

Australasian Animal Studies Association



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Vision, Mission And Objectives

AASA MISSION:

To activate a community of animal studies scholars, scientists, creative artists and animal advocates. To encourage cross-national and disciplinary exchange and, more particularly, to promote work that has animals and human-animal relations in Australia as a focus.

AASA VISION:

For animals and their relationships with humans and environments to be at the forefront of humane and rigorous scholarly, scientific and artistic enquiry. And for this cross-disciplinary intellectual and creative work to inform and infiltrate the treatment and understanding of animals in national, state and local educational institutions, industries and decision making forums.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Australasian Animal Studies Association are to:

- Hold a biennial Australasian Animal Studies Association national conference and provide a forum for transdisciplinarity and knowledge exchange;
- Promote local meetings, symposiums and conference presentations by Human-Animal Studies scholars.
- Produce a regular bulletin that is distributed via email and the AASA website;
- Encourage and support publication and production of scholarly and creative works in the field;
- Maintain the AASA website and promote national and international events and encourage participation in the field;
- Facilitate discussion through the AASA list-serv;
- Develop a database of AASA participants and document their research interests, methods, outputs and expressions of interest in collaborative projects;
- Support the protection of animals;
- Encourage the development of human-animal studies as a field of academic research;

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Dr Melissa Boyde – Chairperson

I am a Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts at the University of Wollongong. My research is in the fields of modernist literature, Australian modernist art and Animal Studies. My work in Animal Studies is based in cultural theory and research with a focus on the lived experiences of animals – particularly in the cattle industries in Australia.

I have been chairperson of the AASA since mid 2011 and a committee member since 2009. I am the founder and editor of *Animal Studies Journal*, AASA's fully peer reviewed, online journal:



<http://ro.uow.edu.au/asj/> or you can follow us at: <https://twitter.com/animalstudies1>

Fiona Probyn-Rapsey and I are the Series Editors of the *Animal Publics* book series published by Sydney University Press: http://sydney.edu.au/sup/about/animal_publics.html

In 2008 philosopher Denise Russell and I developed the RAAT website (Replace Animals in Australian Testing) which provides information and resources on alternatives to using animal for research and testing: <http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/research/raat/index.html>

My university staff Profile and links to my publications are at: <http://lha.uow.edu.au/taem/contacts/UOW120716.html>

Dr Fiona Probyn-Rapsey – Vice Chairperson

I am Senior Lecturer in the Department of the Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney, where I teach and research in the areas of human animal studies, postcolonial and critical race studies and gender studies.

Since 2011, I have been the network coordinator of HARN: Human Animal Research Network, a cross-faculty research group focused on human and animal interactions here at the University of Sydney. I am author of *Made to Matter* (SUP 2013), Editor (with Jay Johnston) of *Animal Death* (SUP 2013) and currently working on a human animal studies monograph (Routledge). I am on the Editorial boards of *Animal Studies Journal*, *Environmental Humanities* and *Australian Humanities Review*. With Melissa Boyde, I am Series Editor for *Animal Publics*, through Sydney University Press http://sydney.edu.au/sup/about/animal_publics.html

Staff profile: http://sydney.edu.au/arts/gender_cultural_studies/staff/profiles/fprobynrapsey.shtml

Dr Jennifer McDonell – Secretary



I am a Senior Lecturer in English in the School of Arts at the University of New England, where I am also Discipline Convenor for English, Media and Communication Studies.

I completed a BA Hons (I), MA Hons (I) and PhD at the University of Sydney, and am a life member of Clare Hall, U of Cambridge (having held a twelve month visiting fellowship there).

As a descendent of five generations of Australian pastoralists I grew up on a family farm in NSW surrounded by animals of all kinds, and from a young age felt the profound contradictions that haunt human relations with them, and was drawn to vegetarianism as a result.

My research is in the fields of Victorian literature and culture and Animal Studies. Currently I am engaged in two major projects: 1) a revisionary history of the emergence of university English Studies in Britain and Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (with Leigh Dale) and 2) a book on sentimentality and the 'care tradition' in animal ethics as manifested in Victorian writing about animal lives.

I have published on the work of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, including most recently essays on Browning and thing theory in *Bric-à-Brackery: Victorian Culture, Commodities and Curios* (Ashgate, 2013) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and pet keeping (*Aux frontières de l'animal. Mises en scènes et réflexivités.* (Geneva and Paris: Droz, 2012) and *Australian Literary Studies* [June 2010]), a special issue on 'Animals and Literature' which I edited with Leigh Dale. Other forthcoming publications include as guest editor of a special issue of *Modern Language Quarterly* 75:2 (June 2014), and essays on 'Victorian Literature and Animals' commissioned for the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2014) and 'Literary Studies and the "Animal Turn"' in *Social Alternatives* (2013).

As the recipient of national, state and institutional awards for use of online educational technology in delivering innovative English Literature curricula to undergraduate students, I am interested in developing and delivering curricula that incorporates HAS (Human and Animal Studies) methodologies and content.

Staff profile: <http://www.une.edu.au/staff/jmcdonell.php>

Dr Yvette Watt – Treasurer

I am an artist and animal advocate, whose art practice spans more than 20 years. For almost as long as I can remember art and animals have been twin passions that have ruled my life, but in the mid 1980s these passions collided when I began my career as an artist and, almost simultaneously, became actively involved in animal rights.

The aim of my artwork is to engage a broad audience with a consideration of the ethical issues surrounding human-animal relations, and is based

on a firm belief that art can be an important tool for making socio-political comment and thus in aiding and instigating change. As Wayne Pacelle, the Director of the Humane Society of the United States has noted, '[a]rt and other cultural forms can be powerful media for promoting awareness of animal suffering and abuse, and for celebrating animals as creatures who deserve our admiration and respect...'

I have recently completed my PhD in Fine Art at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, with a research project titled 'Animals, Art and Activism'. The PhD involved the production of artworks that actively encourage the viewer to consider animals – particularly 'farm' animals – as sentient beings rather than as insensate, objectified commodities. I achieved this through judicious use of anthropomorphism or, more aptly, 'egomorphism' in the depiction of the animals. The latter term, coined by social anthropologist Kay Milton, places the self, rather than humanness in general, as the primary departure point for any understanding of non-human animals. The activation of egomorphism in the work reflects the fact that this research was driven by a very personal empathy for non-human animals, and a consequent concern about human attitudes toward and treatment of other animals, especially those used for food.

Over the last two decades or more I have held numerous solo exhibitions. My work is held in a number of significant public and private collections including Parliament House, Canberra; Parliament House, Western Australia; Artbank and the Art Gallery of WA. I was a founding member of Animal Rights Advocates (WA) and of Against Animal Cruelty Tasmania and am currently Vice President of Animals Australia.

For more images of Yvette's work see New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies website: <http://www.nzchas.canterbury.ac.nz/artists.shtml>

Dr Sally Borrell – General Committee Member



I have always been fascinated by both animals and literature, and these two worlds came together when I took an Honours paper addressing animals in postcolonial writing. I went on to write a Masters and a PhD on animals in fiction. My research is motivated by the idea that literature has the potential to disrupt traditional notions of the human and promote positive attitudes to other species.

I am an independent scholar in the area of animal representation. My research interests include posthumanism, ecocriticism and postcolonialism. I am the associate editor of *Animal Studies Journal* and a reviews editor for *Society and Animals Journal*. I have been on the committee of the Australasian Animal Studies Association (formerly Australian Animal Studies Group) since 2011 and was its secretary for two years. Outputs include book chapters, journal articles, reviews and conference papers. I am an associate of the [New Zealand Centre for Human Animal Studies](#).

Dr Clare McCausland – General Committee Member



My most recent achievement in animal studies is completing a PhD at the University of Melbourne in animal ethics. In it I unpick the animal rights / animal welfare distinction, and argue that philosophical frameworks like rights and utilitarianism are flexible with respect to the political goals they can support. Groups like the RSPCA can (and effectively do) seek to protect 'welfare rights' from a welfarist perspective, and utilitarianism can support an abolitionist approach no less than a theory of animal rights. It follows that I'm also interested in the language we use to describe our moral beliefs about nonhuman animals – when and why we choose and avoid laden terms like 'rights' and 'welfare'.

I now work in policy at the University of Melbourne. The similarity of the values underpinning human and animal research ethics interests me, as does the importance of institutional transparency and civil disobedience on behalf of animals—a topic on which I have recently published with colleagues at Melbourne. I have been fortunate to benefit from the university's strong human-animal studies research culture, which is now supported by its new Human Rights and Animal Ethics Research Network (HRAE). I wonder how the university ought to balance the necessary uncertainty required in honest academic pursuit—being prepared to go wherever the

arguments take us—with the need to protect interests and promote wellbeing.

What I value highly is the contribution which careful academic scholarship can make to animal protection. Animal ethics is an arena where moral philosophers have had significant impact on the lives of animals and people. We may not all have dedicated long hours picketing factory farms or tending carefully to injured animals to demonstrate our commitment to the cause, but if we do our job well the long-term impact will be no less significant for the lives of others.

Christine Townend – General Committee Member

Christine Townend was founder of Animal Liberation NSW in 1976, and, with Peter Singer, co-founder of Animals Australia in 1980. She was managing trustee of an animal shelter in Rajasthan for seventeen years, during which time she established shelters in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas. She has published eight volumes of fiction and non-fiction, and recently, *Walking with Elephants* (Island Press) her first collection of poetry.



Annie Potts – General Committee Member



Annie Potts is the author of *Chicken*, an illustrated natural and cultural history of gallus domesticus (Reaktion Animal Series, 2011), and co-author, along with Phillip Armstrong and Deidre Brown, of *A New Zealand Book of Beasts: Animals in our Culture, History and Everyday Life* (Auckland University Press, 2013). Her contribution to this book includes a detailed history of companion animals in New Zealand (including traditional pets of Maori); a critical analysis of anti-possum rhetoric in New Zealand; and an exploration of vegetarian sub-cultural identity in this country.

Most recently Annie has co-authored with Donelle Gadenne a book called *Animals in Emergencies: Learning from the Christchurch Earthquakes* (Canterbury University Press, 2014). This book provides a historical record of animal rescue, shelter and advocacy following the earthquakes which struck Christchurch and surrounding areas in 2010 and 2011. Annie is also editing a volume called *Critical Perspectives on Meat Culture* for Brill's Human-Animal Series (for publication in

2015).

Annie is co-director of the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies at Canterbury University.

Bulletin Editor – Dr Nikki Savvides

Dr Nikki Savvides completed her PhD in Cultural Studies at The University of Sydney. Her thesis analysed the work of a number of conservation and animal welfare projects at various sites across South and Southeast Asia. She has published research papers on human-horse relationships and a study on Bangkok's stray ('soi') dogs, which have appeared in *Society and Animals*, *Humanimalia* and the *Animal Studies Journal*. Nikki is currently conducting an ongoing ethnographic study of the complex relationships between mahouts and their elephants in a small tribal village in northeast Thailand.

<http://usyd.academia.edu/NikkiSavvides>