

# 3MT finalist researches domestic violence and pets

17 September 2012

When University of Queensland PhD student Dr Catherine Tiplady speaks about her research in animal cruelty and domestic violence, she needs to do so clearly to avoid misunderstanding surrounding this emotive topic.

" Domestic violence is a problem which is often kept hidden, and very few people are aware that animals are often abused in violent homes," Dr Tiplady said.

" Although this a difficult topic to speak about, it is an issue that needs to be told for the sake of both animal and human welfare," she said.

The opportunity to speak about this research and raise awareness of this issue is one of the reasons she jumped at the chance to be part of [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT™\)](#) in 2012, and why she is proud to be one of only eight competitors who earned a place in the 3MT UQ Final on Tuesday, 18 September.

First developed by the [UQ Graduate School](#) in 2008, 3MT challenges research higher degree students to communicate the significance of their projects to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes.

Dr Tiplady, a veterinarian who is in the second year of her PhD in UQ' s School of Veterinary Science [Centre for Animal Welfare and Ethics](#), is researching the link between domestic violence and animal abuse.

" In the final year of my veterinary science degree, I had to write a critical essay and I chose to investigate the reasons why some children are cruel to animals and others are not," Dr Tiplady said.

" You might see in your own neighborhood that some kids are cruel to their pets while other kids seem so caring," she said.

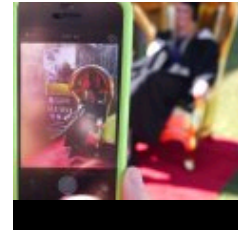
" When I did more research, I found that children from violent homes are more likely to be abusive to animals. I then did an honours year on domestic violence and pets, and ended up focusing on it again for my PhD because there hasn' t been much research done on this in Australia.

" Vets aren' t specifically trained in the link between human interpersonal violence and animal abuse. Sadly, pets can be hurt during domestic violence, as a deliberate tactic to frighten and control the abused partner.

" My eventual aim is to have this topic included in the veterinary curriculum, which will lead to more awareness amongst vets about this issue and how they can assist."

Dr Tiplady said overcoming a fear of public speaking was another important reason why she became involved in 3MT.

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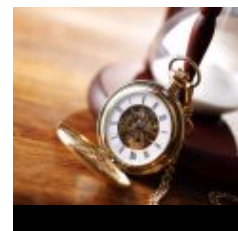
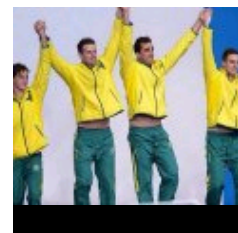
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" I went to the information session run by the UQ Graduate School and they had Ryan Stafford, the People' s Choice winner from the previous year, talking about his own experiences," she said.

" He said he used to be so scared of public speaking that he would shake badly and his voice would crack up. I thought that if he was able to face up to his fears and do it, then I could also do it."

The winner of the 3MT UQ Final will be awarded a \$5,000 travel grant and the right to represent UQ at the prestigious Trans-Tasman final on 11 October 2012; an event that will attract competitors from more than 40 universities across Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the South Pacific.

For more information about 3MT, please click [here](#).

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