

# Staying Safe Around Dogs

Towards Tomorrow  
Australian Institute of Animal Management  
2015 Workshop  
Townsville QLD

# Staying Safe Around Dogs

- Why AMRRIC developed this DVD
- Understanding the relationship between dogs and Indigenous people
- Understanding the context – dog populations in Indigenous communities
- Understanding and identifying dog behaviour
- General safety tips for working around dogs in remote communities



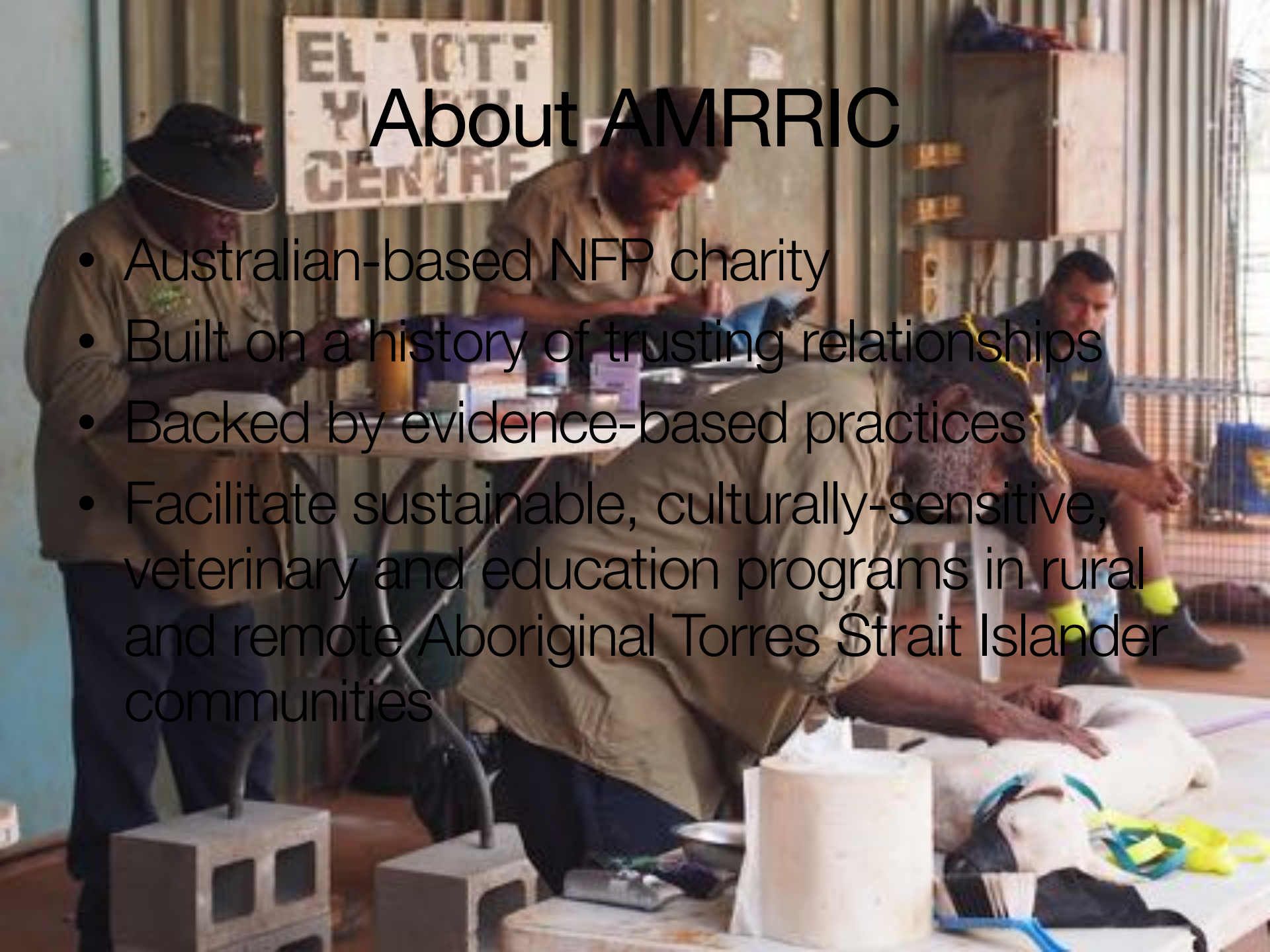
# About AMRRIC

- Independent group of veterinarians, academics and health professionals, Indigenous and non-Indigenous
- Utilise the One Health Framework to improve the health and wellbeing of companion animals, and in doing so, work to improve the overall health and wellbeing of remote Indigenous communities.



# About AMRRIC

- Australian-based NFP charity
- Built on a history of trusting relationships
- Backed by evidence-based practices
- Facilitate sustainable, culturally-sensitive, veterinary and education programs in rural and remote Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities





# About AMRRIC

- Areas of focus include:
  - Companion animal health and welfare
  - Policy
  - Research
  - Education
  - Capacity building of our stakeholders



# Why this DVD was developed

- ‘Culture shock’... Often dogs play a significant role in this experience due to the differences between Indigenous community dog populations, and the way dogs are owned and managed in familiar non-Indigenous settings







*Image courtesy David Darcy*









What are the issues associated with unmanaged dogs?



# Overpopulation





Disease





# Injuries



After:



# Nuisance







Litter

# Threat





# Public Safety



# Flow-on issues associated with unmanaged dogs

- Disempowerment - uncontrolled dogs lower community self-respect
- Stress - grief over sick or dying dogs.



# Broader issues associated with remote communities

## *Issues for communities:*

- poverty
- lack of ownership
- lack of information and training
- limited job opportunities
- poor education levels
- high welfare dependency
- domestic violence and child abuse
- substance abuse

## *Government and stakeholder issues:*

- unsustainable culling programs resulting in lack of trust
- lack of government understanding of the issues
- failure to listen to the needs of communities
- lack of funding and fluctuating funding commitments
- lack of coordination between agencies
- unavailability of qualified vets
- competition for services between communities
- failure of past programs due to poor design

# The Historical Relationship between Dogs and Indigenous People



*Two Aboriginal men with dingoes, Northern Territory Administration Report Lake Mackay Expedition, June/July 1957. ("Two", 1957).*

[www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au)



# Dogs' Importance in Aboriginal culture

- Attribution of skin names



*Image courtesy David Darcy*



# Dogs' Importance in Aboriginal Culture

- Incorporation into creation and 'dreaming' knowledge

*Artwork: 'Papa Tjulurrpa (Dog Dreaming)', Doris Bush Nungarrayi*



# Why do we own dogs?





Companionship





Physical protection





# Spiritual protection

Image courtesy  
David Darcy





Hunting aids





As a source  
of warmth



# The issues with dogs...

## Why do they occur?

- Lack of veterinary access





# The issues with dogs...

- Adjustment to loss of nomadic lifestyle

*Photo: Aboriginal women, Northern Territory, 1928. Photo taken by Herbert Basedow, National Museum of Australia*



# The issues with dogs...

- Dogs not dingos





# The issues with dogs...

- Poverty and geographical isolation



*Image courtesy  
David Darcy*

# The issues with dogs...



- Health and welfare realities of a community













Animal Management in Rural and  
Remote Indigenous Communities