WHAT'S INSIDE

WHAT WE DO

AT A GLANCE
- CHAIR'S MESSAGE
- THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

CEO'S REPORT

PROGRAMS REPORT
- AVERT
- VETMATCH
  - NEW PARTNERS
- VETTRAIN

TREASURER'S REPORT

MEDIA

DIRECTOR PROFILES
Vets Beyond Borders is a registered not-for-profit organisation. It was founded in 2003 by vets committed to improving animal and public health in developing communities and fostering the spirit of volunteering amongst their profession.

A WORLD OF BETTER HEALTH FOR ANIMALS & PEOPLE

Enabled and empowered communities around the globe that can deliver world-class One Health initiatives, to create a world of better health and welfare for animals and people.

Enabling communities to build sustainable veterinary services to improve the health and welfare of animals and people worldwide.
It is clearly no overstatement to note that much of the 2019-2020 FY was tumultuous, necessitating a worldwide and fundamental reassessment of activities by individuals and nations, commercial and not-for-profit organisations alike.

If charities such as Vets Beyond Borders, based on the delivery of services, were to maintain operational ability and relevance, they must have developed strategies for times when their normal operations may be at risk of being overwhelmed by developments beyond their direct control.

The bushfires of the last Australian summer were of extraordinary intensity and scale, but were not entirely unexpected. It was concerns of such a catastrophe that prompted VBB to establish its Australian Veterinary Emergency Response Team (AVERT) in 2015, to complement its existing programs, VetMatch and VetTrain.

AVERT was the creation of our then CEO, Maryann Dalton. Maryann’s death earlier this year came as a shock to all who knew and worked with her. She was a tireless animal welfare advocate and her untimely passing is a great loss. I will leave it to others to detail AVERT’s activities, especially the incredible efforts of our AVERT volunteers in responding to what was a social and environmental, and hence wildlife, disaster.

The closing of international borders due to COVID19 had a major impact on the work of VBB, leading to interruption of nearly all of our overseas activities under VetMatch and VetTrain. Thankfully, AVERT was able to continue to operate, albeit under frequently changing constraints.

Sincere thanks are due to donors large and small, whose generosity enabled AVERT to play a major role in the Australian bushfire response and to the many teams of AVERT volunteers that provided, and indeed continue to provide, desperately needed veterinary care to wildlife impacted by the fires.

We have used these strange times to refine and develop our programs and the online resources available to the animal welfare groups that we assist, and also to ensure that VBB is primed to deploy its volunteers around the world once again, as soon as conditions allow. On behalf of the board of VBB, I would like to acknowledge the unstinting work of CEO, Sally Colgan, and Programs & Administration Manager, Robert Leach.
**THE YEAR IN NUMBERS**

717 days, worked by 61 volunteers, in 9 locations, across 4 continents

**61**

**VOLUNTEERS DEPLOYED**

**717**

**TOTAL DAYS WORKED**

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**Pie Chart Details:**
- AVERT bushfire response: 55.4%
- VetMatch Botswana: 9.9%
- VetMatch Sikkim: 12%
- VetMatch Cambodia: 17.2%
- VetTrain India: 0.6%
- VetMatch Sardinia: 5%

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**Graph Details:**
- X-axis: Days (Jul to Jun)
- Y-axis: Days
- Data points for AVERT and VetMatch

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**Images:**
- Volunteers working on animals in a veterinary setting.
2020 – a year like no other. Bushfires and COVID-19 have made all our lives challenging but have also been monumental catalysts for change.

Vets Beyond Borders (VBB) has a long and successful track record of helping animals and communities in need. As a relative newcomer, I am greatly impressed by the many significant and ground-breaking achievements of this organisation.

Since my appointment I have been assisted by an earnest and engaged board and thank all directors for their support and guidance. I must also offer my sincere thanks to Robert Leach, our new Programs and Administration Manager. Rob has brought expertise and enormous enthusiasm to the organisation. He works tirelessly and his commitment to the cause is exemplary.

This past year we have explored new avenues for Vets Beyond Borders to follow. The concept of “redefining borders” was initiated in the early part of 2020 and became a hard, cold reality when international and local travel was suspended. We needed to find ways to continue our work in a COVID-19 world. In times of crisis, our partners, their animals and communities require our help more than ever. We have worked hard to ensure that VBB remains relevant and continues to provide the clinical and educational services for which it is known and respected.

VBB’s borders now include working across cultural and socio-economic boundaries. This is manifest by increased numbers of working relationships with Australian partners. As a result of international travel constraints, our collaborations with overseas Partner Organisations involves seeking out more locally sourced veterinary assistance and facilitating transport of consumables to international destinations where possible.

As well as being a noble undertaking, volunteering is highly beneficial for wellbeing. Unfortunately, many talented veterinary professionals are affected by mental health problems. Vets Beyond Borders is positioned to help, posting stories about volunteering and mental health on our online platforms. We will continue to provide all possible support to our volunteers, who are the lifeblood of the organisation.

Over the past year we spent a considerable amount of time and effort designing the new VBB website, which will ensure more efficient interaction and communication with our members, supporters and donors. It will also contain an online library and forums for use by our Partner and Affiliate Organisations and volunteers, to assist them in their vital work.
PROGRAMS: Australia
VBB’s Australian Veterinary Emergency Response Team (AVERT): Thanks to the generosity of donors and the commitment of our volunteers, following the dreadful bushfires of last summer, VBB was able to rapidly deploy its AVERT volunteers from across Australia to assist in the emergency responses coordinated by state governments and wildlife rescue organisations.

Between January and end June 2020, over 50 VBB volunteers provided over 400 days of volunteer service, delivering essential veterinary care in bushfire-affected states.

Thankfully, the important work of AVERT was able to continue, despite COVID-19 imposed travel restrictions, as VBB’s veterinary services were classified as essential by the Australian government. We are still providing assistance to groups caring for sick and injured wildlife.

In the aftermath of the 2020 catastrophic fires, VBB has been actively involved in round table discussions with key stakeholders, including the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA), National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), Wildlife Health Australia and the State government’s Department of Primary Industries, to analyse and develop preparedness plans for the future, including assisted NPWS in the development and distribution of a survey on the veterinary response to the fires.

To improve the ability of our volunteer veterinary personnel to cope with situations faced during bushfire events, we are sponsoring a cohort of veterinarians to attend the Taronga Conservation Society’s world-class veterinary wildlife training course, commencing 2021.

PROGRAMS: Overseas
Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, we have continued to work on our core projects, supporting and sharing resources with our international partners. Through collaborations with our Partner Organisations, VBB is actively involved in rabies vaccination and awareness programs around the world.

We have invested much time and energy in the latter part of the 2020 financial year forging new relationships in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia regions, where there is a great need for veterinary volunteers. We are hopeful that a travel “bubble” will be created between Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific in early 2021 to allow deployments to resume and veterinary assistance provided to countries and partners in the South Pacific who have been severely affected by COVID-19 travel restrictions.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of our valued donors and sponsors. The funds we receive allow us to continue our efforts to improve animal welfare and to promote veterinary volunteering, assisting our partner organisations at home and around the world to continue their work, with the ultimate aim of creating “a world of better health for animals and people”.

We look forward to 2021 and the continuing delivery of our successful programs in a COVID-19 world and thereafter.
2020 has been a different year for us all. We commenced the year with the Black Summer Bushfires and the urgent need to deploy the Australian Veterinary Emergency Response Team (AVERT) and then the COVID-19 pandemic began to have its effects. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating. Despite the pandemic, VBB has been active, deploying volunteers where permitted and forming new partnerships throughout the world and planning future deployment of volunteers.

In February 2020 Robert Leach joined the VBB team as AVERT Coordinator during the bushfire crisis, and then was appointed to Programs & Administration Manager in April. Robert brings experience in volunteer management from his previous role at a wildlife rehabilitation NGO in Malawi. Robert holds a Master of Veterinary Studies and is an animal welfare representative on various ethics committees in Australia.

The catastrophic Black Summer Bushfires demonstrated the very real need for an Australian Veterinary Emergency Response Team (AVERT).

During the crisis, our volunteer database was shared with NSW DPI to assist with their response. Although interstate deployments were subsequently suspended due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and border closures. AVERT continues to deploy volunteer vets and vet nurses to Adelaide Koala Rescue in South Australia. We are fortunate to have 921 volunteers on our AVERT database with a diverse range of skills and expertise in wildlife, livestock, horses and companion animals.
The collaboration with the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh, Ladakh Department of Animal Husbandry (LDAH), Leh Municipal Council, Fondation Brigitte Bardot and the Live To Rescue organization has seen the project continue operations in Leh and surrounding areas over the past year.

Regrettably, due to political events and uncertainty surrounding the administrative changes for Jammu, Kashmir and Leh in 2019 VBB was unable to send volunteers to the project and the onset of COVID-19 in 2020 has impacted our involvement further. It is anticipated that post-COVID volunteers will be able to return to Leh.

The Ladakh Feral Dog Initiative (LFDI) is continuing in our absence and local veterinarians are performing ABC surgery, vaccinating and attending to the animal welfare needs of street animals and wildlife. We are pleased that Fondation Brigitte Bardot continue to support this most valuable project.

In the 2019-20 period, VBB deployed 5 volunteer vet students to our partner Phnom Penh Animal Welfare Society (PPAWS). The ongoing collaboration between VBB and PPAWS has provided university veterinary students in Australia with the opportunity to travel overseas for their practical rotations. Students placed on VBB’s VetMatch programs gained the ability to problem-solve and adapt to challenges presented in an non-textbook setting, whilst travelling to beautiful countries with their classmates. University of Sydney veterinary student Meera Kunathasan said: "I really enjoyed working with such a tight knit group where everyone's opinion on a case was well-valued... "It's a great way to push your limits and discover a different veterinary culture in Cambodia!"

VBB deployments to PPAWS were suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-restrictions.
Prior to COVID shutdowns, we were able to deploy two volunteers to Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) program in February/March, with another 3 volunteers deployed October/November of 2019. The ABC program was briefly suspended at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown but has been resumed and the annual state-wide rabies vaccination campaign was undertaken with COVID appropriate measures.

COVID-19 lockdown of India meant that millions of street animals across India faced starvation. The main source of food for these animals was suddenly withdrawn as restaurants and meat shops were closed. SARAH was instrumental in their State Governments granting dispensation from the lockdown, and a street dog feeding program was implemented to prevent starvation of the street animals in this difficult time. The local people supported these welfare efforts and provided donations, assisted with feeding the street animals, and fostered animals when needed.

The response to COVID-19 had the potential for dramatic effects on animal welfare. In India, most farmers have only one or two cows and a perhaps a few goats and each animal is critically important to the household economy. In a proactive move to protect animal welfare, the Government of Sikkim, through the Department of Animal Husbandry instituted processes to ensure the care of the household animals if a household is under isolation because of COVID-19 infection and unable to care for their animals. Volunteers and resources for providing feed and water to the animals of COVID-19 affected households to maintain their welfare were identified at the village level, with responsibility for feed and fodder provision linking to local Department of Animal Husbandry Centres. Potentially affected households are identified by daily liaison with the Department of Health.
In October 2019, VBB deployed a team of veterinary volunteers to the LIDA OLBIA shelter. The team worked tirelessly alongside the local Italian shelter staff to help reduce the population numbers of dogs and cats roaming on the island. Volunteer veterinarian Dr Natalia Koziol reflected on her deployment: “one of my warmest memories of the trip is a wonderful colony of cats living in harmony right next to the shelter. All neutered and sterilised, neat, healthy and friendly, looked after with care by the shelter staff,” she said. “Every morning, they greeted us with sincere joy and enthusiasm when we arrived at the infirmary. The whole group also accompanied us during lunch breaks demanding caresses, attention and delicacies.”

"The team of doctors, nurses and shelter employees are great, highly qualified specialists with whom I could exchange experiences but also improve my workshop and learn a lot from them,” a feeling Natalia described as a "great professional challenge. “I am convinced that the friendships I have made there will be lasting and our professional cooperation will not end with this one project.

Natalia and the other volunteers spent most of the day in the operating theatre, but that’s not where the volunteering experience ended; she described her experience outside the clinic recounting “funny stories, delicious Italian dinners, long conversations and considerations on veterinary medicine with hot aromatic coffee, sunsets on the seafront and walks around charming Italian towns.”

Volunteer placements to Sardinia for May 2020 were sadly cancelled due to the pandemic.
VBB is proud to announce new partnerships approved in the last 2019-20 year:

**ASIA**

BHUTAN
Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care

INDIA
Just Be Friendly (India) Trust
Sanjay Gandhi Animal Care Centre

**AMERICAS**

HONDURAS
Roatan Animal Welfare Society
VetTrain activities were curtailed by the pandemic, but we managed to fit in a 2 day workshop for cattle veterinarians in Karnataka, India in February 2020.

VBB volunteers Dr Natasha Lees and Dr Mark Booth delivered training at a workshop organised by the Indian Buiatricians Association (India’s first national association of cattle veterinarians) and the Commonwealth Veterinary Association to provide practical training leading to improved animal welfare outcomes. The 2-day workshop included lectures and practical sessions, covering diagnostic techniques and surgical procedures.

The demand for further VetTrain activities is high. While awaiting travel restrictions to be lifted, VBB is working hard to develop its online training resources.
The 2020 Financial Year has been a period of significant change for Vets Beyond Borders as for the rest of the world community, but I am pleased to report that, despite a period of significant upheaval, we are in a sound financial position. At the time of writing my report the accounts are still in the audit process; FY19/20 will see a significant surplus for the organisation.

A sad note is the passing of former CEO Maryann Dalton who had guided VBB through some hard times; we are indebted for her contribution.

The onset of the catastrophic bushfires throughout Eastern Australia and the unprecedented response of the world community responding to this tragedy clearly demonstrated that the systems we had in place were inadequate for the volume of inputs to the system.

The first three months of 2020 saw an incredible response from regular donors, individuals, companies large and small from Australia and International contribute to assist our AVERT volunteers with over $360,000 being donated.

After reorganisation of our staffing position, website, payment technology and bookkeeping arrangements we are now in a position to move forward with confidence that our systems are appropriate.

A decision was made in the last quarter of FY20, to engage an accounting firm Yates Baker McLean (YBM) to finalize the accounts for FY20 and handle our financial matters into the future.

We are indebted to CEO Sally Colgan for driving these necessary reforms and placing VBB in a position where we can move forward with confidence. Marketing person Caroline Zambrano continued to keep our profile high on social media and thanks to Kate Neal, succeeded in April by Robert Leach for handling administration issues. We are indebted to the Petbarn Foundation for ongoing support, Animates (NZ), Animals Australia, Nike, other companies and individual donors who continue to support VBB’s work. Fondation Brigitte Bardot (FBB) has continued their consistent support of the animal-related aspects of VBB’s work, for which we are most grateful.

Some acknowledgements:
- The continued sponsorship from the Australian Veterinary Association gives us a most valuable stage on which to promote our organisation to the profession.
- The ongoing support of Fondation Brigitte Bardot allows us to continue to fund long standing projects.
- Our thanks to Nicola Kapa for providing the book keeping services to VBB on a voluntary basis for some three years.
- To Abby Sands and Cally Woodhouse from YBM for their handling of VBB accounts.
Vets Beyond Borders has continued to be active in the media and social media spaces, spreading the word about the fantastic work undertaken by all those involved in the organisation - from collaborations, to programs, to the invaluable contribution made by our dedicated veterinary volunteers.

VBB promoted its programs through volunteer interviews, awareness campaigns and media articles.

VBB’s AVERT was shared in the media internationally and locally with it’s response to the Australian bushfires in the summer months. VBB ran an AVERT Bushfire fundraising/PR campaign from December to March, including three press releases, which generated awareness in the pet/vet media, and in mainstream media too. VBB Chair Dr Ian Douglas was featured in numerous Veterinary Practice Magazine articles, and VBB Director Dr Robert Johnson was featured in an American Veterinary Medical Association news article discussing the bushfires.

We are grateful for all those who supported VBB’s AVERT during the bushfire response, with heartwarming thanks to all groups who took it upon themselves to raise funds for VBB within their communities.

VBB programs have also been featured in numerous Australian and international media publications, including but not limited to NBC News, ABC 7.30, Packenham Gazette, Hygia magazine, Phillip Island & San Remo Advertiser, Yahoo Lifestyle, Australian Veterinarian Magazine, The Veterinarian Magazine, Veterinary Practice Magazine, Australian Dog Lover and others.
Prior to COVID dominating the news, Indian media reported on VBB’s work in Leh, and the collaborative efforts with the Ladakh Department of Animal Husbandry.

The SARAH program in Sikkim saw VBB’s SARAH Program Coordinator Dr Thinlay Bhutia, and VBB lifetime member and 11-time volunteer Dr Alan Sherlock contribute to a research article published in the highly-acclaimed peer reviewed academic journal - Science.

VBB ran a World Rabies Day National Awareness Campaign in September 2019 in partnership with the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC). The campaign generated many media articles in Australia and social media conversation and a full-page article in The Australian Veterinarian Magazine.

Vets Beyond Borders was invited once again to present at Future Vet Kids Camp in Sydney during the January 2020 school holidays. VBB’s Dr Robert Johnson, Kate Neal, and the late-Maryann Dalton, presented to almost 50 campers aged 14 – 16 discussing VBB and its programs around the world.
Chair: Dr Ian Douglas
Vets Beyond Borders has been an important part of Ian’s veterinary life since 2005, when he was elected its inaugural president and commenced work, together with Sikkimese veterinarian, Dr Thinlay Bhutia, to establish the now highly regarded SARAH Program, India’s first state-wide ABC/AR project.

Ian has devised and delivered several surgical training courses in the Asia-Pacific region, is the author of widely referenced publications on clinical aspects of ABC/AR programmes and has been a regular guest speaker at animal welfare meetings.

He is a strong proponent of the “One Health” philosophy, promoting the collaboration of veterinarians, doctors and other health professionals in efforts to combat disease. Ian operates a veterinary neurological and neurosurgical referral practice in Adelaide, South Australia.

Deputy Chair: Dr Helen Byrnes
Apart from her role on the board of Vets Beyond Borders, Helen is the current VBB Program Coordinator for the Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) Program.

In this capacity, she works closely with the local coordinator Dr Thinlay Bhutia in the management of the program.

Helen joined VBB in 2006 when she volunteered in the SARAH Program. She subsequently volunteered on VBB’s Ladakh and Bylakuppe projects before taking on her current roles. Helen graduated with first class honours in veterinary science from University of Queensland in 1988 and subsequently completed a Bachelor of Medical Studies and Graduate Certificate in Trade Mark Law and Practice. Helen is a member of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists by examination in pharmacology. She also has private veterinary practices in Brisbane, Australia.

Treasurer: Dr David Gray
After graduation from Sydney University in 1969, David embarked on a career in mixed rural practice, initially on the Central Coast of NSW but for most of his career on the South Coast of NSW.

Always looking for a challenge, he completed an MBA through University of New England in 1996, participating in a People to People study tour of endangered species in China in 1993 and led an AVA team to assist in the Foot & Mouth disease outbreak in UK in 2001.


David has served on the Board of VBB since July 2012 and has held the position of Hon Treasurer since October 2014.

Dr Robert Johnson
Dr Robert Johnson (BVSc MANZCVS CertZooMed BA Grad Dip Asian Studies) graduated from the University of Sydney in 1977. He currently works in zoo, wildlife, and livestock welfare practice.

Robert is a member of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists (Feline Medicine) and holds a Certificate in Zoological Medicine from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. In May 2015 he was elected President of the Australian Veterinary Association and formally recognised as a Fellow of the AVA in 2020. Robert has extensive clinical experience in zoo animal medicine and has presented and written widely on reptile, zoo and wildlife medicine.

In his spare time Robert draws cartoons and tries to learn stuff.
Dr Hugh Millar
Dr Hugh Millar (BVSc MANZCVS PSM) is a highly regarded veterinarian and biosecurity professional, who has worked extensively over 35 years in biosecurity management and disease control.

Dr Millar was Victorian Chief Veterinary Officer for 11 years, and for 5 years was the Executive Director for Biosecurity Victoria, responsible for policies and programs for plant and animal biosecurity, animal welfare, invasive plants and pest animal management, domestic animal regulation and control of use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. He is a member, by examination, of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists, Epidemiology Chapter, and was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2011 in his role as Chief Veterinary Officer for Victoria. Dr Millar has extensive professional networks within government and with industries at the national and state levels.

Dr Millar has had extensive experience in the area of One Health, forging links over his career with his counterparts in public health and infectious disease management. He is a strategic thinker, not afraid to ‘think outside the square’.

Dr Millar is currently working as a biosecurity and disease management consultant to government and industry.

Jane Sharwood
As the Special Advisor, City of Melbourne, Jane works closely with a wide range of stakeholders to drive economic development and position Melbourne as a world-class city in local, national and international markets.

By building strong and ongoing partnerships with key city stakeholders, domestically and internationally, during the past 22 years, Jane has positioned Melbourne as a city that collaborates with its long-standing international city partnership. Jane also worked for the Victorian Government, councils in remote New South Wales and regional Victoria, in community development and recreation services and for over 30 years, enjoyed supporting her family mixed farming enterprise.

Jane was appointed in 2007, as the lay member of Museum Victoria’s animal ethics committee. Jane holds a Bachelor of Arts (Australian National University), Graduate Diploma in Recreation Planning (University of Canberra), a Certificate in Wool Classing and is a member of the Australia Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Charmaine Tham
Charmaine has been involved with VBB since 2009, beginning as a field and head office volunteer. She has since served on the board since 2011, and was Chair from 2012 to 2015. She has spoken on behalf of VBB on TED@Sydney 2012, TEDxMacquarieUniversity 2012 and TEDxTheRocks 2014.

She has previously worked in animal health divisions of Blackmores, Zoetis and Pfizer. She began her career as a general practitioner emergency veterinarian for four years in Melbourne. She has degrees in Veterinary Science (Melb), Veterinary Pharmacology (ANZCVS), Business Studies (Monash) and a Global Executive MBA (INSEAD); she is also a current member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Nina Dejmanee
Nina is a strategic advisor to organisations across the private, public and for-purpose sectors with a specific focus on organisational capability, culture and design. She joined the Board of Vets Beyond Borders in 2019. Nina currently runs her own independent management consulting practice.

She has previously held consulting roles at Ernst and Young and Bendelta and worked in people strategy and analytics at Macquarie Bank. She holds a degree in psychology (M. Org Psych; B. Psych (hons)) and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Nina has a strong personal interest in animal welfare, animal cognition and behaviour, and the mutually beneficial relationship between animals and humans, an interest strengthened through her previous volunteer work with Delta Therapy Dogs Australia. A passionate animal advocate, Nina shares her home with three indomitable rescue pets.
Dr Sally Colgan
Dr Sally Colgan (BVSc, DipVetClinStud, Diplomate ACVS, MAICD) was appointed as Director of VBB in November 2019, and resigned to become VBB CEO in March 2020.

Dr Colgan graduated from the University of Sydney in 1990 and completed an Internship in Equine Medicine and Surgery, followed by a Residency in Large Animal Surgery (Equine) at Tufts University, Massachusetts in 1996. She left full time clinical practice to establish the veterinary contract research company SCEC in 2002. She implemented and ran a large, surgically based macropod population management program in western Sydney from 2005-2019.

Sally has worked in the animal health industry, in veterinary specialist referral practice and in university practice, in Australia, the USA, and the UK.

Sally is a board-certified surgeon with the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, a Director on the Board of the AVA and President of the AVA special interest industry group (AVI).

Dr John Allen
Dr John Allen is the most recent addition to the VBB Board, bringing with him a wealth of experience in epidemiology and international animal health programs. After leading DFAT and ACIAR animal and zoonotic disease research and control projects in Indonesia, John vastly expanded his assignments to areas such as Lao, Thailand, Vietnam, Bhutan, Mongolia, and Yemen to name a few.

Following completion of an MBA, John sought a change of career and followed an interest in licensing and commercialisation of research outcomes. Since 2009, John has been the Program Leader for CSIRO’s Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness through their International Engagement Program.

John also has made a significant contribution to the ethical conduct of research involving animals and has chaired and held membership on animal ethics committees in Australia and has facilitated the establishment ethics committees in developing countries.