

Understanding the issues[]

See also: Outstation (Aboriginal community)

Living conditions in remote Indigenous communities across Australia impact on animal and human health. There are many challenges when managing large dog populations within poorly resourced Indigenous communities. The impact of dog health on the human community is evidenced in the zoonotic diseases passed from animals to humans.

In some Indigenous communities in Western Australia gastrointestinal diseases are a major problem in young children. In Western Australia, hospitalisation for gastroenteritis was 7 times higher in Aboriginal children than Non-Aboriginal children.

Dogs have always been part of Indigenous communities in Australia and have many roles including, hunters, companions and guard dogs. Although beliefs about the spiritual significance of dogs vary in from community to community, dogs occupy an important place in culture and the community. It is essential to understand the strong cultural tradition of living with companion animals when developing and delivering animal health and management programs.