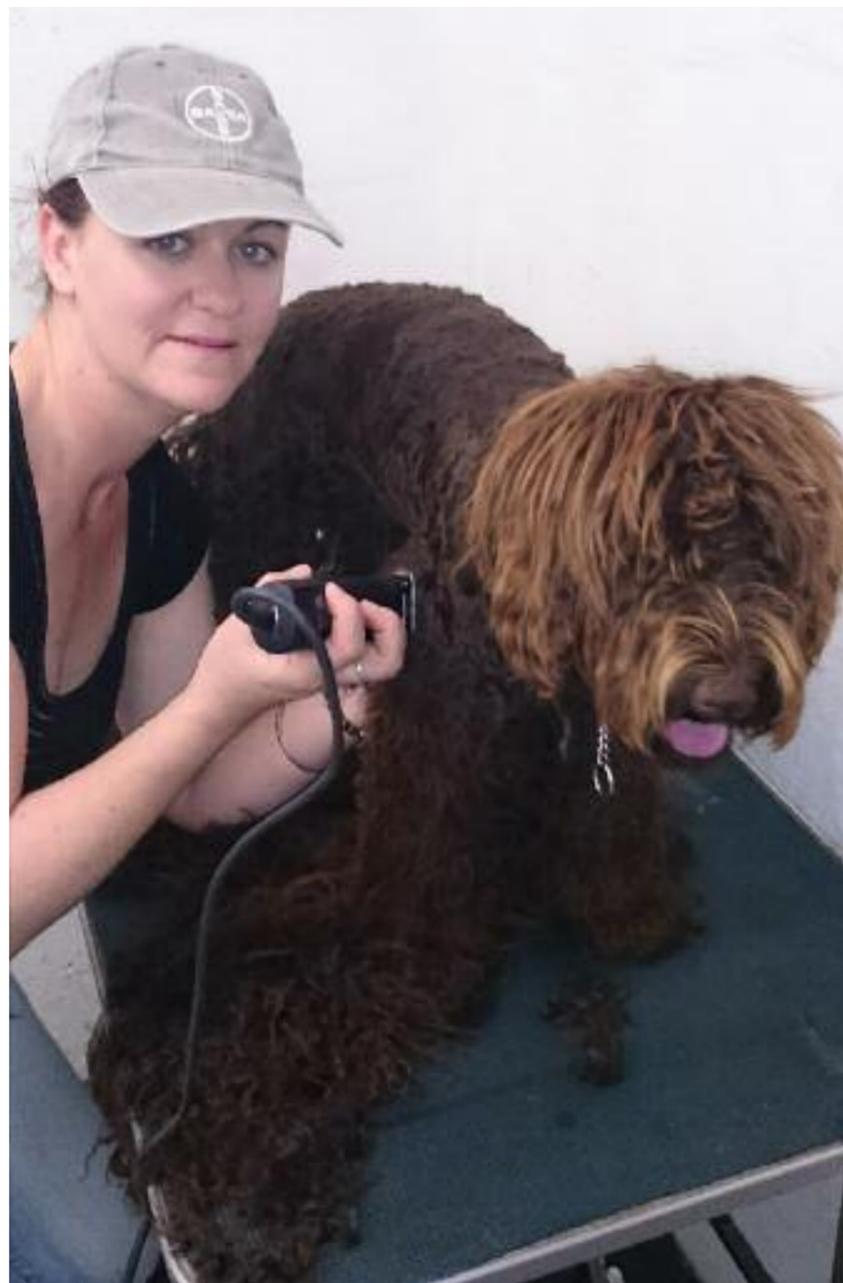


SALLY ROBINSON

Pet groomer, animal behaviourist, artist



Snip 'n clip art

I have always liked being around the animals and working with them. Throughout my life I have owned horses, dogs and cats. Prior to owning and running the grooming business (Devine Paws), I had nine years experience in a Wollongong salon clipping and grooming all different breeds of dogs and cats. During my time at the salon in Wollongong, I was taught by a master groomer all the different types of breed clips.

With the experience I have gained, if a breed clip is requested by a customer I am able to deliver whatever clip they want. I have also studied dog training and psychology and I am certified in these areas.

This particular knowledge helps me when I have a dog coming to the salon that may have had a bad experience. I can also help the dog overcome its fears and that improves the behaviour next time they come in.



BEFORE AND AFTER.



You can get bitten occasionally but it is all part of the profession. You just need to spend more time with those dogs to change their attitude towards having a haircut and bath.

The summer months are the busiest time and in winter things slow down a little bit, but I still get plenty of work to keep busy.

When it does slow down a bit I can make pet portraits at the customer's request.

ROBYN CLUBB

Farmer, boards member, investment enthusiast

Funding future farms

I come from the land — near Cooma. I grew up on a cattle and sheep grazing property, Angus cattle and merino sheep. So although I worked in finance for about 20 years, I have come back to my rural roots.

[BWD] What do you think is the challenge of the moment for the rural sector in Australia?

[RC] I think the biggest challenge, apart from climate change which is obviously the biggie, the next biggest one is access to capital, investment capital because you can borrow a certain amount of money, usually up to 50% of the value of whatever you are buying. That's typically the bank's loan terms, you have to have equity, you have to have equity in farming.

You can start up with equity but if you want to grow, if you want to buy another place, you can't just finance it from debt. So it's finding investors, or sufficient other funds, or off-farm income; or it's finding partners to invest with you.

It could be forming cooperatives to share a farm together or to plan a venture together or a big corporate enterprise — it's all about finding capital. That is the biggest challenge.

There has certainly been a big debate

about foreign investment, but it is not just that, it's looking at things like the future funds, the Australian future funds, which in its charter, in its investment policy, can invest up to five percent in agriculture. I think there is a big opportunity for investors who are prepared to be there for the long term. I think it is a great investment for superannuation funds to match their long term liabilities, but it is also a great investment for non-farming people as well. I think we have to sell it better.

What can be done to make agriculture a better bet for investment?

I think Australians show incredible innovation and ingenuity. We are the world's most efficient farmers, that's been forced upon us; so things like drought management techniques for example or better use of water.

In the rice industry, they have their efficiency of water usage by over 60% in ten years. We are now the most efficient producers of rice in the world in terms of water usage. It's all about productivity and efficiency, but it's also about finding the right products if you like, the right produce, the right commodity to match a particular area.

So if an area is becoming drier, or it's becoming colder or hotter, or wetter —



which is happening all over Australia — then we need to be adapting to that new environment and growing the right things.

We need to grow food to feed Australians and we have this fabulous reputation for growing clean green food. We're one of the most regulated countries in the world in terms of food quality, work health and safety, etc. That's a major selling product, so we do have to do it better, and we just have to be more adaptable, which I think we are. I think Australians are very adaptable.

The biggest issue I think for Australia is investment in research — and then committing to investing in research for the longer term. Our governments tend to run hot and cold on investment in agricultural research. They don't have a long term view.

AMANDA VARDANEGA

Marathon runner

Keeping fit

I run to keep fit and healthy, I've got young children so I like to keep up with them. Also because of my job. I'm National Sales and Marketing manager for MSD Animal Health and I do a lot of travelling — so airports, hotels and restaurants.

Jogging I can do anywhere at any time, it keeps me fit and healthy — and for me it's a great stress relief, like meditation. I've always enjoyed running and after I had my two children I got into competitive running.

I've run a couple of half marathons, one in Canberra at the Australian Running Festival with a time of 1:42:37. Then in Yass I was the 3rd female over the line with 1:42:15. I've done the 14 km City to Surf in Sydney with a time of 1:04:40. I just beat that in the Canberra Times Fun Run, also 14 km with 1:00:01.

