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Diana is a greyhound behaviour assessor at the Greyhound Adoption Program in Victoria and a companion animal welfare scientist completing her PhD research on canine personality assessments. Diana has more than a decade of experience working with dogs in shelter, training and research settings, as well as teaching about companion animal behaviour and welfare at both university and TAFE level. She has a passion for dogs and the people that love them (or might love them given the opportunity). Diana's other interests include compassion fatigue and work-related stress in animal welfare workers, and shelter staff and volunteer training and education.

Abstract

In-shelter/pound behaviour assessments: If temperament tests are out, what do we do now?

The growing body of literature concerning shelter/pound-based behaviour assessments for dogs, otherwise known as temperament tests, is increasingly calling in to question the accuracy and reliability of these tests (Rayment et al., 2015, Patronek et al., 2016). The current consensus of experts in the field is that simple one-time, one-context tests for shelter dogs are an unhelpful drain on limited resources at best, and that this situation is not going to change while the current approach to assessing behaviour in shelters remains.

In this presentation, we will briefly discuss the theory behind canine personality and behaviour assessments with a view to understanding the limitations of test-based approaches to assessing behaviour. We will then focus on practical solutions for shelters/pounds to use when learning about the dogs we know the least about – our strays.