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To whom it may concern,

As one of the local "wildlife" veterinarians and as a wildlife carer myself, I came to know Lynda Staker as an invaluable source of information on marsupial and monotreme husbandry, medicine and hand-rearing of wild animals (ie with the eventual intent of re-release). We keep in frequent back-and-forth contact with requests for information on various wildlife issues.

The work of a tireless minority such as Lynda has done much to raise the standards of treatment of hand-reared and rehabilitated animals, both in terms of information for carers but also for veterinarians. There are no widely published written reference texts that deal with the husbandry, hand-rearing, diseases, medical and surgical treatments of native animals.

The veterinary science courses offered in Australia deal very little with the husbandry, diseases and treatment of these native marsupials and monotremes, and because of their specific and unique physiology, extrapolating dosages and regimes from domestic eutherian species is often useless and can in fact be harmful.

From the perspective of the wildlife carers, they consist of many small local groups that are run largely independently of one another. The national parks and wildlife deal with permits for the keeping of these animals whilst they are rehabilitated, but very little with the establishment and policing of appropriate standards of husbandry practices for these animals whilst in captivity. Thus it is difficult for carers to get background information other than by word of mouth and anecdotal evidence for successful and unsuccessful practices. Thus many useful facts on what to do and what not to do are not disseminated effectively.

This means that carers or veterinarians not directly connected with zoos or wildlife parks are largely on their own when it comes to treating these animals. Thus comprehensive sources of information such as the newsletter and the manual published by Lynda are simply invaluable. In terms of the manual, nothing else like this exists. It is for this reason that I am assisting Lynda with the editing and updating of the latest manual, with the intention to submit it for publishing in the near future.

As such, she is very much a leader in this budding and largely unregulated field.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Vonika Linley'. The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Dr Vonika Linley