Bayer AMRRIC partnership

Bayer Animal Health, manufacturer of Drontal Allwormer, has announced a major partnership with AMRRIC. The pharmaceutical company has committed to helping AMRRIC build a corporate profile, develop and implement a communications and marketing strategy and to assist with fundraising programs.

“We are excited to partner with AMRRIC as we share the same beliefs and commitments to animal, human and environmental health,” said Leandro Posteraro, Brand Manager, Drontal Allwormer, Bayer Animal Health.

New AMRRIC President Dr Ted Donelan was delighted to join Bayer in announcing the partnership.

Dr Donelan, who has worked with Indigenous communities for over 15 years, has just returned from Maningrida where he performed his 1000th “outback” dog desexing. “The links between healthy animals and healthy people and environment are obvious. If we treat the animals against parasites, control dog numbers, discourage aggression and address environmental factors, we see improvements in the overall health of Indigenous communities,” said Dr Donelan.

Dr Donelan said the partnership would be a tremendous boost to the organisation: “We at AMRRIC also recognise this support by Bayer comes from a true commitment to animal health and the bond that people share with their companion animals.”

Garma Festival

In a first for AMRRIC, EO Julia Hardaker and Education Officer Sophie Constable were invited to deliver presentations at the renowned Garma Festival, held in August at Gulkula in Arnhemland. They were introduced by Professor Henry Atkinson of Monash University, who spoke of dog issues in terms of Indigenous/ human rights and education. Interested in attending the 2011 Garma Festival? Volunteering with Indigenous Community Volunteers (www.icv.com.au) is a fun and cost-effective way to get there.

Message from the Executive Officer

This Spring issue sees the tremendously exciting announcement of AMRRIC’s first major corporate partnership. The agreement we now have with Bayer Animal Health will deliver a professional communications and marketing strategy to match our growing organisation.

At our AGM in September, we farewelled and thanked past President Peter Brown and welcomed into the role of President longstanding Board member and AMRRIC veterinarian Dr Ted Donelan. We were also pleased to announce three new Board members – read their profiles on page 3. The AGM, held at the University of Sydney, was preceded by a very successful luncheon seminar on AMRRIC’s work, held with the Faculty of Veterinary Science and the Veterinary Science Foundation.

AMRRIC is now having a significant impact in many remote communities – recent locations include the Croker and Goulburn Islands, Maningrida, Tiwi Islands, Palm Island, Gunbalanya, Belyuen in Darwin, the outstations of Elcho Island, Central Desert Shire communities.

And we are delighted to congratulate AMRRIC Board Member and Darwin veterinarian Dr Stephen Cutter, who received the Northern Territory Pride of Australia Environment Award – read more about Steve’s dedicated work on page 2.

Julia Hardaker
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
We are very grateful to the Northern Territory Department of Local Government for its significant support: the department is funding, for the second year, Dr Sophie Constable’s position of Education Officer.

Thank you also to the Northern Territory Department of Justice - the Department’s Community Benefit Fund has enabled AMRRIC to purchase a new printer.

Congratulations to AMRRIC Board Member and Darwin veterinarian Dr Stephen Cutter, winner of the 2010 Northern Territory Pride of Australia Environment Award (http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2010/09/17/180151_ntnews.html). Stephen works from The Ark Animal Hospital in Yarrawonga, and is available 24/7 for sick and injured wildlife. He undertakes many AMRRIC dog health programs, is Chair of the NT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, involved with Paws Darwin, Wildlife Rescue Darwin, and helped set up a Berrimah Jail program that sees prisoners caring for sick and injured wildlife before release back into the bush.

Former AMRRIC Member of the Month, Professor Tony Peacock, has received one of Australia’s top science awards, the prestigious Australian Museum Eureka prize. CEO of the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre at the University of Canberra, Professor Peacock won in the highly contested category of ‘Promoting Understanding of Science’. See his blog on feral animals at http://www.feral.typepad.com/.

WSPA and NZSPCA supported Julia Hardaker’s travel costs when she delivered two presentations at the New Zealand and Pacific Society for the Protection of Animals (SPCA) Education Conference in Auckland.

AMRRIC member, ICV volunteer and horse carer Rae-Jon Bunting has written a series of books with the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation Biosecurity Queensland staff to help educate young primary school children about the importance of animal welfare and caring for horses. The books follow the life of a foal born in an island community, drawn from Rae-Jon’s experiences with the horse riders of Palm Island (http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_15654.htm).

AMRRIC continues to conduct workshops on its latest resource, the manual Dog Health Programs in Indigenous Communities, targeted at Indigenous Environmental Health Practitioners and local communities. AMRRIC is grateful for funding support from the Aboriginal Benefits Association for the Northern Territory workshops, and in Western Australia, from the Working Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health (WGATSIEH).

Over thirty diverse stakeholders attended the Tennant Creek workshop on 12 October, contributing enthusiasm and energy towards the development of a dog health and management plan in the Shire. Represented were Barkly Shire, Anyinginyi Regional Remote Health Service, Junaliari Council, Departments of Local Government and Health and Families, members of the local community and Mungkarta.

Todd River flooding didn’t stop the Alice Springs workshop on 14 October, with attendees including Noah Pleszet, researcher at the Centre for Appropriate Technology and AMRRIC Member of the Month for October. A third NT workshop was held in Katherine on 19 October, with support from Michael Spry of the Batchelor Institute.

The Broome workshop, co-presented by AMRRIC Board member Clayton Abreu, also attracted more than thirty attendees, including Environmental Health Workers from the Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

The manuals are available for sale ($120 plus postage) by downloading an order form from the Learning Centre (http://www.amrric.com/node/327) or contacting AMRRIC on (08) 8941 8813.

It was exciting to see Dog Dreaming as the subject of Jimmy Dongean’s painting Papa Tjukurpa and Pukara, the winner of the 2010 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Telstra Art Award. Papa is the Pitjantjatjara/Yankunyjatjara word for dog or dingo and Tjukurpa means dreaming. See AMRRIC member and journalist Bob Gosford’s article at The Northern Myth http://blogs.crikey.com.au/northern/2010/08/13/mr-jimmy-donegan-wins-the-2010-telstra-art-award/
New President and Board members

The AMRRIC Annual General Meeting on 10 September 2010 saw the election of a new President, Dr Ted Donelan, and three new Board members, Sabina Shugg, Merle O’Donnell and Dr Liz Tudor. Visit the AMRRIC website for a full list of Board members.

Melbourne veterinarian and Senior Academic Associate at the University of Melbourne Veterinary School, Dr Donelan has been with AMRRIC since its inception and is one of the organisation’s most committed supporters. He has conducted a twice-yearly dog health program at Maningrida the past 8 years, and now spends 4 weeks in the community each year.

Mining engineer Sabina Shugg was the first female to work as an underground mine manager in Western Australia. Currently with Perth management consulting firm Momentum Partners, in 2003 Sabina established the WA Women in Mining and Resources group and in March received the inaugural Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA Women in Resources Champion Award. Sabina also has a long history of supporting animal health and welfare: she is President of ‘Stop Live Exports’ (aka PACAT) in Fremantle, is on the Executive for Animals Australia, and supports dogs in Bali and Perth.

Merle O’Donnell is the Environmental Health Coordinator in the Central Queensland Public Health Office. Chair for 4 years of the National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum (now WGATSIEH), Merle has had a diverse career, including CEO of the Aboriginal Medical Service, Manager in Centrelink, Aboriginal Education, a Councillor in local government and Environmental Health Coordinator in Fitzroy Crossing. She holds degrees in Applied Science (Environmental Health) and Bachelor of Arts (Communication and Psychology). Veterinarian and academic Dr Liz Tudor has extensive experience in veterinary practice, as a University lecturer, researcher and author, and in leadership roles in a range of community and educational organisations. Liz is currently Senior Lecturer, Associate Dean and Chair of the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Melbourne. Liz also has a long term personal connection with the community of Gunbalanya in West Arnhem Land. In 2005 she established WALDHeP (West Arnhem Land Dog Health Program) with the support of the University, delivering an annual dog health program to Gunbalanya and associated outstations and, since 2009, to outstations of the Yantjarrwu Association in the Peppemenarti (Daly) region.

Educating through art

Arrente artists Kungka and Hazel Ungawanaka and Luritja artists Cora Merunjtu and Nora Campbell are painting the story of the new dog program conducted in Titjikala by AMRRIC Education Officer Dr Sophie Constable.

This is the first time AMRRIC has worked in the communities of Santa Teresa, Titjikala and Apatula, with the aim of sharing information about dog health. A University of Sydney PhD student with over 4 years experience in remote communities, Sophie has been working here alongside retired vet Dr Colin Gulbrandson who visits regularly from his home in Tasmania to undertake vet work, including desexing programs.

Sophie says every community is different, with different language groups, health issues and even the place of dogs in the community’s culture: “Apatula is a men’s dog dreaming while in Titjikala, the dog dreaming is in the hands of women and I can talk with them more easily about it,” said Sophie.

This has led some of the women in Titjikala to work on a painting telling of houses, dogs and people in the town and how they interact. Sophie sees it as an affirmation of the importance of dogs in the community as well as a way to illustrate how to look after them. The education program and artists were featured in an article in the Centralian Advocate.

Sophie has been making news in other media publications. The Sydney Morning Herald ran a feature story in September on Sophie and her Australian Research Council funded research project, Healthy Dogs, Healthy Communities. See the article at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Darwin-Australia/AMRRIC-Animal-Management-in-Rural-Remote-Indigenous-Communities/288795640076.
STORY OF THE MONTH

Our Volunteers

AMRRIC could not make an impact on the ground in so many remote communities without its incredibly committed growing team of volunteers.

Year 4 University of Sydney veterinary student Michaela Avery joined Victorian veterinarian Dr Jude Mulholland and vet nurse Denise Pagliaro on a dog desexing trip to Nyrripi and Yuelamu – remote communities between 300 and 500 kilometres north west of Alice Springs. This was Michaela’s first experience with AMRRIC. Apart from returning home with nursing and surgical skills she may not have had a chance to learn until after graduation, Michaela appreciated the opportunity to immerse herself in the culture and language of the communities.

“My advice is to go with an open mind and be prepared to be confronted with sights and smells you may never have experienced and standards of animal welfare you may never wish to see at home,” said Michaela. But she stressed the love and care given to their dogs by some owners and the obvious close bond they shared, and the huge physical and health difference she observed between desexed and non-desexed dogs in the community.

Sandra Russell-Ford has been fostering dogs for a NSW rescue group called www.paws.com.au for five years. In April, she volunteered at Yuendumu with AMRRIC Board member Dr Stephen Cutter and Evan, both from The Ark Animal Hospital in Darwin. Sandra had already visited Yuendumu in February 2009, and says she is pleased to see AMRRIC supporting the Yuendumu Dog Lady, Gloria Morales. Gloria is the Assistant Manager of the Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Cooperative and is tireless in her efforts to care for the local dog population – see the wonderful images of artists and dogs at http://www.warlu.com/about/?dogprogram. “Chasing dogs for my 50th birthday was not easy!” said Sandra. But she says it has been satisfying to see the difference in the numbers of dogs and their health status at Yuendumu over the time of her visits.

Sandra is now helping Gloria rehome some of her puppies in the city and says these wonderful pups are proving that mongrel dogs from an Aboriginal community are just as special as city dogs. See http://www.paws.com.au/FosterCare/FosterCareDesertDogs.html

Sandra is also helping GreenCross Coogee veterinarian Dr Chris Godfrey to establish a free desexing service at the La Perouse aboriginal community.

DVD offer

Don’t forget the educational DVD ‘Caring For Dogs, Community and Country’ is still available for $10. At 35 minutes running time, the DVD covers the most common dog parasites (ticks, worms and fleas) and desexing, as well as information on caring for country.

JOIN AMRRIC

Membership not only provides critical support to AMRRIC, members receive full access to AMRRIC website resources, including Dr Samantha Phelan’s “Conducting Dog Health Programs in Indigenous Communities - A Veterinary Guide”.

If you would like to become a member, please complete an online membership form and post it, along with the fee, to AMRRIC, PO Box 1296, Darwin, NT 0810. Download at: http://www.amrric.org/membershipform.pdf

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Every contribution from our donors and supporters helps make sustainable dog management a reality in remote communities across Australia. Donations to AMRRIC are tax deductible – to donate, visit our website at www.amrric.com or call us on (08) 8941 8813.