

Socialising the Five Domains Model

Bidda Jones¹, William Billingsley², Paul D McGreevy¹ and Cristina L Wilkins³

¹Sydney School of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia, bidda.jones@sydney.edu.au, ² School of Science and Technology, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2353, Australia, ³School of Environmental and Rural Science, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2353, Australia

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Abstract

Effective monitoring of animal welfare over time requires a comprehensive, structured approach to data gathering and repeated observations of an animal's life-world. The Five Domains Model has been adopted by animal welfare scholars, professionals and policy makers across multiple animal sectors as a practical and effective framework for monitoring welfare. To make this scientific framework accessible and applicable to everyday animal care situations, the Mellorater app is a novel, smartphone-based tool that puts the 2020 Five Domains Model directly into the hands of veterinary teams, welfare practitioners and animal guardians. This free, user-friendly app, named in honour of the originator of the Five Domains, Emeritus Professor David Mellor, guides the user through an assessment of 18 key welfare indicators across nutrition, environment, health, and behavioural interactions, ultimately reflecting on the animal's mental state. Using a simple five-point agreement scale, users can systematically record their observations without requiring specialist training. While the app's self-reporting nature has inherent limitations, its strongest advantage lies in enabling longitudinal monitoring of welfare trends, which can help identify trends in their observed quality of life, or areas requiring veterinary intervention or management changes. This presentation will demonstrate how veterinary teams can trial the use of the Mellorater as a communication tool with clients and as an aid in early detection of welfare concerns.