

animals

THE SILENT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



PROGRAM OUTLINE

- **Background to project**
- **Carl's presentation**
- **Dr Lydia Tong, Taronga Zoo**
- **Matthew French – RSPCA Community Development Manager**
- **Sen. Const. Ingrid Reilly, DVLO, Marrickville Local Area Command**
- **Panel discussion – questions**
- **Completion of evaluation survey**

BACKGROUND

- **Extended Essay topic**
- **Pilot of School Awareness Program that focuses on animals as victims of Family Violence**
- **Experts in field are here to present and be on Panel for Q & A with Anna Ludvik from Lucy's Project**
- **Evaluation of Program - Participant Survey to be completed**

KEY

MESSAGES

Animal Abuse is strongly linked with Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)

(Arkow 2016; Tong 2015; Tiplady 2013)

Significant numbers of animals are exposed to DFV

(Tong 2014)

**Males are responsible
for almost all acts of
violence towards
humans and pets**

(Arkow 2016; Tong 2015; Tiplady 2013)

**DFV affects animals'
physical and mental
well-being, and the
effects can be
long-lasting**

(Tiplady 2013)

**There is help available
for pets/animals and
for all family members
where DFV occurs**

(Tiplady 2013)

some
STATISTICS

**Pets are present in 70% of
cases where DFV occurs
– approx. 300,000 a year**

(Tong 2014)

**90% of animal abusers are
reported to be adult males**

(Green and Gullone 2005)

**Some children abuse
animals for complex and
varied reasons**

**Many women fail to leave,
or delay leaving violent
partners for fear of what
might happen to their pets**

(Ascione 2007; Carlisle-Frank et al 2004)

The nature of animal abuse in the context of domestic and family violence

Animal cruelty - a way of exerting power and control

Perpetrators target a particular animal that their partner/children are most closely attached to
(Tong 2015; Carlisle-Frank et al 2004)

In homes where animals are being abused, women are at higher risk of being severely injured, raped or killed by their partner (Simmons and Lehmann in Tiplady 2015; Creevy et al 2013)

animal/human bonds and the impacts of DV

Lydia Tong



Impact of cruelty on animals

- Physical, psychological and emotional injuries
- Fear of abuser and all men/humans
- Anxiety
- Aggressive behaviour – biting
- Helplessness – silent victims
- Symptoms increase when separated from family
- Hard to place in refuge with other family victims, or in foster care, boarding kennel.

what is animal cruelty and how do we respond?

Matt French RSPCA NSW



CRUELTY

means any **act** or **omission**

as a consequence of

Which the animal is unreasonably,
unnecessarily or unjustifiably...

beaten, kicked, killed, wounded, pinioned,
mutilated, maimed, abused, **tormented**,
tortured, **terrified**, **infuriated**, over-loaded,
over-worked, over-driven, over-ridden,
over-used, exposed to excessive heat or
cold or inflicted with pain











EVERY ANIMAL
HAS A HUMAN
STORY.







SAFE BEDS FOR PETS





ALL FAMILY MEMBERS
DESERVE A LIFE FREE
FROM FEAR AND ABUSE.

RSPCA 



SAFE  BEDS
FOR PETS

**Safe, temporary
accommodation**

Flexibility

Confidentiality

**Dedicated
caseworkers**

**Immediate
response**

**Veterinary
treatment**

**Service
connection**



RSPCA®

community

welfare

network

every
animal
has a
human
story

RSPCA® 
RAW
resident animal welfare

RSPCA® 
PATHWAYS

The police perspective

Ingrid Reilly
Senior Constable
Domestic Violence Liaison
Officer

Constable Craig Kelly
NSW POLICE



What is the role of Police in animal welfare?

- Police (along with RSPCA and AWL) are considered as Inspectors under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (POCTAA)
- Police are getting more involved in animal cruelty issues world wide and we are recognising the connection / link between it and other serious crimes - including domestic violence

Animal Law...

- Interest in Animal Law is rising
- There are lawyers who deal just with animal issues in Australia
eg: Barristers Animal Welfare Panel and Lawyers for Animals

Making a complaint about animal cruelty

- Obtain useful information for Police or RSPCA
- Reliable witness statements can be crucial to an investigation
- Always stay safe
- To contact Police..
- To contact RSPCA **1800 CRUELTY** or **rspecansw.org.au**

Animals as victims of DV from a police perspective...

What is an AVO and how can animals be included/considered?

Rural vs City animal welfare management challenges

- Police and RSPCA resource challenges
- Social service resources
- Not only companion animals but livestock, horses, wildlife
- Large and isolated properties
- Rural areas have significant mental health challenges





Where to from here ?

- Police are reliant on services such as Safe Beds for Pets and Paws and Recover
- DVSAT and SAMs are new initiatives in the past year taken on by NSW Police to combat DV and have the potential to improve safety for pets too and acknowledge that cruelty to pets is a risk factor when assessing the victim's safety
- Continuing education of police about this issue is vital as is the judicial system in general (ensuring appropriate sentences etc)
- Importance of new initiatives like Carl's project from a policing perspective

**On line safety when
accessing DV resources**

What needs to happen to address animal and family violence?

Recognise pets as companions and family members

Everyone commit to taking a stance against violence towards animals and humans

Animal welfare agencies/vets, police and services work together

What needs to happen to address animal and family violence?

Hold offenders accountable and responsible for their actions, and supported to make changes

Identify animal abuse early - can stop the cycle of violence, protect the integrity of families, and lives of animals and humans (Arkow 2013)

Bring animal cruelty out in the open

What can young males do to prevent animal and human violence?

- **Refuse peer pressure or coercion to participate in acts of cruelty**
- **Intervene to stop children engaging in such acts**
- **Safely challenge this sort of behaviour as bystanders – be the voice of support for animals and human victims**
- **Keep your response simple – call 000 or RSPCA**
- **Recognise gendered nature of animal and human violence – perpetrated primarily by males**

Help available

- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- DV Helpline: 1800Respect – 1800 737 732 <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>
- NSW DV Helpline: 1800 65 64 63 <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents,-carers-and-families/domestic-and-family-violence/domestic-violence-line>
- School Counsellor: Trinity Grammar
- Police/ambulance: 000
- RSPCA: 1300 CRUELTY - 1300 278 358
<https://www.rspcansw.org.au/contact/report-a-cruelty-case>

Resource:

- Lucy's Project: www.lucysproject.com,
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Lucys-Project-198376983660343/>