



Dr Jacquie Rand

Emeritus Professor, School of Veterinary Science, The University of Queensland
Executive Director & Chief Scientist, Australian Pet Welfare Foundation

Emeritus Professor Rand graduated from Melbourne University in 1975, and worked in veterinary practice for 8 years before doing a residency and doctorate at the Ontario Veterinary College, Canada, followed by 3 years as a senior registrar at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

She was appointed Professor of Companion Animal Health at UQ in 2001 and retired at the end of 2015 to head the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation, which is dedicated to saving pets' lives through research, education and advocacy. She has published over a 112 journal articles, authored 42 book chapters, and is editor of three books.

Currently, she is involved in research programs in shelter medicine aimed at preventing unwanted and problem pets, as well as ongoing research in in diabetes and obesity.

Dr Rand is giving this presentation on behalf of Dr Liyan Huang.

Abstract

Search methods used to locate missing cats and locations where missing cats are found

When pet cats go missing, they are often not found by their owners, with many being taken to shelters and ultimately euthanized. This study aimed to describe times that lost cats were missing, search methods associated with the recovery, locations where they were found and distances travelled. An online survey was created and over 2.5 months, self-selected participants whose cat had gone missing answered questions on demographic information, signalment, how their cat was lost, search methods used, whether the cat was found, time missing and location found for 1232 study cats. An estimated 61% of cats were recovered alive by one year, with 34% recovered within the first 7 days. Few cats were found alive after 90 days. The most effective search method was a physical search; 75% of cats were found within a 500m radius of the point of escape. Cats found dead (2%) were found further from where they were lost (median 429m) than cats found alive (median 50m; $P=0.04$). Microchipping did not significantly contribute to the recovery of missing cats ($P=0.117$). This study highlights the importance of performing a thorough physical search within the first week after cats go missing. Results support further investigation on whether programs that neuter and return cats where found would improve recovery rates and decrease euthanasia in shelters.