



Veticare for Western Australia

Affordable veterinary care is animal welfare, public health and human wellbeing priority.

Prepared for the WA Inquiry into Veticare

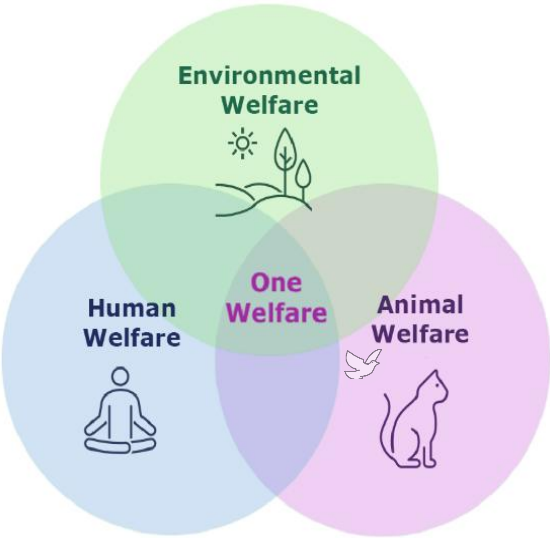


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One Welfare concept

Interconnectedness of human and animal wellbeing & their environments

Benefits of keeping pets and people together



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Victorian state data – 2024 (2018 =27% euthanized)

Cat admissions	Reclaimed	%	Rehomed	%	Transferred	%	Euthanised	%
45,119	3,170	7	19,429	43	7,794	17	12,666	28

Dog admissions	Reclaimed	%	Rehomed	%	Transferred	%	Euthanised	%
27,916	13,498	48	7,671	28	3553	2	3,039	11

No transparency in Western Australia - Population just under half Victoria’s
Approximately **7,000 dogs and cats humanely euthanised** annually in
shelters, pounds & veterinary clinics with council contracts

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- Too many vets are being exposed to killing healthy cats & kittens and treatable dogs
 - At the very best, it decreases job satisfaction
 - At the very worst causes mental health trauma & sometimes suicide



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If we don't act

- Impact on veterinary teams in shelter and pounds (and contracted vets)
- Financial euthanasia in private practice
- **89% vets reported intimidating experience** with clients from client's language or behaviour
- **Cost of treatment** was one of the most common reasons

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Expected response if client feels fearful, cornered with no options



THE STRESS RESPONSE



FIGHT

Yelling, Screaming,
Using Mean Words



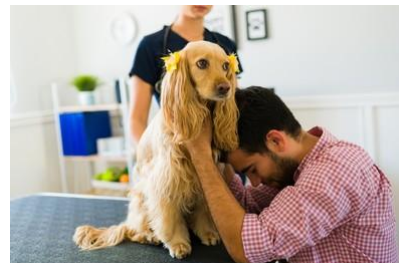
FLIGHT

Wanting to Escape,
Running Away



FREEZE

Shutting Down,
Mind Goes Blank



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Veterinary impact

- Impacts on wellbeing and mental health – loss of vets 1 in 5 leave within 5 years
- Need vets to keep pets with people, agriculture and biosecurity!



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Pet owner impact

- 73% of Australian households have a pet
- 86% of owners say pet **positively affects their lives.**
- Benefits particularly important for **people who live alone or are at risk of social isolation**
- Bond between people and their pets **reduces isolation, increase purpose and bring joy.**
- Pet ownership **facilitates contact between neighbours and strengthen community connection.**
- \$ 700 per year in reduced health care costs

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Strategy : Veticare

- Help protect veterinarians & keep pets with their families



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A three-layer service model

Not every case needs the same level of care.



- 1 24/7 telehealth triage**
low-cost advice; avoid unnecessary emergency visits
- 2 Veterinary tech consults**
routine checks, follow-ups and prevention
- 3 Public/private clinic care**
medical, surgical and specialist care when indicated



Source: APWF submission, pp. 4 and 8-9; Hambrett & James 2024; Jenkins 2025.

APWF submission to WA Inquiry into Veticare

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What Veticare could look like

A practical model using existing private veterinary infrastructure.



Medicare-style rebates for eligible low-income pet owners

Participating private veterinary practices paid directly

Standard Schedule of Fees for essential veterinary services

Public or welfare-operated clinics could be added as a second phase



Goal: keep pets with their families while supporting clinic sustainability.

Source: APWF submission, pp. 3-4; Animal Justice Party 2026; GapOnly 2026; HICAPS 2026.

APWF submission to WA Inquiry into Veticare

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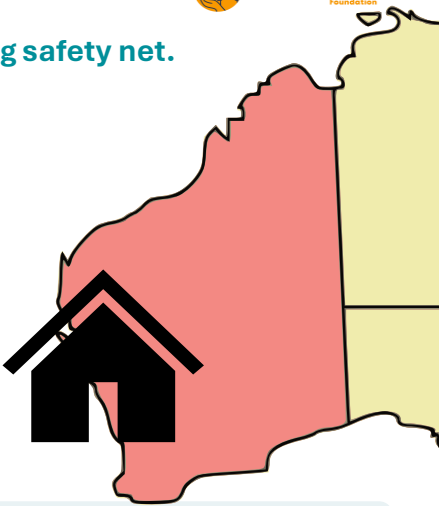
A ring-fenced funding option

A small pet-industry levy could create a self-sustaining safety net.



Estimated annual revenue in WA

1%	\$20.6m	41,301 households/year at \$500
2%	\$41.3m	82,602 households/year at \$500
3%	\$62.0m	123,904 households/year at \$500



Exclude veterinary care and prescribed medications from the levy.

Source: APWF submission, Table 1, p. 11.

APWF submission to WA Inquiry into Veticare

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Five U.S. states use a subsidized veterinary care model funded by a fee on pet food: **Maine, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware, and New Mexico**. These funds target low-cost spay and neuter services to reduce shelter overpopulation. [Journal of Legislation and ... +1](#)

Program and Funding Details



Maine: Adopted the registration fee model in 2009 to fund low-cost sterilization services, bringing state euthanasia rates down significantly. [LinkedIn · Penny Ellison +1](#)



Maryland: Passed legislation in 2013 requiring a dedicated pet food fee distributed as grants to lower the cost of cat and dog surgeries. [Journal of Legislation and ... +1](#)



West Virginia: Enacted its funding structure in 2015, utilizing manufacturer product fees to pay local veterinary clinics for thousands of sterilization procedures. [Federation of Humane O... +1](#)



Delaware: Implemented targeted manufacturer fee increases through the state's Office of Animal Welfare to support accessible spay and neuter grants. [LinkedIn · Penny Ellison +1](#)



New Mexico: Established a mandatory fee on large pet food brand manufacturers to inject over \$1.4 million annually into state sterilization programs. [LinkedIn · Penny Ellison +1](#)

The fee is structured as an annual surcharge stacked on top of existing commercial feed registration rules. Most states exempt prescription diets and small-scale, local "mom-and-pop" pet treat manufacturers. [Journal of Legislation and ...](#)

State	Surcharge per Pet Food Product (Per Year)	Annual Program Revenue Generated
New Mexico	\$100 per label (for brands with over \$3B global revenue)	~\$1.4 Million
Maryland	\$100 per label	~\$600,000
West Virginia	\$100 per label	~\$450,000
Maine	\$100 per label	~\$600,000
Delaware	\$100 per label	~\$400,000

Note: For a major manufacturer selling 50 different variations of dog food, cat food, and treats, this results in an annual payment of \$5,000 to that state's animal welfare fund.

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Wildlife



- Approximately 90,000 wildlife rescued in NSW annually
- Pro-rated to WA population = approximately 33,000 rescues/ year
- **Motor-vehicle collisions and unsuitable environment, extreme weather events and entanglement in netting and wiring**
- **Levy on industries** responsible for most of the rescues: transport, fossil fuels and development resulting in loss of suitable environment.
- At an average cost of \$300 per animal, **approximately \$10 million/year** needed to assist veterinarians in private practice to care for injured wildlife.
- **2.53 million total registered motor vehicles - \$2 levy = \$5m**

It's Not Bella and Charlie We Need to Worry About – It's Us
[. \(https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/16/14/2174 \)](https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/16/14/2174)

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Desexing & microchipping



- **WA Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development (DPIRD)**
 - partnerships with local veterinary clinics provide 100% subsidies for desexing, microchipping, and registration for disadvantaged (regional shires like Esperance)
- **Keeping Cats Safe at Home** -NSW Environmental Trust, administered by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water) – **grants of \$2.5 million in 2021 and \$6 million in 2025** to RSPCA who partnered with 30 councils to deliver desexing and education programs
- **Decreased complaints, impoundments, euthanasia and free-roaming cats**
- **Must be funded long-term – costs decrease as coverage increases**

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Next steps -Decide to act!!!



- **Stakeholder groups for Veticare:**
 1. **Costing of Veticare**, numbers of people needing help (Community Services), cost of veterinary care (AVA, PetSure)
 2. **Pet industry stakeholders** to obtain consensus on support
 3. **Mechanics** – Schedule of fees determined & Medicare structure for payments to pet practices
- **Stakeholder groups for wildlife costing & funding**
- **Stakeholder groups for desexing & microchipping**

Questions?



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