MANAGING ANIMALS IN DISASTERS (MAID)
THE EXPERIENCES OF EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL IN SUPPORTING ANIMALS AND THEIR OWNERS IN DISASTERS

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1) Introduction
2) Managing animals in disasters (MAiD) project
3) Scoping study – Responder experiences
A CATHALYST FOR CHANGE...

• Hurricane Katrina 2005
  • 50,000 dogs and cats left behind
• Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act, 2006)
Pet Rescues in Colorado
Flooding Convince Reluctant Owners To Go

Rescue efforts in Colorado aren't just restricted to people, as the National Guard claims their motto for the flooding evacuations is "No pets left behind," The Associated Press reported.

It's a stark contrast to the stories of people forced to leave their pets when New Orleans was swamped by Hurricane Katrina. That's because including pets in the rescue effort has helped convince even reluctant residents to leave their homes, National Guard spokesman Skye Robinson told the AP. Also, this time around, officials had more than enough space for the animals and even carried animal crates with them.

"It just makes sense that you bring the pets along. They are part of the family," Robinson said. "You wouldn't leave a family behind because they had kids."
INFLUENCES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Australia

• Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2009)
• Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry (2011)
• Tasmanian Bushfires Inquiry (2013)

New Zealand

• National Animal Welfare Emergency Management (NAWEM)
• Research
CATALYSTS FOR THE PROJECT...

• Building Resilience: Animals and Communities coping in Emergencies (October 2012)

• National Advisory Committee for Animals in Emergencies

• RSPCA Queensland – Managing pets in disasters

• People and Pets – Preparedness for Disasters study (2013)
MANAGING ANIMALS IN DISASTERS (MAiD)

Improving preparedness, response, and resilience through individual and organisational collaboration
PROJECT TEAM AND END-USERS

Mel Taylor
Penny Burns
Kirrilly Thompson
Bradley Smith
Greg Eustace

Suellen Flint,
Director Community Engagement

Peter Cinque
Region Controller (Sydney Western Region)

Andrew Stark
Chief Officer, ACT RFS

Katrina Beard
Manager – Education, Research, Training

Sandra Barber
Manager Community Education

University of Western Sydney
CQ University Australia
RSPCA Queensland

Government of Western Australia
DFES
SES
Australian Capital Territory Emergency Services Agency
Australian Government

Tasmania Fire Service

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MAID: AIM AND GOAL

**AIM** - To identify and build best practice approaches to animal welfare emergency management to enable engagement with animal owners, and other stakeholders in disasters and emergencies.

**GOAL** - The goal is to improve outcomes for public safety and the resilience of responders, animal owners, those with animal-related businesses, and communities.
THE ISSUES

• The management of animals in disasters is complex

• Issues poorly understood/not systematically reviewed

• Consideration of animals can impact on people’s decision making and behaviour causing potential issues for public and responder safety

• Some people
  — don’t plan for what they’ll do with animals
  — risk their lives to save animals
  — fail/refuse to evacuate
  — abandon animals
  — have unrealistic expectations if they evacuate
  — return early to rescue animals
  — grieve and mourn for lost animals
IN SCOPE – OUT OF SCOPE
**APPROACH**

### Scoping activities (Year 1)

**Critical audit**: formal policies, procedures and local initiatives, research

**Stakeholders**: priorities and needs

**Responders**: organisational priorities, responder experiences and needs

**Animal Enterprise Owners**: preparedness, expectations, experiences, needs

**Spontaneous volunteers/’non-traditional’ responders**: activities, roles, collaboration with responders

**Knowledge exchange workshop**: one-day meeting 19th August 2014
THE EXPERIENCES OF EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL IN SUPPORTING ANIMALS AND THEIR OWNERS IN DISASTERS

A scoping study
RESPONDER EXPERIENCES STUDY - AIMS AND GOAL

Aims
• To assess attitudes towards operational responsibility for animals.
• To scope the range and extent of challenges faced by emergency services personnel in their interactions with animals and their owners

Goal
• To gather the views and experiences of a broad cross-section of emergency services personnel operating across Australia and all hazards
QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE

Four sections

1) Understanding of organisation’s role and responsibility and knowledge of formal emergency management arrangements

2) Extent and range of problems and challenges encountered in managing animals and their owners (generalpecific)

3) Specific experiences with animal owners

4) Demographic questions
STUDY APPROACH

• Data collected May – July 2014
• Opportunistic sampling approach
• Paper-based and online formats
SCOPING STUDY

Data

- 165 respondents
- 117 emergency services, 48 ‘other’ responders
- 5 emergency service organisations
- 28 ‘other’ organisations
RESPONDER SURVEY SAMPLE

Location

- NSW: 33%
- QLD: 31%
- WA: 23%
- VIC: 9%
- ACT/SA/Nat: 4%

Organisation category

- Emergency services: 70.9%
- Primary industries: 3.0%
- Council: 8.5%
- Animal organisation: 2.4%
- Human welfare: 1.8%
- Not specified: 13.3%

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**UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATION’S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS AND THEIR OWNERS**

- Open question (n=110)
- Coded into seven themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No direct responsibility (‘managing the hazard’)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some level of direct responsibility</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for protecting ALL life (Human 1/Animal 2)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help owners plan and prepare</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with other agencies that are responsible for animals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not responsible for, but animals impact response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too brief to code/interpret</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS

Do you think your organisation should have responsibilities for dealing with animals?

![Bar chart showing responses to the question:]
- **Yes**: 62.5%
  - Emergency services: 37.1%
  - Other: 25%
- **Unsure**: 12.5%
- **No**: 31.9%
  - Emergency services: 31%
  - Other: 25%

In summary, the majority of respondents (62.5%) believe their organisation should have responsibilities for dealing with animals, with a significant portion (37.1%) indicating that emergency services should be responsible.
Are you aware of any formal animal emergency response arrangements in your State Emergency Management Plan?
ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

1) Single general question
2) Multi-part question – specific issues
GENERAL PROBLEMS - MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS/OWNERS

Are there problems or difficulties for your organisation around the management of animals/animal owners in disasters?

- No, none at all: 7.2%
- Some minor or rare issues: 33.3%
- Occasional or recurring issues: 36.0%
- Significant or frequent issues: 19.8%
- Very serious or severe issues: 3.6%
SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

General problems or difficulties for your organisation around the management of animals/animal owners in disasters

a. The physical management/rescue of animals in natural disasters?

b. Interactions with animal owners during disaster response?

c. Interactions with animal owners in disaster preparedness and planning?

d. Interactions with members of the general public with regard to animals in natural disasters?

e. Post-disaster impacts in relation to the management of animals or their owners (e.g. distress, emotional responses)?

f. The logistics available to respond to animals in natural disasters (e.g. additional personnel, equipment)?

g. Unclear policy or operational responsibilities for the management of animals or their owners in natural disasters?

h. Inter-agency coordination around the management of animals or their owners in natural disasters?

i. Co-ordination with non-emergency service agencies (e.g. DPI, Local Council)?

j. Managing/dealing with untrained / spontaneous animal-related responders? (e.g. animal interest groups)
SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH ANIMAL OWNERS

1) Open comment (n=53)
2) Coded into nine themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples of dangerous/risky behaviour or inappropriate actions</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to leave or be parted from animals</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about horses and horse owners as a special case</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of emotional responses of owners</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with dangerous animals/animal behaviour</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues around owners returning/wanting to return early or being denied access</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners’ focus solely on animals and ignoring risk to self and others</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owners having unrealistic expectations of the level of help from emergency services</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with response co-ordination - with groups/agencies or absent owners</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘very emotional situations in time of large fires endangers staff and public’

‘In the event where owners have been told to evacuate pets/animals are often forgotten, when told they cannot return this causes many problems for emergency crews. Endangering life for animals is a big decision and can stretch already busy emergency crews to the limits. Again owners need to take responsibility for their pets/animals where safe to do so. If they chose to leave them behind they cannot get angry when told for their own safety they cannot return.’

‘Roads used for evacuating communities blocked by horse floats… People helping to evacuate friends’ horses with no plan or idea of the area and not knowing the roads into or out of the area they have gone into to assist.’
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1) Need for education/clarification and clearer communication about the role and responsibilities of emergency services organisations

2) Cultural shift required to meet changing public attitudes and expectations

3) Initial quantification of the issue

4) Identification of specific issues
   - Logistics
   - Unclear policy/operational responsibility
   - Interactions with owners during response
NEXT STEPS

1) Consolidation
   a) Responder experiences
   b) Stakeholder priorities and issues
   c) Knowledge exchange workshop

2) Refine and focus
   a) ‘shortlist’ of priority issues
   b) Identify ‘best fit’ options
      • Feasibility
      • Acceptance
      • Team skills
      • Research

3) Planning for field work phase
The experiences of emergency services personnel in supporting animals and their owners in disasters

THANK YOU

Word cloud based on the 100 most frequently mentioned words used by emergency services personnel when describing their experiences with animal owners in disasters