rights are often thought to lie on the same continuum – this is not the case.

Generally accepted principles defining these terms are as follows.

### Animal Welfare

1. The need for a suitable environment.
2. The need for a suitable diet.
3. The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
4. The need to be housed with, or apart from other animals.
5. The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

### Animal Rights

1. Animals are sentient beings that should not be owned by humans.
2. Humans and non-human beings should have equal rights both ethically and legally.
3. Animals should not be kept in captivity, including for food, entertainment, research, companionship, conservation or any other reason.



# Senate Inquiry into a National Register for All Horses

By Karri Nadazdy

On the 12th February 2019 Senator Faruqi, of the Greens, put forward a motion to open an Inquiry into the Feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register. The Senate voted in favour of the matter, and the Inquiry is currently open to submissions under the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee.

Aimed at the Racing Industry to tackle excessive over-breeding and "wastage" (discarded, failed racehorses), a National Scheme would affect all horse owners and keepers, including private owners of all breeds of horses and ponies, as well as many service businesses and NGO's related to the industry.

In asking for Submissions, the Inquiry asks several specific questions:

- the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;
- the benefits of a national register, including for animal welfare, biosecurity safety (including for the prevention and management of Emergency Animal Diseases, such as equine influenza and African Horse Sickness), backyard breeding and the integrity of trade in horses;
- overseas models of national tracking systems for horses;
- funding, enforcement and penalty implications;
- any related matters

ACA investigated the benefits of a National Register, and has found that it does have the *potential* to improve horse welfare in the racing industry especially, as well as improve industry standards, and curb over breeding. For these reasons, ACA, along with most of the Horse Industry, is supportive of the concept of a National Register. However, the benefits to private horse owners are very few, and there will be costs involved, that the government will not absorb, and this needs to be addressed now in the Inquiry stage.

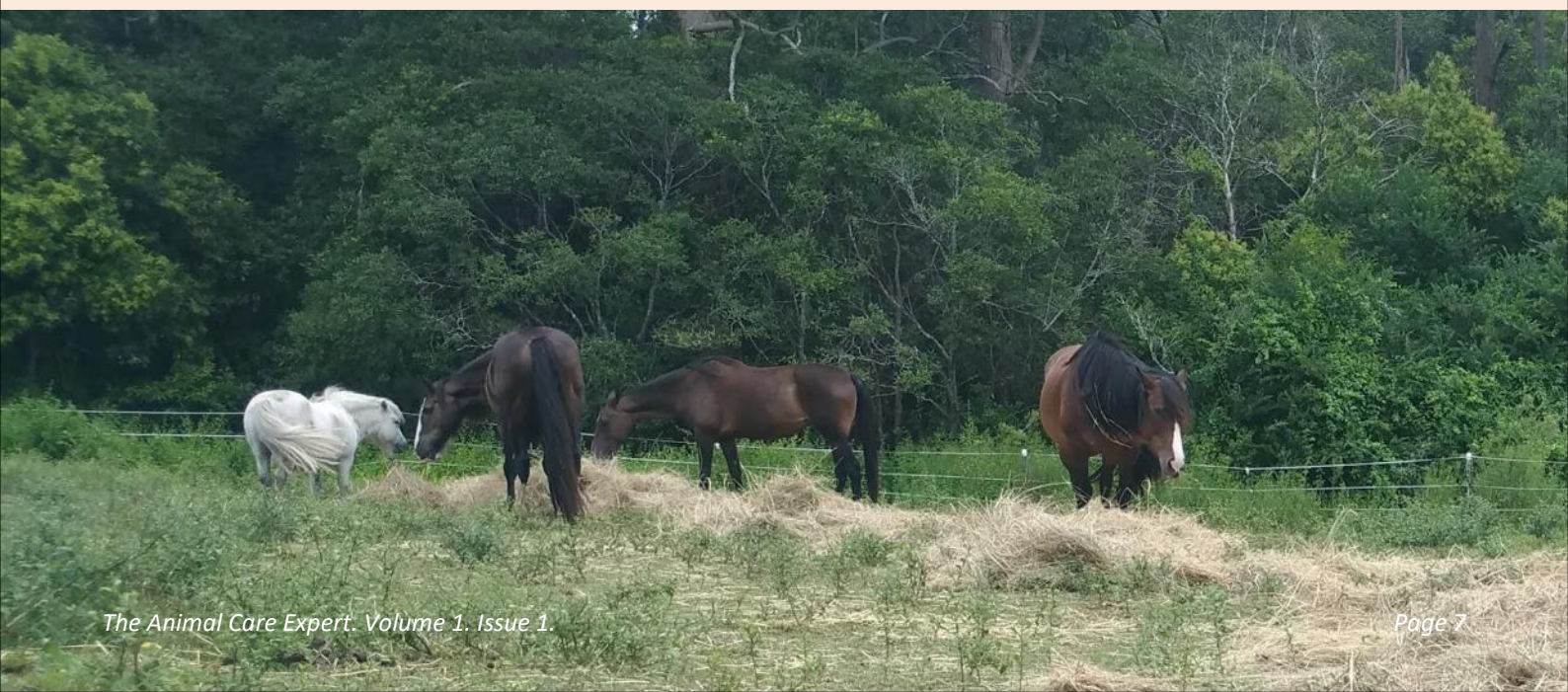
There are also potential welfare issues to consider, especially outside of racing, as tracing a horse's history

without any medical or training information attached to the register, does not tell owners the things they really need to know about a horse they are considering taking on. A horse with a long list of owners is likely assumed to be (and treated as) a dangerous or "bad" horse, when this may not be the case at all. Many good horses may suffer if appropriate protocols for the Register are not implemented.

ACA will be sending a detailed Submission to the Inquiry addressing all of the above issues, and also suggesting that since all horse related legislation will have to be updated to reflect the introduction of the National Horse Register, it would be advisable to update all Horse related legislation into a single document. At present, horses are addressed in dozens of State and National legislations with inconsistent standards, and contradictory laws. Combining all of these documents into one could drastically improve horse welfare standards across the country, unify the industry, and ensure that better information is available to all horse owners in Australia. At the same time, this would ensure that the National Register can function as it is intended to across the country, preventing unintentional breaches.

Submissions close on 5th April 2019. Members of ACA may contribute to the development of ACA's submission to the Inquiry, and we invite Members to participate in the discussion. We also encourage any interested horse owners to write their own submissions, ideally including a recommendation to update all horse related legislation in Australia into one document that encompasses all horses nationally. Assuming the National Horse Register is eventually introduced, we will have a lot of work ahead of us, but it's also a unique opportunity to make some major welfare improvements for the horses in our country.

For more information, please contact ACA's Horse Representative, Karri Nadazdy at [horses@animalcareaustralia.org.au](mailto:horses@animalcareaustralia.org.au). Inquiry Submissions are to be lodged [here](#)





## Birds are self-regulated

### *A broad range of representation*

*By Sam Davis*

Bird keeping (Aviculture) in Australia has a proud record of self-regulation.

In recent years animal rights and animal liberation extremists have begun to pressure our industry with their ultimate goal of preventing the keeping of birds completely.

ACA is here to help bring all animal hobbyists together such that our combined voice is heard above the chirps of the extremists.

Bird clubs and hobbyists represented by ACA include a broad range of avicultural endeavour.

We represent keepers of parrots, finches, canaries, budgerigars, poultry, waterfowl, softbills, pigeons, raptors, etc. Clubs that breed to a standard, those that show competitively, clubs that focus on difficult to breed species, those that educate and support threatened species work and most of all those that provide social interaction, encourage higher welfare and promote aviculture as a valid and valuable hobby.

*Clubs—higher welfare champions!*

## Practical Small Pets

### *Ever more common*

*By Rachel Sydenham*

Small pets are one of the easiest pets to obtain, and as development swallows up the Australian dream of “The big backyard”, more and more people are finding that keeping rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice and ferrets as companion animals, a much more practical option.

ACA was brought into fruition to give all animal hobbyists a voice against animal liberationists and animal rights extremist groups, and to call for more common sense legislations and keeping practices to be put into place.

Clubs, societies, associations and members under the wing of ACA are represented and supported to help promote education, ethical breeding practices and responsible ownership. More importantly, ACA strives to establish a model standard of higher welfare for the keeping and care of these small but equally as important animals.

*Ethical responsible ownership*







## Working purr-fectly for cats!

### *Highest rate of pet ownership*

*By Helen Toovey*

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. Cats are the second most common pet – approximately 16 cats for every 100 people. As Australia's work habits and our way of living changes more people are finding cat ownership fits into their lifestyle. More and more people are seeking out a Registered Hobby Breeder for a specific breed to purchase their new family member from.

There are several Cat Associations in New South Wales, as well as nationally. These cater to the hobby breeder, show enthusiast and support pet owners in responsible cat ownership.

With changes that are happening in the State Legislation pertaining to hobby breeders is complex and will impact every aspect of breeding, - the breeding of pedigrees cats, keeping entire breeders and homing kittens not kept for breeding.

## Human/animal interaction!

### *What a wonderful thing*

*By Noeline Cassettari*

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is for farm animal owners that believes human/animal interaction is a wonderful thing.

ACA is for businesses, associations, or individuals that appreciate that both animals and humans benefit from the partnership.

Whether you love llamas or lambs, adore alpacas, prefer pigs, care for cattle, think goats are gorgeous, camels are cute or are devoted to donkeys... ACA is here to support you.

ACA represents:

- People that spend enough time with animals to know what animals enjoy.
- People that understand animal welfare is a process of continual improvement.
- People that believe science, not hearsay.
- People that educate and share their passion

*It's time someone stood up for our  
pets!*





## Watching out for reptiles & frogs

### *Fastest growing pet keeping hobby.*

*By Michael Donnelly*

Reptile keeping in Australia is the fastest growing pet-keeping hobby. As back-yards in new residential zones are disappearing, the ease of keeping reptiles and amphibians (collectively called 'herps') indoors with suitable enclosures has expanded society's love for interacting with snakes, lizards, turtles and frogs.

In recent years the interest and desire to keep herps has expanded, but it has also seen a strong animal rights and liberation movement push back against the keeping of any native animal. Skewed media reports have portrayed reptile keepers as money-focused animal smugglers with low animal welfare consideration. The reality is far from this, with huge advancements in reptile and amphibian husbandry improving the welfare and wellbeing of captive herps significantly.

Together we can protect the keeping of all pets for the generations of the future.

### *Improving husbandry standards!*

## Important role in society

### *Health benefits undisputed!*

*By Hugh Gent OAM*

Dogs play an important role in Society today, the health benefits of dog ownership are undisputed, Assistance Dogs provide an improved quality of life for thousands of disabled people, Detector Dogs play a vital role in Border Security and with our Police and Defence Forces. Dog Shows, Obedience and Agility Trials, Tracking, Flyball, Herding and Dock Diving are only a small number of family activities that can be done with dogs, but the most important role for dogs is to provide uncompromising companionship. Despite this wonderful contribution to society there are Animal Rights Organisations and their fellow travelers, posing as Animal Welfare Groups, who do not believe dogs should be owned by humans, some believe that dogs should be phased out of society altogether. The Australian National Kennel Council & Dogs NSW strongly disagree, becoming founding members of ACA to provide Governments with expert advice..

### *Fighting Animal Rights agendas.*





## Bucking the trend for horses

### *A long history in Australia*

*By Karri Nazdazdy*

Our country was built on the backs of working horses in agriculture, transport and war, and it's no surprise that horses hold a unique place in the hearts of most Australians. Today, horses continue to work in trail riding centres, racing, rodeos, tourism, entertainment and many are still crucial to farming and rural activities. But the "average horse" is the recreational horse or pony, privately owned, and more companion than working animal. Horses and their owners are involved in pony clubs, competitions ranging from showing to carriage driving to polocrosse, and casual riding on local community bridleways and trails. Horses and ponies are often the target of campaigns by animal rights activists to prevent them working in tourism, entertainment or living in the wild, which can have serious repercussions to our modern recreational horse owners. With horse industry representation focussed firmly on the racing industry, private horse owners have few places to turn to for knowledgeable advice and support regarding issues that affect them. ACA aims to change this.

*Join us—have your voice heard!*

Watch out for our  
next issue in June  
2019.

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



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