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**HAZARDS**CRC

# **MANAGING ANIMALS IN DISASTERS (MAID)**

## **THE EXPERIENCES OF EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL IN SUPPORTING ANIMALS AND THEIR OWNERS IN DISASTERS**

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An Australian Government Initiative



# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Managing animals in disasters (MAiD) project
- 3) Scoping study – Responder experiences



# A CATALYST 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



Colorado National Guardsmen place a rescued dog into a truck in 2013.

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



Pet owner emergency preparedness and perceptions survey

Taranaki & Wellington Regions

February 2010

Supported by Taranaki Regional Council and Wellington SPCA

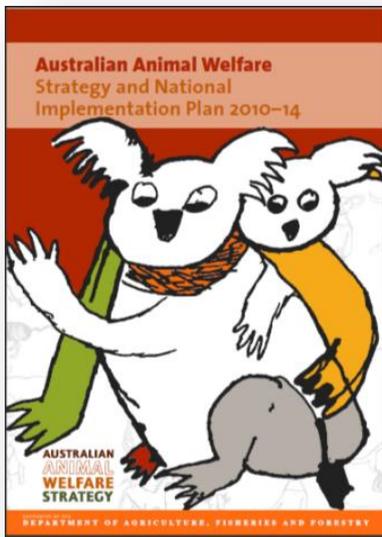


"Pets are one of the family and it is not okay to leave them behind when evacuating"

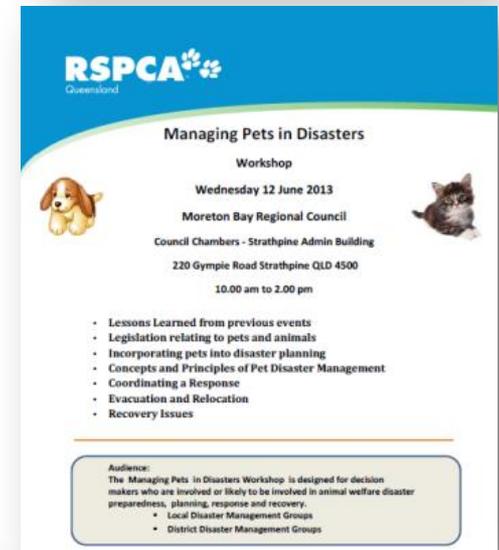
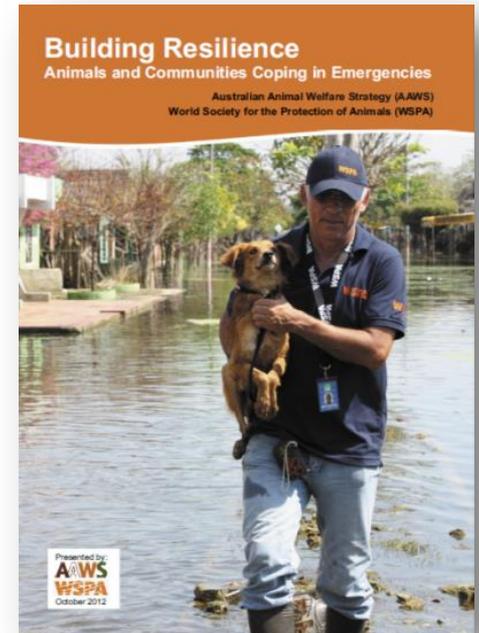


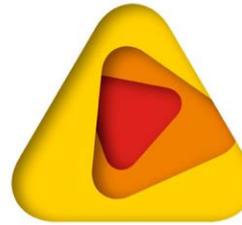
# CATALYSTS FOR THE PROJECT...

- 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)





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## 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



# 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 ARENA



Emergency services

Departments of Primary Industry

RSPCA

Veterinarians

Spontaneous volunteers

# THE ISSUES

“take them or leave me” ultimatum...

- 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

## Pets dilemma for rescue workers

ROHANNE BARRETT, SARAH ELKS The Australian February 11, 2013 12:00AM



A chopper plucks a man and his dog from a boat on the Burnett River. Picture: ADL Action Rescue Helicopter. Source: The Australian



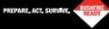
# IN SCOPE – OUT OF SCOPE

A close-up of a horse's eye, which is reflecting a fire. The horse is wearing a bridle.

**For their sake...**  
Know your bushfire risk...  
and make a plan for **all** your family.

For more information visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au)  
Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361 (TTY 133 677)



# **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 (general/specific)
- 3) Specific experiences with animal owners
- 4) Demographic questions

# STUDY APPROACH

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



**MAiD**  
Managing Animals in Disasters:  
Improving preparedness, response and resilience through individual and organisational collaboration

## Survey of Responder Experiences, Needs, and Ideas

**INTRODUCTION**

The MAiD project is seeking to identify and build best practice approaches to emergency service engagement with animal owners, and the management of owners and their animals in natural disasters.

In this survey we will be asking for your views and information about difficult or challenging experiences you and your colleagues may have had with animal-related issues in the context of your work. These could include specific situations with animal owners directly (or possibly animals WITHOUT their owners), or with your colleagues or those in other responding agencies, or possibly with other animal-related responders – such as vets, wildlife carers, or animal interest groups.

**Who is included in the project scope?**

We would like you to think broadly about this issue. 'Animal owners' could be pet owners, small landholders, those with animal-related businesses, or they could be farmers with livestock. Similarly, 'Responders' could be emergency services personnel, staff from Primary Industries or local government, RSPCA or Red Cross personnel, or possibly local vets, animal rescue shelter volunteers, or enthusiastic members of the general public.

In this early stage of the MAiD project we are trying to 'scope' the area – to find out what experiences responders have had, to start to identify the potential needs of responders and animal owners, to gather your ideas and suggestions, and to put this issue into context – to understand how it 'fits' into the bigger picture?

**Just the bad stuff?**

As the MAiD project is trying to identify ways to improve things, then there is a focus on problems initially. However, to achieve a balance we're also interested in a 'lack' of problems, good ideas or suggestions, as well as hearing about local initiatives or plans in this area.

ACEFA 2014

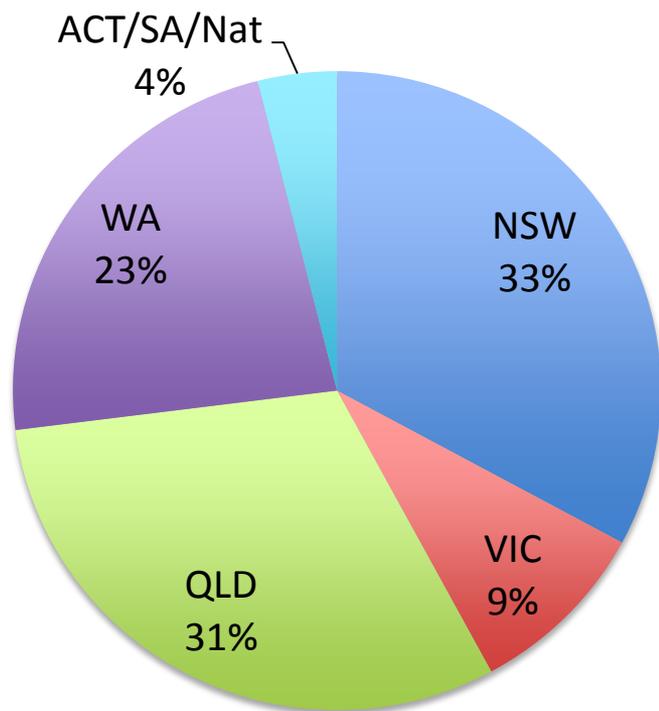
# SCOPING STUDY

## Data

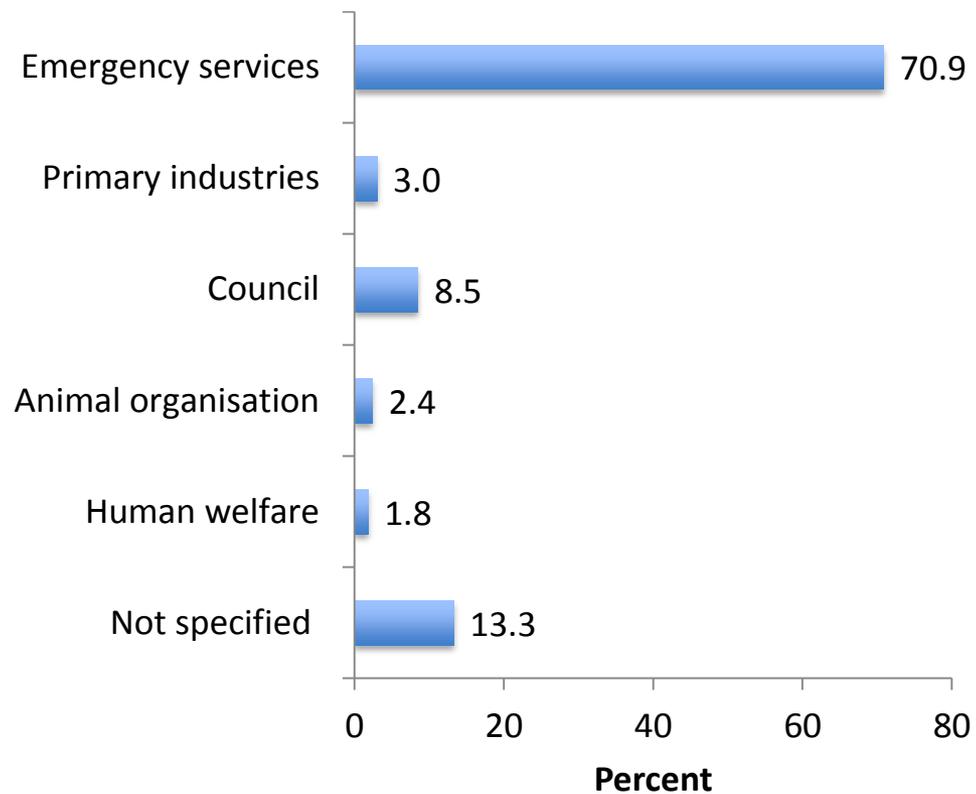
- 165 respondents
- 117 emergency services, 48 'other' responders
- 5 emergency service organisations
- 28 'other' organisations

# RESPONDER SURVEY SAMPLE

Location



Organisation category



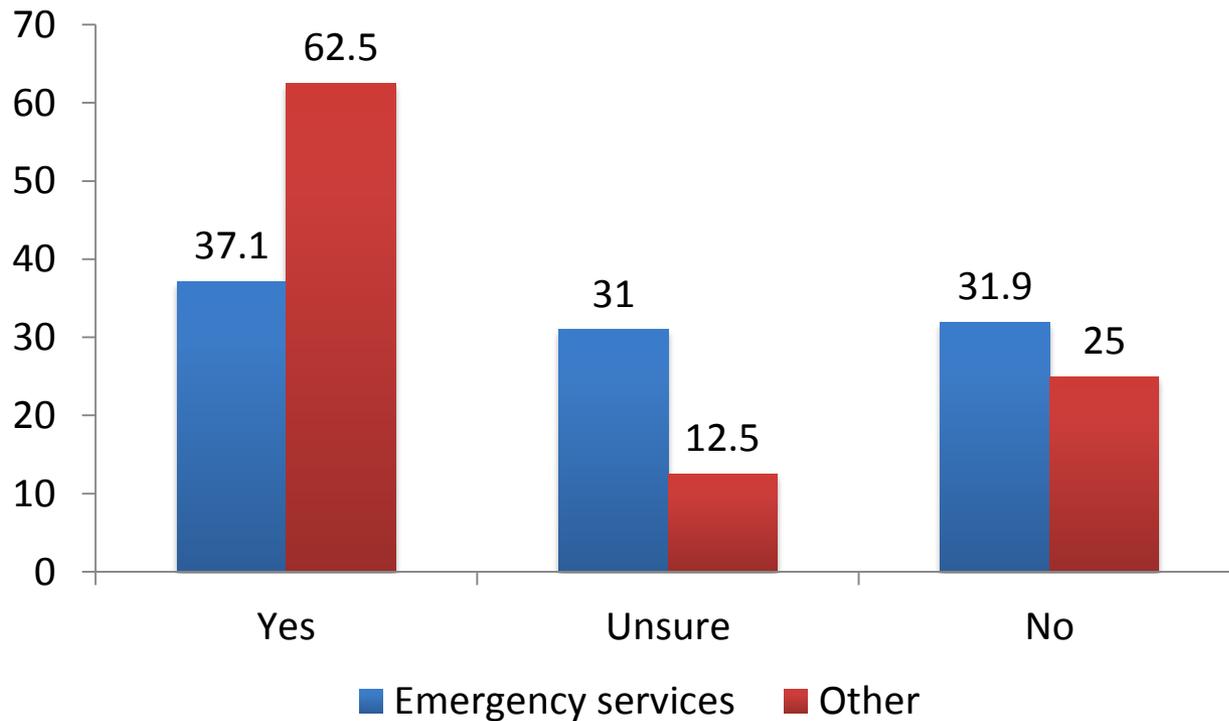
# UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATION'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS AND THEIR OWNERS

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

Theme	%
No direct responsibility ('managing the hazard')	28
Some level of direct responsibility	16
Responsible for protecting ALL life (Human 1/Animal 2)	14
Help owners plan and prepare	13
Work with other agencies that are responsible for animals	6
Not responsible for, but animals impact response	3
Too brief to code/interpret	22

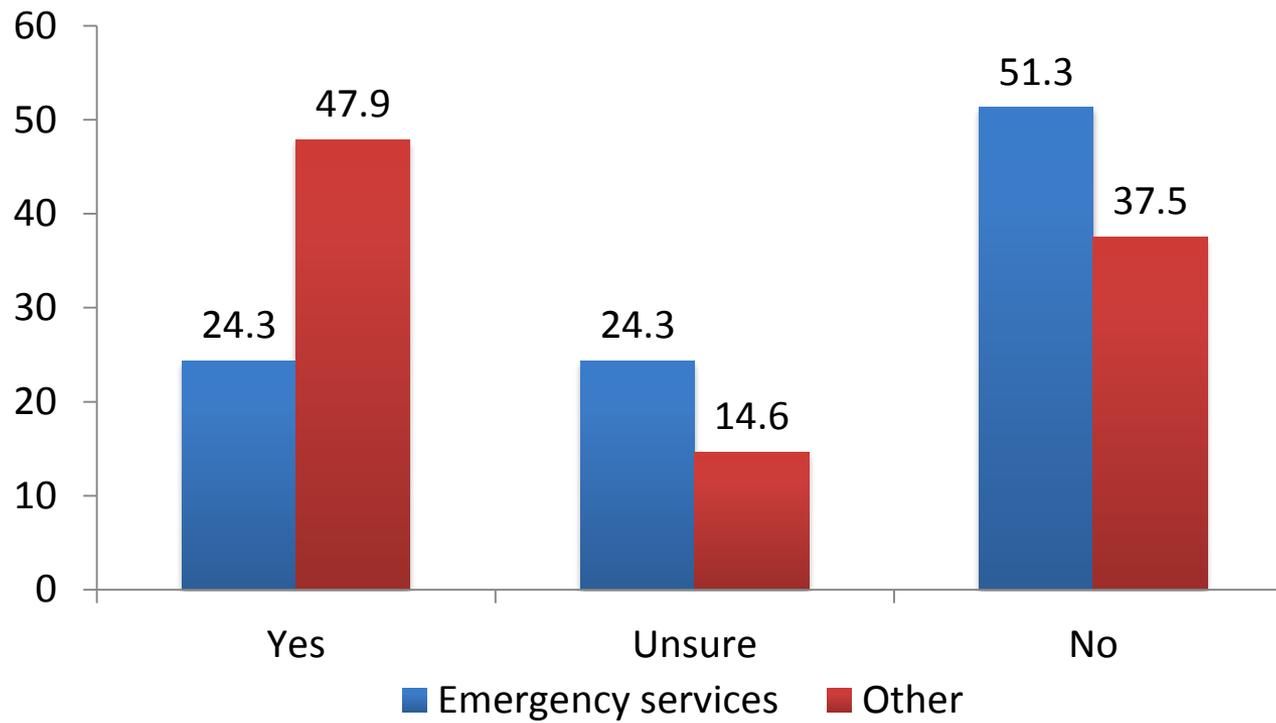
# RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS

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



# AWARENESS OF FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS

Are you aware of any formal animal emergency response arrangements in your State Emergency Management Plan?

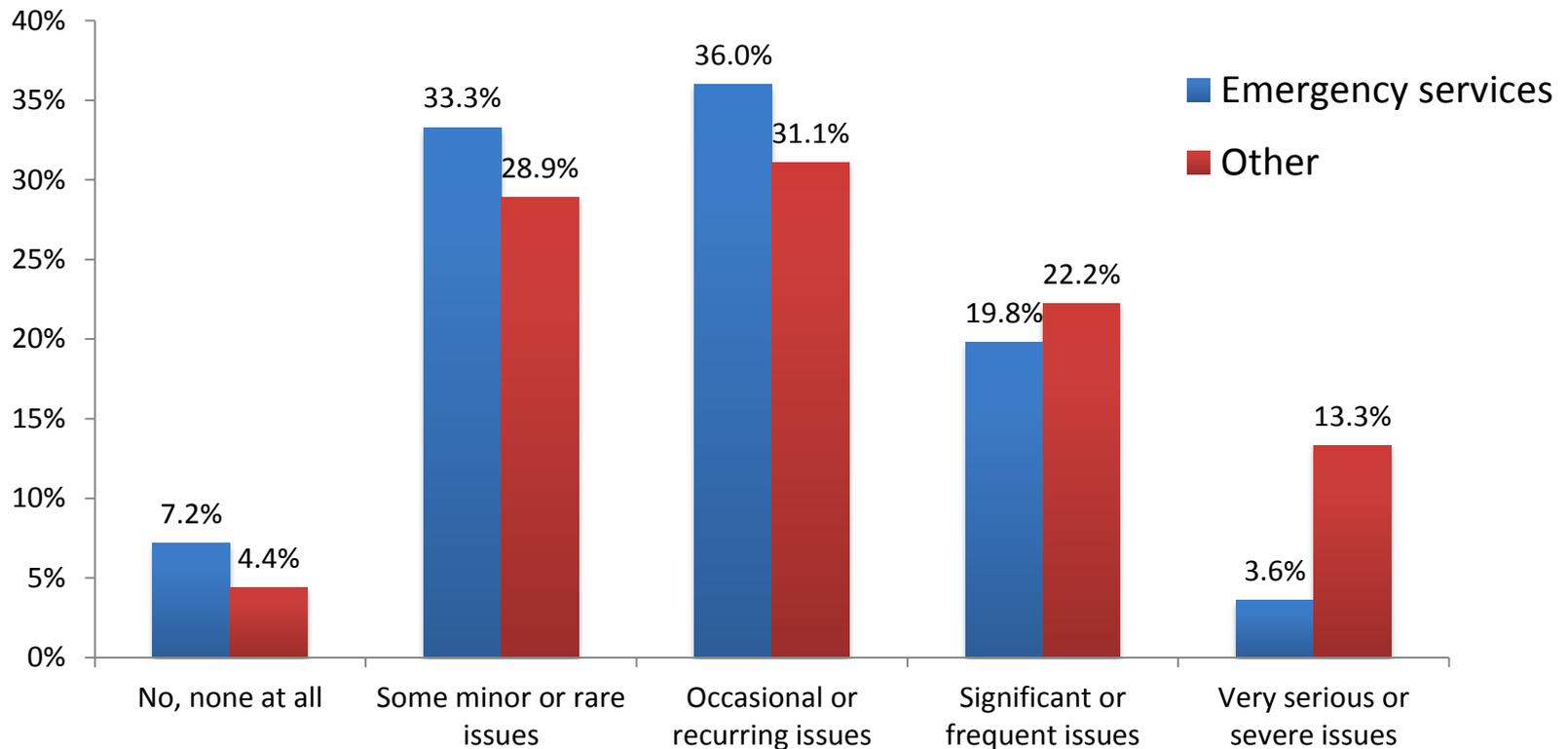


# ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

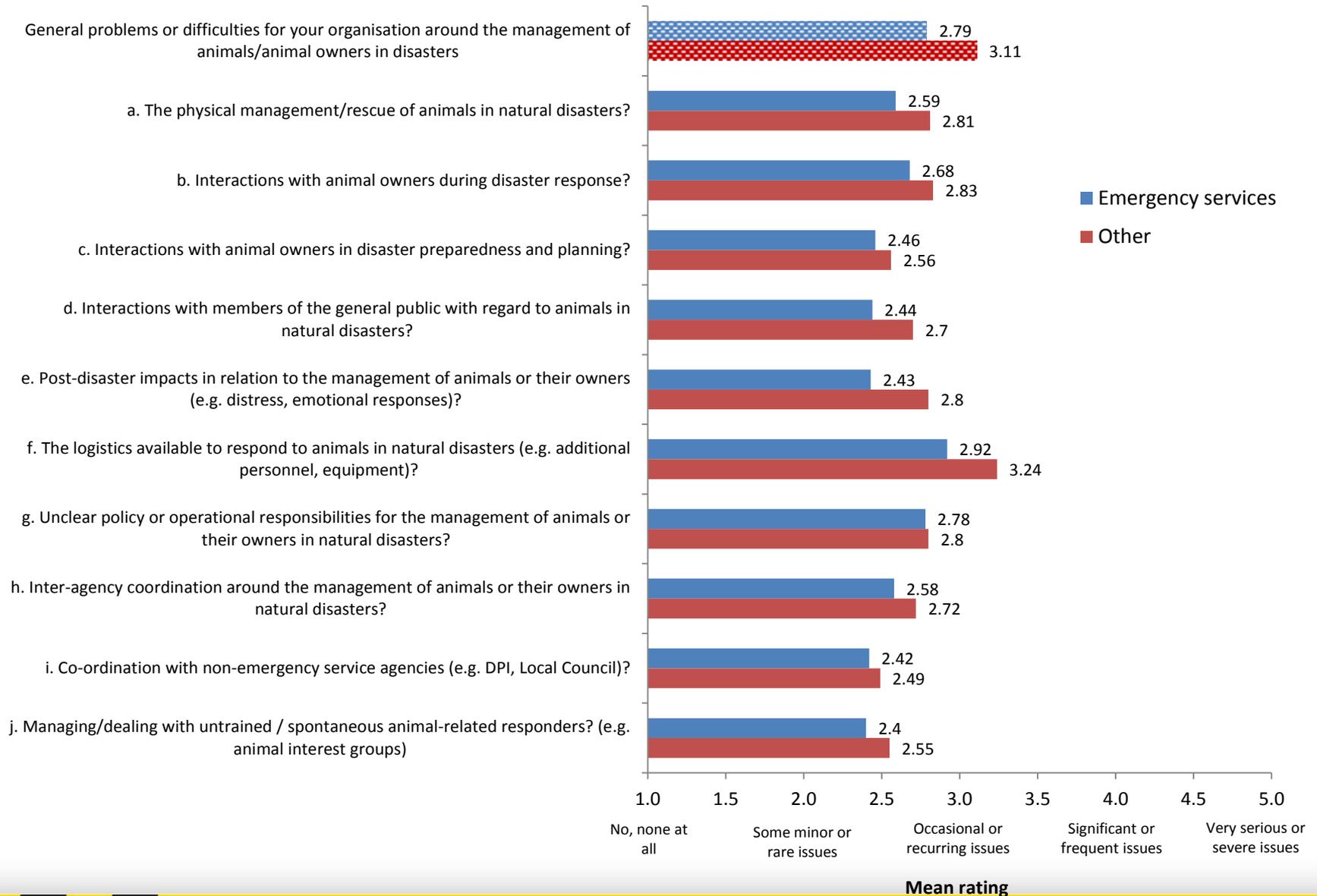
- 1) Single general question
- 2) Multi-part question – specific issues

# GENERAL PROBLEMS - MANAGEMENT OF ANIMALS/OWNERS

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



# SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES



# SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH ANIMAL OWNERS

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

Themes	%
Examples of dangerous/risky behaviour or inappropriate actions	26.4
Refusal to leave or be parted from animals	22.6
Comments about horses and horse owners as a special case	17.0
Details of emotional responses of owners	13.2
Experiences with dangerous animals/animal behaviour	13.2
Issues around owners returning/wanting to return early or being denied access	11.3
Owners' focus solely on animals and ignoring risk to self and others	9.4
Owners having unrealistic expectations of the level of help from emergency services	7.5
Problems with response co-ordination - with groups/agencies or absent owners	5.7

# QUOTES

*'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

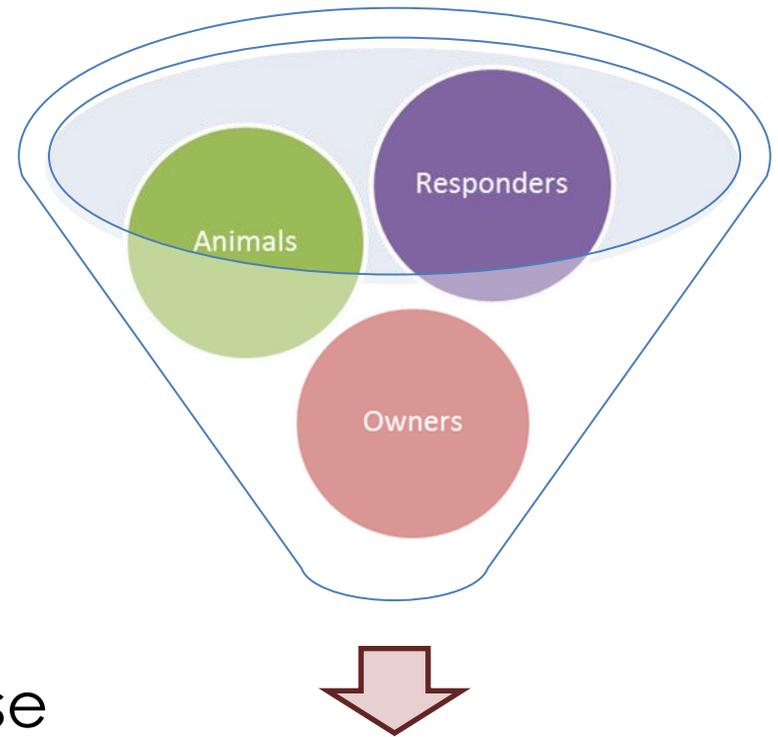
## 1) Consolidation

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

## 2) Refine and focus

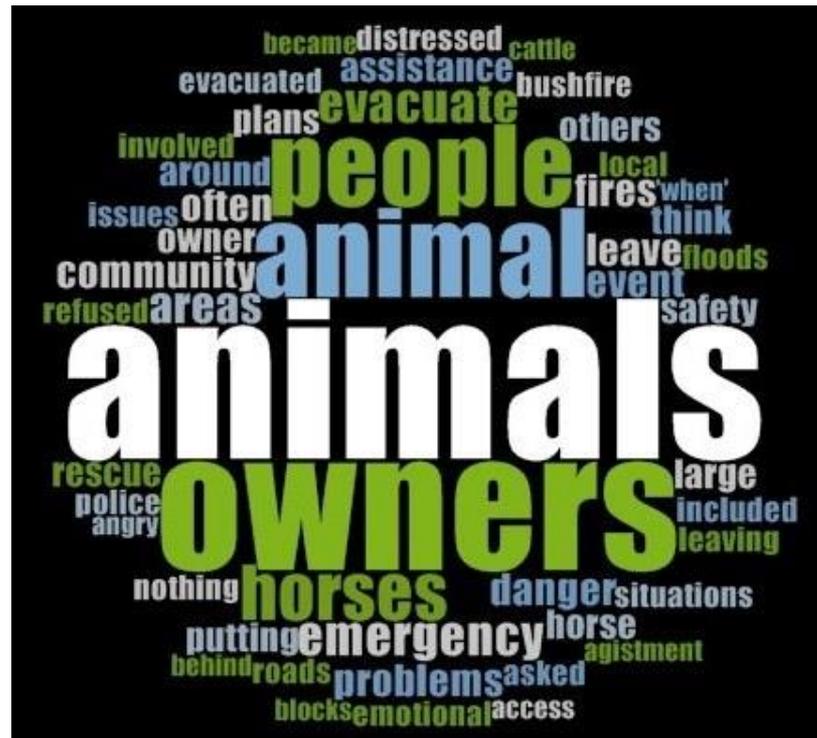
- a) 'shortlist' of priority issues
- b) Identify 'best fit' options
  - Feasibility
  - Acceptance
  - Team skills
  - Research

## 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