



Roundtable

The Future of Veterinary and Social Services

November 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, work and play, and pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waterways, and community and acknowledge that this land was never ceded.

As an organisation that values the human-animal bond, we endeavour to learn from, and incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and the idea of oneness into our practice, in order to benefit both the land on which we live and all beings residing upon it.

B CORP CERTIFIED

Cherished Pets joined the growing community of B Corp certified companies in August 2017. B Corps use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems, and are certified by not-for-profit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

We became a B Corp because of the match with our own mission to positively impact and transform the global economy into a more inclusive and equitable system.



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Activity feedback:

- What's the problem we're trying to solve?
- What are the skills, knowledge, and tools we need to address the problem?
- Who do we need to engage with to make this happen?



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Our intent

In the context of growing systemic approaches to address some of the world's most complex challenges, we convened a Roundtable in November 2023, bringing together a select group of individuals we believe can contribute insights and expertise to help shape the foundational strategies and roadmap for the future delivery of multidisciplinary social veterinary services and the evolving role of veterinary social workers.

At Cherished Pets, our impact is evident in our daily interactions, testimonials, and the joy of happier people and pets. While our care model pets and people builds on existing frameworks, we recognise the need to take it a step further. This requires cross-sector ingenuity to transform how we support people and their pets.

Veterinary Social Work, a field that bridges human health and animal welfare, is gaining prominence as a powerful driver for positive change.

In the dynamic landscape we are working in, new services and organisations are addressing complex societal issues. These include the veterinary industry crisis, access to affordable pet care, the mental health crisis, domestic violence, homelessness, disability, and aging. As we address these multifaceted challenges, interest in the interconnecting of veterinary and social services continues to grow.

Our vision articulated at the time of the Roundtable, is a future where multidisciplinary social veterinary services and Veterinary Social Workers are integral components of our society.

By understanding the various interlocking system elements across animal welfare and human health and wellbeing, we can collaboratively problem-solve a solution.

This Roundtable is not just an event; it marks the start of a vital dialogue aimed at reshaping the veterinary landscape in Australia. Collectively, we explored pathways for training and employment for Veterinary Social Workers and multidisciplinary approaches to care services centered around the human-animal bond, seeking innovative solutions to address the intricate challenges that our society and veterinary profession face.

Together, we aim to unite voices across animal and human welfare sectors, forging partnerships, and working towards shared goals.

By tackling critical issues impacting both pets and people, we can create healthier, more inclusive communities.

Objectives

The purpose of the Roundtable was to explore the complex challenges that impact the veterinary industry and the wider pet community.

Our aim is to ignite positive transformation within our system creating a more inclusive future for pets, individuals, and veterinarians.

We explored a series of questions...

What's the problem we're trying to solve?

What are the skills, knowledge and tools we need to address problem?

Who do we need to engage to make this happen?

Outcomes

By the end of the Roundtable we aimed to:

- Identify challenges related to the accessibility and affordability of pet care.
- Explore opportunities for collective action among attendees and stakeholders to tackle the complex challenges that impact the veterinary industry and the wider pet community.
- Discover ways to strengthen the resources and access to systemic approaches for practitioners working on complex issues/problems/challenges linked to animal and human welfare.
- Identify our primary audiences and stakeholders for this initiative.



Who participated

A total of fifty participants representing thirty-six organisations attended the Roundtable. A mixture of representatives from veterinary organisations, veterinarians, practitioners, academics, policy advisers and professionals across animal welfare, ageing, domestic and family violence, mental health, homelessness, social services, people with lived experience, and other relevant stakeholders in the veterinary social services space participated, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives were captured.



Speakers



Alicia Kennedy

Alicia (Lissi) Kennedy, is a Social Hearted Veterinarian and Founder of Cherished Pets, the world's first certified B Corporation veterinary service. She has led the development of an innovative ecosystem of pet and veterinary care with community at its heart, and accessible and affordable pet and veterinary care as its outcome. Alicia is a passionate advocate of the social value of vets, and the role of the human animal bond and healthy companion animals in human health and wellbeing and a thriving, connected society. She has a close association with Dr Jane Goodall as one of the founders of JGI-Australia.

Lissi was a 2023 recipient of the AVA Vet Business Group Thought Leadership Award and a 2021 AMP Foundation Tomorrow Maker. Cherished Pets received the Australian Women's Small Business Champions Awards – Social Enterprise 2023.



Susan Hazel

Susan is Program Director for the BSc (Animal Behaviour) degree at the University of Adelaide. She teaches animal behaviour, welfare and ethics to students in veterinary, animal science, animal behaviour and veterinary technology programs. Susan is an active researcher in areas of human-animal interactions, including training of animals (e.g. detector and assistance dogs), and ways to increase both human and animal welfare. In the last 10 years she has published more than 50 scientific articles and supervised more than 20 Honours and PhD student projects.

Susan has extensive community engagement through being a Board Member of the Dog & Cat Management Board of South Australia, RSPCA South Australia, and the South Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.



Jane Boag, Facilitator

With a career spanning a variety of senior and executive roles in health, insurance and risk management, Jane is the name behind 'What's The Plan' – a consultancy focusing on strategic and practical enterprise risk management advisory to support good decision making.

Throughout her career, Jane has held a number of non-executive Director roles in Community Health, Aged Care, Disability and the Arts sectors. She's been a pro bono advisor to Cherished Pets for over 8 years, and shamelessly seeks free veterinary advice from Dr Lissi for her cat, Iffy and two Border Terriers, Sidey and Flash.

With thanks to our special guests

Liz Walker

CEO RSPCA Victoria

Megan Lui

Zoetis





What emerged

The Roundtable took on a workshop-style format, characterised by lively discussions, colourful Post-It notes, and even a fun barn tour and adorable plush chickens. The room was brimming with collective wisdom, with each participant bringing their unique perspectives and experiences to the table. We delved into the complexities of our work and vocations, sharing stories and insights that enriched the dialogue.

This interactive environment provided the perfect setting for us to begin formulating a strategy for Systems Change, grounded in the idea of identifying and engaging inspiring individuals already making strides in addressing systemic issues.

While there is so much to explore, one thing is clear: this community possesses both the capability and compassion to shape the future of our communities and are committed to turning talking into action.

Together we will look for new ways of thinking and acting to embrace complexity and address the challenges.





What is the problem we are trying to solve?



Who do we need to engage with?

Thank you to our sponsors of our first Roundtable

We gratefully acknowledge our Foundation Sponsor, Zoetis.



Supporting Sponsors



Join us

A heartfelt thank you to all who attended for their active engagement and valuable contributions, making the day truly enriching for everyone involved. We are open to anyone wanting to be involved going forward.

If you believe in the transformative potential of the human-animal bond in fostering thriving communities, then you belong with us.

Contact

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We wouldn't be here without our partnerships with values-aligned organisations. If you're interested in partnering and sponsorship, we'd love to chat about how we can work together.

