

Not “Naughty”, Not “Normal” - *Behaviour Conference + Masterclass*



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Centre for
Veterinary
Education

9-13 February 2026 | 31 CPD Points
Veterinary Science Conference Centre,
The University of Sydney

Silver Conference Sponsor



Behaviour is not a verdict – it’s a vital sign.

This five-day program brings together a three-day behaviour conference and an intensive two-day masterclass, designed to transform the way you understand, assess and manage behavioural medicine in practice.

Featuring an exceptional speaker line-up – you’ll learn through evidence-based teaching, practical frameworks, case discussions and whole-clinic perspectives.

Whether you’re looking to strengthen your everyday behavioural consultations or deepen your expertise through advanced masterclass training, this program will help you see behaviour differently – and change practice for the better.

cve.edu.au/behaviour-conference
[#behaviourconference2026](https://twitter.com/behaviourconference2026)

Conference Program

Conference Day 1: YOUNG PATIENTS

Preventative care, developmental opportunities and challenges, nature vs nurture, early intervention and training approaches, clinic-wide procedures to foster education of clients.

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| 8.00 | Registration |
| 8.25 | Welcome - Kate Patterson |
| 8.30 | The young patient - neurodevelopment and the capacity to learn - Jacqui Ley |
| 9.10 | What about socialisation? Vaccination, risks and maternal protection - Bronwen Bollaert |
| 9.30 | Spectrum of 'appropriate' - what should we expect of puppies and kittens? - Sally Nixon |
| 9.50 | Red flags and abnormalities - what to look for - Sally Nixon |
| 10.10 | The young patient journey - what can we do in the clinic to help prevent problems? - Isabelle Resch |
| 10.30 | Morning tea/coffee |
| 11.00 | Case presentation and feline behaviour focus: How to differentiate between fear-based and play aggression - Goncalo Da Graça Pereira |
| 12.00 | Pharmacology and young patients - When / what / why? - Shana Gilbert-Gregory & Kersti Seksel |
| 1.00 | Lunch |
| 1.45 | Behaviour management in the hospital: lessons from a shelter medicine perspective. - Gabrielle Carter |
| 2.15 | Updates on fear free / feline friendly programs and practical approaches to managing behaviour problems in the hospital perspective. - Shana Gilbert-Gregory |
| 2.45 | Managing Behaviour in the Hospital from a Vet Nurse perspective - Jodie Pignone |
| 3.30 | Afternoon tea |
| 3.45 | When training is trauma - training myths and behaviour modification in the young - Bronwen Bollaert, Jacqui Ley & Kersti Seksel |
| 5.00 | Conference mixer _ VSCC Foyer |

Conference Day 2: ADULT PATIENTS

Clinician and owner fatigue - what happens when it's not working? Is this a medical problem - multidisciplinary approach, fears and phobias.

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| 8.00 | Registration |
| 8.25 | Welcome - Kate Patterson |
| 8.30 | Destruction, Distress or Disorder? Case presentation(s): Same presentation, alternative history, different management - Case presentation 1 - Sally Nixon - Case presentation 2 - Isabelle Resch - Case presentation 3 - Gabrielle Carter |
| 10.00 | Contextual history taking - a skill every vet should have - Isabelle Resch |
| 10.30 | Morning tea/coffee |
| 11.00 | Why is my cat losing fur? Psychogenic alopecia - an alternative history - Goncalo Da Graça Pereira |
| 11.45 | Why does my cat lick surfaces? Gut - brain axis, how the microbiome affects behaviour - Isabelle Resch |
| 12.15 | Consequences of working in silos - lessons from integrating behaviour medicine into a hospital - Shana Gilbert-Gregory |
| 1.00 | Lunch |
| 1.45 | Feline behaviour referral practice in Portugal, vs USA vs Australia - why are cats referred? What can we learn from each other? - Goncalo Da Graça Pereira, Shana Gilbert-Gregory & Kersti Seksel |
| 2.45 | Contextualised / spectrum of care approach for chronic cases - what are the options? - Gabrielle Carter, Isabelle Resch & Sally Nixon |
| 3.30 | Afternoon tea |
| 3.45 | What happens when the plan isn't working: Strategies to manage clinician and client fatigue. - Jacqui Ley |
| 4.30 | Conference Close |

Conference Day 3: GERIATRIC PATIENTS

Pain, orthopaedic exam in cats, cognition, sleep deprivation, when the problem is the owner – human psychology

8.00 Registration

8.25 Welcome – Kate Patterson

8.30 Pain pathways and behavioural manifestations: how to do a hands-off examination. – Sally Nixon

9.30 Normal feline ageing or other behaviour change – how can I differentiate?
– Jacqui Ley

10.00 The signs can be subtle – an approach to the feline orthopaedic exam
– Rachel Basa

10.30 Morning tea/coffee

11.00 Differentiating house soiling and marking: considerations for treatment
– Goncalo Da Graca Pereira

12.00 How to manage the aggressive animal in the hospital – environmental and pharmacological management
– Shana Gilbert-Gregory

1.00 Lunch

1.45 The human-animal bond: when the problem is on the other end of the leash
– Kersti Seksel

2.30 The chicken, the egg and the epigenome: does epigenetics influence behaviour?
– Jess Hawes

3.00 The psychology of non-compliance. Why owners don't do what you recommend
– Bronwen Bollaert

3.30 Afternoon tea

3.45 Emotionally charged cases and how to manage behavioural euthanasia
– Shana Gibert-Gregory

4.30 Conference Close

Masterclass

Day 4 – 5: MASTERCLASS

Transform Your Approach to Behavioural Medicine

9.00 – 5.00

Discover the cutting edge of animal care in this comprehensive masterclass on veterinary behavioural medicine.

This masterclass offers a deep dive into understanding, assessing, and shaping animal behaviour for improved welfare and clinical outcomes. Led by four renowned international experts in the field, you'll explore the latest research, practical case studies, and evidence-based strategies for diagnosing behaviour problems, implementing treatment plans, and fostering positive relationships between pets and their people.

Whether you want to master the art of behavioural consultations, tackle complex cases with confidence, or simply expand your knowledge, this masterclass provides hands-on techniques and real-world insights tailored for Australian practice.

Join us to elevate your skills, network with fellow professionals, and help animals lead happier, healthier lives.

Presented by:

Dr Goncalo da Graca Pereira,

Dr Shana Gilbert-Gregory,

Dr Kersti Seksel &

Dr Jacqui Ley

Masterclass

Day 1: MASTERCLASS

“So You Think You’ve Tried Everything?”

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| 8.30 | Registration |
| 9.00 | Veterinary Psychopharmacology – Beyond the Basics Explore the latest advances in psychopharmacology for pets, including case-based discussions. - Jacqui Ley |
| 10.30 | Morning tea/coffee |
| 11.00 | Permutations and Combinations in Psychopharmacology Designing individualised treatment plans using permutations and combinations of medications—how to mix and match for optimal patient outcomes. - Shana Gilbert-Gregory |
| 12.30 | Lunch |
| 1.30 | Polypharmacy in Practice Patient monitoring, including animals with specific concomitant pathologies (eg thyroid and seizures, as well as undesirable drug interactions, including concerns about animals undergoing sedation/ anaesthesia. - Gonçalo da Graça Pereira |
| 3.00 | Afternoon tea |
| 3.30 | Titration and Monitoring How do you decide on the right dose of the right drug for each patient with tips for safe and effective dose adjustments. - Kersti Seksel |
| 4.30 | Global Perspectives Panel: “World View: Europe, USA, and Australia” International experts share insights on regional trends, regulatory differences, and best practices in veterinary care. |
| 5.00 | Masterclass close |

Day 2: MASTERCLASS

Behavioural is Medical

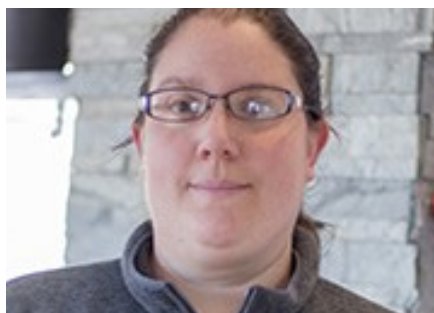
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| 8.30 | Registration |
| 9.00 | Understanding and Managing Pain Review of pain physiology, pain as an emotional state and its influence on behaviour. Latest research and practical approaches to pain assessment and multimodal pain management in companion animals. - Gonçalo da Graça Pereira |
| 10.30 | Morning tea/coffee |
| 11.00 | “When you Itch You Bitch” How the skin affects behaviour and how behaviour affects the skin. Review of common and challenging conditions. - Jacqui Ley |
| 12.30 | Lunch |
| 1.30 | Microbiome, Epigenetics and Medication Response Dive into the impact of the microbiome on disease, immunity, and drug response in animals. Discover the many factors that influence drug efficacy and safety in animals, and what this means for veterinary medicine. - Kersti Seksel |
| 2.30 | Afternoon tea |
| 3.00 | Putting it all together—How to implement Behavioural Care in all aspects of Veterinary Medicine How do you decide on the right dose of the right drug for each patient with tips for safe and effective dose adjustments. - Shana Gilbert-Gregory |
| 4.30 | Panel Discussion with Q and A |
| 5.00 | Masterclass close |

Conference Speakers



Gonçalo da Graça Pereira

DVM MSc PhD Dip ECAWBM (BM) Dip ECAWBM (AWSEL)



Shana Gilbert-Gregory

VMD MS DACVB



Kersti Seksel

BVSc (Hons) MRCVS MA (Hons) FANZCVS DACVB DECAWBM



Bronwen Bollaert

BVSc MSc MANZCVS (Veterinary Behaviour) FFCP (Veterinary)



Gabrielle Carter

BVSc (Hons) MSc MANZCVS DACVB



Jacqui Ley

BVSc (Hons) FANZCVS (Animal Behaviour) CMAVA PhD



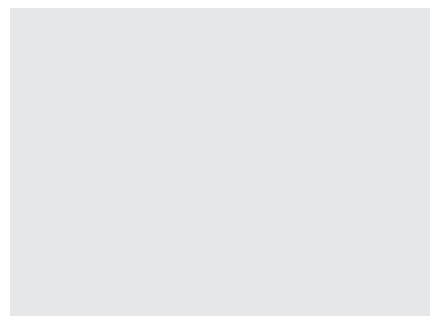
Sally Nixon

BVSc FANZCVS (veterinary behaviour) DACVB



Isabelle Resch

BVSc(Hons), MVS, MANZCVS(SA Medicine, Vet Behaviour)

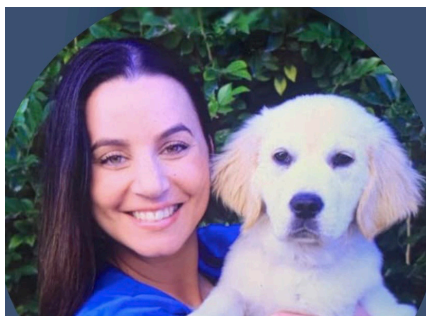


Jess Hawes



Rachel Basa

BVSc DiplomateECVS PGCertVS MVCS MANZCVS PhD



Jodie Pignone

Pricing

| Member Type | 3-day Conference only | | 3-day Conference + 2-day Masterclass | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Early Bird | Full Rate | Early Bird | Full Rate |
| Member* | \$1,710 | \$1,800 | \$3,320 | \$3,495 |
| Recent Graduate Member Part-Time Professional Member | \$1,283 | \$1,350 | \$2,893 | \$3,045 |
| Student Member | N/A | \$710 | N/A | N/A |
| Non-member eMember | N/A | \$2,250 | N/A | \$4,284 |

* Member includes Practice Staff Members, Professional.

Register Now

- cve.edu.au/behaviour-conference
- Or call the CVE Team on 0436 520 249.

Enquiries

For any further enquiries, or to speak to the CVE team, please email: cve.enquiries@sydney.edu.au or call us at +61 2 9351 7979.

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