

Vets for Climate Action



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Vets for Climate Action acknowledges our First Nations Peoples, the traditional custodians who have cared for the country upon which we work and meet; its land, oceans and rivers, its trees and wildlife, for over 60 000 years. Our First Nations Peoples have long understood that healthy people, animals and country are deeply interconnected. This is reflected in the veterinary concept of One Health, an important tenet of our work at Vets for Climate Action.

In the spirit of reconciliation, Vets for Climate Action recognises the generosity of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its invitation from First Nations People to all Australians to walk together to build a better future.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that this land was never ceded.

Cover photo of Scotty charging an EV by Jeremy Watson
Photo by Stefany Goldring, Quandamooka Country

ABOUT US

Climate change is hurting the animals we love and care for. Vets for Climate Action represents concerned veterinarians, veterinary nurses, practices and industry partners across Australia who want immediate action on climate. We are mobilising the veterinary profession and broader animal care community to tackle climate change within and beyond our sector. We are educating the profession and Australian community about the impact of climate change on the animals. We are reducing the sector's greenhouse gas emissions through our Climate Care Program. We are collaborating with like-minded, values-aligned organisations - because we cannot do this alone. And, we are advocating to government to drive policy change on behalf of all animals.

VISION

Our vision is of a world where animals and people thrive in a healthy climate.

PURPOSE

To lead those who love, care for and work with animals to act urgently on climate change.

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

EDUCATION

We will ensure all vet professionals understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock and wildlife, and support them with training, tools and strategies to act urgently on behalf of animals.

SUSTAINABILITY

We will mobilise our world-first online Climate Care Program to assist Australian & NZ veterinary practices to provide more sustainable veterinary care, reduce emissions and move towards Zero

ADVOCACY

We will collaborate with like-minded organisations, and use the veterinary profession's influential voice to advocate for urgent action, strong leadership and strong policies to mitigate the impact of climate change on the animals we love and care for.



Volunteers Rob & Mary Ann representing VfCA at ANZCVS' Science Week

TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

As we reflect on this past year, we are filled with immense gratitude for the steadfast and valuable support provided by our generous donors, partners and supporters.

The continuing commitment of our partners enables us to launch impactful initiatives, champion sustainability efforts and advocate for change to ensure the health and well-being of all animals.

Thank you to all for being an integral part of our mission. We look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year and achieving even greater milestones together.

We send a special thank you to Advance Queensland's Ignite Ideas Fund, The Illawong Foundation, Vicki Brooke, ELA, Ben and Femke, and other others who are deeply appreciated but remain unnamed.

VETERINARY SUPPORTERS



PARTNERS



TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

As the year comes to a close, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to our volunteers for their unwavering dedication and hard work. We deeply appreciate the incredible gift of time and energy, particularly when there are so many competing demands in life.

A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you - you have been the driving force behind our achievements this year: from communications, fundraising, media, events to webinars.

A special thanks go to our volunteer Board, and to our Climate Care Program Advisory Committee.



MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dr Jeannet Kessels

Inaugural Chair 2019 - 2024

Change takes time. To shift a culture, and normalise change, more so.

The world never shifts without disruption. An idea forms, first-followers catch on, then the movement builds like a fever until it becomes unstoppable. Much like this [Crazy Dancing Guy](#).

If we want to change the direction of our future, we must first reconsider what we regard as normal - to rethink how we live, how we relate to money and power, and how that links to precious biodiversity and natural resources. How might we integrate this into our personal, business and corporate lives, whilst deepening connections, engaging the strength of community?

Climate change impacts everything veterinarians hold dear; animal health, welfare, global food supply, biosecurity, One Health, biodiversity and extinctions. As the world experienced its [hottest day in recorded history](#) in July, and continues to explode annual records, what was once distant, abstract and contested is now right in front of us.



We need the collective imagination and collaboration of bright people, those who understand the risks to the systems we rely on and are part of. We need people at high levels of leadership who will take the bold steps required, not gradually or incrementally, but decisively, in line with the scale and speed that this exceptional predicament requires.

As scientists, carers and crucial community members, veterinary professionals have a moral and financial imperative to get active, to lead by example, and to be a voice for the animals we all love and need — wildlife, livestock and companion animals. 87.5% of the Australian veterinary profession we surveyed believe veterinarians have a responsibility to advocate for climate action.

Through Vets for Climate Action, the Australian veterinary profession is leading by positive example, as the vanguard of change.

Our world-first Climate Care Program was formally launched this year. Congratulations to the team!

For his work on 'Net Zero as a Business Strategy', VfCA volunteer Dr Jeremy Watson was awarded the Thought Leader 2024 award by the AVA Veterinary Business Group. Congratulations Jeremy!



2023-2024 Board: L-R Prof. Mark Howden, Dr Liz Clarke, Dr Jeannet Kessels, Dr Helen Scott-Orr AM PSM

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

cont'd

Staff and volunteers had a strong presence at many events, created important submissions to government and embraced speaking engagements.

I had the immense privilege of personally hosting the president of the World Veterinary Association, Dr Rafael Laguens, for eight days, to demonstrate VfCA's ground-breaking work, and to share my vision for global veterinary climate action. He invited me to present to the heads of veterinary associations at the WVA General Assembly in Capetown.

Closer to home together with CEVA's videographer Nik Wood and my daughter Gracie, we will soon visit respected First Nations elders in the Northern Territory, to sit down with the old people who have grown up on country, and to hear their stories about both the small and large changes they are noticing due to changing weather. I hope this will open a pathway for higher level engagement between veterinary leaders and our indigenous brothers and sisters, whose people have steadily cared for country for over 60 000 years.

I would like to thank our absolutely fantastic CEO, Steff Goldring, for her resolute commitment and experienced leadership. Likewise, our VfCA board, advisors, staff, volunteers and supporters, past and present, for both their passion and their enduring patience and support to me as founding chair. I am delighted to continue my strategic contribution as a VfCA director into 2025.

VfCA resolved early on to form the guard rails at the top of the cliff, rather than to act as the ambulance at the bottom. As we approach the fifth anniversary of the catastrophic megafires in which 3 billion of our precious animals perished or were displaced- the [link to climate change now proven](#) - it is time for us all to become active and contribute.

What a sacred thing to work to prevent and alleviate suffering, and a joy to collaborate with fellow advocates who together bring to life the future we hope for.

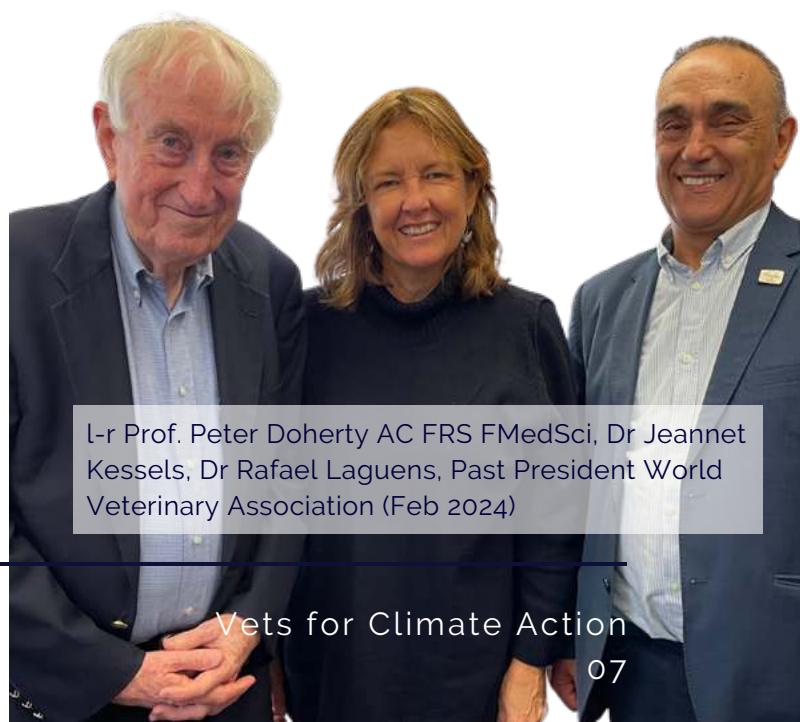
I quote the esteemed ecologist Joanna Macy;

*In doing so, how do we marry serenity and
childfulness with sheer nerve?*

Thank you for being a part of this work

Dr Jeannet Kessels

Outgoing Chair, Founder and Director



L-r Prof. Peter Doherty AC FRS FMedSci, Dr Jeannet Kessels, Dr Rafael Laguens, Past President World Veterinary Association (Feb 2024)



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Steff Goldring

As volunteers, Jeremy and Jim's contributions deserve a shout out as they have gifted us their expertise, time and energy to support the growth of the Climate Care Program.

There have been some backward steps this year in the path to lasting climate action. It is particularly disappointing as 2024 comes to a close as the hottest year on record, surpassing 2023 as previous title holder. 2024 saw extensions of mining licenses, logging of the proposed Great Koala National Park, an ever-growing list of threatened species, and a lack of real progress in reforming our environmental laws. There's also been the unnecessary distraction of talk about nuclear power.

Yet amidst these challenges, there is reason for real optimism:

- Solar power continues to become cheaper and is being adopted at an unprecedented pace globally. Humanity is transitioning to clean energy faster than we thought possible;
- Battery technology is advancing rapidly, further supporting this transition;
- In Australia, renewables now account for about 40% of electricity generation—a figure that has doubled in just six years and
- China is currently installing wind and solar capacity equivalent to five large nuclear power stations every week (just to name a few).

I would like to start by thanking all our supporters, volunteers, donors, climate champions and partners for their part in our success this year. Without your time, energy, financial support and commitment we would not have been able to attend important industry events, present to veterinary colleagues, engage in government inquiries or formally launch our Climate Care Program; impactful acts that drive our strategic goals forward.

I must also add to my thanks to the Board for their time and dedication, and unwavering support and trust in me to lead Vets for Climate Action this year. A special mention to Jeannet for her vision, dedication, and tireless work as founder and, until recently, Chair of VfCA, whose commitment has been instrumental in driving our mission forward. And thank you to outgoing director Professor Mark Howden whose calm and measured approach, expertise and insight added to the depth on our board.

I also express my deep appreciation for my incredible team – Clare, Elise, Jeremy, and Jim – whose hard work and passion make everything we achieve possible.

L - Clare Werbeloff
(Program Lead)
R - Steff Goldring (CEO), Dr
Elise Anderson (Rural &
Regional Lead) & Dr Jeremy
Watson, Chair CCP Advisory
Committee

Additionally, Australia is showing real leadership in global climate accountability. Starting 1 January 2025, mandatory climate-related financial disclosures will require large entities to assess and report on climate risks, greenhouse gas emissions, and reduction targets.

As we look ahead to 2025, we face a critical and challenging period. Having a climate denier in the White House presents significant challenges to global progress, as does a world in continued conflict.

However, with legislated climate targets and the upcoming Australian election, we have the opportunity to keep climate action a priority domestically.

So, as I often say to my team: **we will keep on keeping on.**

At VfCA, we are ready to meet these challenges head-on, as we did in 2024. In 2025, we will:

- continue educating and inspiring the veterinary profession through industry events, online **Masterclasses**, and in-clinic engagement
- Expand initiatives like **ZerOctober**, our veterinary sustainability month launched this year
- Drive sustainable veterinary care and push for Net Zero across the industry through our Climate Care Program, in Australia and potentially overseas. We are excited to welcome CVS and Animal Emerg-

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

cont'd

-ency Australia (AEA) onboard this year and encourage others to join us

- Develop a dedicated emission-reduction program for the equine veterinary sector in Australia
- Partner with forward-thinking organisations like Lyka Pet Food, Resinc Solar, and Thurri Energy to support sustainability initiatives, including offering free energy assessments to veterinary practices; and
- advocate for strong leadership and policies that will mitigate the impacts of climate change on animals, people, and the planet.

Most importantly, we will continue to be a voice for all animals and the veterinary profession, pushing for meaningful change at every level—from practice to policy.

In 2025 I invite you to join the thousands of vets, vet nurses, vet techs, animal carers, pet owners and animal lovers like you, united by our concern about the impact of climate change on the animals we love and care for, and help us to create a world where animals and humans thrive in a healthy climate.

On behalf the animals we love,



IMPACT AT A GLANCE



9

Masterclasses for our community

> Over the year we have educated hundreds of veterinary professionals on sustainability and climate issues through a diverse range of topics, such as Building Practice Resilience in a Changing Climate, and How to Talk about Climate Change and Health, by hosting free, monthly, online Masterclasses.

12

Veterinary and industry events attended

> In 2024 we actively participated in 12 key industry events including the VNCA conference, Vet Expo, Science Week, AVA National Conference, ISVEE17, the ZAA Conference and WVA General Assembly, staffing stands and presenting to those attending. These events provided valuable opportunities to talk directly to and engage with thousands of members of the profession, both in Australia and internationally, to share our mission, promote our Climate Care Program.

15

Submissions and letters to State & Federal Government

> Our submissions and letters provided evidence-based insights to inquiries, and policy recommendations, to ensure decisions are aligned with the impacts of climate change on animal health and welfare. Our involvement showcased the expertise of the vet profession, fostering collaboration between stakeholders and government.

27

Clinic Visits

> Clinic visits allowed us to bring climate science and advocacy directly into practice, and overcome challenges many rural & regional practices have attending events. In-clinic education meant we met and engaged more veterinary professions on climate action and sustainability.

50

CCP Climate Champions

> With more and more practices taking sustainable action in clinic, we are able to reduce the emissions of the veterinary sector. Leading by example, we will inspire the two thirds of the Australian pet owners that climate action is absolutely their business.

4100+

Supporters on social media

> We've grown our audience over 20% on last year enabling us to share our message with a broader and more diverse community, increasing visits to our website and strengthening support for more sustainable veterinary care and climate action.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Climate Care Program

TOWARDS ZERO

After a successful pilot program in 2022 and continued enhancements, the **Climate Care Program** officially launched in May this year. Hosted by Greater Springfield Vets in Queensland, the event was well attended by participants, partners and professional colleagues, and we were thrilled by the widespread media coverage.

An additional enhancement to the CCP just prior to launch was the inclusion of a veterinary carbon calculator. Supported by Pangolin Associates, this is the first carbon calculator specifically for the Australian veterinary profession. This coincided with Mandatory Climate Reporting (MCR) legislation passing through the federal parliament which will require larger organisations to report their emissions from Jan 2025.

We welcomed 12 Animal Emergency Australia (AEA) and 6 CVS Australia practices and their Climate Champions to the program this year with goals to reduce their environmental impact and long term commitment to animal health.

They form the 45 practices and 50 Climate Champions participating in the Climate Care Program. However, ongoing sales of the CCP have proved challenging in the current veterinary landscape. The industry is still under a lot of time pressure and there is limited opportunity to take on



45 PRACTICES & 50 CLIMATE CHAMPIONS NOW PARTICIPATE IN THE CLIMATE CARE PROGRAM

additional programs like the CCP. It is anticipated that MCR legislation will be a future driver for uptake. The legislation will apply first to organisations of 500 employees or more, impacting larger corporate veterinary practices initially.

The CCP will need to continue to evolve to meet the varying needs of a diverse range of practice situations. Additional resources will be needed to develop a range of CCP products to suit different market segments. Funding has been secured to develop an equine version of the CCP and it is anticipated this will take 2 years to fully develop.



Climate Care Program VIP Launch
May 2024

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

CLIMATE CARE PROGRAM CONT'D



To stimulate demand and drive our overall strategy to reduce the profession's carbon emissions, we launched a new initiative: **ZerOctober**: the promotion of October as Veterinary sustainability month. Nine veterinary practices were able to provide **total** scope 1 & 2 emissions calculations.

The additional information of emissions per full time vet equivalent has enabled comparison between practices of different size. It is intended that this will set a baseline for comparison, improvement and competition between practices year on year towards a 2050 goal of Net Zero.

The long term strategic plan of the CCP is to enable veterinary practices to reduce their emissions and to encourage their clients (effectively 2/3 of the Australian population) to support our efforts because we have a shared interest in the future of animal health.

The Climate Care Program's ongoing development and commercialisation has been well supported by volunteer industry professionals who meet every 6 weeks as part of the Climate Care Program Advisory Committee. A special thanks to volunteer committee members Inkarrri Trumball-Ward, Louisa Farthing, Zali Brookes, Annaliese Johnson, Alex Wallace and Terry George for their time and commitment.

We would also like to thank the volunteers who work tirelessly to support the CCP at conferences, through webinars and the Climate Champions leading the profession towards Zero.

Proudly supported by the Advance Queensland initiative



Brimbank Vet Clinic's towel audit as part of ZerOctober

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

RURAL AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

For rural and regional Australia, climate change is no longer a hypothetical, future threat. Whether it be drought, floods, bushfires, thunderstorms, or disease outbreaks, unnatural disasters fueled by climate pollution are impacting the health and welfare of animals, and the people who care for them, love them, and work with them right now.

And, the veterinary industry is right at the frontlines, affected by climate change in their business and personal lives, and responding to its effects on animals, and their communities.

VfCA's **Rural and Regional Program (RRP)** engages with, and educates practitioners, on the impacts of climate change on animal health and veterinary practice, provides practical tools for sustainability in veterinary practice, empowers vets to act as climate champions in their communities and networks, and advocates for strong policy and leadership on climate action at all levels of government.

This year the RRP moved into active **Community Outreach**, in the Goulburn Valley area of northern Victoria and, more recently, in the Northern Rivers



Rural Vets & Vet Nurses make Great Climate Champions



of NSW, where Rural & Regional Lead Dr Elise Anderson was thrilled to visit and conduct our first highly successful roadshow. A mainstay of the program: visiting veterinary clinics and introducing them to VfCA's work, building awareness of the links between climate change and animal health, has met with very positive response with the 24 veterinary teams reached in the last year.

This year RRP's **In-clinic Education Program** has also rolled out, bringing climate science and advocacy directly to rural and regional veterinary teams, as a part of their continuing education requirements.

As the program expands, Elise has garnered media attention for our work, appearing in both veterinary and mainstream outlets such as The Guardian, ABC, and Sky News, both in Australia and internationally. She has also presented on the impacts of climate change on rural and regional veterinary practice at the 2024 Australian Veterinary Association Conference and engaged with final-year veterinary students at Charles Sturt University through their Transition to the Profession program.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

RURAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAM CONT'D

An important part of this activity has also been sharing the **Rural and Regional Program Survey**.

The survey has reached almost a hundred veterinary professionals over the last 18 months, around three quarters of those from regional and rural Australia, and continues to provide VfCA with important insights into the experiences of our profession with climate change, attitudes and concerns, and barriers to further action.

Some key insights we have received from our survey so far include:

>50%

Well over half of our survey respondents report experiencing climate change impacts in their professional or personal lives. This proportion increases significantly for those people who live in rural and regional areas

93%

93% of veterinary professionals surveyed believe that the veterinary profession has a responsibility to advocate for climate action

87%

87% of respondents indicated that it was important or very important to them that their workplace took steps to address sustainability

The program faces a few challenges, including the vast distances of rural and remote Australia, the conservative nature of leadership in these areas, and the competing demands faced by a veterinary industry under immense pressure from financial challenges and staff shortages.

Despite this, the RRP continues to grow and thrive, and in the next year will be focussing on:

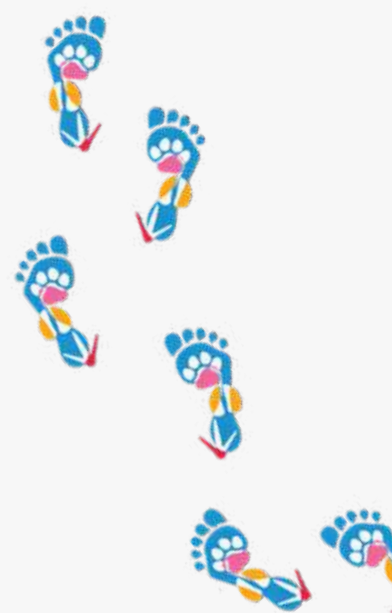
- Continue outreach program of clinic visits and in-clinic education in our pilot electorates
- Continue to build relationships with federal and state MPs in tandem with local clinicians
- Returning to the Northern Rivers to build on the work done there in 2024
- Establish regional chapters of VfCA for supporters in N/NE Victoria and the Northern Rivers
- Host advocacy workshops for regional climate champions
- Development of an online Advocacy Module to run in tandem with the Climate Care Program

L-R Richard, Elise (VfCA) Fiona and Daniela from Shepparton and Kialla Vets during a clinic visit



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Total Income and Expenditure for
the year ended 30 June 2024



INCOME

	2023/2024	2022/2023
Donations	\$176,823	\$201,375
Grants	\$50,000	\$107,205
CCP Subscriptions	\$60,0518	\$21,618
CCP Sponsorship	\$2,500	\$20,000
Other Income	\$6,710	\$890
Total Income	\$296,084	\$351,088

EXPENSES

	2023/2024	2022/2023
Operating Expenses	\$57,777	\$126,190
Marketing & Events	\$794	\$17,071
Wages and Salaries	\$240,524	\$363,013
Total Expenses	\$299,095	\$506,274

PLAY A KEY ROLE IN OUR SUCCESS

DONATE

Vets for Climate Action is a DGR-registered charity. This means every donation over \$2 is tax deductible.

Donations enable us to continue our vital work, attend events, employ experienced staff and maintain our programs .

We are also an Environmental Partner with 1% for the Planet.

PARTNER WITH US

Be part of our vision (it's big!) and put your product, service or innovation in front of Australia's veterinary and animal care industry.

Business supporters can help us tackle the biggest health and welfare threat to the animals we love and care for: climate change.

VOLUNTEER

Our wonderful volunteers are responsible for our success. Volunteering with VfCA gives you the chance to take meaningful climate action and can take many forms.

Volunteering can look like facilitating webinar, delivering presentations, writing articles, educating clinics, talking to veterinary professionals at conferences, and so much more.

Melbourne University's Wildlife Appreciation Group generously raised \$700 for VfCA at their annual Charity Wildlife Speaker Night

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Director &
Outgoing Chair**
Dr Jeannet Kessels



Director
Dr Helen Scott-Orr
AM PSM



Treasurer
Jim Mollison



Director
Dr Liz Clarke



**CEO
Company Secretary**
Stefany Goldring



**Programs Lead &
Community Engagement**
Clare Werbeloff



**Rural & Regional
Lead**
Dr Elise Anderson



**Chair, Climate Care Program
Advisory Committee (Volunteer)**
Dr Jeremy Watson

WITH THANKS TO...



Retiring Director
Professor Mark
Howden
Nobel Laureate



Incoming Chair 24/25
Malcolm Lazenby



Patron
Nobel Laureate
Professor Peter
Doherty, AC FRS FMedSci

**Vets for Climate Action mobilises the
veterinary profession and
broader animal care community
to tackle the climate crisis
within and beyond our sector.**



www.vfca.org.au



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