

Vets for Climate Action Climate Care Program **Pilot Evaluation Report**

Mel Harwin, December 2022

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Executive Summary

Vets for Climate Action

Vets for Climate Action (VfCA) is an Australian-based non-profit organisation that has been operating for over three years. Founded by Australian Veterinarian Dr Jeannet Kessels with a team of vet professionals (primarily volunteer-based), the organisation is responding with conviction and commitment to growing alarm at the effects of climate change on animals and the environment. In three years, VfCA had exponential interest, support, and growth, because of the deep empirical knowledge that climate change is an animal health and welfare issue. In 2022 the organisation recruited a new CEO, and the team of professional staff and volunteers set a new strategic plan. They aim to see Australian vets, vet nurses, and the animal care community take responsibility for using their knowledge, skills, and influence to protect animals (and the people who care for them) - from climate change.

Change to the climate continues to pose a significant threat to animal health, welfare, production, and biodiversity; the good news is that Vets for Climate Action believe that by educating, collaborating, advising, and governing the Vet Sector in Australia, they can help halt catastrophic climate change.

Anthropogenic emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases cause climate change. It impacts natural and human systems globally through increased average surface temperature, extreme weather events, changing precipitation patterns, rising sea levels, and ocean acidification. These risks will ultimately impact people's livelihoods, particularly marginalised groups such as women, children, and the elderly, as resources, food, and water become scarcer. More recently, the international community has recognised that climate change is not just a humanitarian and environmental issue but an animal health and welfare issue. As a sector, Veterinary professionals and animal carers have a vast and important role to play both in servicing animals who face the devastating impacts of climate change, while preventing and reducing the rate of change causing these negative consequences. However an important consideration is a recognition that it is already a sector in crisis, with large levels of underemployment, high needs, and professionals at very high risk of mental health illness and suicide. A parliamentary committee on mental health and suicide prevention¹ recently heard that the suicide rate among veterinary workers was four times greater than in the general population. VfCA is driven to equip and ease some of the environmental, animal care, staffing, and financial burdens of the sector with an action and solution-orientated program.

Climate Care Program Pilot

Program Summary

Vets for Climate Action has received over \$300,000 to design, develop and deliver a quality Climate Care Program (CCP). The program is the first of its kind to exist within the sector here in Australia and one of the few globally. The program's purpose is to educate and empower vet clinics to understand and take action to reduce carbon emissions. The program is developed as a self-paced e-learning program, which includes a suite of course modules around priority learning topics. Tribal Habits host the course, an Australian-owned, made & supported Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS allows for all-in-one training course creation, events, and external training management. It provides access to real-time learning data and the ability to customise surveys for learning outcomes- every response, quiz, poll, etc., and filter based on any job role, location, or custom field set by creator can be accessed for impact or output-based measurement. The program pilot also integrated *Discourse* a

¹ <https://www.bing.com/search?q=veter+professionals+suicide+australia&qsn=&form=QBRE&sp=-1&pq=veter+professionals+suicide+australia&sc=0-35&sk=&cvid=FBE7452225A74C5A82351FCF32A3FE93&ghsh=0&ghacc=0&ghpl=>

community-based app with moderation tools and custom member access, was offered as a community building platform during the pilot phase of the program.

The program is rolled out incrementally, with an introduction topic and outline of the approximate time each course will take and what it includes. At the time of the evaluation, not all the course modules in the pilot are final; the first three are accessible to the program participants.

Program Topics and estimated rollout dates²:

1. Introduction: Starting your Climate Care Journey (published)
2. Topic: Water for Life (published)
3. Topic: No Time to Waste (published)
4. Topic: Energy Efficiency (published week commencing 15 Dec)
5. Topic: The Power of Renewables (in production - publish date not scheduled)
6. Topic: Buying for a Better Future (in production - publish date not scheduled)

Pilot Evaluation

Pilot Summary

In May 2022, a pilot of the Climate Care Program was launched with twenty-one program participants across various professional vet settings in Australia. The course is structured so that the learners can apply their knowledge in real-time, with action. This is both to embed learning, implement climate-positive practices and reinforce their knowledge with their peers and the workplace. The modules have built-in features to boost implementation: learner journals, on-the-job tasks, reflective learning, live polling, stakeholder notifications, and more. The program has relied on discord as a learner engagement tool to generate discussion and dialogue amongst the learning community. As of late November 2022, the pilot project cohort has had access to the first three topic areas, and there is varying completion of the third topic. As the pilot is now in a continuous phase with adjustments taking place in real-time to the program, there is a need to evaluate the pilot to date. The findings from this offer both a learning opportunity for the organisation, along with an understanding of outputs and changes the program is affecting. The Climate Care program will be released to the public/ Vet Sector in Australia to enrol for a cohort launch in early 2023.

Purpose and Methodology

The evaluation focused on the recent preliminary launch of the Climate Care Program, using the data collected across the twenty-one program participants and other relevant stakeholder and assessment data to assess the project's impact according to its desired purpose, outputs, and outcomes. The evaluation will also provide information for both internal organisational stakeholders, along with external stakeholders - veterinary professionals, funding partners, advocates, and supporters. The findings and recommendations may be used for program adaptations and revisions, further developments, decision-making, promotion, and marketing. As the program is in its preliminary stages, with limited data to evaluate longer-term outcomes, findings and recommendations in this report have been concentrated on:

- Refining the program's core purpose, program logic and theory of change
- Supporting and scaling the progress of participants and impact of new learning and practice
- Instruct how the organisation should continue to be monitored and evaluate the program over time

² The list of topics is below, and the outcomes and summary can be found in the appendix of this report

Climate Care Program – Pilot Evaluation

- Identify the most meaningful changes and data
- Offer lean real-time feedback for program learning, revision, and community building

The evaluation purpose was to review primary data from program participants (Climate Champions) and practice managers, collected via the inbuilt custom course-related surveys along with additional surveys collected from both program participants and their practice managers or owners. This data has already been used as feedback and reviewed in real time by the program team to allow for course adjustments and for the team to respond to any issues as they are rolled out.

For the evaluation, data collected was triangulated and analysed according to broad Key Evaluation Questions, co-designed with the VfCA team. The evaluation has been facilitated by Mel Harwin, an external evaluator throughout Oct-Dec 2022 and has taken a participatory learning approach. The evaluation methods, tools, and approach along with this report were designed, mapped, analysed and authored by the evaluator. With the already existing data collected throughout the pilot, gaps were identified, and additional data collection took place. This included reviewing organisational reports, internal workshops, key strategic interviews and facilitated focus groups with stakeholders. Data was collected through structured and semi-structured surveys, notetaking and session recording, coded, themed and analysed accordingly. When required, the evaluation used relevant secondary data relating to the Vet Sector and the e-learning sector.

There were four stages to the pilot evaluation, which included:

1. Mapping out the project parameters, Theory of Change (TOC) & Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) - finalise the evaluation plan (actions, inclusions & exclusions) and key evaluation questions to frame the evaluation, findings & recommendations.
2. Desk-based data discovery and analysis included a review and analysis of existing data for all program participants on both the program outcomes and assessments, along with feedback on the UX experience.
3. Stakeholder Engagement - Strategic Interviews or Focus Group Session/s (this data also provides content for understanding and designing the appropriate MEAL framework and program logic for impact reporting into the future)
4. Evaluation reporting on the impacts, findings and recommendations from the data analysis linked to the KEQ and TOC.

The evaluation analysis and measurement were guided by Key Evaluation Questions, which were co-designed and approved by the team at the beginning of the project.³

Summary of key themes and impacts

The data across the surveys and focus groups found significant positive results around the program design, approach, and delivery. Below are high-level findings from aggregated data across the survey and focus groups. This report's end includes links to the raw data and analysis.



Strongly agree that the Climate Care program is **unique for the vet sector** in Australia



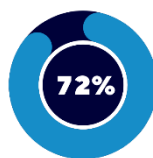
Agree the program is the **right approach** to changing attitudes and behaviours relating to climate actions

³ See mural link for more information - KEQ

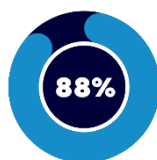
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Believe the program **topics and content are relevant** to the participant's unique need



Agree on the **length** of the program is the right length



Strongly agree that the program is important and will have an impact on reducing harm and halting climate change



Believe the program **will inspire** the people we engage with to advocate for and take climate action

Thematic Impact Areas

Impact Theme	Supporting statements - Direct quotes
The Climate Care program is a much-needed, timely and important program for all vet professionals across the sector in Australia	<i>"As a vet nurse, it is important for me in a support role to management to be able to learn and filter valuable information and processes for change back to the decision-makers to extend our care from domestic animals to the greater environment"</i> <i>"It is important for our sector produces a lot of waste and emissions and we have a responsibility to change this. For me personally, it makes the job more fulfilling and meaningful to be having a wider impact than just treating individual patients"</i>
The Climate Care program is an effective product and staff engagement tool vet owners and management can harness to attract, employ, develop, and retain their quality and professional team	<i>"Our involvement in the Climate Care Program has directly resulted in our hospitals hiring two new staff members, a new receptionist, and a practising Vet. Being involved in the program and having nominated climate champions and a climate committee across the three hospitals influenced their decision to work in our practice"</i> <i>"We are an sector in crisis; skill shortages and high burnout rates exist. The most recent figures show two years is the workplace retention average of Vet professionals in Australia" – Vet Practice Manager (4 hospitals)</i>
The Climate Care program creates real-time climate-positive outputs and changes within vet clinics and hospitals.	• Mask recycling, environmental impact audit, syringe and fluid bag recycling. • Sorting out the washing machine and dry cycles. Using the washing line more when it isn't raining for once. Organising more recycling. • Waste is where we will make the biggest impact. We are purchasing lots of bins of different types and currently looking at all sorts of options with terracycle etc.. • Flow restrictors on taps. • Leather Chamois for Grooming to reduce Laundry and microplastics found in microfibre towels, Half flush toilet signs, Mass dishwashing, addition of flow restrictors,

	purchase of water distiller, turning tap of during surgical scrubbing, instruments cleaned in bucket rather than running water, emptying pet water bowls into garden, installation of zip tap to encourage use or reusable drink containers, • We now recycle more items than cardboard and are active in doing this. • Further recycling. • More waste options (added organic bins, soft plastics), awareness around water usage, booked plumber to fit flow regulators on taps and possibly install rainwater tank. • Still implementing, but already heavily recycle, have solar panels, change from fluros to LED. • Water conservation- highlighting half flushes to all and organising the plumber to come and fix leaking taps and reattach rainwater tanks to the toilets • updated protocols for washing laundry, scrubbing packs, scrubbing for surgery. Expanded our recycling program. • bringing greater awareness. • Rented permanent coffee machine to reduce takeaway cups, research installation of drinking water filters. • Further recycling, contacting companies about the packaging they send order in, repairs to prevent wastage.
The Climate Care program delivery is relevant and accessible to the learners that matter most.	"Overall, I feel this course has exceeded my expectations. I am so impressed at the delivery and organisation of the material"
The Climate Care program is comprehensive and takes more time than recommended. A planned learning approach and guidance from the program team would enhance the learner's success and experience.	"It takes a lot of time to collate all the information and plan. Getting pricing from the people who have access to it takes time. It also takes a block of uninterrupted time to sort things out. The background material and suggestions can be read between consults, but the compulsory tasks must be done at home." "I'm happy to have been able to participate in this pilot program, but I regret that I haven't been able to commit as much time and head space to it due to several external factors over the last few months. It's a difficult area to effect real behavioural change, but it's a great start in opening the conversation within vet practices. It might be more useful to have a vet and nurse team (i.e., two climate champions) per practice, as I feel this would allow a more cooperative approach to bringing about new habits."
The Climate Care program is widely known across the Vet Sector. Potential customers want to engage with the program and content.	"Everyone is talking about the program. I was on a work call with colleagues from across Australia, and it doesn't matter whom I met – people from Adelaide, Sydney...every single person there know Vets for Climate Action – people are talking about the organisation and the program."

Summary of Findings relating to Key Evaluation Questions

The main Key Evaluation Question (KEQ)s in this evaluation focused on relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and to a lesser degree, the final two were focused on questions to do with program impact and sustainability. Sub-questions were designed to draw out an understanding of the extent to which the program's format, content, and methods were suited to the priorities of the Vet sector, the participants, and their employers. The questions also asked to what extent the program to date was attaining its objectives and was. Where possible, a lean assessment of the outputs (qualitative and quantitative) about the program inputs and the approach taken by the organisation was undertaken. The main themes that emerged across these three key evaluation questions have been summarised and explained in more detail below.



Managing the course requirements and planning for learning

Important data emerged relating to the time needed to complete the topics, how learners and their relevant practices and managers are implementing and planning for learning, the realistic nature of what is required to complete the course content and actions, what information is lacking for participants and any significantly important information for climate care champions and practices found useful or needed to know more about for managing the program implementation well.

Key findings:

The time estimated for the first three topics is underestimated. No participant can do the course in one sitting, which has not been constructed in this way. Over half reported the modules are taking 2x more than the allocated 1hr per week recommended by the program.

Average time spent on topics:

Introduction Topic – between 30-60mins
Water for Life – 4+ hours to complete
No time to Waste –All respondents spent 8+ hrs on this module (+2hrs more than estimated). ⁴

Learning can feel disjointed. Due to the work and learning juggle and the structure of the course, the knowledge acquisition and then the actions for application can become quite a disjointed process for the learner. Competing priorities mean that no one has been able to have an easy flow between learning and the tasks required.

More guidance for how practices should budget, plan and manage internal resources. Due to the piloting nature of the program, it is hard to quantify things that haven't been implemented by Vet

⁴ *Whilst there are limited numbers due to no full completion, it is significantly higher than estimated

professionals or across practices. The course relies on practices implementing changes, many of which involve resource allocation – time or budget. Respondents shared the difficulty of budgeting or planning for the course/actions and their rollout. With no estimated course-related expenses, which will cost at varying levels for practices, there is a barrier to making decisions and budgeting through each topic. Practices are unsure how to quantify what it will cost to implement changes. The structure of the program is that courses are unlocked over time; however, budgeting for the overall program happens more strategically and at points in time. As one practice manager raised:

"Financial planning is challenging because hard to know what it will cost by the end of the program when we can't unlock the next parts. Therefore, we are unsure what budget to allocate to each topic,"

How to "do" the course and be a Climate Care Champion in unique settings Each practice applies learning and actions in unique ways. Smaller practices rely on one champion to drive changes, while others may have one climate champ and two people per practice who have formed a committee. Onboarding and setup for the course is a necessary time to instruct the participants on how they might like to "approach their learning" and set up for success, along with managing time and budgets throughout the program. Focus group respondents shared the ways they have approached both topics and implementation in their different settings, which offered others a learning opportunity,

Course Design - Content, formatting, and user experience

Across all stakeholder groups, when surveyed in the focus groups respondents ranked the presentation of the program high. Overall, the data was consistent across all stakeholders who commented or agreed that the Climate Care program and the topic content covered data was:

- ✓ Relevant to the Vet sector
- ✓ Accessible in language, presentation, and delivery
- ✓ Offering both a depth of learning information and actionable, task-oriented implementation
- × Comprehensively more time-consuming than planned

77% of respondents believe the program is the right approach for learning for vet professionals.

The topics and content are relevant to Vet professionals and their work. Across all stakeholder groups, the respondents ranked the program and topics exceptionally high in terms of their uniqueness and relevance. Unanimously it was agreed there was a large amount of content, but equally, it was all important and valuable. Overall, the survey directly from the topics, along with the focus group data, demonstrates that real-time outputs and changes are occurring in learnings, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. It was noted that these actions are easier and quick wins for the water module than the waste one. Examples of changes easily implemented:

- ✓ Aerated regulators installed to taps, not reliant on staff behaviours
- ✓ Distilling your water vs buying big plastic tubs
- ✓ Washing and scrubbing hands – posters and instructions

The learner's experience should be more user-led and less restrictive on content availability and task dependencies. Across the data, there is a core barrier or challenge in the learner's experience

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navigating the information and task elements within the course topics. Due to the complexity of the "actionable" tasks, participants are allocating time for their topic reading and information acquisition to take on, digest and plan for actions to be completed later unless very immediate and able to be executed. There is also frustration around the volume of tasks to do/actions before finishing the topic content. The discussion offered feedback about the challenges they are facing and some suggested approaches to construct or break up the courses between knowledge and action pieces. Due to time management and workload constraints or meetings scheduled, the participants felt frustrated when they had limited time set aside (e.g.: 1hr reading and learning time) and then found that they were unable to move through all the reading content, as there was an action they needed to "do" before accessing it.

There was a strong preference to allow the learner to have access to all the topic information, so they can autonomously manage their time and decide their tasks with all the information, and then later report back. There was also frustration around how the course has been formatted, not allowing the learner to return to previous content to read over something without having to still interact with every element if someone is looking for a quick piece of information. *"My manager allocated an hour for me to do some of the waste topics, but after 15mins, I had to complete a task that was too complex and relied on management decision-making, so I was unable to move on to the rest of the content, and I wasted that time" .."The course is packed full of information and super easy to follow, would be nice to be able to progress further and be able to work on a few stages at once rather than having to provide evidence before going further"*

All learners agree or strongly agree the structure of the modules are logical and easy to follow, along with the instructions for tasks and activities. However, there are discrepancies in the level of detail, with many believing it is appropriate. However, still, **20% or so disagree that it is inappropriate**

The Program designers and content developers understand and allow for the real-life nature of the tasks. It was noted that in various locations and environments, the actions can be significantly time-consuming. The waste module is denser in terms of content and time, and activity consumption and activities are reliant on local research, which is labour-intensive. For example, management approval and research into waste information in the area and what is available locally, there is the need to research, find people's information, and often wait for call-backs or emails. - this takes time in waiting for return calls and finding the right people to speak with.

User-focused methods and activities will mean a quick uptake of champions acting and creating change in their workplace. The respondent's data demonstrated that the tools and templates throughout the topics to date were accessible, easy to understand and useful. They were beneficial to the overall uncovering, understanding and evidence base for planning tasks around water and waste, The easy-to-follow *"waste flowchart was a useful and practical template to understand and use in practice."* Respondents had a need to separate these quick-use tools into the bigger content and context information and longer-term actions that require more involvement or time. Additionally, keeping these tasks simple rather than complex *"Having two ways to assess waste added to the topic's complexities."*

Climate Care Champions and their Roles in change leadership and Behaviour change

The course participants were motivated to act before beginning the program. The evaluation data showed that the leading motivators for practice owners and champions to join the program are:



The nature of the course design and approach places reliance on the program participants and their leadership and influence abilities: The program outcomes depend on the participants being change agents within their workplace. Whether self-nominated or selected, the participants all began the course with the climate champions enthusiastic about making a positive impact in their workplace for the benefit of the environment and/or animals. The acquisition of information to support their values and beliefs motivates them to act, along with the tools they can begin to implement, however, the ability to do these changes relies on fewer personal factors and more workplace and leadership ones. Resources, time, decision making, other staff and team engagement, and fundamental behaviour change across the practice. The responsibility of leadership in implementing climate actions is being taken up by the participants; however, when the rate of interest in change is not shared across the team or with peers or decision makers the risk is the program entrenches a sense of frustration and hopelessness for those who are finding reliant dependencies interest low, inconsistent, or no real tangible investment.

A lack of understanding, information, or support for the Values part of Behaviour change programming: At heart, the program is a behaviour change-focused program, however, there is a lack of onboarding and expectation-making with program participants around behaviour change processes and motivators. The program structure and content rely on a behaviour change methodology with features such as

- ✓ goals and planning (ticking off or planning tasks/goal setting),
- ✓ feedback and monitoring (self-monitoring of behaviours or audits/actions),
- ✓ social support (learning community, roles for climate champion social support), and
- ✓ topic tasks designed to shape knowledge ("instruction on how to perform a behaviour")

However, **Values as a central concept guiding and motivating sustainable and scalable behaviours and personal/practice choices** needs to be understood, introduced, and supported by the program.

A Community of Practice - sharing, learning and support for sustainable change Opportunities for story sharing, focus groups and informal discussion highlighted the need for ongoing qualitative learning actions. The evaluation methods demonstrated the need for the program to coordinate and generate these discussions more often. Participants commented that hearing from other veterinary professionals, and sharing stories of success, challenges and intended or unintended changes were beneficial.

Methods for information and learning dissemination within practices is happening but varied in approach. All practitioners have different internal communication tools they are using with staff and clients. These include practices intranet, slack, cloud sharing platforms and Facebook, which they use to disseminate their learnings, information, and recent changes across practices

Discourse has not been a successful community building tool. Use what is already being used. Across all stakeholder data, it was deeply iterated that discourse has not been used or appreciated or achieved its purpose as a community-building platform within the program, and indeed using another platform episode of the tribal habits, but not one used by the practice or individuals personally was not

a success. Noting the time constraints, user behaviours and the fact that practices already have communication tools being used, there is a desire to build from there. Examples shared in the discussions included:

- One practice with multiple hospitals has an internal sustainability slack channel which people follow and are given guidance and information
- Another practice has an intranet linked to YouTube where someone gives video updates from the program, learning and new changes

All respondents have access and use Facebook at varying levels. One practice has a closed Facebook group as its main information-sharing platform for staff.

Impact and Sustainability - Learning and Practice

The program is successfully contributing to participants attaining course learnings and outputs.

100% of participants can:

- ✓ explain the water cycle and why access to fresh water is important
- ✓ describe the link between climate change and wide-ranging weather extremes such as drought and flood.
- ✓ have been able to/or can assess water consumption in their practice.
- ✓ have implemented or have plans to implement simple solutions to conserve water.

81.8% of learners agree (63.6% strongly agree) the modules are interesting and relevant to their practice. All participants who have completed the first two topic modules to date answered that they can and have successfully been able to understand and implement the outcomes related to both the introduction and the water topic. There is a rapid change in knowledge, and confidence around the topic area of water, along with early evidence of ripple impacts beyond the workplace into participants' personal homes and lives.

"I think we are all more conscious of our water usage in the clinic- we've put the signs next to the scrub sink and the toilet... makes me think more about how I use water at home"

- ✗ At the beginning of the water topic, 2/3 of the participants (63.7%) did not feel confident about their knowledge of water use in their practice and how it could be improved.
- ✓ At the end of the topic, 100% now strongly agree or agree they are confident in their knowledge of water use in their practice and how it could be improved.

There are immediate benefits to practices implementing the learnings and actions from the program. Across the data, there is evidence for cost reductions, waste and water reduction, increased knowledge, and individual behaviour changes. Some of these include:

Water

- Immediately installed Aerator and began saving water and money
- Changed leaking taps.
- Hooked up the rainwater tank to other toilets.
- One practice has managed to see a 30% reduction in their water bill over one quarter – which is significant across their three hospitals.

Waste/ Recycling

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- Switched from cardboard recycling to comingled recycling and put collection throughout the practice
- Communicate with staff on why recycling, what we can recycle following local rules - people have translated it into personal life too
- Deep understanding of the impact of waste and recycling on climate, limited resources, IPCC, etc.
- Established Worm Farms
- Changed Bin placement and influencing waste behaviours
- Installed coffee machine reducing takeaway coffee cups

The program supports practices in staff retention, recruitment, and development. The nature of the sector having skills and staff shortages means the average staff turnover is two years. The program offers a staff retaining quality, which translates to practice savings with *“the cost of recruitment is still being far greater. So, without all the other cost-saving benefits that the program is creating, this factor alone makes it smart and cost-effective for our business”*

Recommendations:

Recommendations in this report are brief and have been discussed with the program team throughout the evaluation data analysis period. A list of key recommendations is included here and briefly detailed below. The recommendations will also form a foundation for ongoing program development and MEAL framework design commencing in December 2022, being led by the consultant.

Recommendations

- ✓ Set Climate Care Champions up for the win and not give them an additional burden to carry by allowing more orientation information and onboarding support
- ✓ Deepen the program team and participants' understanding of Values when undertaking Behaviour Change Programs or interventions
- ✓ Balance the program approach to action-based learning while improving the user experience of being self-paced, with more participants and practice autonomy around action and task planning.
- ✓ Divide and continue to develop the different tools and templates to support champions when they participate in the topics
- ✓ Build a Community of Practice – Use what is in our hands by starting with Facebook and informal community meeting
- ✓ Increase internal understanding of the impact VfCA and the program is playing within the sector
- ✓ An internal review of the structures and organisational skills and roles that will support the program into the future.
- ✓ Engage with the existing networks and pipelines and begin to share stories of impact
- ✓ Monitoring, measuring, learning, and reporting what matters most with a new MEAL framework

Climate Care Program – Building on a quality program design

Set Climate Care Champions up for the win, and not give them an additional burden to carry:

Using the onboarding and introductions to share the benefits of the program, the impacts the pilot participants have found, hacks of how different people are learning and implementing changes in their practices and letting them know the world isn't on their shoulders. The program has proven to bring up frustration and despondency for some involved. Climate champions may feel like the solo change

agent role in their workplace, which can feel like a large responsibility, and there is frustration at the rate or pace of change or seeing people not get on board. Normalise these types of feelings, frustrations, and challenges at the outset, letting them know the program has purposely built a community of practice where these things can be shared and questions asked, and instead of feeling supported by peers in the workplace, they can support each other. With significant levels of mental health issues and suicide within the Vet sector, any program that intersects with the lives of vet professionals has a duty of care to not exacerbate mental health issues by creating further anxiety or deepening negative feelings. The program tone must be action-oriented, not burdensome, and hopeful, not difficult. Setting out the expectations clearly, relating to examples of the rate and pace of change, the cost and resources needed, some ways to work with internal teams and a very supportive and instructive “how to guide” that acknowledges the reality of the influence and impact of an individual participant, can support a program designed to improve

**One participant got a bit teary during the focus group sharing that this program has made them realise they want to do more than just be a vet nurse, and there are some unintended feelings the program is bringing up for her around job satisfaction and wanting to do more leadership in this area.*

Deepen the program team and participants' understanding of values when undertaking behaviour change programs or interventions. Increase internal capacity and learning on the role “Values” place on community building, advocacy and activism and embedding a culture of change. As humans' values put us in groups and define us as individuals. When looking at climate action over time, it will be essential to trace change over time and understand and explain the motivational bases of behaviour to guide climate champions and provide purpose, meaning, and direction. As an introductory activity or information, the participants should be orientated to both the ways people are motivated and will change their behaviours, but also the challenges to being able to influence peers in this.

Some Useful resources for the Behaviour change program and approaches can be found below:

- ✓ **Learning for Sustainability** highlights online resources for those working with complex issues. It showcases the wide range of activities, skills and processes that collectively support constructive engagement, co-design, adaptation, and reflective practice. This article covers some of the ways we can influence people's changing behaviours. [Sustainability: six ways to influence behaviour change - Learning for Sustainability](#)
- ✓ **Centre for Behaviour and The Environment – Climate Change needs Behaviour Change This report** highlights new insights across the science of human behaviour that have transformed our understanding of what motivates people. From this research, we have learned that emotions play an important role in our decision-making processes. As neuroscientist Antonio Damasio writes, “[Humans] are not thinking machines that feel; rather, we are feeling machines that think.” [2018-CCNBC-Report.pdf \(rare.org\)](#)
- ✓ **Summary of Behaviour Change Models** – Mainly used in Public Health campaigns [Behavioural Change Models \(bu.edu\)](#)
- ✓ **Sustainable Brands:** A summary of Communication tools that also influence behaviour from behavioural psychology and user experience (UX) design [6 Cool Tools for Driving Behaviour Change and Innovation - Sustainable Brands](#)

Balancing the program approach to action-based learning while improving the user experience of being self-paced, with more participant and practice autonomy around action and task planning. To avoid user frustration and challenges related to topic restrictions, it is recommended that these be removed, and the learners are allowed access to the full body of content within each series or topic. While there should remain guidance on “how to best do the course”, the realities of varying job

Climate Care Program – Pilot Evaluation



tasks, allocated learning time and roadblocks for being able to do tasks in real-time meaning that there needs to be flexibility in how content is accessed and used.

Divide and continue to develop the different tools and templates to support champions – As more models of change, stories and data emerge, it is important that the programs team track, and use these learnings to design and develop supporting or guiding tools and sheets for the program. Guidance notes or tools to support a range of learner barriers could increase engagement and overall change-making; some are listed here:

- ✓ Estimated cost of each topic – e.g., worm farm and overall cost,
- ✓ Course budget template that looks at return on investment and tracks input to output
- ✓ Implementation planning documents
- ✓ Behaviour change influencing tips and tricks
- ✓ Strategies and approaches that are working in the community
- ✓ Templates and tools to plan, and recommended learning approach

Climate Care Program – Engaging and sustainably scaling over time

Community of Practice – Use what's in our hands (smartphone and a Facebook account) to informally connect the community and scale. You can use an informal platform like a Facebook group, which would mean one practice can share with the others the 30% reduction in the water bill, which they can then use with their managers and the practice owners to influence (as an example). The quicker this connection can happen, the more useful and engaging it will be to the learners.

Increase internal understanding of the impact the organisation, and the program is having within the sector to support the sector crisis areas, such as mental health, employment and increasing animal health incidents. By offering the sector a course that engages the profession in action and positive change-making, building a community, and connecting peers, there are unintended outcomes emerging. These should be captured and measured over time. Data around staff care, satisfaction, motivators along with retention, overall health and wellbeing and feelings of despondency or hope will create a supporting piece of evidence to promote the work of the organisation.

There will need to be an internal review of the structures and organisational skills and roles that will support the program into the future. The program is moving from a design and development phase to an implementation, support and scale phase. This means as it develops and grows the organisation will need staff, and volunteers with skills in community building, program support, impact measurement and monitoring and storytelling promotion. There are skill gaps that need to be addressed either through staff development or role development. These fall into areas relating to marketing and communication, program management/monitoring, community building and learner engagement, impact, and storytelling.

Engage with the existing networks and pipelines and begin to share stories: With the evaluation, and data comes stories that can be shared, around the program benefits, impacts and climate care champions. With the informed consent of the storytellers, the pipeline communities should have access to these program impacts, to promote them in their workplace and support the work of VfCA. There are opportunities to develop champions and their storytelling/public speaking to attend events and speak on behalf of the program – giving a real-life case study to the sector “speaking the language”

Impacting the sector and scaling the Program: The program should commence and be made accessible to the pipeline of interested Vet Professionals. The cost of the program is reasonable and should be re-evaluated after it has demonstrated scalable impact. When surveyed around the cost of the program or subscription, the average across ten respondents was \$280 per mth/ or topic.

Monitoring, measuring, learning, and reporting what matters most with a MEAL framework: The program is already collecting a significant amount of data, however, if this is not being used or useful it is not ethical to be collecting it. The development of a monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning framework will align the impact, outcome and outputs and track them according to relevant indicators, selected by the communities that matter more. Vet professionals, program participants, the organisation and climate change communities. Once this has been developed, the data/surveys can be refined, and less and more meaningful, measurable and trackable data will be collected. Included in this impact measurement piece will be a clear logic between program inputs, changes and where change is impacting the broader international, national, sector and organisational goals aligned with climate action.

Conclusion,

The Climate Care Program is being successfully piloted across 21 Vet practices with Veterinary nurses and Vet professionals in Australia. The paid programs will be marketed and formally launched early 2023. There is a significant pipeline of people and practices ready to access and waiting to learn and take climate-positive actions. The program content and overall format are relevant, efficient and effective as the leading approach to meeting professionals in their workplaces and offering real-life, practical, executable actions they are already making. The benefits in energy, waste and cost saving are recorded within the practices involved in the program. The recommendations from this evaluation were themed around ongoing support for learners and their program engagement and needs over time, along with some smaller orientation and module design elements.

Appendix

1. Climate Care Program CCP module summaries + learning outcomes

Introduction: Starting your Climate Care Journey (published)

Estimated time to complete: 43 mins

In this first part of the 'Starting your Climate Care Journey' module, you'll learn a little about the people behind the program.

We look at who is behind the Climate Care Program; explain why it's so important to understand the environmental impact of veterinary work; how the Climate Care Program empowers you and your team to be more sustainable, and the many benefits of taking part!

Topic: Water for Life (published)

Estimated time to complete: 184 mins.

In this module, you will learn about where our water comes from and why it's important to use it wisely.

You'll also learn about the impacts of climate change on our water supply. You'll be guided through activities to engage your team in assessing your water use and making simple changes to save money and protect our precious water resources.

After completing this topic, you will be able to:

1. Explain the water cycle and why access to fresh water is important.
2. Describe the link between climate change and wide-ranging weather extremes such as drought and flood.
3. Assess water consumption in your practice.
4. Implement simple solutions to conserve water.

Topic: No Time to Waste (published)

Estimated time to complete: 399 mins.

We spend a huge amount of resources in the pursuit of taking care of our clients' pets everyday. A lot of our generated waste is considered medical or clinical related, and needs to be disposed of according to the law, but a large part is made up of valuable resources that can be recovered. Recycling and correct disposal of waste saves money and reduces the environmental impact of our work. This module is about learning to be more efficient at using resources, and disposing of them in an appropriate manner, reducing costs and keeping waste out of landfill.

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

1. Explain what happens to waste and how this contributes to environmental pollution and climate change.
2. Describe the waste streams in your practice, how they are disposed of, and what this costs the practice.
3. Identify options for diverting waste from landfill by using the 5 R's of the 'waste hierarchy': refuse, reduce, reuse/repurpose, repair and recycle.
4. Collaborate with others on finding new waste management solutions.
5. Implement a waste action plan in your practice.

Topic: Energy Efficiency (to be published week commencing 21 Nov)

Estimated time to complete: 421 mins

Energy consumption is one of the biggest ways we impact our environment, and it is a significant cost for any business. By making improvements in energy efficiency, and by looking at how energy is sourced, you can make a big difference to your environmental footprint and help make your practice more profitable!

This module is about:

1. What 'energy efficiency' means.
2. The benefits of using energy efficiently.
3. Getting a better understanding of energy use in your practice.
4. How to implement simple changes that will improve your energy efficiency and save your practice money.

After completing this module, you will be able to:

1. Explain the importance and benefits of using energy efficiently.
2. Interpret your energy bill.
3. Describe where energy consumption comes from in your practice.
4. Implement strategies to reduce energy consumption.

Topic: The Power of Renewables (in production - publish date not scheduled)

You will learn about the different sorts of renewable energy and how they can be used to power your practice in many different ways. Once you understand the different forms of renewable energy available to your practice you can learn how to make it work to your advantage. Find out how you can save money, improve energy reliability and make a significant reduction to the carbon footprint of your practice.

By the end of this module you will be able to:

1. understand the full benefits of solar panels to your practice
2. understand how batteries in your car and practice can get the rewards of cheap renewable energy
3. learn how to make your practice carbon neutral
4. share the benefits with your team and clients

Topic: Buying for a Better Future (in production - publish date not scheduled)

This module focuses on how a veterinary practice spends money and why that matters.

The products that we purchase for use in the clinic, the products we offer for sale, the service companies we engage and the financial institutions we use all have an environmental impact.

This module introduces the concepts of ethical procurement and the circular economy and how this can be applied to veterinary practices. The module also looks at the buying power of practices and how we can use this to encourage our suppliers and animal health companies to offer better products and services.

This topic will teach you how to select better products, how to assess the environmental credentials of products and services and how to reduce your clinic's Scope 3 emissions.

Many financial institutions and superannuation funds invest in fossil fuels; often we are not even aware of how our money is being used by these companies. In this module, you will also learn how to find financial services which are helping to fight climate change.

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- Understand environmentally responsible purchasing, the circular economy and the relevance of these to veterinary clinics.
- Learn how to evaluate a product or service to ensure that it is a more sustainable choice.
- Make cost-effective, achievable changes to products with lower environmental impact.
- Investigate how the financial institutions your clinic uses are positioned with regard to fossil fuels.
- Participate in encouraging animal health companies to source, manufacture and deliver more sustainable products and services.

Topic: Healthcare without Harm (in production - publish date not scheduled)

How to use anaesthetic gases, pharmaceuticals, disinfectants, and other chemicals to care for your patients and keep your teams safe while minimising their environmental impact.

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- Explore how the drugs, agents, and chemicals we use daily in practice impact ecosystems and the environment, our climate, and animals we want to protect.
- Optimise anaesthetic protocols and procedures to improve patient outcomes while also reducing carbon emissions, waste gas pollution, and costs.
- Minimise environmental harm by choosing appropriate disinfectants and by disposing of chemicals, toxins and medications in the least hazardous way.

Note - How the “time” is estimated:

Each part comes with an estimate of the time needed to complete it. This is a rough approximation of the time required to read the on-screen contents, complete the online interactive elements, and perform any compulsory tasks. The estimated time for working through the online contents is generated automatically by the learning platform. A time estimate for completion of compulsory tasks has been added by the module creators. Due to the automated component, the time estimates often don't come out as round numbers! Some parts contain optional reading and/or tasks that you can undertake if and when it suits you. These are not included in the time estimates.

2. Theory of Change – Draft from 2022 Strategic Pillars

All veterinary professionals who understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock, and wildlife, and are willing to act on behalf of animals.

- ★ Across Australia, veterinary professionals understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock and wildlife and are acting.
- ★ They are reducing the carbon emissions of their clinics, and many are active members and volunteers at VfCA.
- ★ They continue to advocate for more sustainable practices from suppliers and have started seeing a real change with the reduction of carbon emissions.

- ★ The Media is running regular stories about VfCA's approach and results, as well as the stories of our members
- ★ Members are getting real value from our membership program, including its seminars, resources, and networking opportunities.
- ★ Students and new graduates are entering the profession knowing the impact climate change has on animals, and they are ready to take urgent action.

What we will measure:

% Increased awareness and understanding of engaged stakeholders/members

% Increased actions and advocacy engaged stakeholders/members \

Policy changes and event results

% Reduced emissions (practice data and SROI/ESG)

% Increased engagement (memberships, volunteers, programs, and events)

% Increased public-impact storytelling by the media

Scale and activity of a growing network

The future looks like this because Vets for Climate Action: (inputs) fundraised, advocated, connected, influenced, researched educated, resourced, and supported

Advocate and Research

- I. Work with key partners to include climate change mitigation and adaptation across the veterinary and vet nurse curriculum at Australian Universities and TAFEs.
- II. Research, monitor and evaluate t Vet Professionals & the Animal Care Sector to measure the increased understanding of climate change impacts on animals and the urgency of what needs to be done over time.

Connect and Influence

- I. providing media training
- II. Attending and speaking at sector events
- III. Securing media and social media coverage - 50% increase in supporters across social media by 2026
- IV. Presence at all major sector events.
- V. Implementing strategic campaigns
- VI. Consumer data and evaluation of veterinary professionals will evidence a change in the way they use buying power to influence the supply chain to implement sustainable packaging and production processes
- VII. 8 seminars held annually and a significant increase in media exposure.

Educate and Resource

- I. Climate Care Program - running in 350 vet clinics by Dec 2025. with an Engage, inform and educate of participating clinics
- II. Engage, inform and educate veterinary professionals through a refreshed membership program
- III. Climate change included in Veterinary Tertiary Education and training by Dec 2025

Learn together and Grow

- I. Curating an online Knowledge Centre,
- II. Hosting online events

- III. Scale our products and membership to reach across Australia and internationally. VfCA has >3000 Members by Dec 2025.

Key Stakeholders: Australian Vet professionals, suppliers, the media, members, students, and new grads.

3. Links to Evaluation data and analysis

1. Workshop collaboration and evaluation planning and logic data use in the evaluation
[Mural boards](#)
2. Program Surveys and data used in the evaluation
TH_Data response and uploads [map](#)
Climate Champions – Feedback Survey 1 [Report](#)
Climate Champions – Feedback Survey 2 [Report](#)
Climate Champions – Feedback Survey 3 [Report](#)
Practice Managers/Owners – [Feedback Survey](#)
Mentimeter Survey [Master Results](#)
3. Evaluation Templates – KEQ
Focus Group Discussion – [Staff and volunteers KEQ discussion template](#)
Strategic Interview- [Org Leadership KEQ Template](#)
Focus Group Discussion- [Program Participants](#)