



*The contribution of  
companion animal veterinary  
services to remote Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander  
community wellbeing*



Animal Management in Rural and  
Remote Indigenous Communities

AIAM Annual Workshop 2019  
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Program Manager – AMRRIC



‘People have been going into these communities and they have been killing dogs because they believe these dogs are making people sick. But it’s not the dogs making people sick; they are in fact keeping people alive in the winter because they use the dogs to keep them warm. They cherish these dogs. These dogs are of high value to them. Whitefellas have been going in and shooting dogs against the will of the people, and it causes amazing pain.’

Quote from the late Dr Trevor Cutter who was the first remote area doctor with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, working in the 70s and 80s.

*2000, The place of dogs in Traditional Culture Philip Donohoe, Yambapal Brando Garrawurri, Richard Trudgen, AMRRIC, ARDS, Big Lick 2000 Conference*







Warmth & companionship

Hunting



Protection

Dogs are highly valued in  
remote Indigenous  
communities

Culture



Image: Good Maps



A camp dog's life  
is a great one





## Case study 1: Blackie, Maningrida





**Pre - treatment**





A few months later





**Individual animal issues**



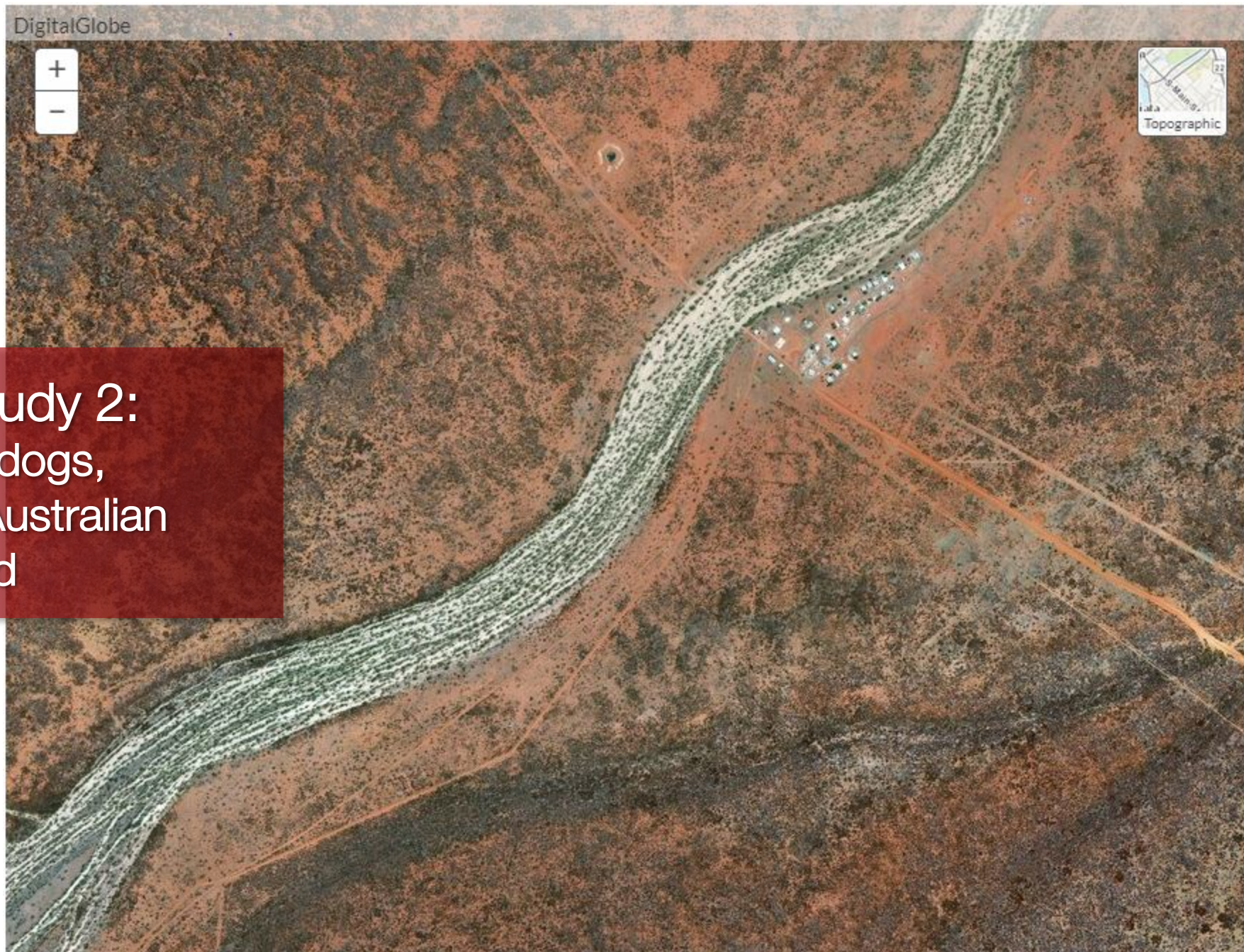








Case study 2:  
Shirley's dogs,  
Central Australian  
homeland





A black dog stands in a dirt yard, surrounded by several small puppies. The dog is looking to the right. In the background, there is a chain-link fence and a yellow building. The ground is reddish-brown dirt.

“I just want all my dogs taken away. I can’t  
look after them and my family.”

— Shirley, outstation 2019





Community animal issues

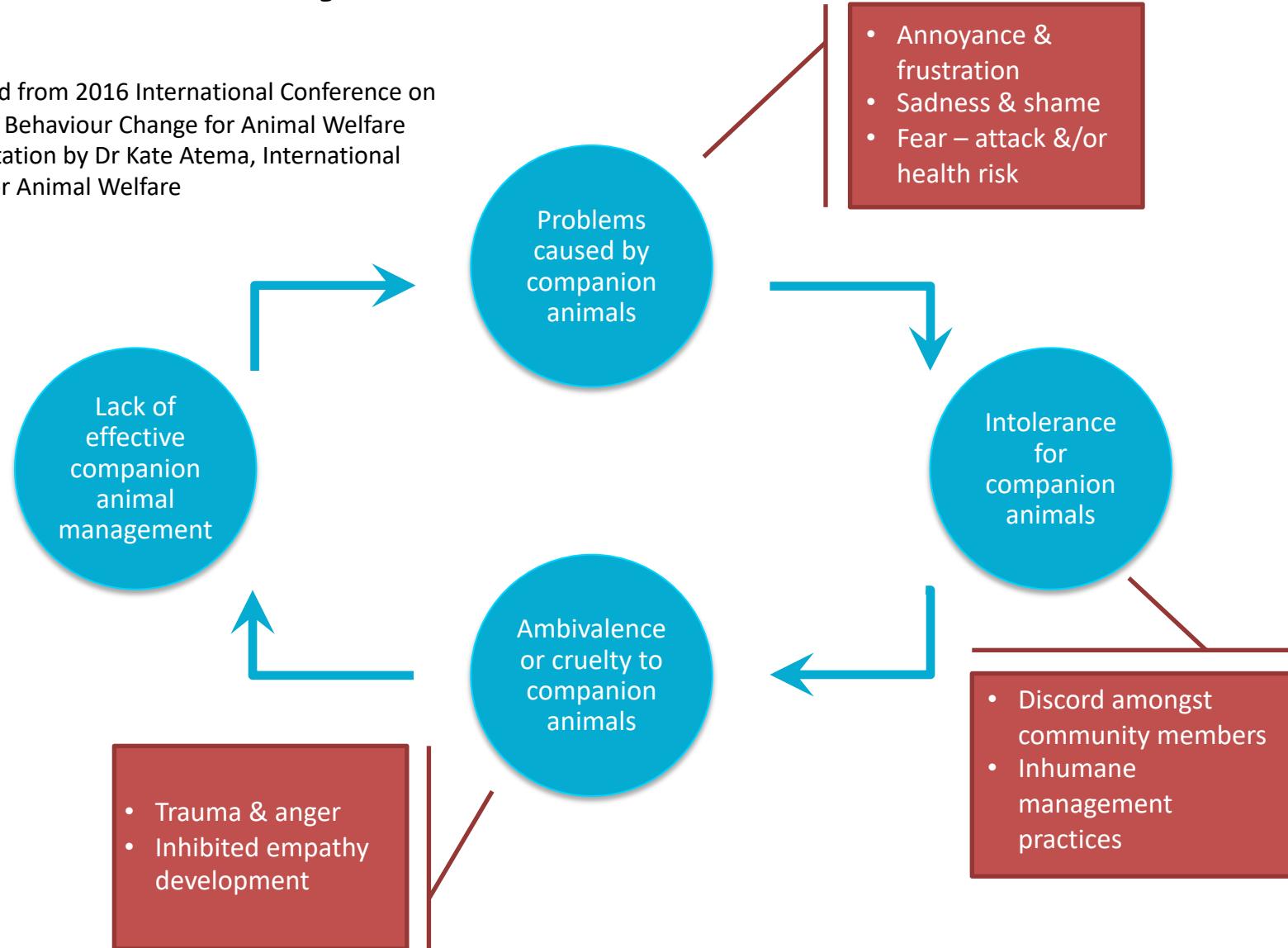






# Cycle of Intolerance

Adapted from 2016 International Conference on Human Behaviour Change for Animal Welfare presentation by Dr Kate Atema, International Fund for Animal Welfare



# Why are there challenges to companion animal management in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

1. Funding, funding, funding
2. Remoteness- distance/weather/culture
3. Lack of knowledge around animal management
4. Lack of prioritisation of animal management
5. Insufficient experienced professionals



## Veterinary services in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander provide:



**Surgical and chemical  
desexing programs**



More desexing-  
Cats, cats, cats





**Community engagement**





**Volunteers!  
Adoption of a  
community!**





**Train local people-  
Rangers are awesome !**



**Train local people – new skills!**



School education





Community events







Animal Management in Rural and  
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Thank you,  
good bye.

Further information:

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