



lucy's project

Safe Families - Paws and All

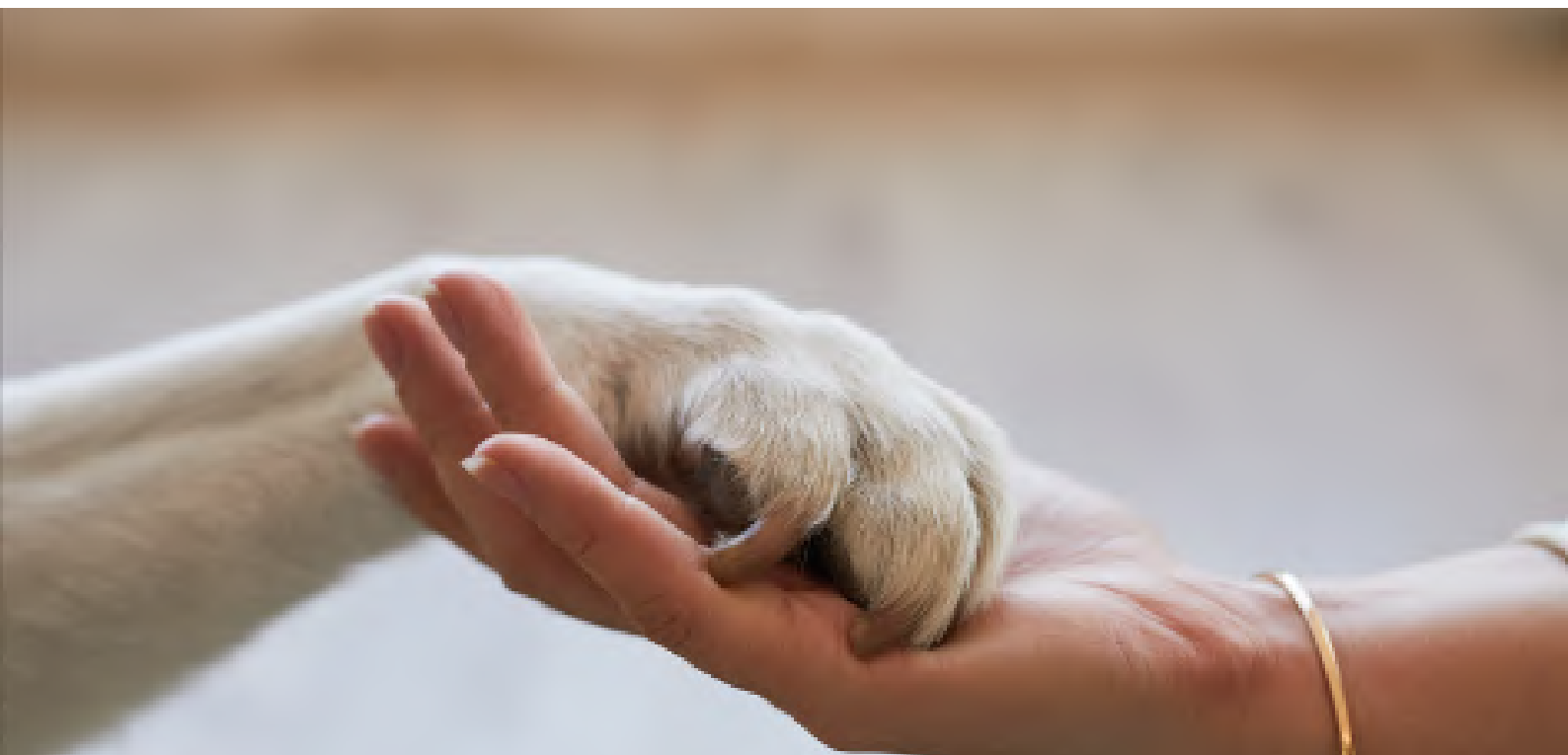
# Lucy's Project 2024 Conference Report

[hello@lucysproject.com](mailto:hello@lucysproject.com)  
[www.lucysproject.com](http://www.lucysproject.com)



## Acknowledgement of Country

Lucy's Project was founded on the land of the Widjabal Wia-bal people of the Budjalung Nation in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. We acknowledge the continuing connection to Country of First Nations Peoples and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We value the knowledge and ways of knowing of First Nations people and stand in solidarity with First Nations people in the ongoing struggle for justice.



## Acknowledgement of Victim-Survivors

Lucy's Project acknowledges the strength, resistance and resilience of people and animals who experience domestic and family violence. We recognise the trauma that is inflicted when people and animals witness their loved ones being harmed, and the immense grief and loss they feel when their loved ones are killed. We advocate for the right to safety of all victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

# About Lucy's Project

## **Our vision**

Safe Families, Paws & All

## **Our mission**

We make a positive impact on the lives of people with animals at risk of, or experiencing, DFV by improving their safety and long-term outcomes.

## **Our Work**

**Collaboration** to build partnerships across services and sectors to promote a coordinated and holistic response to people and animals experiencing violence

**Advocacy** to highlight policy, program and legislative changes needed to improve access to the supports people and animals experiencing violence need to be safe

**Research** to increase the evidence base on the issues faced by people and animals experiencing violence and the supports needed, in collaboration with key partners

**Education** to improve the capacity of DFV, community and animal services and workers to provide support to people and animals experiencing violence



# Our team



## Monique Dam

Chief Executive Officer

Monique previously worked as the Advocacy and Prevention Manager at Domestic Violence NSW where she advocated alongside survivors, social workers, lawyers, policy makers and politicians to improve the safety of women, children and animals experiencing violence. In her previous roles, she worked on legal assistance and early childhood policy for the Commonwealth and NSW governments.



## Alison Waters

Policy, Advocacy and Research Lead

Alison has worked in the family violence sector for 25 years, as an advocate for women, children, and animals. During this time, she has worked in specialist frontline roles and leadership positions. Alison has an academic background in Social Work and Public Policy.



## Belinda Oppenheimer

Education and Partnerships Lead

Belinda has worked as a veterinarian for the past decade, and as an animal shelter attendant prior to this. She enjoys being able to apply her veterinary knowledge and shelter experience to help people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence. While welfare medicine is her first love, Belinda also has a post-graduate qualification in medicine and surgery of unusual pets.



## Natalie Liotta

Business and Project Officer

Natalie has over a decade of experience in human resources and administration. She has a passion for fostering a positive workplace culture and facilitating employee development. Natalie has played a key role in building and fostering high-performing teams, streamlining business operations and has a passion for creating inclusive, organised and supportive work environments.

# Introduction

*Dear friends and colleagues,*

*We are delighted to share with you this report of the 2024 Lucy's Project Conference. Thank you to all our speakers and participants for making it such an inspiring event!*

*The conference brought together a diverse group of professionals, advocates, and experts united by a shared commitment to improving the safety and wellbeing of people and animals subjected to domestic and family violence (DFV). The conference provided a valuable platform for discussing critical issues, sharing knowledge, and exploring innovative approaches to fostering change within our communities.*

*The conference explored emerging and better practices in supporting people and animals experiencing DFV and opportunities for collaboration across the human and animal service sectors along with law enforcement. A central focus was on building a shared understanding how the safety of people and animals is interconnected, and why animal-inclusive safety planning and support and enabling people and animals to heal and recover together is critical to their safety and well-being.*

*With over 30 speakers, including politicians, researchers, academics, practitioners and 120 participants, the conference offered a rich variety of perspectives and expertise. These thought leaders shared valuable insights on emerging practices, collaborative efforts, and the critical need for integrated support for both people and animals.*

*The conference participants work in a diverse range of sectors, including within the DFV, community, veterinary and animal welfare service sectors, as well as in universities and TAFEs, legal and justice, and government. This reflects the need for a multidisciplinary approach and cross-sector collaboration to address DFV perpetrated against people and animals.*

*Throughout the event, participants offered thought-provoking discussion points and shared ideas for creating lasting change. In this report, we provide a summary of each session, capturing the key takeaways and discussions that contributed to expanding our collective understanding of DFV perpetrated against people and animals.*

*We hope that this report will be a resource for continued reflection, learning and action and we look forward to continuing to work together to create a safe future for all.*

*With gratitude and optimism,*

*Monique, Natalie, Alison and Belinda*



## Companion Animals

Unconditional

Warm our hearts

Connect our souls

Safe place to be

Listening...

Hearing...

Responding...

We protect them, they us

Know when we need them

Detect when unwell

Reason to get up

Keep going

When they're traumatised

So are we

When we're hurt

They hurt

Watching an animal abused

Breaks something inside

We lose ourselves as we lose  
them

They know we need them

And they us





They love, won't leave  
When left, escape to come back  
Fret when left behind  
Trying to find safety with them  
leads to  
Homelessness  
Abuse  
Fear  
Landlords blame animals for  
disrepair  
Tribunal  
Leaving them/not an option  
Provision  
Leads to safety for all  
Settles  
Hope breaks through  
And life can begin anew

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# Components of Control

when domestic and family violence is  
used against people and animals

## Intimidation

A perpetrator may harm an animal to show their capability and intent to harm a person.

## Child Abuse

A perpetrator may force a child to participate in harming a beloved animal.

## Emotional Abuse

A perpetrator may harm or kill an animal to hurt the animal and cause distress to the people who love them.

## Threats & Manipulation

A perpetrator may harm or threaten to harm an animal to force a person to stay with or return to them.

## Physical Abuse

A perpetrator may harm or kill an animal to hurt the animal and to coerce and control a person.

## Financial Abuse

A perpetrator may withhold money needed to fulfil an animal's needs, including for food or veterinary care.

## Systems Abuse

A perpetrator may use property laws to make it difficult for a person to keep an animal.

## Sexual Abuse

A perpetrator may force an animal to engage in sexual acts and force a person to participate.

If you are in immediate danger, call 000.

For counselling, information and support, call 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

# Session Summaries



Our Conference brought together researchers, advocates, and practitioners to discuss how to address DFV perpetrated against people and animals. Each session provided valuable insights, practical solutions, and inspiring examples of advocacy and collaboration.

Below is a summary of each session, highlighting the key topics, discussions, and takeaways that shaped this year's event. These summaries serve as a resource for participants and for anyone passionate about creating inclusive, effective responses to DFV that support both people and animals.



# How is the safety and wellbeing of people and animals interconnected?

## Speaker

Talie Star, Consultant in Trauma, Recovery, DFV, Homelessness, and Disability

## Key points

- People's relationships with animals provide safety and love, including for children who are experiencing DFV.
- It can be devastating for people to be forcibly separated from the animals they love.
- Studies have found that companion animals reduce people's stress, anxiety and loneliness.
- Children are victim-survivors in their own right.
- Children do not 'witness' violence, they experience violence.
- People with disabilities are twice as likely to experience DFSV. They may also depend on perpetrators of DFSV to ensure their daily needs and their ability to engage with the community. This can put them at higher risk of experiencing abuse and animal abuse.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Allow people to reside with their animals in emergency and short-term housing.
- Reinststate the NSW DFV Pets and Animal Welfare Support (PAWS) grants program to build animal-inclusive accommodation and expand existing grants.
- Ensure accountability and support healing for perpetrators of DFSV, in recognition that adult perpetrators may have experienced violence and animal abuse as children.
- Provide support and healing for children and young people who have experienced DFSV, and/or who have used DFSV, from childhood.

# What is the research telling us about violence against family animals in the context of intimate partner violence?

## Speakers

Kylie Butler, Australian Institute of Family Studies

Jasmine MacDonald, Australian Institute of Family Studies

## Key points

- Emerging evidence suggests that “violence against family animals is a red flag for frequent and severe intimate partner violence”.
- There is limited information in the literature about victim-survivors who have not accessed support services. This hinders our understanding of what early intervention supports may be required.
- Children form strong emotional connections with animals and feel comforted spending time with animals. The impacts of animal abuse experienced by children are similar to those experienced by adults. Children will sometimes try to intervene when perpetrators are harming or threatening animals and violence can be redirected towards them.
- There are barriers to disclosing violence against family animals, including shame and embarrassment about the violence, a fear that support services will not understand or take seriously the importance of their relationship with their animal, and a fear that their animals may be taken away from them if they cannot ‘prove’ ownership or due to welfare concerns.
- Many women will delay leaving, stay with, or return to perpetrators because they have concerns for the safety of their animals if they are left behind.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Include questions about animals during intake and assessment and provide opportunities for people to talk about violence perpetrated against animals.
- Respond seriously and sensitively to disclosures of violence against animals and record the details and threats of violence towards animals.
- Include animals in safety planning and increase access to animal-inclusive crisis accommodation.

# How can DFV services support people and animals to be safe together?

## Speakers

Jess Wilson, Safe and Equal, Victoria

Angie Piubello, Beryl Women's Refuge, ACT

Julie Chapman, Pet Refuge, NZ

Shelley Booth, DFV NSW

## Key points

- It is important for practitioners and service providers to ascertain who the meaningful relationships are for clients, including animals. It is important to give children the opportunity to talk about their animals and share their concerns about them, particularly if they have been separated from them.
- For some women and children, their relationships with animals may be their only positive relationships and even their reason for living. Perpetrators commonly target the animals that women and children have the strongest connection to.
- It is important to acknowledge that women and children may have been forced to participate in abuse of a beloved animal by perpetrators of DFV.
- Peak bodies can advocate for policy and systems changes and support best practice through training and resources for practitioners.
- Caseworkers often experience time pressures and a lack of access to resources in general. Therefore, trying to accommodate the needs of animal victim-survivors can be time consuming and difficult to achieve in this context. Despite these challenges, workers strive to find creative solutions to support women and children with animals.
- People with animals struggle to find animal-inclusive refuges, and will often delay leaving a perpetrator unless they can access support together. It is also difficult to access long-term animal-inclusive accommodation.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Support people and animals to maintain their connection and relationship when they are not able to be housed in crisis accommodation together.
- State and federal governments should provide more funding to services so that they can help to keep people and animals safe and together.

# How can DFV services become animal inclusive and what are the benefits for women, children and animals?

## Speakers

Billie-Jo Williams, Ngarrunga Refuge and Link Wentworth  
Maria Losurdo, The Women's Cottage

## Key points

- “Ngarrunga means a calming place in the Darug language and the aim is for women and children to have a safe, warm and healing place in a welcoming, caring, supportive community so they can escape as a family with their pets.”
- There are many reasons why it is important for refuges to be animal-inclusive, including the following: harm to pets is often used as a form of intimidation, threat and abuse; a lack of animal-inclusive housing and accommodation options can be a significant barrier to safety for victim-survivors; having their animals with them can support healing and recovery for women and children.
- Concerns for the safety and wellbeing of farmed animals and large animals can limit options for victim-survivors in regional and rural areas.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Involve animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, pet supplies companies and the wider community to find solutions for including animals.
- Partner with animal welfare organisations to develop and implement companion animal safety protocols.
- Develop a conflict resolution policy for clients that can address potential challenges that may eventuate in relation to animals.
- Develop ongoing partnerships with local veterinarians to support the health and wellbeing of animals.
- Explore the possibility of building relationships with private accommodation providers who accept companion animals and who would be open to accepting women escaping DFV who require temporary accommodation.

# How can we support LGBTQ+ people and animals experiencing DFV?

## Speakers

Damien Riggs, Flinders University

Heather Fraser, Queensland University of Technology

Nik Taylor, University of Canterbury

## Key points

- Animals are often key members of queer families and households.
- Animals are a source of unconditional positive regard, and they can provide a 'buffer' against marginalisation.
- It can be hard for victim-survivors to reach out for help in general. However, LGBTQ+ people can find this harder due to cisgenderism and heteronormativity in service responses.
- Watching an animal being abused may be the tipping point for a person to recognise that DFV is being perpetrated against them and their animals.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Ask about animals as kin and take seriously the relationships that people have with their animals.
- Welcome animals into spaces wherever possible and share stories about animals.
- Focus on the agency of animals. Regard them as distinct from their human guardians.
- Provide specific DFV services for LGBTQ+ people that are animal inclusive.
- Use visual cues at your office and on your website to demonstrate that your service is LGBTQ+ inclusive and animal inclusive (e.g. rainbow sticker with paw print).

# “Protecting woman’s best friend”: The impact of pet protection orders in the USA

## Speaker

Phil Arkow, National Link Coalition, USA

## Key points

- Forty one US states, plus D.C and Puerto Rico, have Pet Protection Orders in place. Sixteen states protect any ‘animal’. Twenty-three states limit protections to ‘companion animals’ or ‘household animals’. Two states protect ‘domesticated’ animals. Two states specifically exclude ‘commercial livestock’ or animals kept for agricultural, commercial, economic or business purposes.
- In eight US states, divorce courts can award custody of animals based on an animal’s best interests.
- Limited data has been collected on the effectiveness of Pet Protection Orders.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Collect data on how many women have been turned away from shelters or have declined to access them because the service will not accommodate their animals.
- DFV services, including refuges, should ask several questions about animals as a standard process at intake and record this data e.g. *Are there animals at home? Have they ever been abused? Are you worried about their welfare?*



# How can animal welfare and veterinary services support animals and people experiencing violence?

## Speakers

Jacki Largo, Paws and Recover

Jayla Sainty, RSPCA Tasmania

Alicia Kennedy, Cherished Pets

Rochelle Paterson, University of Guelph

## Key points

- Vets may be the first people outside of a family who become aware that DFV is being perpetrated against people and animals.
- Vets are frontline responders for non-accidental injury and animal abuse.
- Coercive control, financial abuse and elder abuse can come to light in the vet clinic context (forced euthanasia is an example).
- Vets are trusted professionals and victim-survivors may feel safe disclosing to them. Veterinary social workers can play an important role in supporting human and animal victim-survivors.
- A research paper has established that the 3Rs DFV training (recognise, respond, refer) is effective when it is used as a training tool for vets.
- Vets who suspect that an animal has sustained non-accidental injuries may not feel comfortable or supported to act or they may not know what to do.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Veterinary clinics and DFV services should collaborate with local councils and boarding facilities to support people and animals experiencing DFV.
- Veterinary clinics should work towards creating safe and non-judgmental environments so that disclosures of DFV can be responded to in a safe way.
- Veterinary clinics should develop a standard operating procedure or protocol about how to respond to animal abuse or family violence.
- Veterinarians should undertake DFV training.
- Make training for vets to recognise, respond, refer animals and people who are experiencing DFV widely accessible and accredited as continuing professional development.

# How can we recognise animals as victim-survivors in their own right?

## Speakers

Jane Kotzmann, Deakin University

Morgan Stonebridge, Deakin University

## Key points

- Most Australian jurisdictions have enacted legislation that expressly recognises threatened and actual abuse against companion animals as a form of DFV.
- Animals experience mental and physical suffering when they are subjected to DFV. However, there is no express statutory recognition that animals can be victim-survivors of DFV. Their interests as sentient beings who want to avoid harm are not recognised; rather, their status is typically defined by the impact of abuse on human victim-survivors.
- According 'victim-survivor status' to animals would enable courts to make orders protecting animals as victims of DFV regardless of who 'owns' them. This also has the effect of protecting human victim-survivors.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Amend legislation to recognise animals as victim-survivors of DFV in their own right.

# How can law enforcement respond to DFV perpetrated against people and animals concurrently?

## Speakers

Kathryn Jurd, RSPCA NSW

Ingrid Reilly, NSW Police Force

Demi Kuiters, Queensland Police Service

## Key points

- As first responders, general duties police are in a good position to identify animal welfare issues and animal cruelty.
- Police, RSPCA and Animal Welfare League have the status of inspectors under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 in NSW. There is a limited number of inspectors in regional and rural areas.
- Convictions for charges initiated by RSPCA now appear on a person's criminal history in NSW, providing valuable and helpful information to police and judicial officers.
- There is value in sharing information about animal cruelty charges and convictions between agencies to build a comprehensive history of violence.
- Perpetrators of DFV use systems abuse to exert power and control over people and animals, such as by seeking to have victim-survivors charged with theft of animals who are legally owned by the perpetrator of DFV.
- The status of animals as property and the lack of acknowledgement of their sentience is a barrier to their safety and wellbeing.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Law enforcement and animal welfare agencies should work together to protect people and animals experiencing DFV.
- Provide ongoing training for police and the community about how animals are used by DFV perpetrators to exert coercive control.
- Build networks between relevant stakeholders; including refuges, vets, police, animal welfare and community organisations.
- Enshrine animal sentience in legislation.
- Amend POCTA to enable judicial officers to centre an animal's experience of violence.

# Rurality, DFV, and animal cruelty: A study of practitioner perspectives

## Speakers

Bridget Harris, Monash University

Chloe Keel, Griffith University

Anna Eriksson, Monash University

## Key points

- Barriers to addressing DFV and animal cruelty are exacerbated in non-urban areas, for all groups (e.g. victim-survivors, advocates, practitioners). By better understanding these barriers, we can enhance prevention and response initiatives.
- DFV is higher in rural and remote areas as compared to urban areas and it can be really challenging to disclose, seek help or respond.
- There are different ways that coercive control and animal cruelty can present in rural areas, for example perpetrators can target farmed animals, companion animals and wild animals (including native and introduced species).
- Animal cruelty reporting can be difficult. RSPCA or AWL may not have a presence in the local area.
- The safety of animals may not be prioritised and they may not be recognised as victims, particularly animals that are not cats and dogs.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Provide training for police on the intersection of DFV and animal cruelty.
- Collaborate with animal welfare organisations to house large animals.
- Share information with a clear intent of reducing risk.
- Increase funding to animal welfare organisations to assist people and animals.

# What are the benefits of enabling people and animals to heal and recover from DFV together?

## Speakers

Jasmine Montgomery, James Cook University

Felicity White, Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre

Talie Star, Consultant in Trauma, Recovery, DFV, Homelessness and Disability

Megan Nutbean, Lort Smith Animal Hospital

## Key points

- The human-animal bond should not be underestimated. Being separated from their animals can have the impact of haltering the process of healing from trauma for people.
- Adults and children can experience negative mental health impacts when separated from their animals. For example, children can be re-traumatised through the loss of the connection with their animal. People can experience ongoing anxiety about the animal's wellbeing and safety.
- A shared experience of abuse can create a unique bond between people and their animals who may seek to protect each other.
- Having the support and companionship of an animal can assist people, including children, to rebuild after experiencing loss and upheaval.

## Recommendations for governments, services and practitioners

- Ensure that lived expertise informs the development of policies and services.
- Promote networking across animal and human services, particularly at the local level.
- Ensure animal-inclusive housing is available so that human and animal victim-survivors can stay together.
- Ask what animal victim-survivors need to be safe and well.

# SCREENING OF THE DOCUMENTARY 'REFUGE: A DUTY TO CARE'

**Annie Goldson ONZM - University of Auckland**

**Alex Reed - Bloom Pictures**

**Erin Roberts - Pet Refuge New Zealand**

A highlight of the conference was the Australian premiere of 'Refuge: A Duty to Care', a powerful documentary that moved many participants. It tells the stories of families who have been supported by Pet Refuge New Zealand, an organisation that provides temporary shelter to animals who have experienced violence, ensuring they can be reunited with their families when it is safe to do so.

A quote from one of the people interviewed in the film, "animals knew me better than humans did," resonated deeply with the audience, capturing the profound bond between people and their companion animals in times of crisis.

The documentary highlights the intersection between animal welfare and DFV, underscoring the importance of providing care and sanctuary for animals as part of a holistic approach to supporting victim-survivors. It sparked meaningful conversations about the need for integrated solutions to address the needs of people and animals.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to director and co-producer Professor Annie Goldson and co-producer Alex Reed for allowing us to screen this documentary.

The documentary can now be viewed here:

<https://www.journeyman.tv/film/8746>

If you'd like to learn more about Pet Refuge NZ you can visit <https://www.petrefuge.org.nz/>



# What can Governments do to enhance the safety and wellbeing of people and animals experiencing DFV?

We were honoured to receive addresses from eleven politicians and two commissioners at the conference.

These leaders shared their perspectives on how governments can enhance the safety and wellbeing of people and animals experiencing DFV.

Their messages emphasised the importance of collaboration, innovative policies, and holistic approaches in addressing DFV perpetrated against people and animals.

Below is a list of the distinguished contributors and some key insights from their addresses.





## The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Member of the Australian Labor Party

*'Lucy's Project reminds us about our animals' importance.*

*Pets are such an integral part of our families and lives...*

*Pets too deserve to be safe and cared for at all points of the system response.'*



## The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP

Minister for Local Government, Member of the Australian Labor Party

*'Lucy's Project is a beacon of hope and support for those experiencing domestic violence, providing crucial assistance not only to the victims, but also their beloved companion animals.'*



## Dr. Hannah Tonkin

NSW Women's Safety Commissioner

*'Governments alone cannot deliver the rapid degree of change that we need to see in our communities. Community and professional networks play a vital role in this context.'*

*I wish to thank Lucy's Project for the important work that they are leading to harness these networks to address violence across the community. Your work to connect animal and human service systems together including through this conference is crucial.'*





## The Hon. Leslie Williams MP

Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Member of the Liberal Party

*'Thank you all for the incredible work you do to support women and animals impacted by DFV...'*

*'I want to commend everyone involved in Lucy's Project and in particular your strong advocacy supporting victims of DFV who have animals.'*



## The Hon. Emma Hurst MLC

Member of the Animal Justice Party

*'Animals can often be victims of violence in their own right...'*

*'When somebody has a very strong bond with an animal it's so important that we protect both of them. Failing to actually protect animals also fails that human victim as well.'*



## Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Member of the Greens

*'So many of us are living with animals that we love dearly. Unfortunately, that gets used against us by perpetrators...'*

*'We also know that when we keep pets together with victims of DFV we have families able to heal a lot easier.'*



## The Hon. Justine Elliot MP

Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence,  
Member of the Australian Labor Party

*'We have a shared goal of ending gender-based violence, and I want to thank and really express my absolute thanks for the dedication, commitment and work of all the organisations represented at the conference.'*



## Senator Kerryne Liddle

Senator for South Australia, Shadow Minister for Child Protection and the Prevention of Family Violence, Member of the Liberal Party of Australia

*'The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children recognises people intending to flee may not do so earlier because of fear for the welfare of their pets.'*

*'Pets are increasingly being used as a tool to coerce, control and intimidate.'*



## Senator Mehreen Faruqi

Senator for NSW, Deputy Leader of the Australian Greens

*'There should be more programs for companion animals who have been traumatised and displaced by domestic violence...'*

*'Each and every policy in action must be developed through an intersectional lens for the wellbeing of all those impacted by DFV – people and animals.'*



## Senator Larissa Waters

Senator for Queensland, Leader of the Australian Greens in the Senate, Member of the Australian Greens

*'There are so many incredible organisations that are doing prevention work and providing wrap around services like crisis accommodation for pets too.'*

*'But those services are underfunded and over capacity.'*



## The Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie

Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence,  
Member of the Tasmanian Liberal Party

*'The insights and voices of victim survivors alongside the expertise of advocates like Lucy's Project are crucial to shaping our response.'*

*'It is vital that our efforts remain collaborative and inclusive ensuring that we address the full range of needs that victim survivors face.'*



## Cindy McLeish

Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence,  
Member of the Victorian Liberal Party

*'We can't have families not leaving dangerous situations because of their animals...'*

*'There is a lot of room for crisis accommodation to think more broadly to work out how we can help support a family or a person with an animal as they flee.'*

## Micaela Cronin

Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence  
Commissioner

*'We absolutely support the importance of recognising animals as integral members of people's support networks, of their families and the care that they give and how reciprocated that is.'*



# Founder's Address

A heartfelt  
call to action  
from  
Anna Ludvik

Anna delivered an inspiring address and her words set a powerful tone for the event, reinforcing our organisation's mission to create a world where people and animals are safe from violence.

Anna reflected on the progress made and the vital importance of continued collaboration to break down barriers between human and animal welfare services. She celebrated the collective achievements of the movement while urging participants to push forward with their work to drive lasting change.

*"What I encourage each and every one of you to do is to not stop now. We have to keep this momentum going..."*

*We need to have a bigger impact to better the lives of women, non-binary people and all the animals affected by family and domestic violence."*



# Motion passed in NSW Parliament

We are thrilled to share that the below motion was passed on 23 October 2024.

*(1) That this House notes that:*

*(a) Lucy's Project, a charity that aims to improve the safety of people and animals experiencing DFV, held their 2024 online conference from 16 to 17 October 2024, and participants gathered to discuss the impact of DFV on both people and animals, and the action needed to protect animals and people from DFV; and*

*(b) the conference heard from leading experts from across the world about animals as victim-survivors of DFV in their own right, the connection between animal abuse and DFV, the benefits of animal-inclusive frontline services for human and animal victim-survivors, and the role of governments, law enforcement and animal services in enhancing the safety and wellbeing of animals and people experiencing DFV.*

(2) That this House affirms that animals are victims of DFV in their own right, and deserve to be protected from all forms of violence and considered in DFV policy responses.

(3) That this House commends the work of Lucy's Project in driving critical work to protect animals and people from DFV and ensure the safety, healing and recovery of all animal and human victim-survivors.

We warmly thank Abigail Boyd MLC and her team of advisors, including Therese Camus, for introducing the motion in the NSW Legislative Council.



# Conference Feedback

Participants were invited to share how they were feeling after the first day of the conference. Below is the word cloud generated by their responses:



Below is a summary of participant feedback received through a survey:

- 87% felt the conference deepened their understanding of the issues.
- 90% reported increased understanding of emerging and better practices for supporting people and animals experiencing DFV.
- 86% gained insights into the different ways human and animal services and law enforcement can collaborate to support people and animals.
- 87% reported an improved understanding of how the safety of people and animals is interconnected, and why it is important to enable people and animals to heal together.
- 90% found the topics highly relevant to their work or study.
- 75% said the conference provided ideas for actions they could apply.
- 95% agreed that attending the conference was time well spent.

# Most valuable aspects of the conference

## 1. Educational Insights:

- Highlights included discussions on veterinary social work, innovative ways to support survivors, and research on LGBTQ+ and rural and remote communities.
- Legislative updates and practical examples of how current laws impact DFV survivors were also highly valued.

## 2. Unique Perspectives:

- The panel on "How Can Animal Welfare and Veterinary Services Support Animals and People Experiencing Violence?" was a standout for many participants.
- Participants noted the value of hearing from a range of voices and unique perspectives, including law enforcement, social services, animal welfare, and policy experts.

## 3. Networking and Collaboration:

- The conference offered opportunities for future networking and collaboration, inspiring participants to take action in their local contexts.
- Attendees found value in connecting with like-minded professionals who share a passion for breaking down silos and providing holistic support.

## 4. Practical Applications:

- Respondents highlighted actionable ideas, such as veterinary staff education, creating networks for rural support, and using resources like Lucy's Project's Components of Control poster in public spaces.

## 5. Inspiration and Advocacy:

- Stories of survivor support and the advocacy for meaningful legislative and systemic change resonated deeply with participants.
- Participants were inspired by the collective passion and dedication of speakers and participants to effect positive change for people and animals affected by DFV.

## Actions inspired by the conference

### 1. Advocacy and Policy Development:

- Many participants plan to advocate for policy and practice changes to better address animal safety and wellbeing, including within their service.
- Some aim to integrate animal-related considerations into risk assessments, client intake forms, and safety planning for DFV survivors.

### 2. Education and Team Engagement:

- Participants intend to educate their teams and share insights with colleagues about the interconnectedness of human and animal welfare.
- Specific actions include incorporating learnings into workplace practices, expanding knowledge databases, and engaging in training efforts.

### 3. Networking and Collaboration:

- Building connections with animal welfare agencies, human service providers, and regional networks was a prominent takeaway.
- Attendees emphasised the value of fostering collaborations across sectors to enhance support for people and animals experiencing DFV.

### 4. Research and Program Development:

- Several participants are developing research projects informed by the conference. Topics include veterinary staff training, children's experiences with animals in DFV contexts, and program evaluations.
- Others are developing or expanding programs, such as emergency boarding services, foster support, and animal sanctuaries.

### 5. Immediate Practical Applications:

- Some participants took immediate action, such as contacting organisations to collaborate on practical support like cat desexing programs.
- Planned actions include updating referral forms to include animals and revising service approaches to reflect changes to relevant laws.

### 6. Inspiration for Long-Term Change:

- Many participants expressed a renewed commitment to advocating for animals as sentient victims of DFV and ensuring their voices are heard in broader conversations about safety and healing.



## Impact on participants' work and study

### **1. Professional Practice Improvement:**

- Many participants highlighted a direct influence on their professional practices, including enhanced readiness to address DFV cases involving animals, and integration of learnings into service responses.

### **2. New Career and Research Interests:**

- Several participants expressed interest in exploring new career paths, such as veterinary social work, or pursuing specialised research on companion animals in DFV situations and their impacts on families.

### **3. Broader Understanding and Awareness:**

- The conference broadened perspectives, with participants noting shifts in viewing animals as victim-survivors in their own right and recognising the interconnected needs of people and animals for healing and recovery.

### **4. Resource Utilisation and Networking:**

- Access to resources and awareness of others working in the field inspired collaboration and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

### **5. Educational Alignment:**

- For students, the conference reinforced and expanded upon academic studies, with many expressing a desire for the topics covered to feature more prominently in formal education programs.

### **6. Continued Learning and Advocacy:**

- Attendees plan to continue their learning journey, stay engaged with Lucy's Project through programs, future conferences, and networking to advocate for improved policies and practices.



lucy's project

Safe Families - Paws and All

## Participant Feedback

We were so pleased to receive highly positive feedback from speakers and other participants of our conference. Their insights and reflections underscore the value of the event and its impact on advancing collaborative efforts to support human and animal victim-survivors of DFV. Below is some of the feedback we received:

### **Dr. Lynn Simpson**

Veterinarian and Animal Welfare Advocate

*"Thank you for the amazing work you do with Lucy's Project!! I attended the two-day conference recently, and it was amazing!*

*So poignant, broad-reaching, and worthy. Probably the most important and worthwhile conference I have ever attended."*

### **Dr. Nina Hudson**

Senior Research Fellow, Tasmania Law Reform Institute

*"Thanks to you and other staff of Lucy's Project and presenters for such an excellent and informative conference."*

### **Ingrid Reilly**

Acting Sergeant, Domestic and Family Violence Registry, NSW Police

*"Thanks for putting on such a fabulous conference!"*

### **Angie Piubello**

Specialist Child and Youth Domestic Violence Case Worker, Beryl Women

*"What an amazing conference. We are already planning next steps for our service and connecting with government and other services."*

### **Kylie Butler**

Senior Research Officer, Australian Institute of Family Studies

*"What a beautiful community of people working in this space."*

# Message from participants to governments

At the conclusion of the conference, participants were invited to share their message to local, state and federal governments. Below is a summary of participants' calls to action for governments:

## **1. Recognise Animals as Victim-Survivors of DFV**

- Acknowledge animals as sentient beings who experience DFV and their emotional needs to heal and recover from trauma too.

## **2. Increased and Sustained Funding for Human and Animal Services**

- Provide significant, long-term funding for human services to support people with animals and animals experiencing DFV.
- Fund animal welfare services that provide housing and supports for animals who have experienced DFV, including veterinary care.

## **3. Legal and Policy Reforms**

- Amend family law to ensure that family law courts consider animals as family members and ensure their welfare in custody decisions.
- Strengthen animal cruelty laws to better enable law enforcement to secure convictions, and ensure penalties reflect the severity of harm.
- Mandate that workers must report animal abuse to improve the safety of people and animals experiencing DFV.

## **4. Improved Housing Solutions**

- Expand animal-inclusive public housing and crisis accommodation options.
- Make rental policy changes to make it easier for people experiencing DFV to find rental homes where they can keep their animals.
- Build fit-for-purpose shelters and refuges that are animal-inclusive so that families can be supported to heal and recover together.

## **5. Cross-Sector Collaboration and Training**

- Break down silos between human and animal welfare services to create integrated solutions to support people and animals experiencing DFV.
- Train police, DFV workers, and veterinary professionals to recognise and respond to the link between animal abuse and DFV.
- Consider including veterinary professionals in information sharing frameworks so that risks to people and animals are known to agencies.

## **6. Advancing the One Welfare model**

- Adopt the One Welfare approach to ensure holistic support for people and animals experiencing DFV.
- Provide funding for veterinary social workers and education programs addressing DFV and animal welfare.
- Support collaboration across the human and animal welfare service sectors.

## **7. Public Awareness**

- Invest in community education to equip community members to recognise and respond to signs of DFV and animal abuse.

## **8. Data Collection**

- Ensure that data on DFV perpetrated against people with animals and animals is being collected by services and monitored by governments to inform policy and practice.

# **A Unified Call to Action**

Attendees urged governments to take urgent action to improve the supports available for people and animals experiencing DFV, in recognition that the safety and wellbeing of people and animals is interconnected.

Lucy's Project plans to consult with DFV and animal welfare organisations, peak bodies, professional associations, researchers and practitioners to further explore participants' calls to action for local, state and federal governments.

# Research and resources by the conference speakers

- **'Violence against family animals in the context of intimate partner violence'** - Kylie Butler, Jasmine MacDonald, Australian Institute of Family Studies (2024): <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/policy-and-practice-papers/violence-against-family-animals-context-intimate-partner>
- **'Exploring the Linkages between Animal Abuse, Domestic Abuse, and Sexual Offending: A Scoping Review'**- Kristin Diemer, David Gallant, Nicolas Mosso Tupper, Kate Hammond, Ashrita Ramamurthy, Cathy Humphreys (2024) - <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1155/2024/1170505>
- **'What can veterinary professionals do? Measuring the effect of one DFV training pilot program on veterinary professionals' capacity to recognize, respond, and refer human victims of DFV'**- Rochelle Paterson, Elise Boller, Youna Kim, Kate Hammond, Kristin Diemer (2024): <https://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/scholarlywork/1862072-what-can-veterinary-professionals-do%3F-measuring-the-effect-of-one-domestic-violence-training-pilot-program-on-veterinary-professionals'-capacity-to-recognize--respond--and-refer-human-victims-of-domestic-violence>
- **'Safe and Equal Guidelines: Supporting victim-survivors of family violence with family animals'** – Jessica Wilson (2023) <https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/supporting-victim-surivors-of-family-violence-with-family-animals/>
- **'The link between animal abuse and domestic violence/abuse'** – Phil Arkow in 'Understanding animal abuse and how to intervene with children and young people: A practical guide for professionals working with people and animals' edited by Gilly Ferreira, Joanne Williams (2023): <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003165552>

# Research and resources by the conference speakers

- **'Addressing the Impact of Animal Abuse: The Need for Legal Recognition of Abused Pets as Sentient Victims of DFV in Australia'** - Jane Kotzmann, Mirko Bagaric, Gabrielle Wolf and Morgan Stonebridge (2022): <https://www.unswlawjournal.unsw.edu.au/article/addressing-the-impact-of-animal-abuse-the-need-for-legal-recognition-of-abused-pets-as-sentient-victims-of-domestic-violence-in-australia>
- **'Domestic Violence NSW Report: Animals and people experiencing DFV. How their safety and wellbeing are interconnected'** - Monique Dam and Christine McCaskill (2020): <https://apo.org.au/node/311962>
- **'The link between domestic violence and abuse and animal cruelty in the intimate relationships of people of diverse genders and/or sexualities: a binational study'** – Damien Riggs, Nik Taylor, Heather Fraser, Catherine Donovan, Tania Signal (2018): <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260518771681>
- **'Recognising and responding to cases of suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect: what the veterinarian needs to know'** – Phil Arkow (2015): <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6067667/>
- **'Rurality, DFV, and animal cruelty: Practitioner perspectives'**- Bridget Harris, Chloe Keel, Anna Eriksson (Current): <https://www.monash.edu/arts/gender-and-family-violence/research-and-projects/rurality,-domestic-and-family-violence,-and-animal-cruelty-practitioner-perspectives>

# Speaker Bios



We were privileged to host an incredible lineup of speakers who shared their expertise and passion at our conference.

Each speaker contributed to building a shared understanding of DFV perpetrated against people and animals.

This section features the bios of each of the speakers who presented and participated in the panel discussions.



## TALIE STAR

*Consultant in Trauma, Recovery, Domestic and Family Violence, Homelessness and Disability*

Talie Star started her career as a Singer/Songwriter. She utilises these skills in her business where she works as a Systems Change Advisor and Trauma Informed Trainer. Talie specialises in the area of Trauma, Domestic Family and Sexual Violence, Homelessness and Disability. She is much sought after for consultations and speaking engagements. Her scope of work is with Peak Bodies, Health, Governments, Universities and NGO's both state-based, nationally and broader. She is on many advisory committees and uses both her professional and personal expertise, as well her counselling and creative arts background, to empower and challenge systems in a way that inspires collaboration and collective healing.



## KYLIE BUTLER

*Australian Institute of Family Studies*

Kylie Butler (MSP, MPhil, MEnvSc) is a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS). Kylie's work at AIFS explores issues affecting child and family mental health and wellbeing, including intimate partner violence and violence against family animals. Kylie produces resources which synthesise evidence-based information for practitioners working in child and family welfare. Prior to joining AIFS, Kylie's research focused on relationships and interactions between people, animals and nature, specifically human-elephant co-existence. Kylie has also been involved with greyhound rescue in Victoria and programs supporting village dogs in Sri Lanka.



## JASMINE MACDONALD

*Australian Institute of Family Studies*

Dr Jasmine B. MacDonald (BA/BSW(Hons), Ph.D.) is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS). Jasmine has published research focused on mental health, trauma exposure and trauma reactions. Jasmine's work with AIFS has focused on intimate partner violence, including violence against family animals, technology-facilitated coercive control and reproductive coercion and abuse. Jasmine has extensive experience turning evidence-based insights into practical learnings for practitioners supporting children and families, through workshop, written resource, webinar, and podcast formats. Jasmine is the creator and host of the Psych Attack podcast.





## KRISTIN DIEMER

*Melbourne University*

Associate Professor Kristin Diemer is a sociologist at the University of Melbourne. She specialises in measuring violence against women and family violence. She has also researched extensively on the barriers to women leaving violence, the role animals play in the lives of victim /survivors, and tactics of control by men who use violence in the home. Kristin is the co-author of several major Australian studies, including *Australians' Attitudes to Violence Against Women* and *The Victorian Family Violence Database*. Recent projects include measuring prevalence, attitudes toward violence and reporting rates. Kristin holds a Bachelor of Arts and a PhD in sociology.



## JESS WILSON

*Safe and Equal VIC*

Jessica works at Safe and Equal, the peak body for specialist family violence services that provide support to victim survivors in Victoria. In her current role she supports the statewide program that promotes a coordinated and integrated response to serious-risk perpetrators. Jessica has worked in the family violence sector for 12 years in various roles, including working directly with victim survivors, program coordination, training, and various project roles that support sector and practice development including building the capacity of refuges to accommodate and care for family animals.



## ANGIE PIUBELLO

*Beryl Women's Refuge ACT*

As a dedicated Child and Youth Domestic Violence Specialist based on Ngunnawal Land, Angie Piubello brings over 17 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector, with a deep focus on domestic violence. Angie employs a Therapeutic Trauma-Informed approach, passionately advocating for and supporting children, youth, and women who are survivors of domestic violence. With extensive expertise in working within culturally diverse and Aboriginal communities, Angie is committed to providing culturally sensitive and effective support tailored to the unique needs of these communities. Angie's career is marked by a steadfast dedication to enhancing the lives of survivors and ensuring the voice of children and young people experiencing violence is respected and valued.



## **SHELLEY BOOTH**

### *Domestic Violence NSW*

Shelley is a political sociologist with 20 years experience as a social policy and gender analyst. Shelley has an extensive background in policy development, analysis and advocacy across the government and non-government sectors. In her current role at Domestic Violence NSW, she represents the views of over 180 specialist domestic and family violence services across the state. This year, Shelley's policy and advocacy work contributed to the NSW Government announcing over \$245 million to address domestic and family violence, and to the release of NSW's first primary prevention strategy.



## **JULIE CHAPMAN**

### *Pet Refuge NZ*

Julie is the founder of the Pet Refuge Trust and the CEO and founder of New Zealand's largest children's charity, KidsCan. Julie has more than fifteen years' experience in not-for-profit management. She regularly speaks about leadership and innovation in the not-for-profit sector at business and community forums. She is a tireless advocate for children living in hardship. She also has a passion for helping animals, especially those who are abused or neglected. She started Pet Refuge using money left to her by her late parents, aiming to remove one of the barriers people face when deciding to leave abusive homes. The shelter is the first of its kind in New Zealand. In 2008 Julie was recognised with a Sir Peter Blake Leadership Award, and in 2013 was named Next magazine's Woman of the Year. In 2015 she was named as a finalist for Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year – the second time her contribution has been recognised by the national award.



## **BILLIE-JO WILLIAMS**

### *Ngarrunga Refuge and Link Wentworth*

With over 10 years' of experience in the community services sector. Billie-Jo is a Wiradjuri woman who has held a series of roles in tenancy operations and casework advocating for the community, women and children, and culture. Having spent time living in community housing with her children, and being a survivor of Domestic and Family Violence she has been instrumental in strengthening relationships between Community Housing and its stakeholders. One of the key goals as the Team Leader for Nurreen Services and Ngarrunga Women and Children's Safety Service. Ngarrunga is a modern, well-designed refuge that was funded by the Department of Social Services' Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program and has been staffed and expanded through the NSW Core and Cluster program. Billie-Jo's focus is to deliver a culturally appropriate trauma-informed service to women, children and their pets escaping domestic and family violence.



## **MARIA LOSURDO**

### *The Women's Cottage*

Maria has worked for over 40 years, as counsellor, advocate, mentor and team leader in family crisis work, child protection, domestic violence, social justice, and community development. Maria's work has focused on supporting safety, respect and celebrating diversity, with experience working within the Aboriginal, non-English speaking, LGBTQI+ and deaf communities. Maria's practice is based on recognising the goodness in all people, being trauma informed and applying strength-based approaches to support people move closer to others by moving closer to themselves. Maria is currently the Manager of The Women's Cottage, a feminist women's crisis and domestic and family violence centre run for women and children of the Hawkesbury district. Maria also runs her own private practice that has included therapeutic group work services for Cara House, running training for the community sector and providing clinical supervision and counselling services to homelessness and domestic violence workers across NSW. In all areas of work Maria has a special focus and interest supporting cross cultural understanding and the recognition and healing from intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal families and community. In this work Maria collaborated with Ancestors Singing co-authored Victor's Story, a paper and training program that followed the impacts of colonisation and generational trauma across 6 generations of one Aboriginal family.



## **DAMIEN RIGGS**

*Flinders University*

Damien Riggs is a professor in the College of Education, Psychology, and Social Work at Flinders University. His most recent research focuses on trans young people's relationships with animal companions. He lives with two human children and two dogs.



## **NIK TAYLOR**

*University of Canterbury*

(Dr.) Nik Taylor is a critical and public sociologist who has published many articles, books and book chapters. Her research focusses on mechanisms of power and marginalisation expressed in/through human relations with other species and is informed by critical/ intersectional feminism. Nik is currently the co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, where she also teaches topics in the Human Services program that focus on human-animal violence links; scholar-advocacy; social change, and crime and deviance, particularly domestic violence and animal abuse. Nik's latest books include *Queer Entanglements* (Cambridge University Press, with Damien Riggs, Heather Fraser and Shoshana Rosenberg) and *Rescuing Me, Rescuing You: Companion Animals and Domestic Violence* (Palgrave, 2019, with Heather Fraser).



## **HEATHER FRASER**

*Queensland University of Technology*

Heather Fraser is Associate Professor of Social Work, School of Public Health & Social Work, Faculty of Health, QUT. She is an internationally recognised critical social work scholar who started her career three decades ago in shelters for women, young people and children trying to escape domestic violence and/or child abuse. She has been a social work educator at several Australian universities, over the last 25 years, teaching subjects such as Human Rights Based Social Work Practice. While domestic violence is a key area of expertise, her research interests are varied, crossing disciplinary boundaries and inclusive of human-animal studies. All projects are undertaken from a critical perspective. She has published three books: *Neoliberalization, Universities and the Public Intellectual: Species, Gender and Class and the Production of Knowledge* (London: Palgrave), *Understanding Violence and Abuse, An Anti-Oppressive Practice Perspective* (Winnipeg: Fernwood Press) and *In the Name of Love, Women's Narratives of Love and Abuse* (Toronto: Women's Press/Canadian Scholars Press). Her latest book, *Rescuing You, Rescuing Me: Companion Animals and Domestic Violence* (Palgrave: London) was published in 2018.



## **ANNIE GOLDSON**

*University of Auckland*

Annie Goldson is a documentary filmmaker whose films have won over 60 awards at international film festivals, have opened theatrically in the US, Australia and Aotearoa NZ and sold to major broadcasters and streamers worldwide. Her best-known feature titles include Punitive Damage, Georgie Girl, An Island Calling, Brother Number One and Kim Dotcom: Caught in the Web (Special Mention, Best Documentary APSA 2018). Her most recent films include the features, A Mild Touch of Cancer (2021) Red Mole: A Romance (2023) and the 40-minute short Refuge: A Duty to Care (2024). Annie also regularly publishes articles and chapters in scholarly collections and journals. She holds an ONZM for Services to Film and is a Fellow of the Te Apārangi | Royal Society, which recently awarded her the Aronui Medal for Excellence in the Humanities. In 2023, she became an Arts Laureate and was also a 'DocEdge Superhero'. She is a Professor at the University of Auckland, where she has taught for over two decades.



## **ALEX REED**

*Bloom Pictures*

Alex Reed is a producer of high quality documentary and drama content. She started her career working with Ken Loach on films including Land and Freedom, My Name is Joe and Bread & Roses. Since then she has written, researched or produced over twenty factual and drama projects commissioned in New Zealand.

Alex's major credits include Leanne Pooley's critically acclaimed intimate documentary The Girl on the Bridge, and genre-bending feature, There's No "I" in Threesome (HBO Max). In 2022 she released David Farrier's box office hit, Mister Organ, as well as prime-time television series, Unbreakable. In 2023 she released hard-hitting feature documentary, Ms. Information and the social impact film Pacific Mother, followed by adventure documentary, Te Ara - The Path (People's choice award - NZ Mountain Film Festival, Finalist Banff Mountain Festival) and most recently Annie Goldson's Refuge: a Duty to Care.



## **ERIN ROBERTS**

*Pet Refuge NZ*

Erin Ellis-Roberts is the General Manager, Marketing and Business of Pet Refuge. Having been with the charity since September 2021, just three months after the shelter opened its doors, Erin has been part of Pet Refuge's journey over the past three years. Erin works on the organisational side of the charity, managing finance, supporter services, marketing, and fundraising.



## **PHIL ARKOW**

### *National Coalition USA*

Internationally acclaimed lecturer, author and educator Phil Arkow is President & Secretary of the National LINK Coalition – the Global Resource Center on The LINK between Animal Abuse and Human Violence and edits the monthly LINK-Letter, with over 5,500 subscribers. He chairs the Latham Foundation's Animal Abuse and Family Violence Prevention Project. He teaches at the University of Florida and Harcum College. He has presented over 400 times in 17 countries, 38 states and 9 Canadian provinces, and has authored over 100 key reference works on human-animal interactions and violence prevention.

He co-founded the National Link Coalition, the National Animal Control Association, and the Colorado and New Jersey humane federations. He has served with the American Veterinary Medical Association, the ASPCA, American Humane, the Delta Society, the Animals & Society Institute, the National Sheriffs Association's National Coalition on Violence Against Animals, the National District Attorneys Association, the Academy on Violence & Abuse, and the American Association of Human-Animal Bond Veterinarians. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from New Jersey Child Assault Prevention.



## **ALICIA KENNEDY**

### *Cherished Pets*

Dr. Alicia (Lissi) Kennedy is a Social Hearted Vet. A trailblazing veterinarian with over 35 years of experience, dedicated to preserving the powerful bond between humans and animals. As the founder of Cherished Pets, a holistic veterinary service in regional Victoria, Dr. Kennedy leads a pioneering social enterprise that provides interconnected veterinary and social services to support vulnerable community members with pets, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and those impacted by family domestic violence, homelessness, mental health challenges, and unexpected crises.

At the heart of Cherished Pets is a deep commitment to the human-animal bond, a relationship Dr. Kennedy passionately advocates as essential to both animal and human health and well-being. Under her leadership, Cherished Pets has become a certified B Corp, exemplifying the organisation's dedication to using business as a force for good. Dr. Kennedy has been instrumental in integrating social work into veterinary practice, recognising the critical role that veterinary social workers play in addressing the complex human elements that often accompany animal care. This innovative approach not only enhances the quality of care provided to pets but also supports people and the veterinary teams.



## JAYLA SAINTY

### *Paws and Recover*

Jayla is an emerging social worker, with a passion for working with owners and their animals once a qualified social worker. In her current role with RSPCA Tasmania, Jayla supports victim-survivors of family and domestic violence to have their companion animals cared for by the RSCPA Tasmania, through the Safe Beds Program. The program also focuses on key advocacy areas, such as the need for improved housing options (short and long-term) for people and companion animals, legislation reform, and for improved support for organisations to adopt a Companion-animal-inclusive domestic violence practice across not just family violence services, but also housing and community health services. In essence, Jayla is passionate about giving a voice to the voiceless, not just for victim-survivors, but also their companion animals."



## ROCHELLE PATTERSON

### *University of Guelph*

Rochelle completed her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Melbourne in 2019 and has since worked in both general and referral practices in Australia, USA and Canada. She is currently completing her specialist training in Ontario, Canada. Rochelle has a strong non-clinical interest in the role of veterinary hospitals as potential intervention points for humans and animals experiencing DV. This has included research on the impact of a training program on the veterinary professionals ability to recognise, respond and refer human victims of DV.



## JACKI LARGO

### *Paws and Recover*

Jacki Largo, a Senior Constable in NSW Police, began Paws and Recover in 2011. Jacki had witnessed animals being left alone, or at risk of harm, due to instances of domestic violence, mental illness or ill health. She also noted that a lot of people were prevented from getting help due to concern about having no one to care for their pets. She wanted to keep pets and people together, and to assist those going through times of adversity. Her mission was to help people, and help animals. Jacki won the Pride of Australia medal in 2018, and has continued to lead the way with Paws and Recover filling gaps in our society and spreading awareness of the importance of animals, people, and how society can assist those in need. Jacki's favourite saying is by the 14th Dalai Lama:

If you want to be happy, practice compassion;

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion -



## **JANE KOTZMANN**

*Deakin University*

Jane Kotzmann's research focuses on both animal rights and human rights. This includes the potential extension of international human rights to non-human animals, and what this tells us about the theoretical underpinnings of human rights law. Jane's article titled 'Recognising the Sentience of Animals in Law: A Justification and Framework for Australian States and Territories' (2020) (42(3) Sydney Law Review 281) was given an Australian Legal Research Award in 2022 for Best Early Career Research Article. Jane is a Senior Lecturer in Deakin Law School and was previously an Alfred Deakin Postdoctoral Research Fellow. She obtained degrees in Commerce, Law (with Honours), and a PhD in human rights law from Deakin University, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (Teach for Australia) from the University of Melbourne.



## **MORGAN STONEBRIDGE**

*Deakin University*

Morgan Stonebridge is a PhD candidate at Deakin University where she researches in animal law. Her doctoral research concerns the use of empathy in generating stable support for the principles of animal law reform. Morgan has an undergraduate degree in Law (with Honours) from Deakin University and has published in leading journals such as the University of New South Wales Law Journal, Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy and the Columbia Journal of Environmental Law.





## **DEMI KUITERS**

*Crime & Intelligence Command, Queensland Police Service*

Demi has been an intelligence analyst for over 7 years working in the criminal justice and policing fields. Demi has provided actionable insights on topics including domestic and family violence that have led to initiatives such as the current partnership between the Queensland Police Service and the RSPCA Qld. This initiative is vital to help both the people and animals involved in these difficult situations.



## **KATHRYN JURD**

*General Counsel, RSPCA NSW*

Kathryn Jurd holds degrees in Social Science and Criminology and Law from UNSW, a Masters in Law from Macquarie University and is undertaking a PhD Law at UNSW on the Judicial Treatment of Animal Cruelty offending, and Animal Cruelty in the context of Domestic Violence. She was employed for ten years at the NSW ODPP and has been the General Counsel at RSPCA NSW for seven years. She is an acknowledged expert in animal welfare prosecutions and is regularly consulted on statutory and regulatory reform by the NSW Government and stakeholder groups, appearing at, giving evidence, and preparing witnesses to give evidence in multiple NSW Parliamentary Inquiries. Kathryn regularly conducts animal law training for various entities including most NSW universities teaching animal law, NSW Police, and other research and training bodies.



## **INGRID REILLY**

*Acting Sergeant, DFV Registry, NSW Police Force*

Ingrid has been with the NSW Police force for 25 years and 9 of these years were spent as a domestic violence officer. Ingrid has assisted many people and their animals to find safety. She has used her love of animals and knowledge about the link between animal abuse and domestic violence to educate other police and the community about this important topic.



## **ANNA ERIKSSON**

*Monash University*

Dr Anna Eriksson is an Associate Professor in Criminology at Monash University. Her research is broadly focused on criminal justice reform, including practices of imprisonment, treatment of disadvantaged populations within the criminal justice system, and alternative responses to crime. She is also a long-time volunteer at RSPCA in Victoria, focused on horses and livestock.



## **BRIDGET HARRIS**

*Monash University*

Dr Bridget Harris is an Australian Research Council 'Discovery Early Career Research Award' Fellow, Director of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre and A/Prof in Criminology at Monash University. Bridget's work is interdisciplinary – incorporating criminology, socio-legal studies and cultural geography – and explores domestic violence, access to justice and spaces to justice. Her areas of research include: domestic/family violence (including in RRR locations); technology-facilitated domestic violence; technology-facilitated advocacy and justice administration in the context of domestic violence; legal advocacy and postcode (in)justice.



## **CHLOE KEEL**

*Griffith University*

Chloe Keel, PhD (Monash), is a Lecturer in Criminology at Griffith University. Chloe is the Early Career Research Representative on the Australian Community Capacity Study, a longitudinal study of community processes, crime and disorder in neighbourhoods. Chloe's research has examined migrant and refugee women's experiences of domestic and family violence, regional experiences of safety and domestic and family violence in regional areas.



## **MEGAN NUTBEAN**

*Lort Smith Animal Hospital*

Megan Nutbean is the Community Programs Manager at Lort Smith, where she has spent over a decade developing and leading impactful programs that support vulnerable communities. Lort Smith, a not-for-profit organization in Melbourne, is dedicated to the health and wellbeing of animals and people, providing veterinary care, shelter, and community outreach. Megan oversees Lort Smith's Pet Therapy program and other services that support both people and animals, fostering healing through the incredible power of the human-animal bond. Megan feels privileged to work with an incredible team of people (and dogs!) who are passionate about the transformative connections Animal-Assisted programs have the power to create.



## **JASMINE MONTGOMERY**

*James Cook University*

I am a mother of four beautiful children and live with five dogs, one cat, six chickens, many fish and a turtle. I have a Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Counselling Advanced Practice. Advocating for social justice on behalf of humans and other species are highly important to me, in particular, keeping people and pets together at times of crisis. I am currently completing a PhD on forced separation from pets in domestic violence situations that aims to develop a national framework with a focus on keeping women and their pets together. I enjoy spending leisure time with my family, especially the four legged furry kind.



## **FELICITY WHITE**

*Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre*

Felicity is a Trauma Informed Body worker currently working at the Women's Trauma Recovery Centre in the Illawarra region of NSW. She has many years experience working and teaching Bodywork in the Health and Wellbeing Sector. Felicity also spent many years working as a Veterinary Assistant in several busy practices and has an interest in the intersection between human and animal wellbeing and how these precious relationships have the power to heal and nourish both humans and animals. She has a special interest in treating Women and Children recovering from FDVSA with Somatic Body based therapies and Equine Assisted Therapy. This interest stemmed from her own lived experience as a victim survivor of FDV. She continues to build her skills and knowledge in this dynamic and developing field of study which she finds so relevant and essential to trauma recovery.

# Conclusion

*The Lucy's Project team extends our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made this conference possible. This event was a success thanks to the contributions of many individuals and organisations who share our vision for a world where people and animals can live free from violence.*

*We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the NSW Government for funding Lucy's Project and StreetSmart who sponsored our conference.*

*We are grateful to Vina Ngo and Jake Blundell from Banki Haddock Fiora for the legal support and advice they provided.*

*We thank our speakers for sharing your expertise and passion. Your contributions have inspired action and provided meaningful insights on the solutions needed to ensure the safety of people and animals.*

*To all the participants, thank you for everything you do to support people and animals and for your dedication to creating meaningful change together.*

*Looking ahead, Lucy's Project will continue to:*

- Collaborate across the human and animal service sectors to promote a holistic response to people and animals experiencing DFV;*
- Advocate for policy, program and legal changes to ensure people and animals have access to the supports they need to be safe;*
- Research the issues faced by people and animals experiencing DFV and promote knowledge translation to contribute to evidence-based solutions;*
- Educate workers across sectors and community members to improve access to supports for people and animals experiencing DFV.*

*We look forward to continuing to work with researchers, practitioners and advocates across the DFV, homelessness, community, animal welfare and veterinary sectors. Together, we are building a safe future for all.*

# Thank You!



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