

# Northern Territory Experiences

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The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of some Northern Territory dog health programs I have been part of since 1997. Between the 4 vets involved they cover virtually all communities in Arnhem Land and all communities in the Tiwi islands, and several communities around the Tennant creek region, around Katherine and the Centre.

The dog programs have been developed from talking to many, many people—Aboriginal people, government departments and others--and looking at the pros and cons from the communities' point of view, from past experience in the communities and from our own experiences. It's worth noting that communities differ markedly in size, language, perception of dogs and other factors. There are exceptions to almost every rule.

## The aims are

- ◇ To improve the health of the dogs,
- ◇ To control dog numbers.
- ◇ To reduce environmental health problems caused by

the dogs (primarily the reduction of zoonotic diseases and nuisance problems),

- ◇ To provide a dog program that is ongoing, professional and supported by community members.

So after desexing thousands of dogs and giving hundreds of thousands of doses of ivermectin to dogs what has changed? What's happening now?

This paper will give an update on what's happening in these dog programs.

It will examine some of the results of the program. What diseases and problems have been controlled and what haven't. Some of the ever present and new difficulties and challenges will be discussed as well.