

CANBERRA MOB REPORT

Animal Health Team

Barkly Regional Council:

- Scott Spurling (Animal Management Worker)

Canberra Mob Indigenous Dog Health:

- Michael Archinal (veterinarian)
- Karl Northhall (veterinarian)
- Sandy Hume (veterinarian)
- Ellen Sutherland (veterinarian)
- Jemima Amery-Gale (veterinarian)
- Stacey Gould (veterinary nurse)
- Michelle Hayes (veterinary nurse)

Veterinary Work

The veterinary team visited each community in Utopia (Rocket Range, Soapy Bore, Kurrajong, Mosquito Bore, Atnarara, Arlparra, Apungalindum, Aniltji, Camel Camp, Ampilatwatja) over three days (3th – 5th March 2016), going house to house. The team also visited Hart's Range, N#5, Foxall (7th March) and Engawala (8th March). We spoke to residents at each house, explained the program and asked the owners if they would like to get any of their dogs and cats surgically desexed.

Animals to be desexed were collected at their houses and transported in the Barkly Animal Control vehicle or the Central Desert Shire Vehicle to a temporary 'vet clinic/operating theatre' set up at the community hall at the basketball courts in Arlparra (for the Utopia communities), Harts Range (for dogs from there or N#5 or Foxall) and Engawala (for the dogs from Engawala). Surgery was performed under general anaesthesia, and animals were then returned back to their owners' houses once they were recovered and awake.

All dogs that were desexed were given prophylactic antibiotics and were also treated for parasites (sarcoptic mange, internal parasites, and ticks) with ivermectin (either oral or injectable). All dogs that were desexed were also vaccinated with an annual C4 vaccination against canine parvovirus, canine distemper virus, canine adenovirus type 2 and canine parainfluenza virus type 2.

During the visits to the communities, most dogs (> 90%) were treated with ivermectin sandwiches. Most people in the communities (including Hart's Range) were very receptive to their dogs receiving ivermectin treatment. This is important for animal health and welfare, but for human health as it reduces transmission of disease (especially sarcoptes) from animals to people.

Most community members in Utopia were familiar with the desexing procedure, as we have visited the communities in previous years to run the program. Many of the animals (>70%) had already been surgically desexed in this area. There were still many un-desexed dogs at Camel Camp, especially at the green house at the far side of the camp. This family did not want any of their dogs desexed but were happy for parasite treatment. Everyone else in this community was happy for us to treat their dogs for parasites as well.

Community members in Hart's Range were not receptive to the desexing program. As a result, no-one gave consent for their animals to be desexed (except for Josh's two dogs), although everyone was receptive to parasite treatment for their dogs. There were a particularly large number of dogs living at Irrilirre (N#5), but none of the owners (including Caroline) wanted their dogs to be desexed. Again though, owners in Irrilirre were happy for us to treat their dogs for parasites.

Community members in Engawala were familiar with and receptive to the desexing program and 13 were desexed here.

Health of Dogs in Utopia and Central Desert (Hart's Range and Engawala)

The general health of the Utopia dogs was good, with the majority of dogs having a body condition score of 3/5. About 10% of dogs looked to have mild sarcoptic mange (although this problem is worse at Camel Camp). We saw one male dog with a transmissible venereal tumour (TVT) from **Mosquito Bore**, which was debulked at the same time as desexing. There was also a female dog with a possible TVT or vaginal prolapse at Aniltji, but we were unsuccessful in catching this dog for further examination and in locating the owner.

The general health of the animals in Hart's Range and Engawala was good, with the majority of dogs having a body condition score of 3/5 and approximately 10% with mild sarcoptic mange. The dogs at Irrilirre generally had a lower body condition score (average 2/5) and there were a higher proportion of dogs with sarcoptic mange (approximately 40%). There is approximately 35 undesexed dogs at Irrilirre.

Comments

- As dogs can breed twice a year, it is beneficial to visit every 6 months so that dogs undesexed on this trip don't have time to get pregnant again before the next visit.
- The use of the Central Desert Vehicle and the Barkly Animal Control vehicle was very useful as it has dog cages built onto the ute tray.
- We noticed a decreased number of cats in the communities in Arlparra, compared to previous years
- There are still a lot of dogs that need to be desexed at Irrilirre, Camel Camp and Hart's Range.
- One horse was also gelded at Urapuntja

	Dog female	Dog male	Cat female	Cat male	Average Body score	Average Sarcoptes score	Euthanasia	Comments
Arlparra	3	1			3/5	0		
Soakage Bore	1	3			3/5	0		
Mosquito Bore	8	2			3/5	0		
Atnwengerrp	3	3			3/5	1		
Aniltji	1				3/5	0		1 possible TVT
Soapy Bore	1	1				0		
Kurragong						1		
Camel Camp					2/5	0		
Ampilatwatja		3	6			0		
Rocket Range	1	2				0		
Hart's Range	2				3/5	0		
Irrilirre					2/5	1		A lot of dogs here
Foxall	3	1			2/5	0		
Engawala	6	7			3/5	0	2	
TOTAL	29	23	6				2	

