



lucy's project

Safe Families - Paws and All

# Annual Report

## 2024-2025

[hello@lucysproject.com](mailto:hello@lucysproject.com)  
[www.lucysproject.com](http://www.lucysproject.com)



## Acknowledgement of Country

Lucy's Project was founded on the land of the Widjabal Wia-bal people of the Budjalung Nation in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. We acknowledge the continuing connection to Country of First Nations Peoples and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We value the knowledge and ways of knowing of First Nations people and stand in solidarity with First Nations people in the ongoing struggle for justice.



## Acknowledgement of Victim-Survivors

Lucy's Project acknowledges the strength, resistance and resilience of people and animals who experience domestic and family violence. We recognise the trauma that is inflicted when people and animals witness their loved ones being harmed, and the immense grief and loss they feel when their loved ones are killed. We advocate for the right to safety of all victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.



# About Lucy's Project

## Our vision

Safe Families, Paws & All

## Our mission

Make a positive impact on the lives of people with animals at risk of, or experiencing, domestic and family violence, by improving their safety and long-term outcomes.

## Our Work

Collaboration, Advocacy,  
Research and Education (CARE)

**Collaboration** to build partnerships across services and sectors to promote a coordinated and holistic response to people and animals experiencing violence

**Advocacy** to highlight policy, program and legislative changes needed to increase the supports people and animals experiencing violence require to be safe

**Research** to increase the evidence base on the issues faced by people and animals experiencing violence and the supports needed, in collaboration with key partners

**Education** to improve the capacity of DFV, community and animal services and workers to provide support to people and animals experiencing violence



# Our Board

Kristin Diemer, Chair

Youna Kim, Company Secretary

Anna Ludvik, Board Director and Founder

Kate Hammond, Board Director



Rishika Pai, Board Director

Rachael Dickinson, Board Director

Monique Dam, Board Director and CEO





# Our Team

## Our Staff

Monique Dam, CEO

Natalie Liotta, Business and Project Officer

Alison Waters, Policy, Advocacy and Research Lead

Belinda Oppenheimer, Education and Partnerships Lead



## Our Volunteers

Jennifer Gallagher

Natasha Lee

Angela Tillott

Madison Martin

Clara Lauinger

## Our Contractors

Ninian Gemmell, Treasurer

Naomi Rose, Bookkeeper

Jeremy Perez, IT Consultant

# A Message from the Chair

*As we present this 2024-2025 Annual Report, this message offers reflection, gratitude and optimism. Over the 12 years of existence, Lucy's Project has navigated opportunities and challenges with passion for its' cause guided by a commitment to integrity, and service.*

*Together, the Founder Anna Ludvik, CEO Monique Dam, the staff and Board members have built a community of dedicated and supportive partners aware that to support humans living with domestic and family violence, it is critical to support the animals in their lives.*

*2024-2025 sees the end of a 2-year core funding grant from NSW Government. This grant, along with donations from Petstock, has been critical to enable Lucy's Project to support DFSV services across Australia with knowledge, education and networks to ensure animals in the care of victim-survivors can be cared for when seeking help.*

*In 2024-2025, Lucy's Project has celebrated tremendous progress in awareness raising, education, and community collaboration. We also enthusiastically welcomed two new Board members.*

*It has been an outstanding year of intense stakeholder engagement. From briefing the NSW parliament, securing consultancy projects and delivering an impactful education program, Lucy's Project will endure.*

*I extend my deepest appreciation to the staff and volunteers, whose dedication has been the heart of Lucy's Project. To our Board members, thank you for your trust and collaboration. And to our Founder Anna, and CEO Monique, I am grateful for your imagination, innovation and integrity.*



*Your support is making a difference in the lives of human survivors of domestic and family violence by paying attention to the animals in their lives.*

*As we close this chapter, we do so with pride in what has been accomplished and optimism that the spirit and commitment will continue to inspire future endeavours.*

Warm regards,



Dr Kristin Diemer  
Chair, Board of Directors  
December 2025

# A Message from the CEO

*Lucy's Project is a lot about love. Lucy's Project was born out of our founder Anna's love for her daughter and her love for animals. We exist because we know that people love their animals and animals love their people. For people experiencing violence, their only safe relationship may be with their animal.*

*We're passionate about building a shared understanding across sectors that the safety and wellbeing of people and animals is interconnected. Animals are family and no one fleeing a violent partner or parent should be forced to leave their beloved animals behind.*

*Many women do not leave, or delay leaving, a violent partner because they are worried their animals will be killed. Women and children risk their lives and experience homelessness to protect their beloved animals, and animals risk their lives to protect the women and children they love.*

*Thank you to the many survivors who have shared their stories with us at Lucy's Project. We are so grateful to you for speaking out to highlight the ways that services and systems failed you and your animals – and how we can make them work better.*

*Thank you to the organisations we have collaborated with this year – Domestic Violence NSW, Women's Legal Services Australia, NSW Women's Alliance, Cat Protection Society of NSW, FAMS, Animal Welfare League NSW, RSPCA Australia, Companion Animal Network Australia, PetRescue, Engender Equality Tasmania, Petstock, White & Case, and many more. We are inspired by the changes we've been able to create together to improve the lives of people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence.*



*Thank you to all the politicians and policymakers we have met with, who joined us for our NSW Parliamentary Briefing, who engaged with us as part of Federal and State Parliamentary Inquiries, who consulted with us as part of policy, program and legislative reviews. We value your time and support and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the safety of people and animals across the country.*

*Thank you to every advocate, practitioner and researcher across the domestic and family violence, community, homelessness, animal welfare and veterinary sectors who have supported people and animals to find safety and to heal and recover from violence.*

*Thank you to our dedicated team of board members, staff and volunteers who are so passionate and committed to the work we do. You bring your heart and soul to work everyday and it makes a difference.*

*The work we do is hard. The stories we hear break our hearts. But our hope keeps us going, year after year, because we know change is possible.*

*We've witnessed significant shifts in the past 12 years and 12 months, and we will keep working towards a safer future for everyone. Because every person and animal has the right to be safe.*

*We look forward to the day that our work is done – when we no longer need to exist. Until then, we look forward to working together until every person and animal is safe.*

*With love, hope and determination,*



Monique Dam  
CEO and Board Director  
December 2025

# Thanks Petstock!

Thank you Petstock for increasing community awareness of domestic and family violence perpetrated against people and animals and raising \$124,503 for Lucy's Project as part of the 2024 Christmas Project and the Hometown Heroes Campaign!







# What we achieved across our CARE pillars of Collaboration Advocacy Research Education...

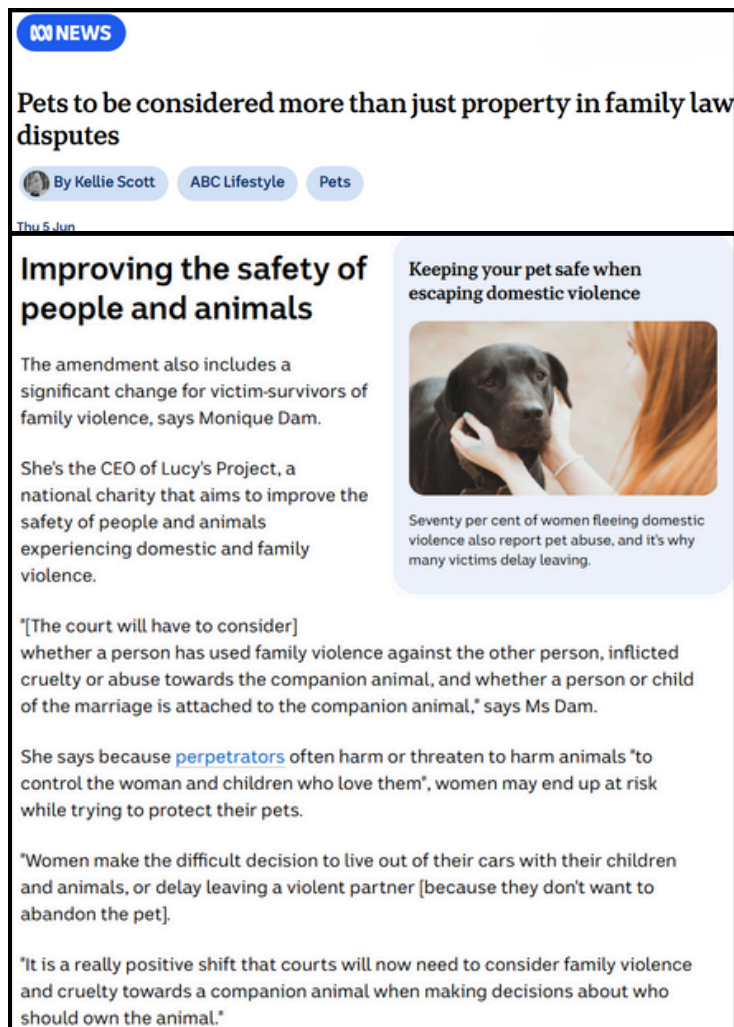




# Collaboration

Lucy's Project collaborated with organisations across the DFV, community, homelessness, animal welfare and veterinary service sectors across all areas of our work including advocacy, research and education. Below we have highlighted some of our key collaborative advocacy achievements:

- Collaborated with 6 organisations to advocate for legislative changes in NSW to improve access to rental housing for people with animals experiencing DFV. These changes came into effect in May 2025.
- Collaborated with 5 organisations to advocate for family law courts to prioritise the safety of victim-survivors when making decisions about animals as property. The changes came into effect in June 2025.
- Collaborated with 6 organisations to advocate for changes in Tasmania to ensure animal abuse is recognised as a form of DFV in law. These changes came into effect in November 2024.



**ABC NEWS**

## Pets to be considered more than just property in family law disputes

By Kellie Scott | ABC Lifestyle | Pets

Thu 5 Jun

### Improving the safety of people and animals

The amendment also includes a significant change for victim-survivors of family violence, says Monique Dam.

She's the CEO of Lucy's Project, a national charity that aims to improve the safety of people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence.


"[The court will have to consider] whether a person has used family violence against the other person, inflicted cruelty or abuse towards the companion animal, and whether a person or child of the marriage is attached to the companion animal," says Ms Dam.

She says because **perpetrators** often harm or threaten to harm animals "to control the woman and children who love them", women may end up at risk while trying to protect their pets.

"Women make the difficult decision to live out of their cars with their children and animals, or delay leaving a violent partner [because they don't want to abandon the pet].

"It is a really positive shift that courts will now need to consider family violence and cruelty towards a companion animal when making decisions about who should own the animal."

### Keeping your pet safe when escaping domestic violence



Seventy per cent of women fleeing domestic violence also report pet abuse, and it's why many victims delay leaving.





# Advocacy

Lucy's Project made evidence-based policy submissions and provided input for:

- NSW Homelessness Strategy 2025-2035 which led to a commitment in the strategy to ensure people with animals can access crisis accommodation.
- NSW Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool Redesign which ensured that services are required to ask victim-survivors about any harm or threats to harm companion, assistance, farmed and wild animals.
- NSW Common Risk Assessment and Management Framework which ensured that veterinary professionals are included as responders to DFV.
- NSW Rental Commissioner and Fair Trading consultation which led to changes to make it easier for people to rent with companion animals.
- Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Violence Orders which led to the Committee recommending that risk assessments address harm to animals, and that training about animal abuse be provided to judges and lawyers.
- Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Law Amendment Bill and provided evidence at the Senate Hearing which ensured that companion animals can be transferred to a family member or friend, instead of having to be sold, if the court decides neither party should own the animal.
- National Roundtable into Healing and Recovery to ensure recognition that people and animals should be supported to heal and recover together.
- SA Royal Commission into DFSV which led to the recommendation that the risk assessment framework must identify and respond to animal abuse.
- TAS Family Violence Amendment Bill 2024 which led to changes to the law to ensure that animal abuse is recognised as a form of DFV. Lucy's Project role in driving the change was acknowledged in a speech in parliament.
- Commonwealth and State and Territory Budgets for 2025-2026 to ensure that governments are aware of the need to fund services to support people and animals experiencing DFV.



# Advocacy

Lucy's Project delivered a Parliamentary Briefing with the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, supported by the co-chairs the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC and Trish Doyle MP.

Thank you to all the NSW parliamentarians who spoke at the briefing to acknowledge the importance of working together to improve the safety of people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence, including:

- The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC, Shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion, Homelessness and Youth
- Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains and Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Heritage
- The Hon. Emma Hurst MLC, Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Animals and Women's Health
- Abigail Boyd MLC, Chair of Parliamentary Friends of People with Disability, Deputy Chair of Parliamentary Friends of Animals and Women's Health
- Wendy Tuckerman MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government and Member for Goulburn
- The Hon. Janelle Saffin MP, Minister for the North Coast, Recovery and Small Business and Member for Lismore

We also greatly appreciated the attendance of:

- Jenny Leong MP, Member for Newtown
- Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury and Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education
- Tim James MP, Member for Willoughby and Shadow Minister for Small Business, Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building
- The Hon. Aileen Macdonald OAM MLC, Shadow Minister for Youth Justice
- The Hon. Scott Farlow MLC, Shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hunter, Housing and Cities.

Thank you also to all the policy advisors who joined the parliamentary briefing.



**lucy's project**

Safe Families - Paws and All

*Join us for a briefing about domestic and family violence  
perpetrated against people and animals*

**THURSDAY  
5 JUNE**

**12.30 to  
1.30pm**

**MACQUARIE  
ROOM**



**This briefing will cover:**

- An introduction to Lucy's Project and the impact of our work
- The nature of DFV perpetrated against people and animals
- Perpetrators' use of animal abuse as part of coercive control
- Issues and barriers to safety for people and animals
- Solutions for improving the safety of people and animals

*Lucy's Project thanks the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC and  
Molly McDonald for their support in organising this event*







# Research

Lucy's Project organised 2 day conference to bring together over 30 speakers and 120 attendees to share research and practice insights.

The participants work in the DFV, community, veterinary, animal welfare, university, TAFE, legal, and government sectors.

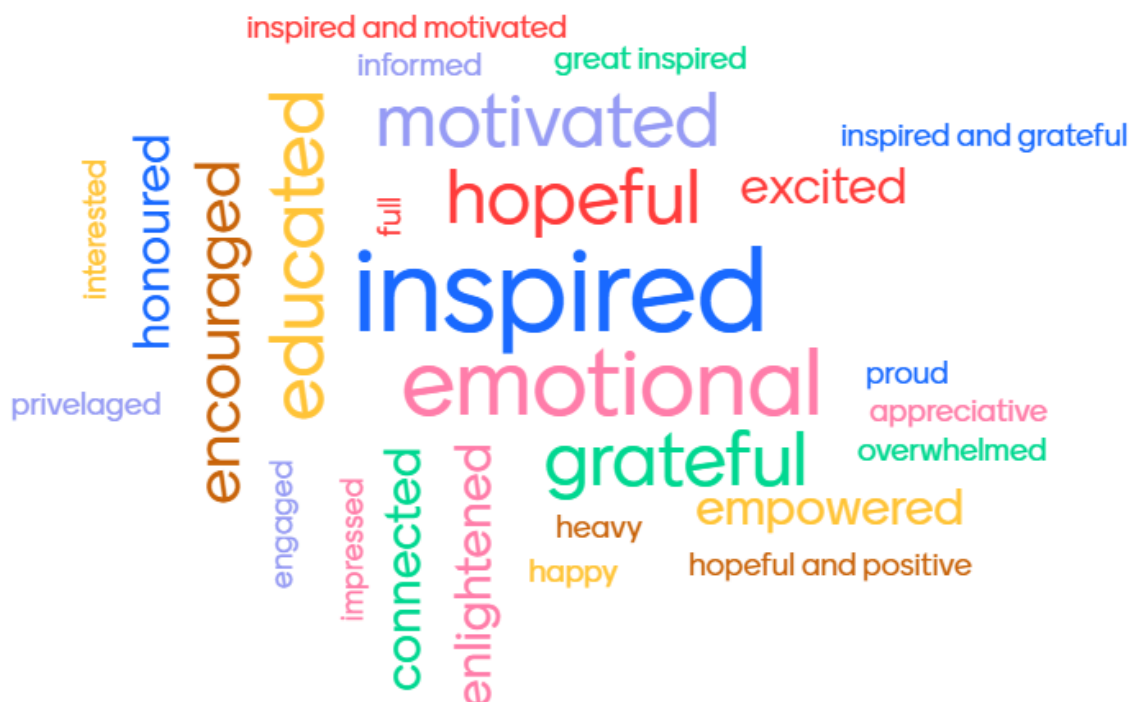
90% of participants said the conference increased their understanding of emerging and better practices for supporting people and animals experiencing DFV.

Participants said they were inspired to take the following actions:

- Advocate for policy and practice changes within their service
- Include animals during intake, risk assessment, safety planning
- Educate their teams and share insights with their colleagues
- Collaborate across human and animal services
- Develop or expand emergency boarding and care programs
- Undertake research on issues raised during the conference

The conference report and session recordings are available on our website:

- <https://lucysproject.com/2024-conference-report/>
- <https://lucysproject.com/2024-conference-recordings/>



Lucy's Project partnered with White & Case LLP International Law Firm who undertook extensive legal research on a pro bono basis for Lucy's Project.

Lucy's Project asked White & Case to provide a comprehensive overview of relevant laws across the Commonwealth and state and territory jurisdictions to respond to the following questions:

- What provisions exist in DFV-related legislation regarding violence or threats of violence against animals?
- How do Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) and equivalent legal instruments provide protection for animals or people with animals?
- What are the current laws regarding the right of tenants experiencing DFV to keep animals in residential premises?
- Under the amended Family Law Act, how are companion animals treated in property settlements or custody matters in DFV contexts?
- Are there specific legal mechanisms for determining "custody" or care arrangements of animals post-separation in DFV-related family law proceedings?
- What are the laws regarding ownership, registration, and microchipping of companion and farmed animals?
- In cases of DFV, what legal hurdles exist in proving ownership or reclaiming animals legally classified as "property"?
- What protections are afforded under any Animal Cruelty Legislation or equivalent acts? Do these protections extend to animals experiencing or exposed to DFV (companion, assistance, farmed, and wild animals)?
- What anti-discrimination protections exist for individuals with assistance animals?
- Are there inconsistencies (if any) between federal and state/territory laws that may impact victims of DFV with assistance animals?
- What legal avenues are available for addressing harm to wild animals in the context of DFV?

Thank you to the over 30 partners, lawyers and staff of the White & Case Australian offices for contributing your time and expertise!

The legal research will be highly valuable for informing Lucy's Project's policy submissions and advocacy for legislative reform to improve the safety and wellbeing of people and animals experiencing DFV across Australia.



# Education

Lucy's Project delivered 24 education sessions to 691 participants working in the DFV, homelessness, community, animal welfare, veterinary and local government sectors.

- 92% of participants said that their understanding of DFV perpetrated against people and animals had improved.
- 98% of participants said they now have a better understanding of animal inclusive intake, risk assessment and safety planning.
- 100% of participants said that their knowledge of the barriers faced by people and animals experiencing DFV had improved.

Participants said they would make changes to their practice to include questions about animals and animal abuse during intake, risk assessment and safety planning.

*"Another fantastic training from Lucy's Project with accurate, up-to-date, evidence based information, with progressive ideas and strategies for structural change."*

*"The practical steps for supporting people to safely leave with animals was incredibly valuable and touched on lots of points I hadn't thought about before."*

In addition to the education sessions outlined above, Lucy's Project also presented to over 1000 workers at:

- Australian Institute of Family Studies Webinar
- NSW Police Domestic Violence Forum
- Animal Welfare League NSW Conference
- Legal Aid NSW Family Advocacy and Support Services Forum
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services Forum
- NSW Councils United for Pets Network Meeting
- DFV Networks for the Inner West, Cumberland, Illawarra
- International Association of Veterinary Social Work Webinar

Lucy's Project also contributed to the following initiatives:

- Podcast for Legal Aid NSW
- Podcast for Women's Legal Service Queensland
- NSW Police and Rotary 16 Days of Activism Campaign



## Raising awareness through social media

Over the past year, Lucy's Project has seen significant growth across our communications channels, reflecting the impact of our renewed digital strategy. With a stronger focus on consistency, skills development, and expanding our online presence, we've been able to connect more deeply with our community and amplify the message that safety for all victim-survivors, including animals, is possible.

Our social channels saw steady and meaningful increases in both reach and followers. Instagram reach grew by 27.69%, while Facebook reach rose by an impressive 53.60%. We also strengthened our core supporter community, with Instagram followers increasing by 47.81% and Facebook followers by 12.3%.


Engagement tells an even more encouraging story. Content interactions surged—by 122.17% on Instagram and 56.52% on Facebook—demonstrating that our messaging is resonating more strongly than ever. Content sharing on Instagram also increased dramatically by 535.72%, helping further extend our reach and awareness of animal-inclusive safety.

This year, several posts significantly outperformed our usual metrics, demonstrating the impact of strategic content design, sector partnerships, and selective paid promotion. Across our top posts, we saw strong reach, high view counts, and meaningful interaction rates, with several posts generating 2,000 to 4,380 views and others driving remarkable engagement relative to audience size.

We also expanded our electronic mailing list, with email subscribers increasing by 21.25%. This growth strengthens our ability to maintain ongoing conversations with supporters, provide updates on our advocacy, and invite more people to be part of the movement for safety and change.

These results reflect the power of a thoughtful, strategy-driven approach—and highlight the growing community of people committed to helping us build a future where no victim-survivor, human or animal, is left behind.

We have continued to strengthen our social media strategies by deepening supporter engagement, enhancing supporter experience, and positioning Lucy's Project as a sector leader in animal-inclusive domestic and family violence responses. We aim to achieve this by maintaining a strong, adaptable social media strategy that keeps pace with a fast-moving digital landscape. Our content and engagement approach have continued to be reviewed to ensure it reflects emerging goals, tools, and opportunities for impact.





Lucy's Project  
Published by [Natalie Liotta](#) • August 21, 2024 •




Calling All Vets! 🐾🐾

W... See more



# CALLING ALL VETS!

Want to earn Australian Veterinary Association **CPD points** AND.....






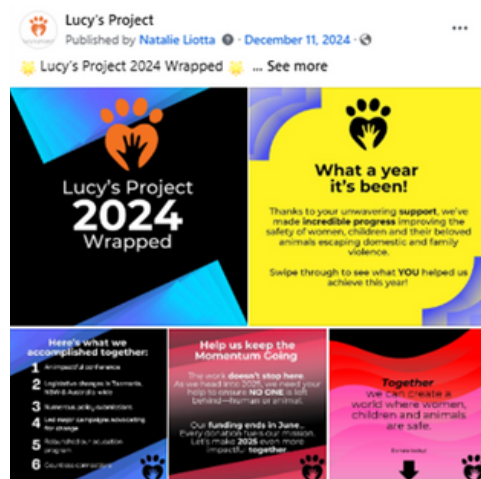
... deepen your understanding of the link between animal welfare & domestic violence?

Don't miss our **2024 Online Conference!**  
Be part of the change & advance your professional development!

**GET YOUR TICKET TODAY!**





## Lucy's Project's 12<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration

A highlight of the year was celebrating Lucy's Project's 12<sup>th</sup> birthday with our supporters and partners.

The event included:

- A reflection on our impact over the past 12 months by CEO Monique Dam and over the past 12 years by Founder Anna Ludvik
- A spoken word and musical performance by Talie Star and Sabine Hattersley
- A speech by Delia Donovan, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW
- A panel discussion with:
  - Kristina Vesk, CEO of Cat Protection Society NSW
  - Talie Star, Consultant in Trauma, Recovery, DFV, Homelessness and Disability
  - Rishika Pai, Women's Legal Service NSW and Lucy's Project Board Director
  - Kristin Diemer, University of Melbourne and Lucy's Project Chair
  - Monique Dam, CEO and Board Director of Lucy's Project
- An art viewing with artworks donated by Natasha Lee and Andrew Meade

To close the night, there was a lighting of a candle in memory of Lucy.

We are grateful to all the speakers, volunteers and the 51 supporters who joined us on the night, including our partners Petstock Foundation and White & Case.

## Thank you for joining us!



The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC • The Hon. Emma Hurst MLC

Aboriginal Women and Children's Crisis Service • ACON • Animal Welfare League NSW •  
ANROWS • Cat Protection Society of NSW • Campbelltown City Council •  
Companion Animal Network Australia • Domestic Violence NSW • FAMS • Hope and Heal •  
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre • Link Wentworth • Local Government NSW •  
Mary's House • Older Women's Network NSW • Paws and Recover • RSPCA NSW •  
Total Ethics Media and Marketing • University of Melbourne •  
Western Sydney University • Women's Health NSW • Women's Legal Service NSW

Petstock • Pooches at Play • White & Case Law Firm















## “Companion Animals” by Talie Star

Unconditional	They know we need them
Warm our hearts	And they us
Connect our souls	
Safe place to be	They love, won't leave
	When left, escape to come back
Listening...	Fret when left behind
Hearing...	Trying to find safety with them
Responding...	
We protect them, they us	leads to
	Homelessness
Know when we need them	Abuse
Detect when unwell	Fear
Reason to get up	
Keep going	Landlords blame animals for
	disrepair
When they're traumatised	Tribunal
So are we	Leaving them/not an option
When we're hurt	
They hurt	Provision
	Leads to safety for all
Watching an animal abused	Settles
Breaks something inside	Hope breaks through
We lose ourselves as we lose	
them	And life can begin anew

*Talie Star is a Consultant in Trauma, Recovery, DFV, Homelessness and Disability. She is a supporter of Lucy's Project.*

*Talie wrote this poem for the 2024 Lucy's Project Conference and performed it at our 12<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2025.*

# Thank You!



## **Our funding body**

NSW Government

## **Our supporters and donors**

Everyone who has donated to us – your support makes such a difference!

We would like to extend a special thank you to the following supporters and donors:

Petstock Foundation  
White & Case LLP Law Firm  
Total Ethics Media and Marketing  
Persephone Foundation  
Canva Space  
Natasha Lee  
Talie Star