

# SPEAKERS

**Dr Anne Fowler** has had an interest in birds and unusual pets from childhood. She grew up with chickens, rabbits, fancy mice and birds as pets. As a graduate from Veterinary science at the University of Sydney, she has seen that the particular husbandry and disease issues that face these special pets require more knowledge than what was provided in the veterinary degree. Appreciating that not all vets can be knowledgeable across all species, she has studied and sat further exams through the Australian and New Zealand College in Veterinary Science to achieve Membership qualifications in the following areas:

1. Avian Health
2. Medicine of Australasian Wildlife
3. Medicine and surgery of Unusual Pets.

This examination system allows a vet to demonstrate to colleagues and clients a proficiency and expertise in the areas studied. Dr Fowler has also worked with Dr Pat Macwhirter, a specialist in Avian health at the Burwood Bird & Animal Hospital, at Healesville Sanctuary, a Zoos Victoria property dedicated to Australian wildlife and was the first vet to work at Sydney University's Avian, Reptile and Exotic Pet Hospital, established in 2007. For the last two years, Dr Fowler has offered a referral service for birds and pocket pets through the Adelaide Animal Emergency & Referral Centre. However, a desire to help these pets to remain healthy, rather than react to their illness has prompted her to open the Adelaide Bird & Exotics Vet Centre in 2016.

**Ben Dessen** is a conservationist and wildlife advocate having dedicated his life to working with a wide variety of animal species. Ben graduated from Western Sydney University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Natural Science majoring in Animal Science and Conservation Biology. He travelled to Borneo where he lived in the jungles and helped establish an orangutan orphanage and rehabilitation centre. Ben has kept and bred reptiles and amphibians privately for almost 20 years, starting with his first pet snake when he was just six years old. Ben has worked at Kellyville Pets for 10 years and has managed the Reptile Department for the past three years. He is passionate about the pet industry and sees the value in educating new generations about responsible pet ownership and appreciation of all animals.

**Rebecca Baldwin** grew up fascinated by the variety of animals that surrounded her. This fascination led to her career in the animal industry. Over the past 15 years she has amassed a range of experience; from zoo keeping and animal training, to attending avian and exotic species as a veterinary nurse, to now managing the Bird Department of Sydney's largest pet store, Kellyville Pets. Rebecca is a self-confessed bird nerd and lifelong professional learner. Rebecca has been grateful to have opportunities to present topics on avian husbandry and training to a wide variety of animal institutions including the Australian Veterinarian Association (UPAV sector), TAFE NSW and several Bird Societies. She has developed Kellyville Pets "Parrot Preschool" classes, which she has presented for more than a decade. Rebecca's main goal is to create a working environment that not only enriches and empowers the animals she encounters but also the humans whom care for them.

## Aquatics

After the sell-out success of the inaugural 2016 aquarium event titled "Growing the Aquarium Industry", PIAA will again this year run a similar event. This year, the event will be run in conjunction with the tradeshow as opposed to the day prior. We are planning 16 talks this year with some fantastic speakers already arranged. Topics this year will be diverse and cover a number of themes including business, health & disease and regulation & legislation. The talks will cover the basics such as Water Quality 101, essential aquarium lighting and fish compatibility, through to aquascaping and reef water chemistry. We will also have talks about creating an experience in store for the consumer and some tips on how to combat the increasing online only retailers. There will be an update on the current government import regulations for live fish as well as a talk on how the aquarium industry can strengthen its response in the event of an aquatic animal disease such as the recent whitespot virus event with edible prawns. There will also be an open-mic forum planned with some great speakers planned.

