



# STRATEGIC PLAN

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2015-18





A hand holding a globe with a red and orange brushstroke background. The hand is positioned at the bottom left, holding a small globe of the Earth. The background is a vibrant, textured wash of red and orange colors, resembling a paintbrush stroke. The top of the image is a solid blue color.

“

Our One Health approach recognises the inextricable links between human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing.

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## ABOUT US



Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) is a national, not for profit charity that uses a One Health<sup>1</sup> approach to bring about integrated animal health, education and community development programs in Indigenous\* communities.

Our One Health approach recognises the inextricable links between human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing. By working with remote Indigenous communities to improve the health of their companion animals we are helping to create healthier, safer and happier communities.

AMRRIC variously delivers, facilitates, coordinates and supports culturally sensitive programs in Indigenous communities across Australia, collaborating with the communities to develop programs that meet their needs.

The immediate objective of our approach is to improve the health, welfare and behaviour of companion animal populations in Indigenous communities. The longer-term objectives of our

model are sustainability and capacity-building, so that ultimately communities can confidently and effectively manage their own companion animal populations.

AMRRIC seeks to base its policies and strategies on factual information, and recognizes that ethical, culturally sensitive research can result in tangible benefits for both Indigenous communities and their companion animals. Additionally, AMRRIC recognizes the capacity- building benefits of the involvement of Indigenous people as full partners in research projects and strongly supports such collaborations.

Advocacy is an integral part of AMRRIC's work in seeking to promote and facilitate the health and wellbeing of companion animals and the associated interests of Indigenous communities. AMRRIC advocates for the legitimate needs and interests of community animals and their human companions at all levels of society, but particularly with national, state and local governments with regard to resource allocation.



## PARTNERSHIPS



- We have strong relationships and engagement with Indigenous communities across Australia.
- We have well established networks across Australia and internationally, encompassing veterinary, health, education and academic professionals and service providers.
- Our relationships with all levels of government allow us to advocate for, and to assist with, improved animal management in Indigenous communities.



## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



- We have highly skilled staff and volunteers who are culturally aware and committed to reconciliation in their work.
- All of our staff and volunteers are dedicated to improving animal health and wellbeing.
- We have a highly committed voluntary Board of Management with a wide range of relevant experience to bring to the governance of the organisation.

## OUR STRENGTHS



- Integrated animal health and community development programs
- Veterinary programs which include parasite treatments, population control by de-sexing and the treatment of sick or injured animals
- Health and wellbeing-focused education programs which are implemented in many community groups including schools, men's groups and women's groups
- Capacity-building programs, such as the Animal Management Worker program which trains and mentors community members to facilitate and help deliver companion animal management in their communities



## BEST PRACTICE APPROACH



- Our programs are designed in collaboration with communities, with inbuilt monitoring and evaluation.
- Community and stakeholders inform current program practice and future program design.
- We employ current industry standards in our veterinary and education programs.
- Our Best Practice Guidelines have been recognised by the Australian federal government.







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## OUR PURPOSE



To collaborate with rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve the health and wellbeing of their companion animals and the health, wellbeing and safety of communities

## OUR VISION



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are healthy and safe for people and their companion animals



A black dog stands on a dirt path in a natural setting, looking towards the camera. The background shows trees and a clear sky. The dog is the central focus of the image, positioned on the left side of the page.

## OUR VALUES



### RESPECT

- For the communities with whom we work, our supporters and our colleagues
- For Indigenous culture and traditional knowledge
- For the diversity and individuality of all people

### ACCOUNTABILITY

- We work to clearly articulated objectives in a transparent manner
- We seek to achieve the best use of resources

### INTEGRITY

- We are honest, open and transparent
- We avoid real, or apparent, conflicts of interest

### OUTCOMES FOCUS

- All our decisions are framed around the question “How will this help the communities with whom we work?”

### COLLABORATION

- We work **with** communities

### INTERCONNECTEDNESS

- We integrate our programs and work with others

## OUR UNIQUE APPROACH



“ AMRRIC uses an integrated, holistic approach to coordinate and facilitate veterinary and education programs in Indigenous communities. ”

AMRRIC uses an integrated, holistic approach to coordinate and facilitate veterinary and education programs in Indigenous communities. We call this our One Health approach.

This approach recognises the inextricable links between human, animal and environmental health and wellbeing. By working with remote Indigenous communities to improve the health of their animal companions, we are helping to create healthier, safer and happier communities.

In practical terms this means:

- Healthier and better behaved animals, where reproduction and population numbers are under control
- Owners who take responsibility for the health, wellbeing and behavior of their animal companions
- Community-based animal health and wellbeing

programs delivered in conjunction with veterinary collaborators

These outcomes require attitudinal change towards responsible pet ownership and the investment of animal management resources, skills and knowledge. This can only come about through the integration of veterinary programs, community education programs and capacity building.

### **For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**

AMRRIC offers an experienced, culturally sensitive, independent and professional source of animal management expertise, culturally appropriate education materials and policy advice. We listen to community needs and support community members in developing sustainable options for improving animal health and wellbeing, which positively impacts the health and wellbeing of people in the community.





**For donors, supporters and those interested in animal wellbeing issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**

AMRRIC provides a trustworthy, independent and professional one stop shop for veterinarians, animal management experts, human health clinicians and professionals, educators and academic researchers, government at all levels, and people with an interest in animal wellbeing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our focus is on developing and evaluating evidence-based approaches in all aspects of our operations. Although operating only in Australia, AMRRIC has links with similar organisations around the world. In all aspects of our work, AMRRIC's preferred way of working is based on formulating long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with like-minded individuals and organisations.





## OBJECTIVE 1

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### MORE PROGRAMS

To increase the number of effective, culturally appropriate, community-driven sustainable animal health and management programs in rural and remote Indigenous communities across the country.

Our strategies to achieve this are:

- To build long term relationships with communities and work with them at their invitation
- To develop programs that are community-driven and that recognise cultural traditions
- To facilitate and coordinate One Health programs in Indigenous communities
- To provide programs directly where appropriate





- To encourage all levels of government to provide resources to implement AMRRIC's One Health best practice model
- To support existing and new animal health and wellbeing programs throughout rural and remote Australia

**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- We have increased the number of long-term, sustainable relationships with rural and remote Indigenous communities
- We have developed programs that recognize the individuality of each community
- We have increased the number of established One Health programs that are culturally appropriate and develop capacity within communities
- We have well established, productive relationships with all tiers of government and have evidence of governmental adoption of AMRRIC's best practice model
- We have well established and productive relationships with affiliated organizations also providing animal health and wellbeing programs throughout rural and remote Australia



To build long term relationships  
with communities and work with  
them at their invitation



“ AMRRIC education resources are embedded in the Northern Territory curriculum ”

## OBJECTIVE 2



### EDUCATION

To collaborate with Indigenous communities to develop and deliver culturally relevant and sustainable education programs that will ultimately enable these communities to manage the health and wellbeing of their companion animals

Our strategies to achieve this are:

- To develop and promote the widespread use of Be a Friend to Your Dog (BAFTYD) and similar resources to add value to AMRRIC's One Health Programs
- To build local capacity to manage dog health and wellbeing by adopting a solutions-based approach to change, and by harnessing existing community capacity and leadership
- To add greater reach and impact to the implementation of AMRRIC's education objectives by collaborating with other service providers
- To use education programs to support and enhance the outcomes of established Dog Health Programs, including the education of non-Indigenous community residents and visiting professionals
- To develop and promote public awareness campaigns, targeting the issues, challenges and opportunities for improving animal health and wellbeing in remote Indigenous communities throughout Australia

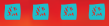




**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- Rural and remote schools are implementing BAFTYD and other similar resources as part of their overall school learning plan
- AMRRIC education resources are embedded in the Northern Territory curriculum
- AMRRIC education programs are embedded nationally in all State and Territory curricula
- Communities take control of dog management and care at community and household level
- AMRRIC is working collaboratively with other service providers to deliver community initiatives
- The dog population and physical condition of dogs is at a manageable level requiring fewer veterinary interventions

## OBJECTIVE 3



### CAPACITY BUILDING

To work with Indigenous communities to build capacity so that over time effective animal health and management is sustained with a lessening reliance on external providers. AMRRIC will work to further build the capacity of relevant stakeholders (including government departments, regional councils, Aboriginal corporations, veterinarians and AMRRIC itself) to achieve a One Health approach to animal health and management.

**Our strategies to achieve this are:**

- To ensure AMRRIC's entire operations take a long-term approach where relationship-building is a key tenet enabling true capacity building to occur
- To work with Animal Management and Environmental Health Workers to build animal management skills and knowledge on the ground
- To engage with local government authorities and Aboriginal corporations to support their implementation of a One Health approach
- To build the capacity of volunteers, veterinarians, veterinary clinics and universities to deliver sustainable remote Indigenous community veterinary programs in accordance with AMRRIC's best practice guidelines

**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- We have strong and sustained relationships across our operations
- More communities have the internal capacity to design and implement effective and sustainable animal management programs
- Regional councils and Aboriginal corporations approach animal health and management with a One Health understanding
- AMRRIC's Best Practice Guidelines are used by the vast majority of veterinary service providers working in rural and remote Indigenous communities





Regional councils and  
Aboriginal corporations  
approach animal health and  
management with a One  
Health understanding







## OBJECTIVE 4





## ADVOCACY & POLICY

To work with stakeholders and decision makers advocating on behalf of Indigenous communities to develop animal management policies that are community driven and culturally appropriate and which focus on sustainable improvements in animal, human and environmental health and wellbeing.

**Our strategies to achieve this are:**

- To continue to seek and receive requests for assistance, and to work with communities and stakeholders to develop appropriate solutions to animal health and wellbeing concerns
- To engage with community members and decision makers on the ground to ensure that our advocacy accurately reflects and articulates each community's concerns
- To strengthen AMRRIC's relationships with decision makers in every tier of government to increase our ability to influence animal management policy
- To work with state and local governments to achieve more consistent approaches to animal management

**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- All levels of government seek AMRRIC's advice on effective, evidence-based, culturally appropriate and sustainable animal health and management
- Animal management policies at local and state level are community driven, culturally appropriate and take a One Health approach
- Communities and decision makers consider AMRRIC a trusted ally, known for accurately and sincerely reflecting the appropriate wishes of communities
- The number of requests for assistance from communities decreases as they take control of their animal health and wellbeing concerns and manage them from within the community





## OBJECTIVE 5



### RESEARCH & EVALUATION

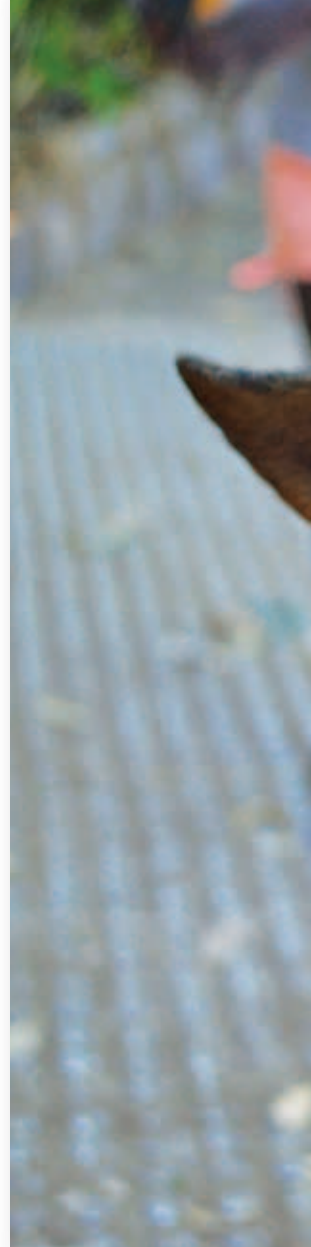
To support relevant research and continually monitor and evaluate all aspects of our work to ensure evidence-based approaches and maximum efficiency, leading to sustained improvements in animal, human and environmental health.

**Our strategies to achieve this are:**

- To strengthen and extend our research networks
- To partner in relevant research
- To ensure all aspects of our work incorporate in-built monitoring and evaluation
- To communicate lessons learned from our evaluations
- To facilitate opportunities for One Health stakeholders to share experiences of animal health and management

**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- AMRRIC has a vast and diverse network of researchers who support our vision
- Communities are empowered by, and proud of their involvement in, AMRRIC-affiliated research projects
- Our in-built monitoring and evaluation constantly highlights efficiencies and areas for improvement, allowing us to continuously improve our approach
- We regularly publish articles and papers that communicate the lessons we have learned, ensuring that others can share in our accumulated knowledge and experience
- We are recognised by others in the field as promoters of collaboration and facilitators of knowledge sharing







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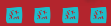
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## OBJECTIVE 6



### ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

AMRRIC's unique approach is maintained and strengthened by continued good governance, financial sustainability and sound management systems that support innovation, quality, efficiency and effectiveness .





**Our strategies to achieve this are:**

- To implement effective governance and compliance frameworks including robust quality and risk management systems
- To build and maintain integrated and sustainable information and communication systems
- To ensure fiscal responsibility and develop alternate income streams to support innovation in our work
- To reward, recognize and celebrate innovation in all we do

**We will know we have succeeded when:**

- We have a suite of systems that meet all our information management needs
- We have increased income from non-government sources
- We have robust and sound management and governance frameworks in place



# AMRRIC'S RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

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All our strategic objectives align with the aspirations within our RAP.

## RELATIONSHIPS



Sustainable partnerships through trust and respect are fundamental to AMRRIC's approach to national partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, decision makers, government and non government organisations.

## RESPECT



In all AMRRIC programs we build, nurture and value relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and other stakeholders based on the principles of mutual respect, trust, self determination and capacity building.

## OPPORTUNITIES



AMRRIC service delivery and activities are underpinned by the values, knowledge and guidance of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.









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From the very beginning,  
AMRRIC has had a unique  
approach to its work.

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## OUR HISTORY



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A commitment to cultural respect, capacity building and a desire to work with communities and to value their perspective remains at the core of the AMRRIC ethos.

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In the early 1990s a handful of veterinarians was providing various types of dog health programs in remote Indigenous communities. The first formal Dog Health Conference was held in Darwin in 1993 as part of the Western Pacific Veterinary Conference.

In 1998 Tony English, a veterinary academic who was in the army reserve, wrote an article in the Australian Veterinary Journal reporting on his experiences conducting a dog health program on a remote NT community as part of the Army ATSC Community Assistance Program. Further programs were conducted in conjunction with army activities at other communities. On Tony's retirement these programs were continued by Dr Rod Salter.

Meanwhile, in Arnhem Land in the NT, Environmental Health Worker, Phil Donohue from Nhulunbuy was linking up with veterinarian Dr Stephen Cutter from Darwin and Professor Rick Speare from James Cook University to provide dog health and education programs to remote communities. Discussions among these pioneers grew into a regular series of telephone hook-ups of practitioners including Tony English, Jack Shield and Rod Salter.

In 1999 a loose group called “Big Lick” was formed. In 2000 Jack Shield coordinated a watershed conference in Darwin entitled “A Better Dog's Life – Itches to be Scratched”.

At a conference held in Alice Springs in 2002, in association with the Urban Animal Management group, it was decided to change the name of the fledgling organisation to AMRRIC, to draw up a constitution and to formally register as an Association. Significant founding members of AMRRIC also included Mark Lawrie, Peter Brown and Ted Donelan.

In May 2004 AMRRIC received a government grant that enabled the employment of Phil Donohue as the Executive Officer and to complete registration under the Associations Act of the NT. AMRRIC was officially launched in 2004.

Phil worked tirelessly to set up the administrative and financial structures of the organization, whilst also visiting numerous communities to establish and advise on dog health programs. He was the driving force behind the major international conference “Dog





People” held in 2006. Phil tragically died later that year.

From the very beginning, AMRRIC has had a unique approach to its work. A commitment to cultural respect, capacity building and a desire to work with communities and to value their perspective remains at the core of the AMRRIC ethos.

AMRRIC has developed critical resources including Sam Phelan’s milestone manuals for veterinary practitioners and Indigenous Animal Health Workers, and has provided training and mentoring to these groups.

AMRRIC works strategically at local, state and federal government levels to facilitate and support integrated dog health, community development and education programs - our One Health model.





Animal Management in Rural and  
Remote Indigenous Communities

**For more information or  
to support our work:**

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