

Animal Care and Management



Makes a revenue of \$3.82²⁰

Value added \$2.33²¹

Made up of more than 3,400 businesses²²

Employs a workforce of more than 25,700 people²³

Dog owners in Australia spent a total of \$20.5 billion in 2020-2021, while cat owners spent \$10.2 billion.²⁴

69% of Australian households now have one or more companion animals (compared with 61% only two years ago).²⁵

There are now 30.4 million pets (compared with 28.5 million in 2019) that require training, grooming, shelter and health-related services.²⁶

The skills and knowledge of the animal care and management industry contribute hugely to the health and harmony of our communities and ecosystems. Job roles across the industry are diverse, including veterinary nursing, companion and assistance animal management, pet care and training, equine care and animal regulation. With pet ownership growing 8%¹⁹ in the past two years, industry has experienced accelerated growth, meaning continued growth in productivity and profitability. This dedicated workforce continues to adapt its skills, caring for and nurturing wild and domestic animals while supporting the mental and physical health of employees and the public.

The national skills standards and qualifications for this industry are overseen by the Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee (IRC), and the Amenity Horticulture, Landscaping, Conservation and Land Management IRC.

19 Animal Medicines Australia (2021); Pets and the Pandemic

20 IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

21 IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

22 IBISWorld Industry Wizard (2022)

23 AISC (2022); Industries / Animal Care and Management; <https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/industries/animal-care-and-management>; viewed 31/08/2022

24 Labour Market Insights (2022); Animal Attendants and Trainers ANZSCO ID 3611; <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/animal-attendants-and-trainers?occupationCode=3611>; viewed 31/08/2022

25 Labour Market Insights (2022); Animal Attendants and Trainers ANZSCO ID 3611; <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/animal-attendants-and-trainers?occupationCode=3611>; viewed 31/08/2022

26 Labour Market Insights (2022); Animal Attendants and Trainers ANZSCO ID 3611; <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/animal-attendants-and-trainers?occupationCode=3611>; viewed 31/08/2022

Industry Skills Report

This year, Skills Impact prepared an Animal Care and Management Industry Skills Report, at the request of the Industry Reference Committee (IRC), to provide in-depth information about industry-specific issues impacting skills and training.

The animal care and management industry is experiencing rapid expansion, as people in Australia take on more pets and seek out more products and services for them. Pet ownership has experienced 8%²⁷ growth over the last two years, and there is high demand for more information, food, accessories, medicines, therapies and veterinary care. This has created pressure on value chains to respond to elevated and changing demands and to take advantage of opportunities for new and expanding businesses. There is strong growth projected across occupations, with 14.9% more animal attendants and trainers expected to be employed in Australia by 2026²⁸. Future job opportunities such as this will need to be supported by education policy, career planning services for job seekers and students, course offerings by education providers and broader policy and program design.

Attracting labour to keep up with the strong demand for animal care services remains a challenge. A 2021 workforce survey by the Australian Veterinary Association found almost 31% of veterinary job vacancies took more than 12 months to fill or were still not filled. Various strategies are being implemented by industry to promote industry careers,

especially to young people who are interested in working with animals. The Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia (VNCA) has also explored whether veterinary nurses could take on expanded roles, to help mitigate staff shortages. However, appropriate training and support is needed for this to happen safely and effectively.

Access to trained animal care and management professionals is important to protecting animal welfare, biosecurity and public health, especially in regional, rural and remote Australia. To help address the many challenges for providing adequate skills and training opportunities in regional Australia, the Hon Fiona Nash was appointed as Australia's first Regional Education Commissioner in December 2021 and will oversee implementation of recommendations from the *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy* ('the Napthine Review')²⁹. According to the review, provision of tertiary education is the key to increasing productivity and strengthening industries, economies and communities. In remote communities, work with Indigenous ranger groups is helping to meet some animal care and management related needs, but further training and extension of the program may promote better outcomes.

Appropriate ANZSCO and ANZSIC classification of the whole of the animal care and management value chain would help support future industry growth and collection of relevant data. Acknowledging interconnections and interdependencies is becoming increasingly important so that industry can anticipate and respond holistically to challenges, changes or trends.

The IRC has identified priorities for consideration in future:

- review of qualifications in veterinary nursing, including addressing mandatory workplace requirements consistent with new standards introduced in 2022
- review of qualifications in animal technology to include replacement of superseded units to updated units.

27 Animal Medicines Australia (2021); *Pets and the Pandemic*

28 National Skills Commission (2022); *Animal Attendants and Trainers*;

<https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/animal-attendants-and-trainers?occupationCode=3611>; viewed 05/07/2022.

29 Commonwealth of Australia (2019); *National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy*.



Projects

Project work between 2021-22

Skills Impact managed the following projects between July 2021 and June 2022.

The Animal Care and Management Industry Reference Committee (IRC) oversaw the project development, as part of their responsibility to support engagement with their industry and to ensure the project met stakeholder needs.

The skills standards and qualifications updated as part of this project are expected to be endorsed by the AISC and State and Territory Ministers in early 2023.

Small Companion Animal Incident Management Project

The benefits of companion animals are well understood in Australia, with an estimated 30.4 million pets across the country. When incidents occur that put these animals in danger, a coordinated effort is required. Animal facility, emergency services, animal welfare and evacuation centre workers must all work together to manage the safety of companion animals and the people they live with. Following the 2019-20 Australian Bushfires, the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements recommended 'national consistency in training and competency standards' to help support people to work effectively across different states. Specific skills are also required for working in rural and regional Australia where incidents such as fires, floods and natural events occur at a higher rate.

As a result of consultation throughout this project, national skills standards have been developed to support the skills needed to evacuate and accommodate companion animals and their owners during an incident.

Key Outcomes

- Seven units of competency were developed to describe the skills involved in rescuing companion animals, including planning, raising awareness, communicating to owners, participating in and performing rescue, setting up a rescue facility, and determining database information requirements.
- One unit, ACMAIM313 Carry out casualty and post-rescue management of animals, was revised to broaden its coverage so that it can be used for animals of all sizes.
- Four skill sets were developed to address the skills required for management and planning in the case of an incident involving companion animals and campaign planning to raise awareness about companion animal rescue, as well as for participating in companion animal incident management as a worker or leader.
- The revised and developed units are packaged in the existing qualifications ACM30122 Certificate III in Animal Care Services, ACM40122 Certificate IV in Animal Regulation and Management and ACM40222 Certificate IV in Animal Facility Management.
- The Companion Volume: Animal Incident Management User Guide was updated to provide additional information specific to companion animal rescue to assist RTOs with delivery.



Trainers of Assistance Dogs Project

As evidence and awareness of the benefits of assistance dogs grows, there is increasing demand for skilled trainers to prepare dogs and their handlers for life together. There is a projected growth rate of 14.9% to November 2026, meaning an extra 3,083 workers will be needed.³⁰ With long wait lists at organisations such as Assistance Dogs Australia and Guide Dogs Australia, many people are turning to independent dog trainers. This, combined with the expansion of assistance dogs into fields covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other health streams has inspired calls for greater regulation and skilled delivery of assistance animal training.

Thanks to the contributions of everyone involved in this project, five units and two skill sets have been developed to capture the skills required to train assistance dogs for a broad range of purposes and to work with and instruct prospective handlers.

Key Outcomes

- Five units were developed to reflect the skills to train assistance dogs, select appropriate equipment for a handler and dog, assess the suitability of a prospective handler for a dog and instruct handlers to train dogs. The units reflect the importance of the monitoring and maintenance of dogs' work/life balance, condition, and physical, emotional and mental health

needs. References to relevant legislation have been incorporated into the units as applicable.

- Two skill sets were developed to capture the skills required to introduce an assistance dog to a handler and to provide potential dog handlers with the skills and knowledge to train an assistance dog.
- The Certificate IV in Animal Behaviour and Training was updated to include the new units and a specialisation for assistance dog training was added.
- The Trainers of Assistance Dogs User Guide was created to provide additional information to assist RTOs with delivery.

Completed Project (started in the previous year)

The following project was endorsed by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and State and Territory Skills Ministers. The revised qualifications, skill sets and units, that were developed as part of the project, are published on the national training register (training.gov.au) and available for delivery by registered training organisations (RTOs).

Visit www.skillsimpact.com.au/completed-projects for further details.

Horse Care Project

It takes input from a whole range of professionals to care for horses. Different kinds of expertise are required to keep a horse's body functioning well, to make sure equipment used is appropriate and safe, and to make sure basic needs are being met. Industry from around the country contributed to this project to define the skills standards for a range of horse care professions. Qualifications, skill sets and units have been updated and developed so that they support consistency in how services are provided, provide clear career pathways, and promote the foundational safety skills required across all environments.

