

PhD Scholarship in Human-Animal Relations and Disaster Preparedness and Survival



A PhD Scholarship is available on the ARC DECRA Project 'Should I stay or should I go? Increasing natural disaster preparedness and survival through animal attachment' to work with principle supervisor Dr Kirrilly Thompson who is based at CQUniversity Australia's Appleton Institute, Adelaide. Suitable co-supervisors will be sourced to provide the relevant disciplinary support. The project commences in 2013.

The successful candidate will receive the tax-exempt scholarship of \$24 653 per year for three years (standard ARC entitlement) including relocation expenses of \$1520 maximum, a thesis allowance of \$840, laptop computer, \$2000 per year research costs at the supervisor's discretion (which would be used to fund an interstate student's visits to Adelaide) and \$1500 per year towards presentation of a paper at a conference.

Applications close

Friday, 22 February 2013

Project Summary

Countless Australians risk their lives to save animals during bushfires and floods. Many die. Animal attachment theories explain this heroic but self-destructive behaviour. However, they have not been extended to prevent it. What if the risk in wanting to save animals was also an untapped protective opportunity? This project will determine how people's motivation to save animals during natural disasters could be used to increase preparedness and improve survival. By interviewing and surveying survivors of natural disasters about the impact of animals on their emergency behaviour, this innovative project will develop effective public health campaigns to improve natural disaster preparedness and save Australian lives.

The project involves the following methods and deliverables:

1. Analyse secondary data, including witness statements in Volume IV of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report.
2. Interview 120 natural disaster survivors in four Australian states (30 interviews in each state) about the impact of animal attachment on their experiences of fire (South Australia and Victoria) and flood (New South Wales and Queensland).
3. National online survey of 500 pet owners surveying animal owners and carers about a) their past behaviour if they have experienced a natural disaster and their plans in case of future disasters and b) their planned behaviour if they have not experienced a natural disaster.
4. Develop an innovative emergency preparedness public health campaign that effectively increases natural disaster preparedness and survival.

The successful PhD candidate will contribute to some or all of the above listed methods and deliverables. In the formal application form, potential candidates will be asked to propose a PhD concept based on or complimentary to the aims, methods and deliverables listed above (and available in expanded detail by contacting Dr Thompson).

For example, the candidate might want to:

- Conduct a mixed-methods study by using all three data collection methods listed above
- Take ownership of one method (ie in situ interviews)
- Focus on one kind of disaster (flood or fire)
- Focus on one kind of animal (pet, livestock or wildlife; or dog, cat, horse etc)
- Focus on one state
- Any combination
- Propose a complimentary study (eg evacuation centres, grief following pet loss).

Applicants are encouraged to discuss ideas with Dr Thompson. An offer to the successful candidate does not mean that their proposed area will proceed exactly as detailed in their application form.

You will need

- To be prepared to enrol in a full-time postgraduate research degree at CQUniversity
- To be prepared to travel to Adelaide for occasional meetings if you are based elsewhere in Australia
- To have an appropriate Honours 1 or 2A (or equivalent) undergraduate degree
- To not be receiving similar funding or stipend from any Commonwealth Government program
- To not already have completed a degree at the same level as the proposed Commonwealth-supported candidature or at a higher level
- To not previously have held an Australian Postgraduate Award or APAI unless it was terminated within its first six months.

Other considerations:

- Location in Adelaide is not a requirement, but a successful interstate candidate will be required to attend at least one meeting in Adelaide each year.
- The successful applicant will be required to undertake a thesis by publication.
- We are looking for a team player who is as enthusiastic about intellectual insight as they are about conducting applied research and who is as comfortable presenting at academic forums as they are collaborating with industry partners
- The position will commence in 2013. The start date is negotiable but an early start (March) is preferred.

For further information on the project, or to obtain a full and detailed project description:

- * Prior to 8 February please contact Dr Kirrilly Thompson on 0413 616 650 or kirrilly.thompson@cqu.edu.au.
- * After 8 February please contact Kasey Girle on 07 4923 2607 or sgr@cqu.edu.au.

Please click [here](#) for the application package. The application can be submitted by email to sgr@cqu.edu.au