

Prologue

Michael Banyard - Urban Animal Management Convener

Welcome to the fourth national conference on urban animal management held in Australia. Previous conferences have been held in Brisbane, Penrith and Canberra. This year's venue, Melbourne, is especially fitting because of the public consultations and consequent legislative developments which have been underway for some years, and are now nearing fruition. I must say, however, that it is unfortunate that the Victorian Government chose to name the new companion animal legislation the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act*. As everyone at this conference is aware, the feral and nuisance dimensions of our relations with animals are minor in comparison to the positive contributions that those relationships make to human well being. This legislation comes into effect on 9 April 1996, and one hopes the Government will consider changing the title before then to reflect the social, economic and political importance of animal keeping in Victoria.

The papers bound in these proceedings reflect views ranging in emphasis from control to prevention. The papers provide up to date information and highlight current issues in urban animal management. Although the views expressed in the papers are those of the author and not necessarily those of the conference organisers, the conference itself is designed as a forum in which such views might be exchanged (and, in some cases, perhaps changed as well) in a positive atmosphere in which urban animal management is discussed seriously by public administrators and policy makers. The conference also provides a wonderful opportunity for participants to renew and build networks with their colleagues, for the long term gain of their host organisations.

Survey work and published research in the past year has confirmed the importance of animal keeping in urban Australia. Baseline data is being accumulated quite rapidly to justify the allocation of adequate resources to urban animal management such that the value of animal keeping to the community can be preserved and enhanced. I do not believe an informed council, aware of the majority community view, would move to prohibit animal keeping. The papers add to opinions and information from previous conferences to help provide a basis for creative as well as reactive policy responses by councils to the occasionally conflicting needs of members in their communities.

This year the proceedings have been edited jointly by David Paxton and Patrick Boland. It is an advantage for attendees to have the proceedings at the conference and the Editor's contribution is gratefully acknowledged, Patrick took on the task at short notice, as David Paxton has accepted a posting to Papua New Guinea to work in an agricultural quarantine project for some years. He will, however, continue to research animal management issues in Port Moresby.

Once again, it is a pleasure to thank Ms Doreen Culliver of AVACOS for the professional and cheerful way she has organised the conference and prepared the proceedings for printing.

Finally this conference would not have been possible without the commitment and energy of all the local organising committee but in particular, Barbara Wellington, Jonica Newby and Rick Walduck.

UAM 95 Support Organisations

**The Australian Veterinary Association
Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association
Petcare Information and Advisory Service
Municipal Association of Victoria**