

## From Delhi to Cairo, Australians are rescuing animals abandoned by collapse in tourism

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By [Latika Bourke](#)

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**London:** They are the four-legged, mostly forgotten victims of the pandemic – the animals admired, used and sometimes abused for tourists' delight.

As citizens around the world were ordered indoors, aeroplanes grounded and tourists kept at bay a question mostly overlooked is just who will look after the world's street animals after metropolises are left deserted?

It is a quest that Melbourne-based Lyn White, from Animals Australia, has undertaken.

"This virus not only has broad human implications, there are dire impacts for animals as well," White said.

"In many countries, the absence of tourists has led to an inability to feed animals used in tourism-related enterprises.

Animals Australia has been partnering with animal welfare groups around the world, with a particular focus on developing countries, where services are fewer. It has dealt out half a million dollars in grants to partner organisations around the world.

In Egypt, horses that used to transport tourists to the pyramids have been left to starve, because the lack of tourists means there is no money to buy their feed.



Egypt Equine Aid volunteers are treating and feeding horses and donkeys normally used to transport tourists to the pyramids. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, many animals have been left to starve.

Jill Barton from Egypt Equine Aid, an organisation that draws attention to the abuse of horses and donkeys and provides care, food and shelter for the animals, said her efforts had been thrown a "lifeline" with the grant from the Australian organisation.

"To be able to offer these animals sanctuary for life, provides a rare silver lining for what is an ongoing dire situation for animals in Egypt," she said.



Jill Barton from Egypt Equine Aid.

Grants have gone to organisations that are providing food to elephants in riding camps in Thailand and India, as well as education programs that encourage hands-off human encounters with the animals - to support more ethical and sustainable tourism models.

In India, where major cities have huge populations of stray dogs, Animals Australia has given grants to organisations not just feeding abandoned animals but also neutering and spaying strays.



A volunteer at Wildlife SOS, India, wearing a mask feeds an elephant.

Timmie Kumar from Help in Suffering, a rescue service which provides free emergency care for Jaipur's wild animals and domestic pets in India said volunteers had been feeding the city's street animals.

"In ordinary times, they are dependent on scraps and leftovers by residents, restaurants, and kiosks but with complete lockdown, there was no food on the streets," Kumar said.

"Even kind people who feed animals regularly were not allowed to come out of their homes. In such desperate times, it was Animals Australia that came to the aid of our animals.



A volunteer with Friendicoes in Delhi, India, attends to a camel.

"Truly, the impossible becomes possible and easy when all come together to work for a common cause," he said.

In Delhi, Friendicoes, in the city's south, has been feeding cows and camels.

In the West Bank, where feral dogs and cats also roam, the Palestinian Animal League is also feeding the animals as well as catching them to desex.

Lyn White said the grants were an example of Australians' willingness to help victims of the pandemic around the world.

"This pandemic has shown it has no borders in how it travels and affects us all, it is the same with animals," she said.

"While we cannot physically travel to other countries to help, we know that the kindness and generosity of Australians is lifting spirits and enabling critical assistance."

In total, the not-for-profit's global emergency effort – made up of member contributions and donations – has sent funds to 35 animal protection groups around the world, including in Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, India, West Bank, Uruguay, Colombia, Lebanon, Egypt and The Philippines.

