

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026



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



VFCA EXISTS BECAUSE...



Climate change is an animal health and welfare issue. Animals hold no responsibility for the causes of climate change, yet they feel the consequences most strongly. Approximately 3 billion animals were killed or displaced by the 2019-20 bushfires, hundreds of thousands more killed by floods, and domestic pets suffer from heat stress each summer. Veterinary professionals and animal carers are on the frontline experiencing the impacts first hand.

Vets also carry deep responsibility for Australia's biosecurity and food production, with livestock contributing \$20.4b to our economy. 'One Health', where human and animal health needs intersect, is of increasing importance, with shared diseases (such as Japanese Encephalitis) spreading rapidly, facilitated by climate change.

Vets, vet nurses and the animal care community have a responsibility to use their knowledge, skills and influence to protect animals - and the people who care for them - from climate change.

While climate change continues to pose a significant threat to animal health, welfare, production and biodiversity, the good news is we CAN halt catastrophic climate change. The work outlined in this Strategy forms part of this solution.

VISION

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.

VALUES

- **We care deeply about animals, humanity and the environment. Consistent with the One Health paradigm, we recognise the three are inextricably linked.**
- **We value the commitment of our people and honour the trust our communities have in the veterinary profession.**
- **Our actions and policies are based on the available research and scientific evidence.**
- **We are proudly non-partisan. We support climate-positive policies and call out climate-damaging policies, regardless of the party or politician they are associated with.**
- **We are driven to achieve our strategic goals and increase our impact.**

OUR NICHE & POWER



It's well understood that information from a trusted advisor is more likely to be well received than via other mediums. Veterinarians, vet nurses and those associated with our profession are well placed to be trusted advisors. As Vets and Vet Nurses we are:

- deeply embedded within our local communities across Australia; rural, regional and urban
- regarded by the general population as knowledgeable, empathetic and trustworthy
- scientists who communicate complex matters in a simple way, opening up opportunities for action
- passionate about protecting the health and welfare of both animals and people
- already experiencing first hand the impacts of climate change on livestock, wildlife and companion animals
- **trusted advisors to farmers, governments, and others, who are committed to the health of all animals.**

OUR NICHE & POWER



We are protectors of our economy:

- Tourism experiences rely on our natural places, and native species.
- Australia's \$20.4b Livestock industry.
- Threats of serious, painful and expensive diseases incursions such as Lumpy Skin Disease.

We have a responsibility to our First Nations peoples to continue to care for country, and in particular, its animals. We must listen and learn from their experience in managing the land successfully for 60,000 years.

We reach a wide group of people through their love for animals:

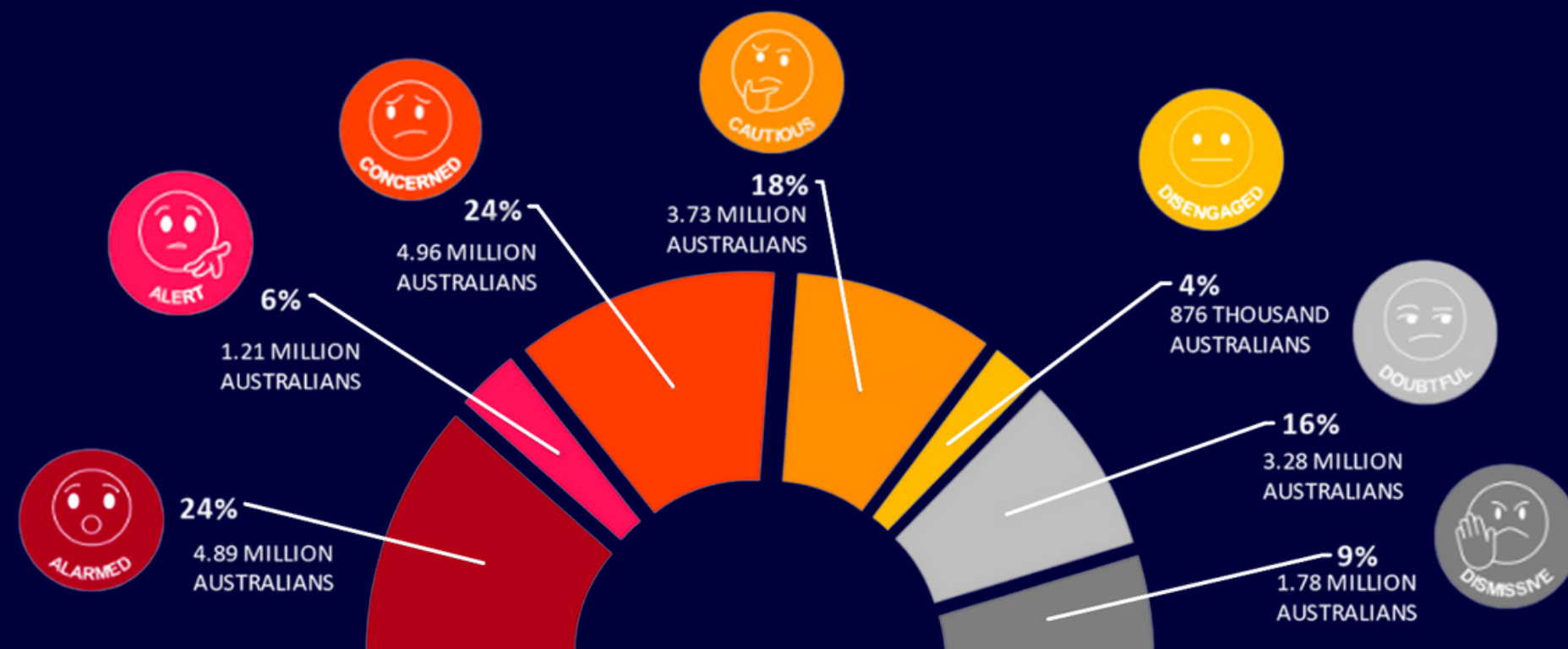
- Animals evoke strong emotions and inspire people to take action.
- Australia is a nation of animal lovers, with 90% of Australians having owned a pet at some time.
- Love of animals crosses party lines. Our political leaders own family pets.

OUR AUDIENCE



Australians can be divided into seven groups by their attitudes on climate change, from most worried and motivated (the 'Alarmed' group) to least worried (the 'Dismissive' group). The two most worried groups 'Alarmed' and 'Alert' are already activated on climate change, engaged and mobilised by traditional climate organisations.

A key audience the current climate movement must influence is the next most worried: the 'Concerned' group. This group makes up 24% of the Australian population, many in key electorates represented by politicians who advance policies that are regressive on climate or put forward policies that support fossil fuel industries. These people are aware of climate change as a problem but they are not personally engaged with it. **This is the primary audience VfCA will focus on, followed by the 'Cautious' audience as a second priority.**

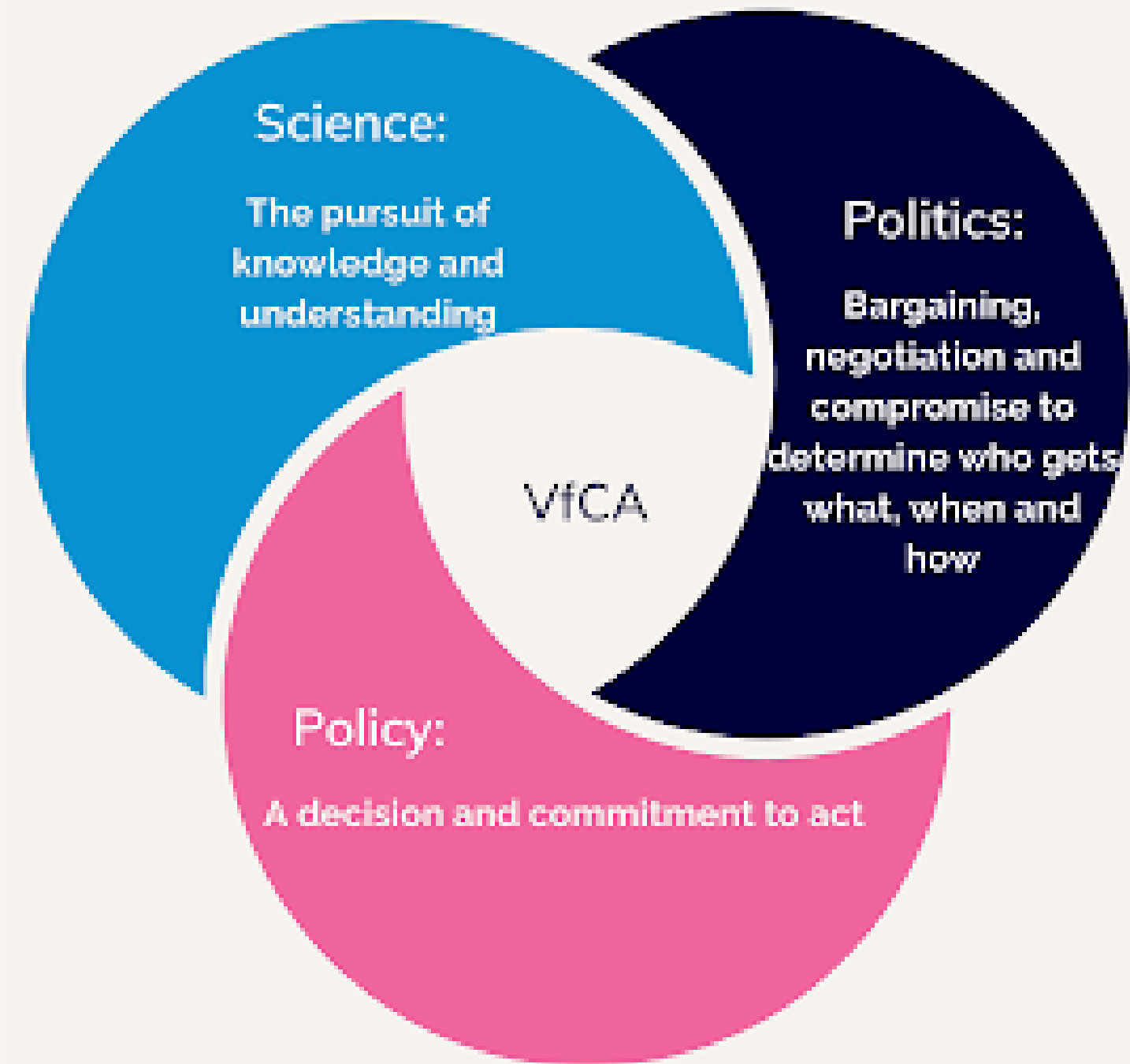


Key findings from Rebecca Huntley's 2020 research regarding Australians' attitudes to climate change

PATHWAY TO IMPACT

At the centre of Science, Policy and Politics, VfCA inspire, educate, mobilise, collaborate with, and act as a trusted advisor for the veterinary profession and animal care community to take climate action.

As such, we grow, diversify, and strengthen the climate movement and embolden politicians to take urgent positive action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.



OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

Board, Staff and Volunteers



EDUCATE

We will develop, distribute and/or sell high quality learning experiences for the veterinary profession* and broader animal care community*, in a way that is strongly aligned to our values and brand proposition.



COLLABORATE

Partnerships are fundamental to our success. We partner with like-minded, values-aligned organisations to achieve our purpose.



TRUSTED ADVISOR

Being a trusted advisor within the veterinary profession, to the broader community and to Government is key to the potential power of VfCA. We respect and steward this role.



GOVERNANCE

To achieve financial, social and ecological sustainability through fundraising, ethical practice, and meeting all legal requirements.

*Veterinary professionals include Veterinarians, Veterinary Technicians, Veterinary Nurses/Specialists/Vet Physios/Vet Public Health practitioners either in private practice, research or government

* The broader animal care community includes animal carers, farmers, RSPCA, Zoos, Aquaria

Activity Area: EDUCATE

GOAL

100% of veterinary professionals understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock and wildlife, and are willing to act on behalf of animals.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

Develop and deliver a quality **Climate Care Program (CCP)** to educate and empower vet clinics to understand and take action to reduce carbon emissions.

Work with key partners to have climate change mitigation and adaptation included across the veterinary and vet nurse curricula at Australian **Universities and TAFEs**.

Encourage and empower Vets to work with **veterinary and animal care suppliers** to apply pressure to reach net zero by 2035 and work collaboratively with international organisations already engaged in this area.

Engage, inform and educate **veterinary professionals** through a refreshed membership program, hosting online events, attending and speaking at industry events, securing media and social media coverage, providing media training, curating an online Knowledge Centre, and implementing strategic campaigns.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

CCP running in **350 vet clinics** by Dec 2025. with measurable reduction in carbon footprint of participating clinics

Vet Professionals & Animal Care Sector research shows increased understanding of climate change impacts on animals, and the urgency of what needs to be done, with **100% understanding** by Dec 2025.

Climate change included in **Veterinary Tertiary Education** and training by Dec 2025.

Veterinary professionals use buying power to influence the **supply chain** to implement sustainable packaging and production processes.

VfCA has >3000 Members by Dec 2025.

50% increase in supporters across social media accounts by 2026; 8 seminars held annually and significant increase in media exposure.

Presence at all major industry **events**.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

All across Australia veterinary professionals understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock and wildlife, and are taking action. 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 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.

Activity Area: **COLLABORATE**

GOAL

100% of the broader animal care community understand the impact of climate change on companion animals, livestock and wildlife, and the urgency of what needs to be done.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

Using a **joint stewardship** approach, we bring animal communities together as a voice for the animals we love and need.

Driven by a common purpose, our values-aligned **partnerships** with animal care organisations drive strong collective impact.

Our **partnerships** with other climate action organisations bring synergies and opportunities to further deliver upon our Mission and Purpose.

We **cooperate internationally** to enable veterinary communities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals **13** (Climate Action), **14** (Life Below Water) and **15** (Life on Land) within our spheres of influence.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

We have **8 signed MoUs** with industry associations in the animal care community. These will include Australian Veterinary Association, Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia, Veterinary Business Group, New Zealand Veterinary Assoc. Zoos and Aquariums Assoc., RSPCA, Alliance for Animals, Australian Veterinary Boards Council.

We meet at least monthly with other constituents of the climate action network.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

VfCA with our partner organisations are driving best practice for mitigation and adaptations to climate change in the animal care community and as a public voice for all animals.

Activity Area: **TRUSTED ADVISORS**

GOAL

Veterinary professionals have an increasingly influential voice for action on climate change.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

We influence policy change by offering sound solutions for the Government to achieve their goals.

We educate and empower Rural & Regional veterinary professionals to bring positive action to climate change through our Rural & Regional Program. We will offer training and resources including how to talk to clients about climate change, how to write letters to MPs, how to attend meetings with MPs, storytelling for impact and media training.

VfCA makes it easy for veterinary professionals to have a strong voice through media opportunities and supporting correspondence to government representatives. We offer access to training in these areas with support from our partners.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Our 4 areas of focus for working with Govt:

- Prioritise an effective national climate action plan, with stronger net-zero emissions targets via deep cuts in carbon emissions and rapid transition to renewable energy by 2030;
- End destruction of native vegetation, including old growth forests and increase plantings of native vegetation and timber;
- Strengthen environmental and wildlife protections afforded by the EPBC Act 1999, including incorporating a climate trigger;
- Position Australia as an agricultural leader in the world, with a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 and development of a National Ruminant Emissions Reduction Program.

By June 2024 our Rural & Regional program will run in 5 key electorates resulting in 50 veterinary professionals joining the campaign, 40 letters sent to MPs, 4 meetings with MPs, 10 clinics displaying posters, 4 media stories, and 2 storytelling videos produced.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

It is accepted that vets and other animal health professionals have a social licence to advocate for the health and welfare of animals. VfCA makes it easy for veterinary professionals to have a strong voice. This includes rural and regional communities where vets are seen as trusted advisors on climate change, and are now working with their broader communities, and some local MPs, to take action and advocate on climate change.

Activity Area: GOVERNANCE

GOAL

VfCA secures the resources we need to realise our Vision and Purpose and implement our Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

Board & CEO undertake **Strategic Planning** annually, with a major plan each 3 years.

CEO & staff develop annual **Operational Plans** linked to the Strategic Plan.

Secure **income** through fundraising, partnerships, memberships, philanthropy and the Climate Care Program.

Ensure all **Board positions** are filled and aligned with strategic objectives, and Company Secretary is fast-tracked.

We offer our **staff and volunteers** a safe, enjoyable, flexible, and learning-rich environment, and support them with tools and resources needed to achieve outcomes.

We **measure and evaluate impact** to ensure we're implementing the things that matter most, while also being able to share the impact that our work is having.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Our comprehensive 3 year **Strategic Plan** is owned by the Board, Staff and Volunteers.

We release **12 month Operational Plans** that are transparently linked to the Strategic Plan.

Annual income targets of \$1m are achieved.

Board vacancies are filled within 2 months.

Staff are appointed into all roles in our organisational structure, and our staff turnover is low, with satisfaction ratings high.

We have a clear **volunteer engagement and management** process run by a Community Engagement Manager, that is attracting and retaining volunteers to assist VfCA to achieve our vision and purpose.

Impact Measurement Framework activated by June 2023 to ensure the actions we are taking are having the desired outcomes.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

VfCA is a strong, active, well respected and sustainable organisation with a clear mandate. Our human and financial resources will have grown to create a solid and stable foundation to deliver upon our vision and purpose. We attract and retain highly skilled and values aligned staff and volunteers, and our influential Board is active and engaged. Our Impact Framework is sound and clearly articulates the direct and indirect impact our work is having.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr Jeannet
Kessels (Chair)



Dr Angela
Frimberger
(Deputy Chair)



Dr Helen Scott-Orr,
AM PSM



Nobel Laureate
Professor Mark
Howden



Nick Williamson
(Treasurer)



Dr Jonathan
Happold

BOARD ADVISORS



Indigenous Advisor
Ben Tyler



Legal Advisor
Kelly Douglas



Patron
Nobel Laureate
Professor Peter
Doherty, AC FRS FMedSci

STAFF



Chief Executive Officer

Tara O'Connell



Chief Operating Officer

Steff Goldring



Community Engagement

Jesse Fox

Climate Care Program (CCP) Team:



Chief Impact Officer

Mel Harwin



Project Coordinator

Katie Sheehan



Product Developer

Liz Malcolm

VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer-driven organisation, VfCA is grateful for the time and energy our wonderful volunteers donate to ensure urgent climate action to protect the animals we love and need from climate change.



Vets for Climate Action

A Voice for all Animals



***Veterinary professionals** include Veterinarians, Veterinary Technicians, Veterinary Nurses/Specialists/Vet Physios/Vet Public Health practitioners either in private practice, research or government
The **broader animal care community** includes animal carers, farmers, RSPCA, Zoos, Aquaria