ORIMA

Animal Welfare Victoria

Victorian Pet Census

Survey Findings Report

FINAL

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ORIMA

Quality and Compliance Statement

This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252, the international information security standard ISO 27001, as well as the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). ORIMA Research also adheres to the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021 administered by the Australian Data and Insights Association (ADIA).

Acknowledgements

ORIMA pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples past and present, their cultures and traditions and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the participants who were involved in the research for their valuable contribution.

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I.   Executive summary

Background

The Victorian Government committed to a state-wide pet census (the Census) in its 2022-23 State Budget to address data gaps regarding pet/ companion animal ownership in Victoria. The objectives of the Census are to obtain estimates of the overall pet population numbers in Victoria and measure a range of awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to pet ownership. Data from the Census will be used to inform education, policy, and program initiatives regarding pet ownership across Victoria.

ORIMA Research, an independent social and market research company, was commissioned by Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) to conduct the Census.

This report presents the Census findings. These findings will inform future work undertaken by AWV.

Methodology

To inform the development of the Census questionnaire, **initial qualitative research** was conducted to explore perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in relation to domestic animal pet ownership.

The Census itself comprised two components:

- an **online panel survey** designed to be representative of the Victorian general community; and

- an **online 'open link' survey** available to the general Victorian public on the AWV website.

Fieldwork was conducted from 3 July to 30 July 2023. The online panel survey sample size was n=5,069 and the open link survey response size was n=32,391.

Most responses to the open link survey were from pet owners. While these responses provided valuable information on pet owners' experiences, they have not been used to generate community level estimates (e.g. pet ownership prevalence) due to the non-representative (open to all/ opt-in) nature of the survey. Only results from the representative online panel survey have been used to present community level results in this report. Combined results from the online panel and open link surveys have been used to report on **questions applicable only to pet owners**.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting all survey results presented due to sampling and non-sampling errors. In particular, due to the open nature of the survey, results and estimates based on the open link survey should be interpreted as broadly indicative only.

Key findings

58% of adult Victorians owned a pet at the time of the survey, equating to approximately **1.4 million Victorian households**

Rates of pet ownership were higher among those living in non-metropolitan Victoria, families with children aged under 18, those living in houses, people aged under 55 years, higher income households (over $120,000 per annum) and those who only spoke English at home.

Victorians were **overwhelmingly positive** about their pets and **98% said they had a positive impact** on their life

The main benefits of pet ownership were companionship/ love (79%) and improved mental health/ emotional support (57%).

Victorian pet owners had **1.5 different types of pets** on average

42% had just one type of pet, 12% had two types and 4% had three or more types.

Dogs (41%) were by far the most popular pet, followed by **cats (24%)**

Only small proportions of Victorians had other pets, including birds (5%), fish (5%), small mammals such as rabbits and guinea pigs (2%), large mammals such as horses and sheep (2%), reptiles and amphibians (2%) and insects (<1%).

Breeders (51%) were the most common source of acquisition among **dog owners**, but less common for other pet types

The main reason dog owners got their dogs from a breeder was because they wanted a specific breed (62%).

Cat owners were more likely to get their cats from a **rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation (28%)** or **animal shelter (22%)**

Compared to 17% of dogs obtained from a rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation and 6% obtained from an animal shelter.

Food was by far the biggest expense for pet owners, with Victorian pet owners spending an estimated **$3.1 billion on food** in the last year

Veterinary services were the second largest expense among pet owners ($1.8 billion).

Veterinary services were the **most common service** used for all types of pets, particularly among dogs (92% used in the last year), cats (78%), small mammals (69%) and large mammals (65%)

Bird (23%) and reptile/ amphibian (19%) owners were less likely to have visited a vet in the last year.

Awareness, understanding and perceived importance of the legal requirements around pet ownership was fairly low compared to other aspects of pet ownership

While most cat owners (91%) felt it was important for them to meet legal responsibilities, perceived importance was much lower for other pet types (ranging from 6% among insect owners to 77% for among dog owners).

Pet owners were generally more likely to be aware of laws relevant to the personal keeping of pets (such as limits on the number and type of animals you can keep on your property) than laws relevant to the broader pet industry (such as requirements around breeding).

Pet owners mainly relied on the internet for information to help look after their pet, including search engines (69%) and online forums (33%), as well as advice from veterinary clinics and hospitals (44%)

However, they were very unlikely to seek information from Victorian Government websites (less than 1%).

II.   Background and methodology

Background

Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) is a dedicated public service group within the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, that was established to support animal welfare within Victoria. AWV is responsible for bringing together aspects of domestic animal and animal welfare research, policy, legislation, education and compliance.

Up-to-date and reliable data regarding pet/ companion animal ownership in Victoria is crucial for AWV to inform education, policy, and program initiatives regarding pet ownership across Victoria. While some data existed, this was mainly focused on dogs and cats (as the only pets that must be registered in Victoria) and did not provide sufficient information on other types of pets.

To address these data gaps, the Victorian Government committed to a state-wide pet census in its 2022-23 State Budget. ORIMA Research, an independent social and market research company, was subsequently commissioned by Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) to conduct the Victorian Domestic Animals Pet Census (the Census).

To inform the development of the Census questionnaire, **initial qualitative research** was conducted to explore perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in relation to domestic animal pet ownership.

The Census itself comprised two components:

- an **online panel survey** designed to be representative of the Victorian general community; and
- an **online 'open link' survey** available to the general Victorian public on the AWV website.

This report presents the Census findings.

Research objectives

The objectives of the Census were to:

- Understand the demographics of Victoria's pet owners and their pets, including:
  - ➢ an estimate of the overall companion and hobby animal population numbers at the state, metro, and regional levels;
  - ➢ sources of animal acquisition; and
  - ➢ species and breed of animals kept.
- Measure awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to pet ownership, including:
  - ➢ general matters relevant to pet health (e.g., diet, exercise/ enrichment, housing, etc.);
  - ➢ the costs and services associated with purchasing and caring for pets, including animal services utilised, frequency and reason for accessing the services;
  - ➢ understanding of responsible animal ownership and purchasing requirements, including reforms introduced by the PFPS Act; and
  - ➢ social and well-being impacts of pet ownership.

- Measure awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to animal management and welfare issues more generally, including experiences with local government.

- Understand motivators and barriers in relation to pet ownership in general, and specific aspects of pet ownership (e.g., accessing pet care services including preventative versus reactive care including in areas of grooming, veterinary treatment, insurance, etc.).

- Understand demographic and regional differences in awareness, attitudes and behaviours (e.g., by age, by type of pet, etc.).

Research methodology

Qualitative research methodology

The qualitative research was comprised of **4 face-to-face focus groups** conducted in **May 2023** with a total sample of **n=34 participants**.

As shown in Table 1, the qualitative research included **current** and **potential pet owners** from two locations — Melbourne and Ballarat. The demographic profile of qualitative research participants (Appendix A) shows that people from a range of demographic backgrounds participated in the research.

Participants were recruited via **local ISO-accredited specialist qualitative research recruiters** to attend focus groups of up to one and a half hours in duration, which were conducted by qualified qualitative researchers from ORIMA Research.

Table 1: Qualitative Research Design

Audience group:			Melbourne, VIC	Ballarat, VIC	Total
Victorian general public (aged 18 and over)	**Current pet owners**	Cat owners	1 x FG n=10		3 x FG n=27
		Dog owners		1 x FG n=9	
		Other pet owners[1]	1 x FG n=8		
	Potential pet owners (i.e. considering acquiring a pet in the next 12 months)			1 x FG n=7	1 x FG n=7
Total by location			2 x FG n=18	2 x FG n=16	4 x FG n=34

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[1] Other pet types represented in the focus groups included fish, birds, rabbits, horses and reptiles.

Quantitative research methodology

Sample design

The Census comprised two components:

- an **online panel survey** designed to be representative of the Victorian general community (by gender, age and remoteness); and

- an **online 'open link' survey** available to the general Victorian public on the AWV website.

  - ➢ AWV implemented a comprehensive communications strategy about the Census to encourage Victorian pet owners to respond.

  - ➢ The benefits of the 'open link' survey were to maximise opportunities for Victorians to participate in the study and to collect data about Victoria's less common pets, including birds, fish, reptiles and other small/ large mammals, given low incidence of these pet owners.

Fieldwork was conducted from 3 July to 30 July 2023. The online panel survey response sample size was n=5,069 and the open link survey response sample size was n=32,391.

Online panel survey

The online panel survey obtained a representative response sample of the Victorian adult population and was sourced from a high-quality online panel developed and maintained by The Online Research Unit (ORU). The ORU are a full service and 100% local fieldwork operation. Their panels, servers (data storage) and staff are all located in Australia. Like ORIMA Research, the ORU is a member of ADIA and complies with the Privacy Code (Market and Social Research) 2021.

Samples derived from online panels are not probability samples, though they are often used as though they are. Technically, as non-probability samples they cannot be as confidently projected to a population. In practice, however, results from online panel surveys tend to be as good as phone surveys (if not better for some cohorts), and **closely reflect the underlying population**. The ORU panel's **rigorous recruitment approach** (offline as well as online) and **large size** (over 350,000 panel members) means that the panel is broadly representative of the underlying Australian population.

- Recent results from ORIMA's COVID-19 Recovery Tracker (CRT) provide just one example of this, where vaccination status results from the survey (based on fortnightly nationally representative samples of n=200) were **consistently within +/- 3pp of the official estimates** from the start of the vaccine rollout in February 2021 through to when vaccination rates reached saturation point in Australia.

ORIMA Research regularly conducts experiments to validate the reliability and accuracy of our sampling methods and preferred suppliers. For example, In late 2018, one of these experiments found that a **national survey of adults administered via the ORU produced a significantly smaller Mean Absolute Error** (based on comparing the survey results with 15 demographic, behavioural and attitudinal population benchmarks) **than the same survey administered via Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)** utilising a 'gold standard' Random Digit Dialling dual frame sampling design (mobile and landline telephone number sample). The outcomes of this experiment are presented in Table 2 overleaf and reinforce our view that **a stratified random sample from the ORU Panel provides a good approximation of an equivalent sample** of the general population.

Table 2: Absolute error vs population benchmarks between CATI dual frame RDD and ORU Panel samples

	Absolute Error[1]	
	CATI[2]	Panel[3]
Higher education	13.67%	7.27%
Language other than English	6.54%	9.43%
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	0.38%	0.28%
Income	4.92%	4.52%
Volunteering	26.41%	11.55%
Home has telephone	9.02%	10.04%
Has mobile phone	0.17%	0.87%
Australian citizen	7.34%	4.64%
Political engagement	16.53%	5.16%
No political affiliation	16.77%	8.13%
Voter enrolment	2.13%	5.96%
Alcohol consumption	1.89%	0.40%
Identifies as non-drinker	9.19%	5.78%
Health status	3.59%	4.42%
Weight consciousness	27.83%	19.19%
Mean Absolute Error[5]	**9.76%**	**6.51%**

1. Absolute Error refers to the difference (abstracting from the direction of the difference – i.e. absolute value of the difference) between survey sample proportion and population benchmarks. Both samples were RIM weighted by age, gender, state and metro/non-metro location.
2. Dual frame telephone survey (n=601), with the response sample comprising 249 responses from landline numbers and 352 from mobile numbers.
3. Online panel survey using our preferred supplier, ORU (n=1,049). Quotas enforced for age, gender, state and metro/non-metro location.
4. Benchmarks are based on the modal proportion within the population data; for example 77% do NOT speak a language other than English at home (LOTE). Some population and sample proportions have been recoded for the purpose of analysis.
5. Mean Absolute Error provides an indication of the overall accuracy of the survey method across the above factors. Each factor is weighted equally. The difference in Mean Absolute Error between the CATI and Panel methods is significant at the 95% statistical confidence level.

Open link survey

The open link survey response sample was mainly comprised of pet owners (98%). While the open link survey responses provided valuable information on pet owners' experiences, they have not been used to generate community level estimates due to the non-representative (open to all/ opt-in) nature of the survey.

Sample use

In consideration of the sample characteristics outlined above:

- Results from the **online panel survey** are used to report on **all questions relevant to the general community level**, including prevalence of pet ownership, past pet ownership, future pet ownership and pet surrendering (labelled 'panel sample' in the base of results);

- **Combined results from the online panel survey and open link survey** are used to report on **questions relevant to pet owners**, including feeding, training, grooming, enrichment and use of services (labelled 'merged sample' in the base of results); and

  ➢ ORIMA Research investigated the response patterns among pet owners in each data set and determined they were sufficiently aligned before merging.

- **Combined results from the online panel survey and open link survey** are also used to report on **questions relevant to non-pet owners only**, including reasons for not wanting a pet (labelled 'merged sample' in the base of results).

Privacy

Assuring survey respondents' privacy and anonymity is crucial to encourage honest and candid responses while protecting their personal information. Key principles for achieving this, and meeting obligations under the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2021, include:

- **Confidentiality**: The ORU as survey administrators have ensured that panellist respondents' personal details, such as names and contact information, have been kept confidential and not shared with outside parties (including ORIMA Research and AWV). Furthermore, this information was not collected for open link respondents.

- **Anonymity**: Survey data has been collected and stored in a way that prevents tracing individual responses back to specific individuals. This has been done by assigning a unique code or identifier to each respondent rather than collecting or using personal information.

- **Informed consent**: Survey participants have been provided with clear information about how their data will be used and assured that their responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Informed consent helps build trust and encourages more honest responses.

- **Aggregated reporting**: Survey results are reported in aggregate form, where individual responses are grouped together to provide overall trends and insights. The main exception is open-ended verbatim responses, which have been reviewed before inclusion in reporting to ensure they do not identify individuals.

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was developed and refined in consultation with AWV based on research objectives for the Census, findings from the qualitative research and feedback provided by stakeholders during a questionnaire development workshop.

Pet owners were only asked about **one** type of pet in the survey to reduce respondent burden and maintain quality of data. If a respondent had more than one type of pet, they were randomly allocated a pet type to complete the rest of the survey on. Rules to prioritise allocation to less common pet types were implemented at the start of fieldwork, but were then updated to fully random allocation later in fieldwork (except for insect owners, who were only asked the full scope of questions for their insect(s) if they *only* owned insects).

The survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Data validation

Several steps of data cleaning and validation were conducted, including:

- Examination of survey completion length, open ended responses and response patterns to identify duplicate and lower-quality respondents;

- Data checks for completeness of data and appropriateness of data capture;

- Conducting hole-count checks to ensure correct survey programming logic, and filtering of responses; and

- Data consistency checks – including the detection of unusual patterns that may suggest problems in the underlying data.

In total, 101 cases were removed as part of the data cleaning and validation process.

Weighting

The online panel survey results were weighted to Victorian population proportions based on 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data, including: gender, age, remoteness, household size, dwelling type and income. These variables were included in the weighting scheme (using random iterative method) as pet ownership differs by these variables.

Pet owner results (combined open link and panel respondents) were then weighted to the estimated (weighted) demographic profile of pet owners in the panel survey based on these same demographic variables, as the best available population benchmark for Victorian pet owners.

Extrapolations of cost, household and animal numbers

Extrapolations of pet costs, animal numbers and household numbers throughout this report have been based on household number estimates (private occupied dwellings) from the 2021 ABS Census (the number of households in Victoria was estimated to be around 2.4 million). Any extrapolated figures should be considered broadly indicative **estimates only** based on available household and survey data.

Statistical precision

Overall percentage results for community level questions answered by a particular number of **online panel survey** respondents have a specific degree of sampling error (i.e. confidence interval) at the 95% level of statistical confidence. That is, there is a 95% probability (abstracting from non-sampling error) that the results will be within +/- percentage points (pp) of the results that would have been obtained if the entire target population had responded. For instance, for questions answered by all/ most Victorian adults, the 95% confidence interval is no greater than +/-1pp. Higher degrees of sampling error apply to questions answered by fewer respondents.

Table 3 provides indicative confidence intervals for different response sizes within the overall sample by respondent groups for this survey.

Table 3. Indicative confidence intervals (+/-) at the 95% confidence level

Group	Total response size (n=)	Indicative confidence intervals (95%)
Victorian adults overall (panel only)	5,069	±1 pp
Victorians living in metro locations (panel only)	4,280	±2 pp
Victorians living in non-metro locations (panel only)	789	±4 pp

Note: These confidence intervals are upper bound levels based on percentage results of 50%. For higher or lower percentage results, the confidence intervals will be narrower.

The ORU panel's rigorous recruitment approach and large size (over 350,000 panel members) means that the panel is broadly representative of the underlying Australian population. However, the panel members were not selected via probability-based sampling methods and hence the use of statistical

sampling theory to extrapolate the online panel survey findings to the general population is based on the assumption that a random sample of panel members provides a good approximation of an equivalent sample of the general population.

As the open link survey was a non-representative opt-in survey open to all Victorians, the survey results are not subject to sampling error. This means that sample survey measures of statistical precision (statistical margins of error and confidence intervals) are not applicable to the survey results. It also implies that the procedure of testing for statistically significant differences is not applicable.

Caution should be exercised in interpreting all survey results presented due to sampling and non-sampling errors. In particular, due to the open nature of the survey, results based on the open link survey should be interpreted as broadly indicative only.

Presentation of results

Understanding the qualitative research findings

The qualitative research findings presented in this report are used to provide depth of understanding on particular issues and support the findings of the quantitative research component. It should be noted that the exact number of qualitative research participants holding a particular view on individual issues cannot be measured.

The following terms have been used throughout the report to provide a **qualitative indication** and approximation of the size of the target audience who held particular views:

Most – refers to findings that relate to more than three quarters of the research participants

Many – refers to findings that relate to more than half of the research participants

Some – refers to findings that relate to around a third of the research participants

A few – refers to findings that relate to less than a quarter of research participants

The most common qualitative findings are reported except in certain situations where only a few have raised particular issues, but these are nevertheless considered to be important and to have potentially wide-ranging implications/ applications.

Participant quotes have also been provided throughout the report to support the main results or findings under discussion.

Understanding the quantitative research findings

Reported percentages are based on the total number of valid responses (for the relevant response base – either panel sample only or merged sample including the panel plus AVW link) made to the particular question being reported on. This occasionally differs from the total number of completed survey questionnaires because of omissions in the completed questionnaires. The results reflect the responses of people who had a view and for whom the questions were applicable. 'Don't know/ unsure' responses have generally been presented, as this aids in the interpretation of the results.

For ease of reading, where relevant, the total proportions of positive responses have been provided in charts and figures alongside the full response scales. For example, the proportion of respondents who answered 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to a particular question are reported as the total proportion who agreed. Percentage results throughout the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding, or where a question allowed multiple responses to be selected.

III.   Pet ownership in Victoria

Overall pet ownership

58% of adult Victorians had a pet at the time of the survey, equating to approximately 1.4 million households. 42% of adult Victorians had just **one type of pet**, 12% had **two** types of pets and 4% had **three or more** types of pets (1.5 types of pets on average[2]).

Dogs and cats were by far the most popular pets, followed by fish and birds. Among all adult Victorians:

41% have a **dog** (average of 1.4 per dog owner)
Popular breeds: Cavoodle, labrador, greyhound, border collie and golden retriever

24% have a **cat** (average of 1.6 per cat owner)
Popular breeds: Domestic short/ medium/ long hair, Tabby, Ragdoll, Burmese

5% have a **bird** (average of 5.4 per bird owner) – including[3] 4% with birds other than poultry and 2% with poultry birds
Popular species: Budgie, Cockatiel, Cockatoo, Galah, Chicken (Isa brown, Silky)

5% have **fish** (average of 8.6 per fish owner) – including 2% with pond fish and 3% with aquarium/ tank fish
Popular species: Goldfish, Guppy, Betta/ Fighting Fish

2% have a **small mammal** (average of 2.5 per small mammal owner) – including 1% with rabbits, 1% with guinea pigs and 0.2% with other small mammals such as ferrets and rats
Popular breeds/ species: Lop/ Mini lop rabbit, Dwarf rabbit, Short haired guinea pig, Rat, Ferret

2% have a **large mammal** (average of 4.3 per large mammal owner) – including[4] 1% with horses and 1% with other large mammals such as sheep and cows
Popular species: Thoroughbred horse, Alpaca, Sheep, Goat

2% have a **reptile** or **amphibian** (average of 2.6 per reptile owner) – including 1% with lizards, 1% with turtles and 0.3% with snakes
Popular species: Bearded dragon, Blue tongue lizard, Eastern long neck turtle, Murray long neck turtle, Python (Diamond, Carpet)

0.3% have an **insect**
Popular species: Stick insect (spiny leaf, leafy, prickly), Spider (Tarantula), Bees, Ants

A full breakdown of pet ownership including estimates of total numbers of households with pets and total number of animals is provided in Table 4 and Table 5 overleaf.

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[2] Based on detailed pet types (e.g. lizard, snake, turtle) rather than condensed pet types (e.g. reptile).
[3] Please note that these figures do not sum to 5% as some bird owners owned both types of birds.
[4] Please note that these figures do not sum to 1% as some large mammal owners owned both horses and other animals.

It is estimated that there are around 4.4 million pets in Victoria, including 2.8 million in metropolitan Victoria and 1.6 million in non-metropolitan Victoria. These figures should be considered broadly indicative estimates of actual pet numbers based on available household and survey data. Extrapolations were made based on survey data and ABS 2021 Census data on the number of Victorian households.

Table 4: Estimates of pet ownership in Victoria
Base: *Overall pet ownership:* All respondents, panel sample (n=5,069)
Average number of animals: Pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

	% of adult Victorians who have type of pet	Estimated number of households	Average animals per household[5] (for owners of each pet type)	Estimated number of pets
Dogs	**41%**	**977,209**	**1.4**	**1,329,945**
Cats	**24%**	**579,222**	**1.6**	**913,629**
Birds	**5%**	**127,232**	**5.4**	**646,069**
Non-poultry	4%	86,736	3.8	331,009
Poultry	2%	49,944	6.3	315,060
Fish	**5%**	**116,381**	**8.6**	**1,047,336**
Pond fish	2%	52,304	8.2	425,705
Aquarium fish	3%	76,304	8.1	621,631
Small mammals	**2%**	**53,086**	**2.5**	**140,674**
Rabbit	1%	29,086	1.9	53,729
Guinea pig	0.9%	20,820	2.6	54,424
Other small mammal	0.2%	5,657	4.4	32,521
Large mammals	**2%**	**38,369**	**4.3**	**153,196**
Horse	1%	26,790	3.3	82,342
Other large mammal	0.5%	12,635	5.6	70,854
Reptiles/ amphibians	**2%**	**38,689**	**2.6**	**83,209**
Lizard	0.5%	13,251	2.2	28,595
Turtle	0.8%	18,310	1.4	25,712
Snake	0.3%	7,007	2.0	14,068
Amphibian	0.2%	5,035	2.9	14,835
Insects	**0.3%**	**6,951**	**7.1**	**43,647**
TOTAL	**58%**	**1,392,157**	**1.5 different types of pets**	**4,357,706**

PETTYPE. What type of pet(s) do you currently own? [Multiple response]
NUMBERPETS. How many pets do you currently own? Please indicate how many next to each type below [Numerical entry]

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[5] Averages calculated for number of pets exclude outlier responses of 50 or higher.

Table 5: Estimates of pet ownership in Victoria by region
Base: *Overall pet ownership:* All respondents, panel sample (n=5,069)
Average number of animals: Pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Pet type	% of adult Victorians who have type of pet Metro	% of adult Victorians who have type of pet Non-metro	Estimated number of households Metro	Estimated number of households Non-metro	Average animals per household[6] Metro	Average animals per household Non-metro	Estimated number of pets Metro	Estimated number of pets Non-metro
Dogs	**39%**	**47%**	**712,644**	**264,565**	**1.3**	**1.5**	**923,386**	**406,559**
Cats	**23%**	**29%**	**414,067**	**165,155**	**1.5**	**1.7**	**633,533**	**280,097**
Birds	**4%**	**10%**	**69,630**	**57,603**	**4.5**	**6.6**	**309,580**	**336,489**
Non-poultry	3%	6%	53,309	33,427	3.8	3.9	201,460	129,549
Poultry	1%	5%	21,965	27,978	4.9	7.4	108,120	206,939
Fish	**4%**	**6%**	**80,028**	**36,353**	**8.5**	**9.0**	**701,774**	**345,562**
Pond fish	2%	3%	36,418	15,886	7.7	9.0	282,105	143,600
Aquarium fish	3%	4%	52,114	24,189	8.1	8.3	419,669	201,962
Small mammals	**2%**	**3%**	**35,514**	**17,571**	**2.1**	**3.5**	**74,219**	**66,455**
Rabbit	1%	1%	23,186	5,900	1.7	2.3	39,942	13,787
Guinea pig	0.6%	2%	11,738	9,083	2.4	2.9	27,706	26,718
Other small mammal	0.1%	0.6%	2,462	3,195	2.7	8.1	6,570	25,951
Large mammals	**0.9%**	**4%**	**16,102**	**22,266**	**3.2**	**4.8**	**47,346**	**105,850**
Horse	0.9%	2%	15,893	10,897	2.7	3.6	42,984	39,358

[6] Averages calculated for number of pets exclude outlier responses of 50 or higher.

Pet type	% of adult Victorians who have type of pet Metro	% of adult Victorians who have type of pet Non-metro	Estimated number of households Metro	Estimated number of households Non-metro	Average animals per household[6] Metro	Average animals per household Non-metro	Estimated number of pets Metro	Estimated number of pets Non-metro
Other large mammal	0.0%	2%	755	11,880	5.8	5.6	4,362	66,492
Reptiles/ amphibians	**1%**	**2%**	**25,324**	**13,365**	**2.4**	**2.8**	**51,733**	**31,476**
Lizard	0.4%	0.9%	7,912	5,339	2.1	2.2	16,921	11,674
Turtle	0.7%	1%	12,900	5,409	1.3	1.6	17,324	8,388
Snake	0.2%	0.6%	3,851	3,156	1.9	2.2	7,132	6,936
Amphibian	0.2%	0.3%	3,546	1,489	2.9	3.0	10,357	4,478
Insects	**0.2%**	**0.7%**	**2,917**	**4,034**	**8.0**	**5.0**	**23,279**	**20,368**
TOTAL	**56%**	**64%**	**1,027,389**	**364,768**	**1.4 different types of pets**	**1.8 different types of pets**	**2,764,850**	**1,592,856**

PETTYPE. What type of pet(s) do you currently own? [Multiple response]
NUMBERPETS. How many pets do you currently own? Please indicate how many next to each type below [Numerical entry]

The following groups were *more likely* than other groups to own a pet:

Those living in **non-metropolitan** Victoria (64%, compared to 56% of respondents in metropolitan Victoria)

Those living in a **house** (63%, compared to 51% of those living in a unit/ townhouse/ bungalow and 41% of those living in an apartment)

Households with **three or more people** (69-72%, compared to 45-53% of those with one or two people) – where pets were more common among respondents with children aged under 18 years (73%, compared to 53% of those without children)

Younger respondents aged under 35 years (70%) and **35 to 54 years** (62%), compared to those aged 55 years and over (45%)

Higher income households with an **annual household income over $120,000** (65%) and **$60,000 to under $120,000** (61%), compared to those with an annual household income less than $60,000 (54%)

Those who **spoke English at home** (60%, compared to 45% of those who spoke a language other than English at home)

Nearly three quarters (74%) of pet owners had **owned a pet in the past** before they obtained their current pet(s).

Around half (53%) of pet owners had gotten their most recent pet in the last three years (since 2020). The distribution of results suggests that pet acquisition did increase over the COVID-19 pandemic, with elevated pet acquisition from 2020 to 2022.

Figure 1: Year of acquisition

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Year	Percentage
2023	12%
2022	15%
2021	14%
2020	12%
2019	8%
2018	7%
2017	5%
2016	4%
2015	4%
2014	3%
Before 2014	14%
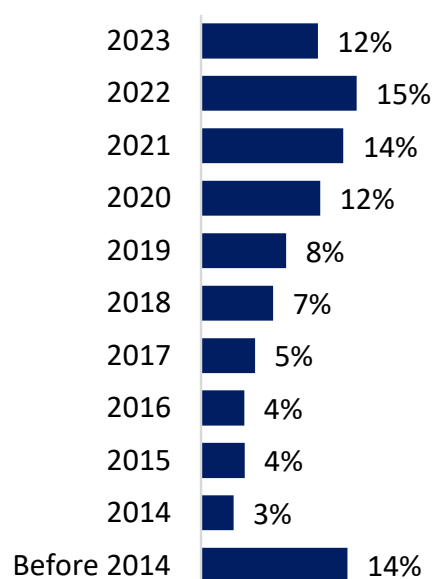
YEARACQUIRED. In what year did you get your current/ most recent PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

Most popular pet names

'Luna' was the most popular pet name among both dog and cat owners. Many of the other common names were shared among both dogs and cats, including Charlie, Max, Daisy, Coco and Bella. Pet names for other types of pets appear more likely to be based on pets' colours or species (e.g. Ginger for guinea pigs, Bluey for blue tongued lizards) or characters (e.g. Squirtle and Franklin for turtles).

Fish were most likely to *not* have a name (66%), followed by insects (44%) and birds (26%).

Figure 2: Most popular pet names

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

PETNAME. What is your PETCATEGORY's name? [Free text]

Pet age

The average current age for each pet type (for pet owners' most recently acquired pet) ranged from 1.61 years (approximately 1 year and 7 months old) for insects, to 9.57 years (approximately 9 years and 7 months old) for large mammals.

Dog and cat owners were most likely to know their pet's age, while insect and fish owners were least likely to know their pet's age.

The results indicate that 9% of most recently acquired dogs in Victoria were puppies and 9% of such cats in Victoria were kittens (less than one year old).

Figure 3: Current age of pet

Base: All pet owners, merged sample
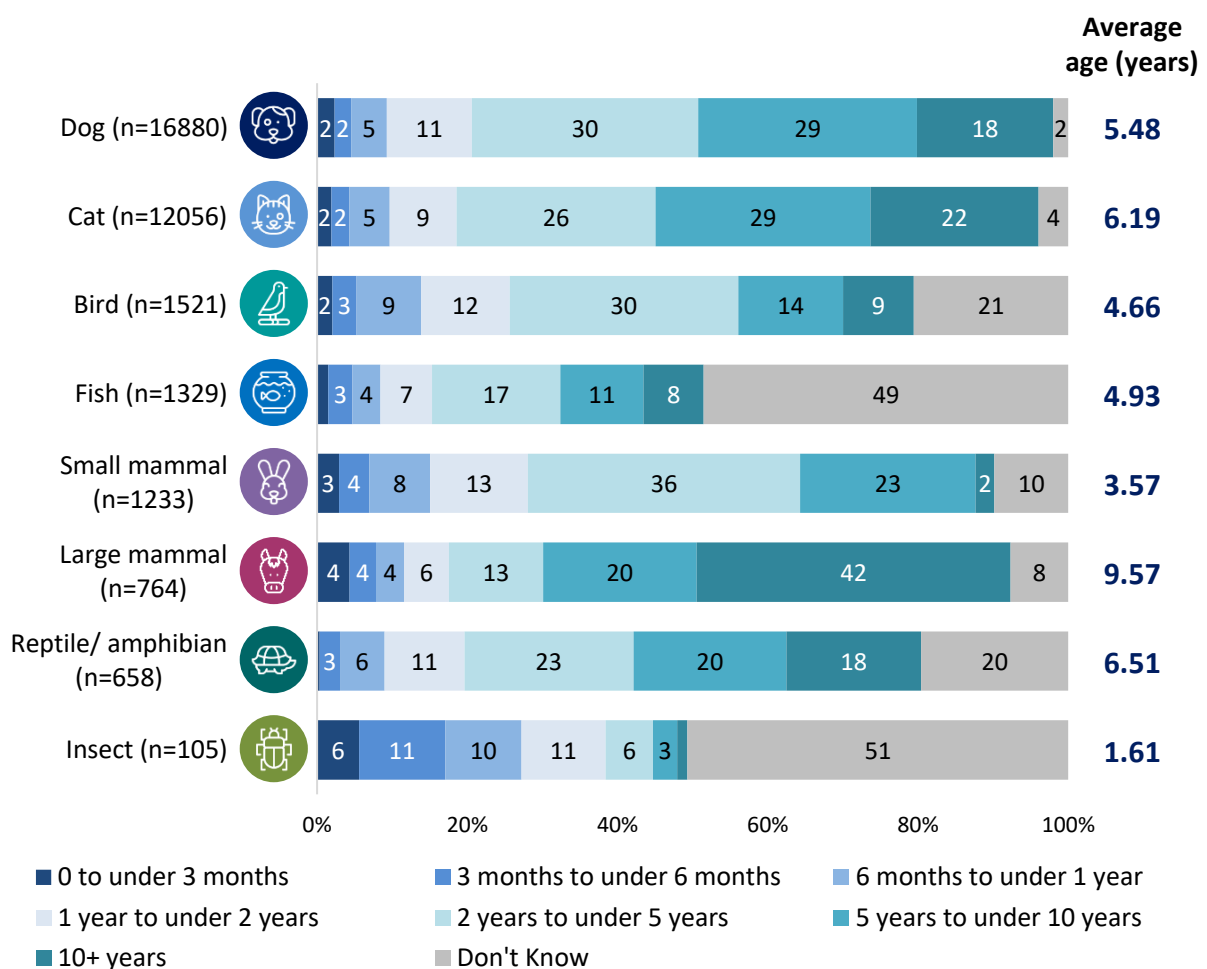
PETAGENOW. And how old is your PETCATEGORY now? Please provide your best estimate. [Numerical entry]

Reasons for pet ownership

Among pet owners, the most common reason for getting a pet in general was to provide companionship (64%). Additionally, around one third of pet owners indicated that having pets was habitual/ they had always had them (35%), or that they got a pet to benefit their or their family's mental health, such as by providing a sense of purpose or connection (30%).

Figure 4: Main reasons for getting pet(s) in general

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Reason	%
Companionship for me/ my family	64%
Have always had pets	35%
For my/ my family's mental health (e.g. sense of purpose, connection)	30%
Wanted to help/ save the animal	23%
Someone to look after/ provide a sense of family	15%
My family member(s) wanted one	15%
For my/ my family's physical health (e.g. exercise, walking)	12%
Companionship for another pet	10%
Previous experience with family or friends' pets	7%
Fun/ entertainment/ as a hobby (e.g. sport, showing or competition)	5%
Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)	4%
Security for me/ my family	4%
Impact from COVID-19 lockdowns (e.g. spent more time at home, boredom)	3%
For work or products (e.g. breeding, farm working dogs, egg-laying)	3%
Service/ assistance animal	1%
Other	2%
I did not decide to get my pet (e.g. it was given to me, I inherited it)	1%
Don't know	<1%

WHYGET. What are the main reasons for why you decided to get your pet(s)? Please select up to three. [Multiple response]

Pet owners' reasoning for deciding to get a particular type of pet over other pets was varied and quite specialised depending on their pet type (see Figure 5 overleaf):

Dogs were most often chosen because of the companionship, support and sense of family they provide (57%);

Cats were most likely to be chosen due to owners having previous experience with cats (47%), as well as their cleanliness and the ease of looking after them (43%);

Birds were most commonly chosen as pets for work or work products, such as egg laying (31%) – particularly relevant to poultry birds;

Fish were most likely to be chosen due to them being low maintenance and easy to look after (43%), as well as for their appearance (40%);

Small mammals were most likely to be chosen for their size and the amount of space they require (35%);

Large mammals were most often chosen for entertainment or enjoyment purposes, such as horse riding (45%); and

Reptiles/ amphibians and insects were most likely to be chosen as pets because they're interesting and different (46% and 59%, respectively), as well as low maintenance, clean and easy to look after 33% and 50%, respectively).

Figure 5: Main reasons for getting specific type of pet

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Reason	%
Companionship/ support/ provide a sense of family	57%
Previous experience with type of pet	47%
Pet's personality/ energy levels	40%
My family member(s) wanted this type of pet	23%
Like how it looks (e.g. cute, colourful)	19%

Cat (n=12,056)

Reason	%
Previous experience with type of pet	47%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	43%
Companionship/ support/ provide a sense of family	42%
I wanted to help/ save the animal	36%
Pet's personality/ energy levels	29%

Bird (n=1,521)

Reason	%
For work or products	31%
Previous experience with type of pet	28%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	23%
Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby	19%
Like how it looks (e.g. cute, colourful)	19%

Fish (n=1,329)

Reason	%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	43%
Like how it looks (e.g. cute, colourful)	40%
Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby	31%
Inexpensive	25%
Interesting (e.g. thought it was cool, different)	25%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Reason	%
Size of pet/ amount of space required for pet	35%
Previous experience with type of pet	34%
I wanted to help/ save the animal	29%
Companionship/ support/ provide a sense of family	29%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	27%

Large mammal (n=764)

Reason	%
Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby	45%
Previous experience with type of pet	40%
I wanted to help/ save the animal	27%
Species/ breed enthusiast	25%
Companionship/ support/ provide a sense of family	14%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Reason	%
Interesting (e.g. thought it was cool, different)	46%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	33%
My family member(s) wanted this type of pet	32%
Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby	22%
Like how it looks (e.g. cute, colourful)	19%

Insect (n=105)

Reason	%
Interesting (e.g. thought it was cool, different)	59%
Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness	50%
Inexpensive	37%
Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby	30%
Size of pet/ amount of space required for pet	30%

WHYPET. What are the main reasons you decided to get a PETCATEGORY over other types of pets? [Multiple response]

IV. Perceptions of pet ownership

Overall impact

Nearly all pet owners (98%) felt that having their pet(s) had had a positive impact on their life, with nine in ten (89%) stating that the impact had been 'very positive'. The perceived impact of having a pet was highly favourable across all pet types (95-99% positive). In addition, most qualitative participants reported that the benefits of owning a pet 'far outweighed' any drawbacks (see subsequent section for details).

Figure 6: Impact of pet ownership
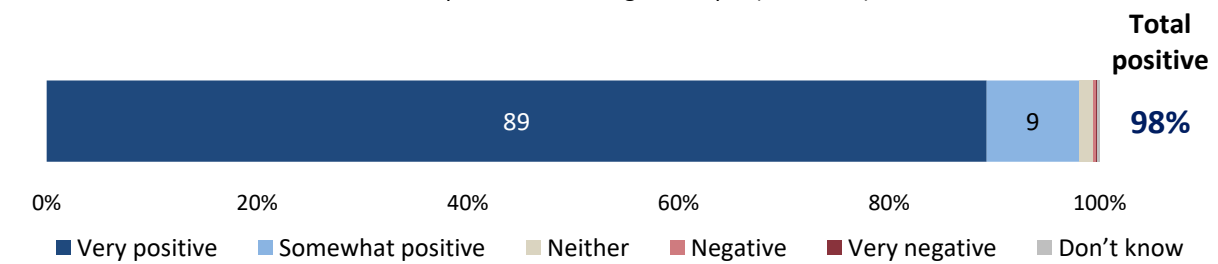
Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

IMPACT. On balance, what kind of impact has having your pet(s) had on your life? [Single response]

Figure 7: Impact of pet ownership by pet category

Base: All pet owners, merged sample
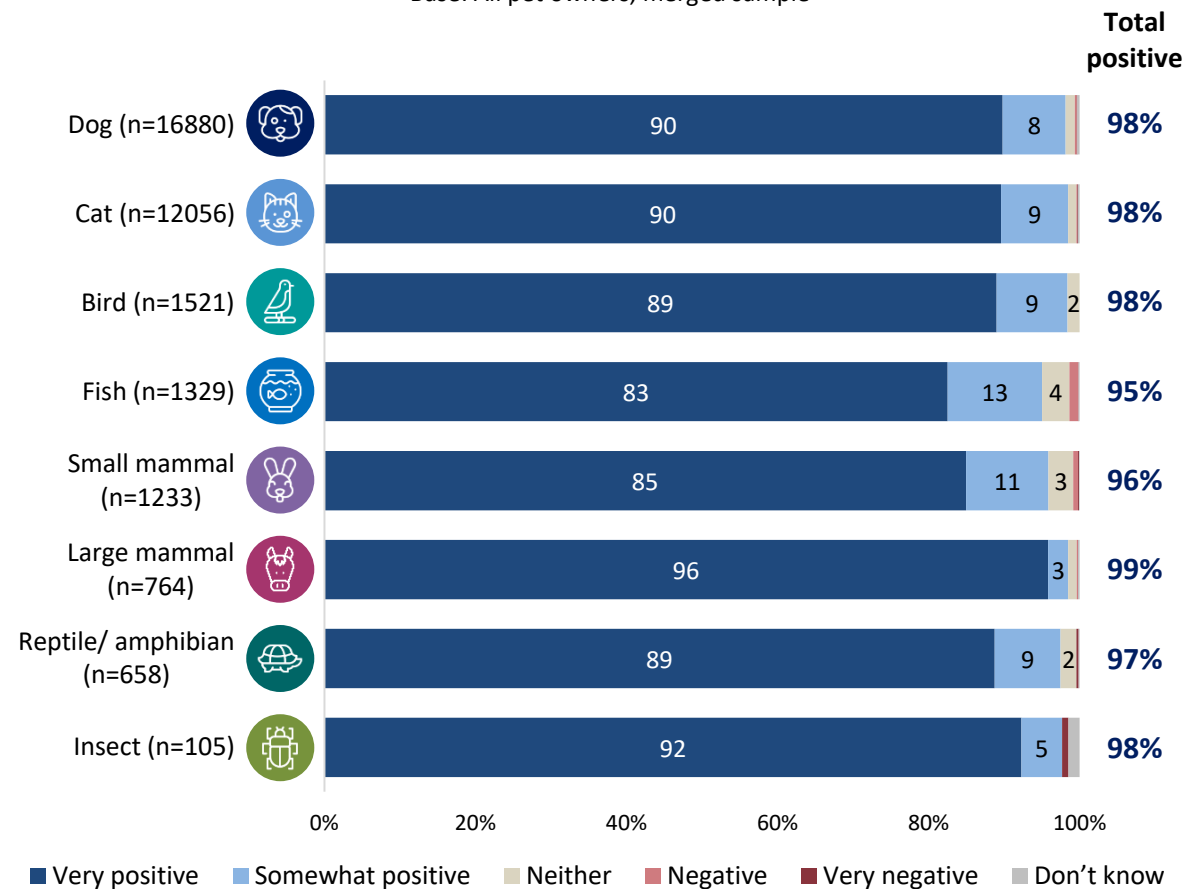
IMPACT. On balance, what kind of impact has having your pet(s) had on your life? [Single response]

Main benefits

The most common perceived benefits of having a pet were companionship and love (79%) and improved mental health or emotional support, such as a sense of purpose or connection (57%). Many qualitative participants also reported that the routine and structure of pet ownership benefited their mental/ emotional health. Additionally, around a quarter of pet owners indicated that they enjoyed having a pet to look after and provide a sense of family (25%) or benefited from improved physical health or ability (e.g. through exercise or mobility support) as a result of having a pet (24%).

> *"[The cat] is part of our family, she gives us so much love and enhances our lives with purpose. She gives comfort and provides us mental health support"—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne*

Those who owned dogs (36%) or large mammals (29%) were especially likely to state that having a pet had improved their physical health or ability, while owners of pets other than cats or dogs were more likely (17-26%) to state that having a pet helped to teach children responsibility, respect, and patience.

> *"Dogs are really a lot of fun. [I got mine] for some extra exercise, to help me get outside more and meet new people while on walks"—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria*

Figure 8: Perceived benefits of pet ownership

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Benefit	Percentage
Companionship/ love	79%
Improved mental health/ emotional support (e.g. sense of purpose, connection)	57%
Someone to look after/ provide a sense of family	25%
Improved physical health or ability (e.g. exercise, walking, mobility support)	24%
Fun/ entertainment	21%
They understand me/ meet my emotional needs	18%
Teaches children responsibility/ respect/ patience	15%
Social connection with others (e.g. family/ friends, community)	11%
Safety/ sense of security	8%
Sense of pride/ achievement	3%
Learning new skills	3%
Products/ income (e.g. breeding, egg-laying)	2%
Other	1%
None of the above – no benefits of having a pet	<1%

BENEFITS. What do you consider are the main benefits of having a pet? Please select up to three. [Multiple response]

Drawbacks

Pet owners most commonly indicated that the death of a pet and resulting emotional impact was a drawback of having a pet (42%). This was followed by reduced ability to take a holiday or spontaneous trips (39%), financial costs of ongoing pet ownership and care (35%). The qualitative research found that most participants 'expected' and/or accepted these drawbacks as an inherent part of being a pet owner.

> *"The main [drawback] is when they get sick or pass away. It's so hard watching that"*—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria

> *"Going away for a while can be hard [if you have a pet]. Kennels are so expensive and it can cost so much"*—Potential pet owner, Regional Victoria

Owners of small mammals were most likely to list the cleaning, mess and smell associated with the pet as a drawback (32%).

Just under one in ten (9%) pet owners felt that there were no drawbacks of having a pet.

Figure 9: Perceived drawbacks of pet ownership

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Drawback	Percentage
Death of pet (e.g. emotional impact)	42%
Reduces ability for me/ my family to take a holiday/ spontaneous trips	39%
Financial costs (e.g. of ongoing pet ownership and care)	35%
Worrying about pet's happiness/ wellbeing/ behaviour (including unwanted behaviours)	22%
Cleaning associated with pet/ mess/ smell	21%
Managing pet's health (e.g. managing preventative health such as vaccinations, ongoing health conditions)	18%
Limits housing options (e.g. rental properties, building requirements)	13%
Damage to home/ items	10%
Interrupted sleep (e.g. due to unwanted noises)	7%
Keeping pet(s) groomed	5%
Training/ exercising pet regularly	5%
Spending time with pet/ giving them attention	3%
Health impacts on me/ my family (e.g. allergies)	1%
Other	1%
None of the above – no drawbacks of having a pet	9%

DRAWBACKS. What do you consider are the main drawbacks of having a pet? Please select up to three. [Multiple response]

Reasons for not wanting a pet (among non-pet owners)

Consistent with the main drawbacks listed by pet owners in relation to having a pet, those who did not currently own a pet and did not want one in the next 12 months were mostly likely to indicate that this was because of the reduced ability to take a holiday or leave a pet alone (39%). One quarter of respondents reported that they did not plan to get a pet due to a lack of time or ability to look after one (25%) and the financial costs (25%) associated with owing a pet.

Other reasons provided for not intending to get a pet (8%) included being too old or not well enough to look after a pet, not wanting to experience the grief of a pet passing away, their home not being suitable for a pet, plans to travel or move, not wanting to be responsible for a pet, already looking after other friends'/ family members' pets when they go away or caring for foster animals, and perceptions that pets are damaging to the local environment and native wildlife.

> *"We are nearing 80 years old and my husband has a chronic disease so we do not consider it responsible to take on any further pets."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"Lifetime commitment and heartbreak then ensues when they get sick or die."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"Have downsized to an apartment and we now travel away from home regularly and for extended periods."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"I'm enjoying not having the responsibility associated with caring for a pet."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"I look after foster animals and having a pet would make that difficult."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"Environmental impact. I've read reports showing that production of pet food has huge detrimental effects. No one seems to mention this in mainstream media. Don't get me wrong – I love pets. But I think maybe it's wrong for the planet."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

Figure 10: Reasons for not planning to get a pet

Base: All non-pet owners who did not plan to get a pet in the next 12 months, merged sample (n=1,677)

Reason	%
Reduced ability to take a holiday/ leave pet alone	39%
Do not have time/ ability to look after pet	25%
Financial costs	25%
Not at home enough (e.g. at work, studying, socialising)	18%
Cleanliness/ cleaning required	16%
Do not have enough space in home	15%
My family or household member(s) do not want one	11%
Do not want a pet/ do not like animals	9%
Recently lost a pet	7%
Damage to home/ items	7%
Landlord/ building does not allow pets	5%
Allergies	5%
Having to meet legal requirements (e.g. planning provisions, obtaining excess animal permits, registration)	3%
Noise	2%
Have/ planning to have children	2%
Other	8%
Don't know	2%

WHYNOTGET. What are the main reasons you do not want to get a pet in the next 12 months? Please select up to three. [Multiple response]

V. Acquiring pets

Pet age

Across all pet types, pet owners most commonly indicated that their most recently acquired pet was up to three months of age when they first acquired them. The average age of each pet type at acquisition ranged from 0.63 years (approximately 8 months old) for insects, to 5.17 years (approximately 5 years and 2 months old) for large mammals. Large mammals were most likely to have been first acquired when they were between 5 and 10 years of age (19%) or 10 or more years old (19%).

Notable proportions of pet owners for certain types did not know how old their pet was when they first got them. Dog owners were most likely to indicate that they were aware of their pet's age at acquisition (just 3% said they didn't know), while more than half (56%) of insect owners and over two thirds (68%) of fish owners were unsure.

On average, pets obtained through a breeder were younger (0.42 years, approximately 5 months old) compared to those obtained through other sources including Council pounds (1.66 years), animal shelters (1.94 years), rescue/ rehoming organisations (2.09 years) and family members/ friends (1.98 years).

Figure 11: Age of pet at acquisition

Base: All pet owners, merged sample
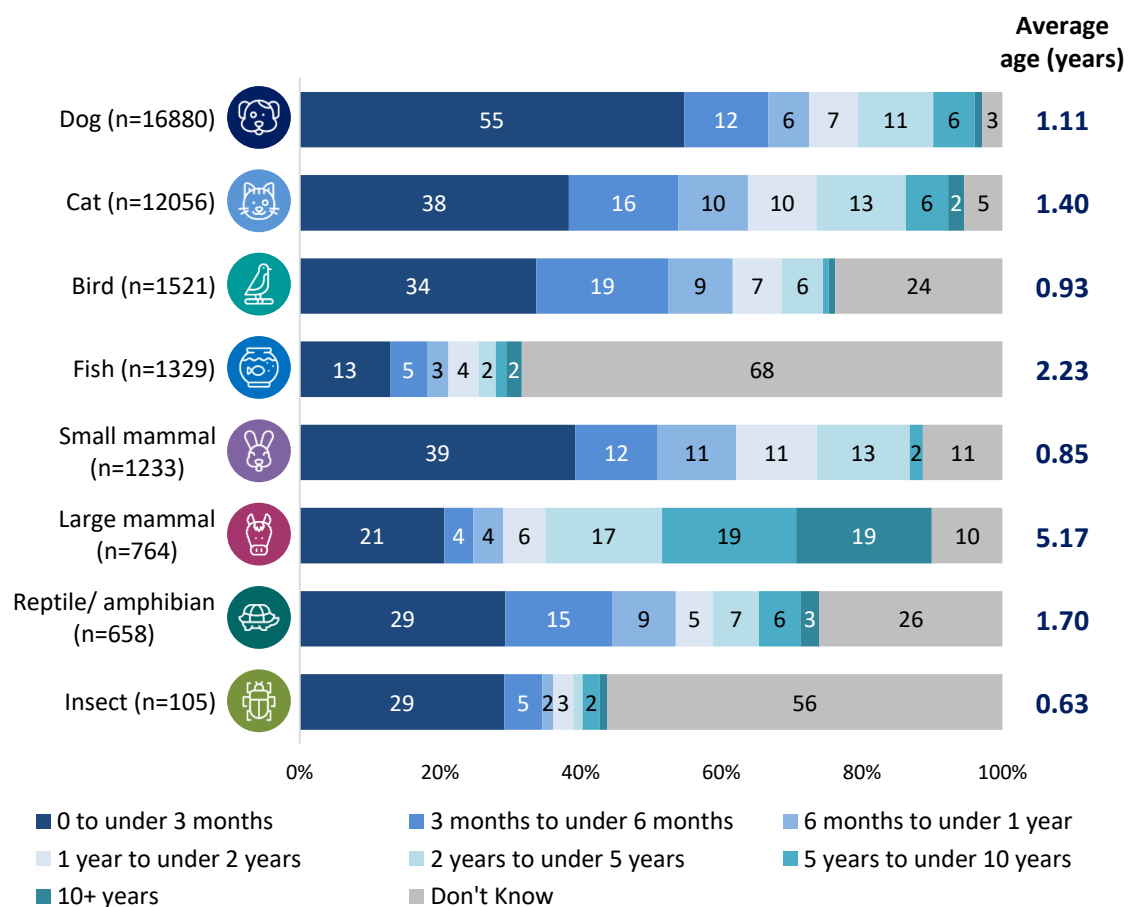
	Average age (years)
Dog (n=16880)	**1.11**
Cat (n=12056)	**1.40**
Bird (n=1521)	**0.93**
Fish (n=1329)	**2.23**
Small mammal (n=1233)	**0.85**
Large mammal (n=764)	**5.17**
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	**1.70**
Insect (n=105)	**0.63**

Legend:
- 0 to under 3 months
- 3 months to under 6 months
- 6 months to under 1 year
- 1 year to under 2 years
- 2 years to under 5 years
- 5 years to under 10 years
- 10+ years
- Don't Know

PETAGE. How old was your PETCATEGORY when you first acquired them? Please provide your best estimate. [Numerical entry]

Cost

Purchase or adoption costs differed greatly depending on pet type (see Figure 12), with the average cost ranging from $52 for insects and $67 for small mammals, up to $1,410 for large mammals and $1,609 for dogs. Average costs of other pet types were quite similar, ranging from $122 to $228.

Owners of large mammals were most likely (37%) to indicate that they paid nothing for their pet, followed by insect (35%) and cat owners (32%) (see Figure 13 overleaf). For most pet types, at least half (50-65%) of owners reported that they paid between $1 and $499 for their pet. The two exceptions were the generally more expensive pets – dogs (47% of owners said they spent $1,000 or more) and large mammals (35% said they spent $1,000 or more).

Figure 12: Average cost to purchase/ adopt by pet type ($)
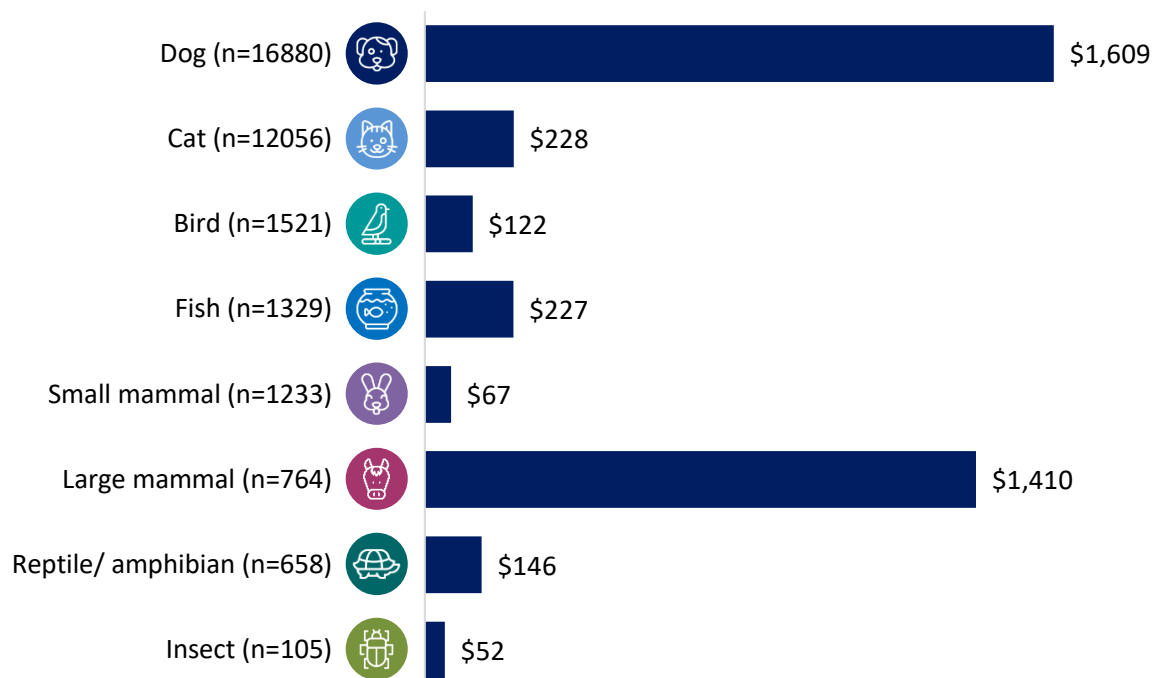
Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Pet type	Average cost
Dog (n=16880)	$1,609
Cat (n=12056)	$228
Bird (n=1521)	$122
Fish (n=1329)	$227
Small mammal (n=1233)	$67
Large mammal (n=764)	$1,410
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	$146
Insect (n=105)	$52

PETCOST. How much did your PETCATEGORY cost to purchase or adopt? If you did not pay anything for this pet, please enter '0'. [Numerical entry]

Figure 13: Cost to purchase/ adopt by pet type
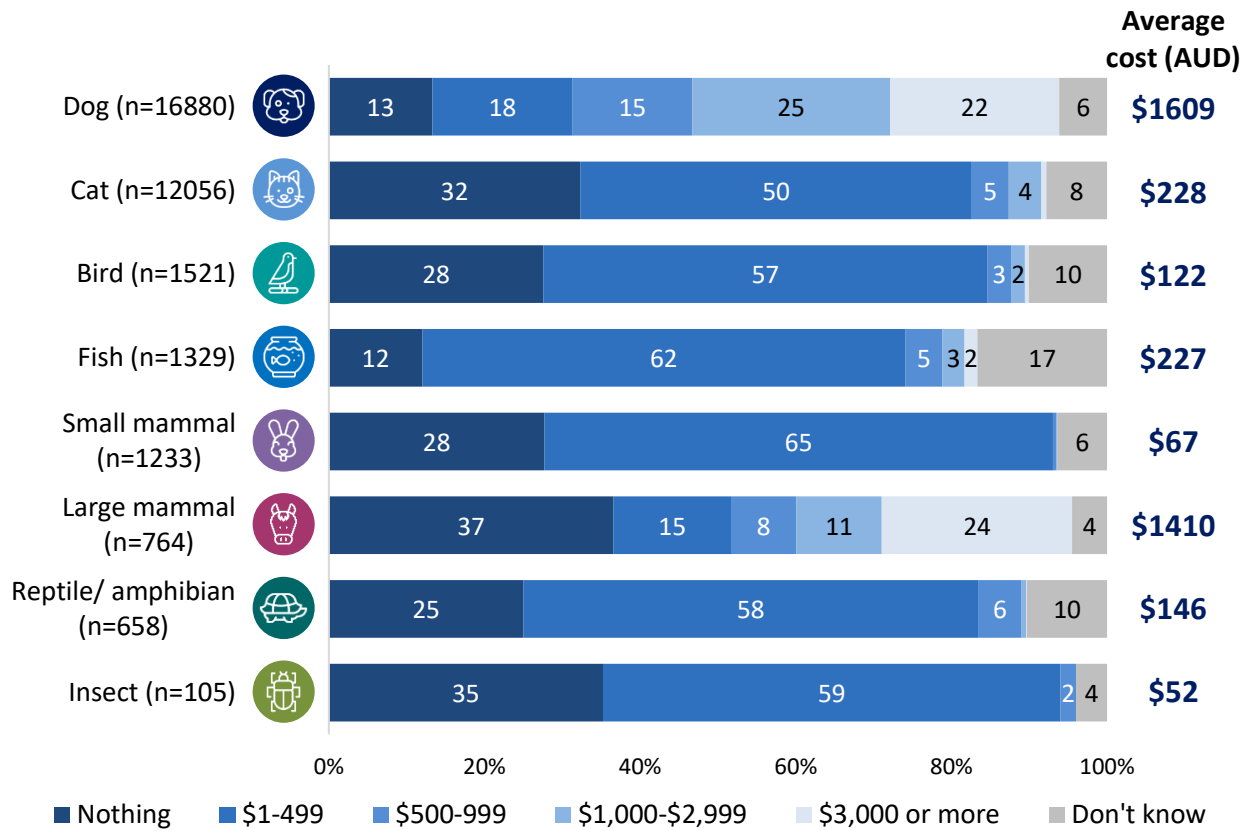
Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Average cost (AUD)

Pet type	Nothing	$1-499	$500-999	$1,000-$2,999	$3,000 or more	Don't know	Average cost (AUD)
Dog (n=16880)	13	18	15	25	22	6	**$1609**
Cat (n=12056)	32	50	5	4		8	**$228**
Bird (n=1521)	28	57	3 2			10	**$122**
Fish (n=1329)	12	62	5 3 2			17	**$227**
Small mammal (n=1233)	28	65				6	**$67**
Large mammal (n=764)	37	15	8	11	24	4	**$1410**
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	25	58	6			10	**$146**
Insect (n=105)	35	59	2			4	**$52**

■ Nothing ■ $1-499 ■ $500-999 ■ $1,000-$2,999 ■ $3,000 or more ■ Don't know

PETCOST. How much did your PETCATEGORY cost to purchase or adopt? If you did not pay anything for this pet, please enter '0'. [Numerical entry]

Sources of acquisition

The most common sources of acquisition (for owners' most recently acquired pets) varied between pet types. Dogs (51%) and birds (34%) were more likely than other animals to have been sourced from a breeder, while cats were more likely to have been rescued from a rehoming or volunteer-run organisation (28%) or animal shelter (22%). Fish were most likely to have been purchased at a pet shop (43%) or specialty shop fish (34%). Compared to other pet types, reptiles/ amphibians (30%) and insects (18%) were more likely to come from a specialty shop (e.g. an aquarium). Insects were also the most likely to have been found on the street or in the wild (18%). Around three in ten (29%) owners of large mammals said they got their pet from another source, such as by breeding the animal themselves, through work (e.g. on a farm), from a trainer, via an advertisement, or by private sale from the previous owner.

Figure 14: Top sources of acquisition by pet type

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Breeder	51%
Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation	17%
From a family member or friend	9%
Animal shelter	6%
Other source	5%

Cat (n=12,056)

Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation	28%
Animal shelter	22%
From a family member or friend	14%
Breeder	10%
On the street/ in the wild	6%

Bird (n=1,521)

Breeder	34%
Pet shop	16%
From a family member or friend	15%
Other source	10%
From an acquaintance	6%

Fish (n=1,329)

Pet shop	43%
Speciality shop (e.g. aquarium)	34%
From a family member or friend	8%
Other source	5%
Market	3%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Breeder	23%
Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation	21%
Pet shop	16%
From a family member or friend	14%
Animal shelter	8%

Large mammal (n=764)

Other source	29%
Breeder	23%
From an acquaintance	15%
From a family member or friend	14%
Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation	11%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Speciality shop (e.g. aquarium)	30%
Pet shop	21%
Breeder	16%
From a family member or friend	12%
From an acquaintance	6%

Insect (n=105)

Breeder	23%
Other source	18%
On the street/ in the wild	18%
Speciality shop (e.g. aquarium)	18%
Pet shop	11%

SOURCE. Where did you acquire your PETCATEGORY? [Single response]

Among dog owners who got their dog from a breeder, the majority (62%) said that they got to meet their pet's parents before purchasing. The most common methods for identifying or finding a dog breeder were through Gumtree or another online advertising platform (22%), through the breeder's own website (20%), through a breeder peak body, such as Dogs Victoria (19%), through a family member or friend (16%), or through Facebook or another social media platform (12%).

The most common reasons provided by owners for going to a breeder for their dog were wanting a specific breed or species (62%), the breeder's practices, such as responsible or regulated breeding (45%), or the breeder's reputation (e.g. for high animal welfare standards or experience, 24%).
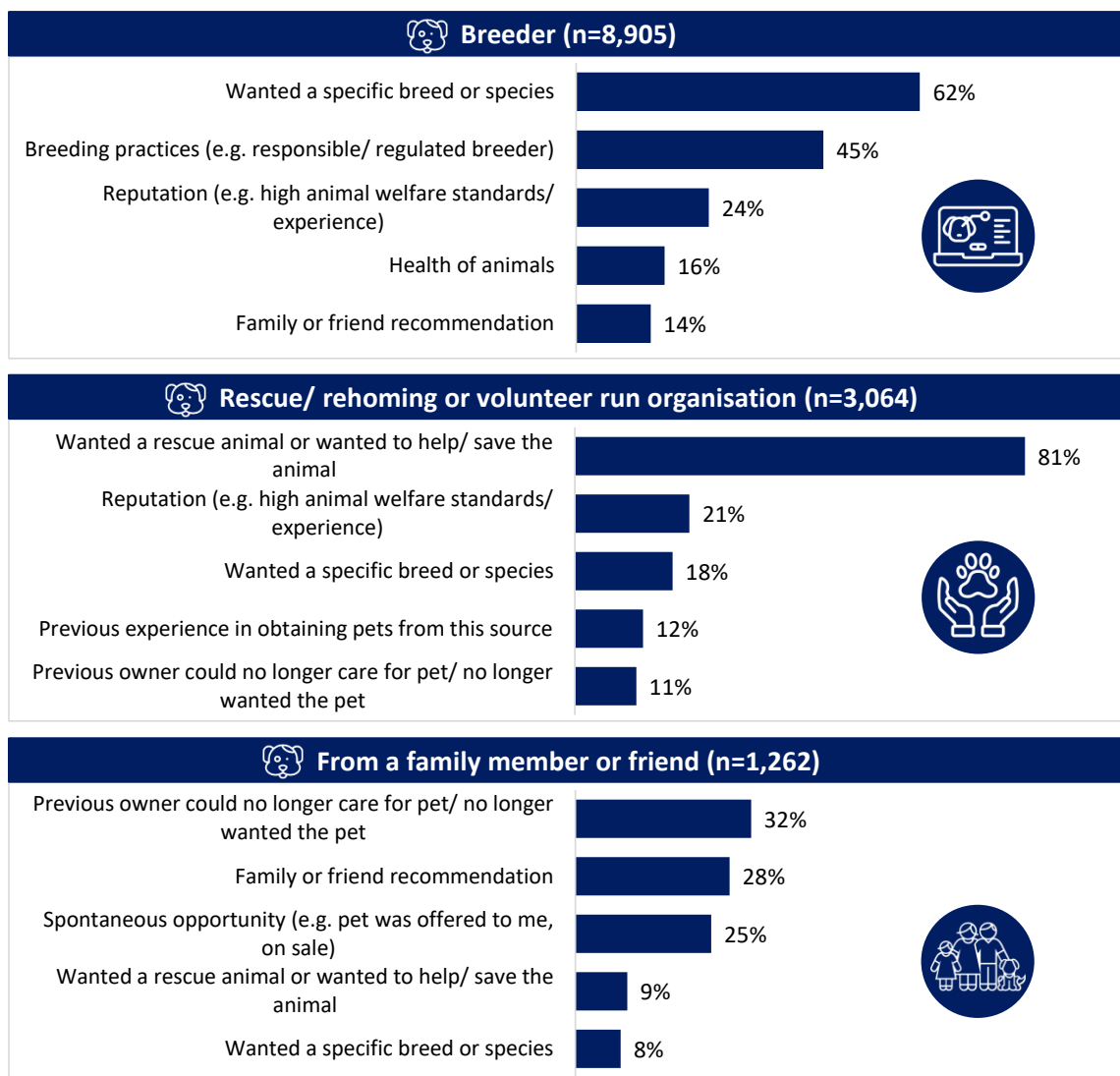
Dog owners had other specific reasons for acquiring their pet through alternative sources. Among those who obtained their dog from a rescue/ rehoming or volunteer-run organisation, the vast majority (81%) said that they had wanted to rescue, help or save the animal. In contrast, those who got their dog from a family member or friend were more likely to indicate that the previous owner could no longer care for or no longer wanted the pet (32%), their family member or friend had recommended it (28%), or it was a spontaneous opportunity (25%).

Figure 15: Reasons for obtaining pet from source (Top 3 sources) – Dogs

Base: All dog owners, merged sample

🐶 Breeder (n=8,905)

Reason	%
Wanted a specific breed or species	62%
Breeding practices (e.g. responsible/ regulated breeder)	45%
Reputation (e.g. high animal welfare standards/ experience)	24%
Health of animals	16%
Family or friend recommendation	14%

🐶 Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation (n=3,064)

Reason	%
Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	81%
Reputation (e.g. high animal welfare standards/ experience)	21%
Wanted a specific breed or species	18%
Previous experience in obtaining pets from this source	12%
Previous owner could no longer care for pet/ no longer wanted the pet	11%

🐶 From a family member or friend (n=1,262)

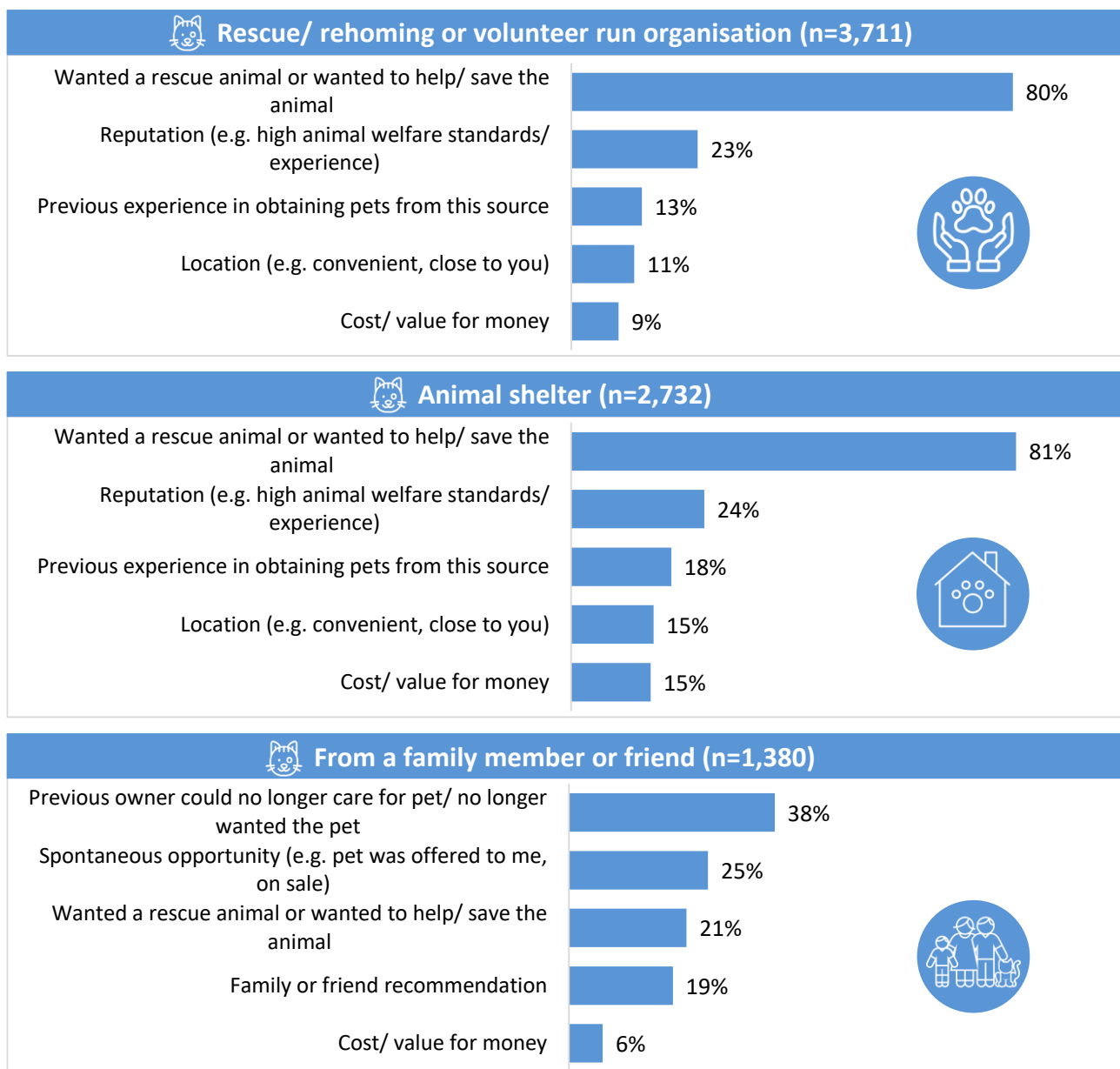| Reason	%
Previous owner could no longer care for pet/ no longer wanted the pet	32%
Family or friend recommendation	28%
Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)	25%
Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	9%
Wanted a specific breed or species	8%

WHYSOURCE. Why did you acquire your PETCATEGORY from this source? [Multiple response]

Cat owners provided very similar reasons for obtaining their pet from a rescue/ rehoming or volunteer-run organisation, or from an animal shelter – in both cases, around four in five (80-81%) said they had wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help or save the animal. A reputation for high animal welfare standards or experience in caring for animals was also valued among around one quarter of owners who sourced their cat from an animal shelter (24%) or rescue/ rehoming/ volunteer-run organisation (23%). Additionally, some cat owners (13-18%) indicated they had previous experience obtaining pets from these sources, went there due to location (11-15%) or cost/ value for money (9-15%).

Owners who got their cat from a family member or friend also had similar reasons as dog owners for getting their pet this way – that the previous owner could no longer care for or no longer wanted the pet (38%), or it was a spontaneous opportunity (25%).

Figure 16: Reasons for obtaining pet from source (Top 3 sources) – Cats

Base: All cat owners, merged sample

Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation (n=3,711)

Reason	%
Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	80%
Reputation (e.g. high animal welfare standards/ experience)	23%
Previous experience in obtaining pets from this source	13%
Location (e.g. convenient, close to you)	11%
Cost/ value for money	9%

Animal shelter (n=2,732)

Reason	%
Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	81%
Reputation (e.g. high animal welfare standards/ experience)	24%
Previous experience in obtaining pets from this source	18%
Location (e.g. convenient, close to you)	15%
Cost/ value for money	15%

From a family member or friend (n=1,380)

Reason	%
Previous owner could no longer care for pet/ no longer wanted the pet	38%
Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)	25%
Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	21%
Family or friend recommendation	19%
Cost/ value for money	6%

WHYSOURCE. Why did you acquire your PETCATEGORY from this source? [Multiple response]

Research prior to getting pet(s)

Around six in ten (61%) pet owners conducted research prior to getting their most recently acquired pet. Those who owned less common types of pets, particularly reptiles/ amphibians (82%) and insects (76%), were more likely to indicate that they did research before getting their pet, while cat owners were least likely to have done prior research (44%).

Those who had not owned a pet in the past were slightly more likely to have done research before acquiring their pet (63%) compared to those who had owned a pet before (61%).

> *"I'd never had a [reptile] before… I needed to research the costs, like the food they need [and] how to clean and maintain their space"*—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

> *"I've never had a dog before so it's like being a learner driver all over again"*—Potential pet owner, Regional Victoria

The qualitative research found that owners who acquired their pet(s) through a considered/ deliberate decision (particularly from breeders, speciality shops and rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisations) were more likely to have conducted research prior to getting their pet, compared with those who acquired their pet through an impromptu/ opportunistic decision (particularly on the street, in the wild, from a vet clinic, or from family members/ friends). Those who got their pet from a breeder (85%), specialty shop (71%), or rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation (63%) were more likely to have done some research beforehand, while prior research was less common among owners who got their pet on the street or in the wild (13%), from a vet clinic (30%), or from a family member or friend (31%).

> *"Mine was an impulse purchase from the lost dogs home – they called us urgently one day. I just searched for information afterwards"*—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria

> *"[My cat] was a stray I found, so I just decided to start looking after him. It's not his fault he was a stray, if you like cats it just pulls on the heart strings"*—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Among owners who conducted research before getting their pet, the majority (57%) indicated that they had looked for information on breeds or species characteristics, including specific behaviours, health conditions or physical features (see Figure 17 overleaf).

> *"I went to a breeder [to ensure] the quality of the bloodline. [I wanted] to be assured of the dog's integrity [because the species] often have health issues"*—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria

Additionally, around four in ten owners who did prior research had looked into the pet's:

- Medical/ health requirements (41%);
- Food requirements (39%);
- Suitability for them or their family/ children (38%);
- Size or amount of space it requires (37%);
- Desexing/ microchipping/ vaccination status (36%); and
- Cost to purchase or adopt (36%).

Figure 17: Information looked for before getting pet(s)

Base: Pet owners who did research prior to getting their pet, merged sample (n=22,183)

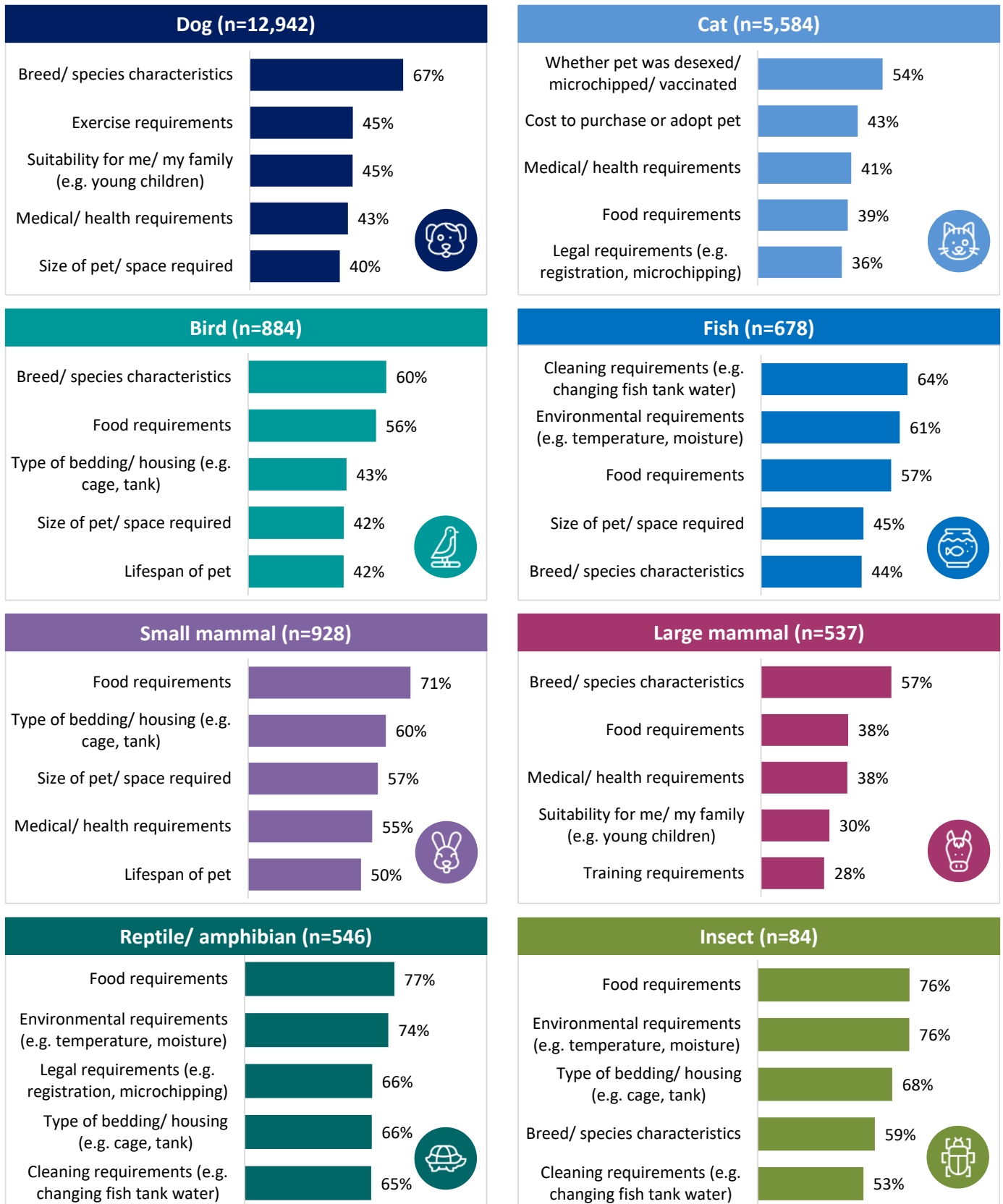| Information	%
Breed/ species characteristics (e.g. behaviours, health conditions, physical features)	57%
Medical/ health requirements (e.g. pre-existing conditions, vet care requirements)	41%
Food required (e.g. type of food, frequency of feeding)	39%
Suitability for me/ my family (e.g. young children)	38%
Size of pet/ space required	37%
Whether pet was desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated	36%
Cost to purchase or adopt pet	36%
Exercise requirements	32%
Lifespan of pet	30%
Legal requirements for owning pet (e.g. registration, microchipping)	30%
Ongoing costs associated with owning pet (e.g. housing, food)	28%
Level of supervision required/ social needs	28%
Where to get/ purchase pet	27%
Grooming requirements	27%
Training requirements	27%
Reputation of breeder	24%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank required)	23%
Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)	20%
Cleaning requirements or processes (e.g. changing fish tank water)	17%
Other	3%
Don't know	1%

PRIORWHATINFO. What information did you look for? [Multiple response]

The types of information that pet owners looked for varied depending on the specific pet they were getting (see Figure 18 overleaf):

- Dog owners were most likely to look for information on breed or species characteristics (67%) and suitability for them or their family (45%);

- Owners of small mammals were more likely than other pet owners to research medical/ health requirements (55%) and food requirements (71%), as well as the ongoing costs of owning a pet (47%);

- Cat owners were more likely to look into whether their cat was desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated (54%), as well as the legal requirements of owning a cat (e.g. registration, microchipping, 36%);

- Owners of dogs (38%) and large mammals (28%) were more likely to have looked at training requirements for their pet, as well as exercise requirements for dogs (45%);

- Around six in ten fish owners had researched cleaning requirements or processes, such as how to change fish tank water (64%), and environmental requirements such as temperature (61%);

- Owners of reptiles/ amphibians were more likely to have looked up a wide variety of different information, particularly in relation to food (77%), environmental (74%) and legal (66%) requirements, as well as the type of housing needed (e.g. cage, tank, 66%), cleaning processes (65%), and the size of the animal or amount of space required (62%); and

- Insect owners were also more likely to have conducted research into the pet's requirements related to food (76%), environment (76%) and type of housing/ enclosure (68%).

Figure 18: Information looked for before getting specific pet types

Base: Pet owners who did research prior to getting their pet, merged sample

Dog (n=12,942)

Breed/ species characteristics	67%
Exercise requirements	45%
Suitability for me/ my family (e.g. young children)	45%
Medical/ health requirements	43%
Size of pet/ space required	40%

Cat (n=5,584)

Whether pet was desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated	54%
Cost to purchase or adopt pet	43%
Medical/ health requirements	41%
Food requirements	39%
Legal requirements (e.g. registration, microchipping)	36%

Bird (n=884)

Breed/ species characteristics	60%
Food requirements	56%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank)	43%
Size of pet/ space required	42%
Lifespan of pet	42%

Fish (n=678)

Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing fish tank water)	64%
Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)	61%
Food requirements	57%
Size of pet/ space required	45%
Breed/ species characteristics	44%

Small mammal (n=928)

Food requirements	71%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank)	60%
Size of pet/ space required	57%
Medical/ health requirements	55%
Lifespan of pet	50%

Large mammal (n=537)

Breed/ species characteristics	57%
Food requirements	38%
Medical/ health requirements	38%
Suitability for me/ my family (e.g. young children)	30%
Training requirements	28%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=546)

Food requirements	77%
Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)	74%
Legal requirements (e.g. registration, microchipping)	66%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank)	66%
Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing fish tank water)	65%

Insect (n=84)

Food requirements	76%
Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)	76%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank)	68%
Breed/ species characteristics	59%
Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing fish tank water)	53%

PRIORWHATINFO. What information did you look for? [Multiple response]

VI. Pet care

Overall perceptions of pet care

The majority of pet owners felt it was easy on balance to look after their pets, however some differences existed between pet type. Insects and cats were considered the easiest types of pets to look after, while large mammals and small mammals were considered the hardest. Owners of these pet types (i.e. small and large mammals) who participated in the qualitative research indicated feeling unsure about the preventative care needs of their animals, including how to identify when their pet was feeling unwell and/or needing assistance.

> "*It's really hard to tell [if my rabbit is feeling sick]. I never know when to take them to the vet*"—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Overall, pet owners in the following groups generally felt it was easier to look after their pets:

- Respondents **aged 55+ years** (85% 'very easy' or 'easy', compared to 81% of those aged under 55 years);

- **Females** (84%, compared to 81% of males);

- Those living in **non-metropolitan** areas (85%, compared to 81% of those living in metropolitan areas); and

- Those who **spoke only English at home** (83%, compared to 72% of those who spoke another language at home).

Figure 19: Overall perceptions of looking after pets

Base: All pet owners, merged sample
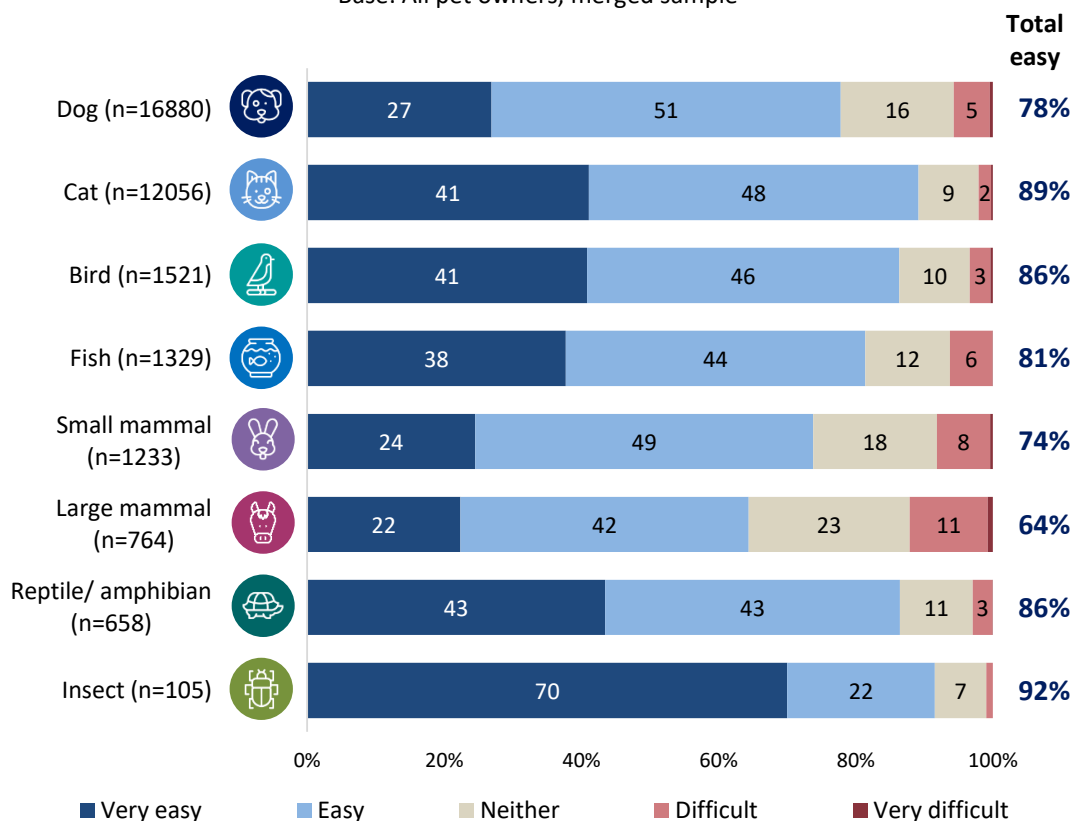
|	Total easy
Dog (n=16880)	**78%**
Cat (n=12056)	**89%**
Bird (n=1521)	**86%**
Fish (n=1329)	**81%**
Small mammal (n=1233)	**74%**
Large mammal (n=764)	**64%**
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	**86%**
Insect (n=105)	**92%**

DIFFICULTY. Overall, how easy or difficult do you find it to look after your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]

Diet and feeding

Frequency of feeding varied by pet type. Most dog, cat and other small mammal owners fed their pets at least twice a day, while most bird, fish and large mammal owners fed their pets at least once a day. Frequency of feeding was much lower on average for reptiles/ amphibians and insects.

Notable proportions of large mammal and insect owners indicated they do not regularly feed their pets as they grazed, foraged or fed themselves.
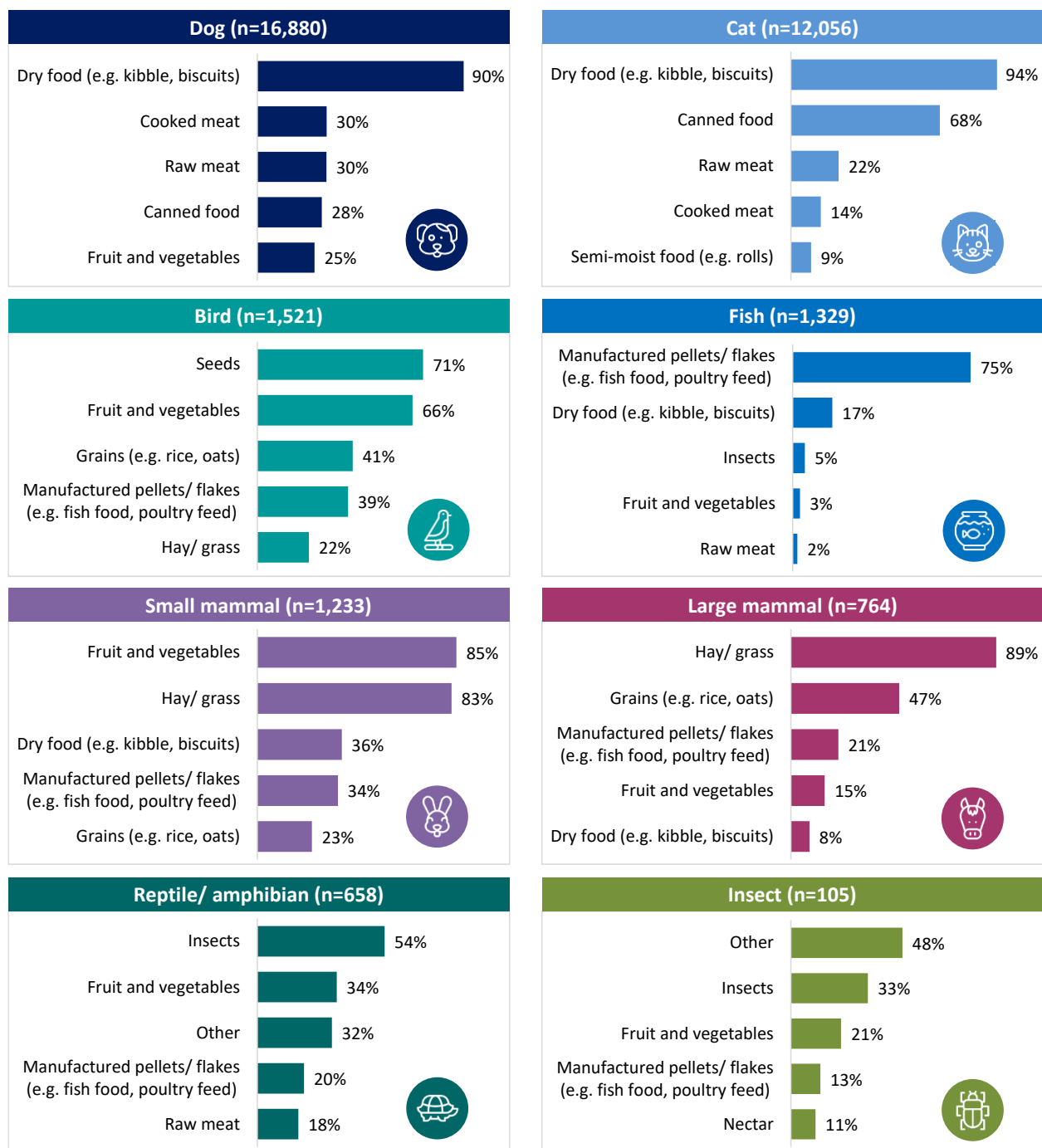
Figure 20: Frequency of feeding

Base: All pet owners, merged sample
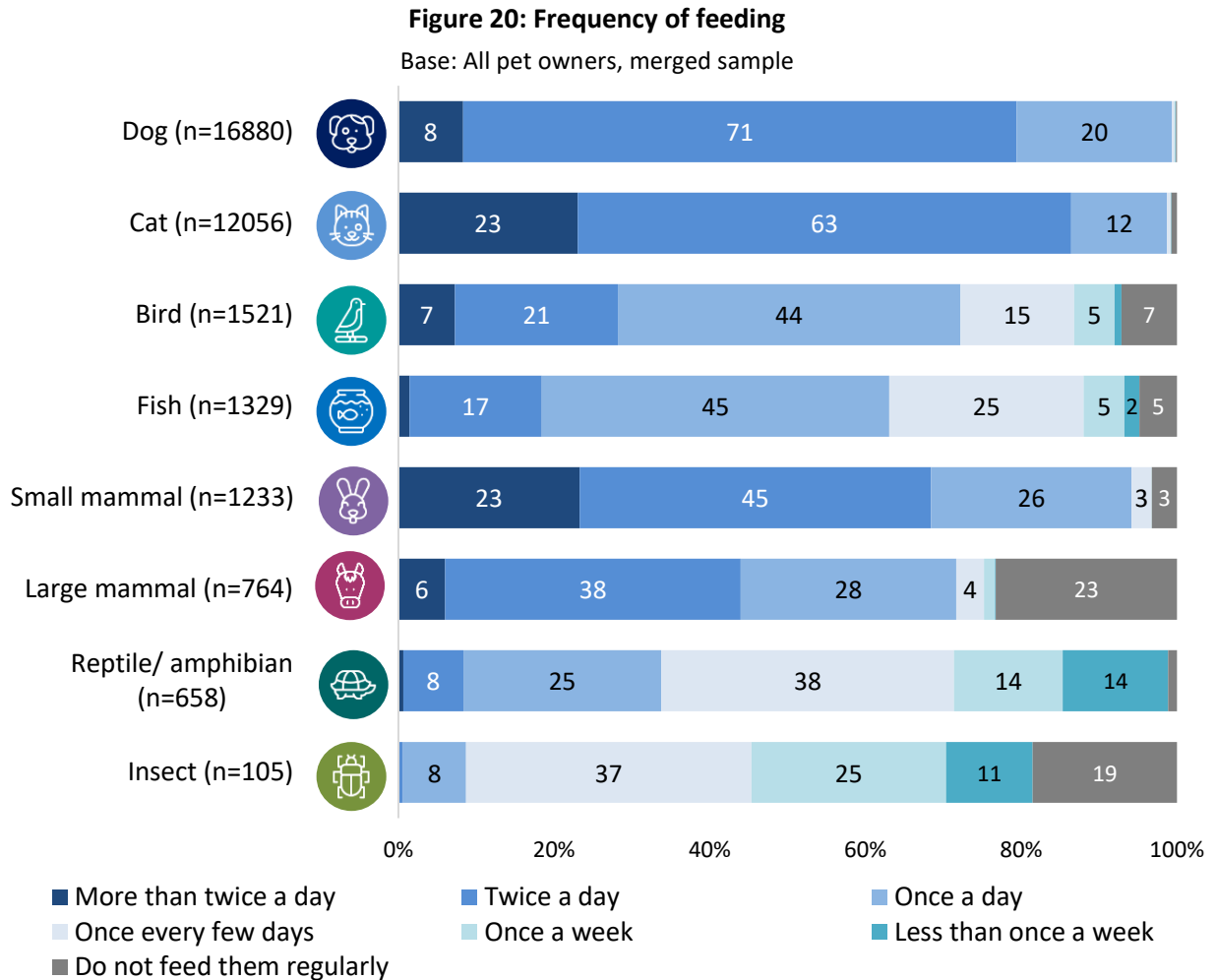
WHENFEED. How often do you feed your PETCATEGORY(s) currently? [Single response]

Dog and cat owners were most likely to feed their pets dry food (such as kibble or biscuits), canned food, cooked meat and raw meat. Bird, small mammal and large mammal owners most commonly fed their pets a mix of seeds, hay/ grass and grains as well as manufactured food. The majority of bird owners also fed their pets fruits and vegetables.

Reptile/ amphibian and insect owners commonly fed their pets insects, fruits and vegetables as well as 'other' food. For reptiles, 'other' types of food mainly included mice/ rats (for snakes), frozen food and live fish (for turtles). For insects this mainly included gum or eucalyptus leaves.

Figure 21: Type of food (Top 5)

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)	90%
Cooked meat	30%
Raw meat	30%
Canned food	28%
Fruit and vegetables	25%

Cat (n=12,056)

Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)	94%
Canned food	68%
Raw meat	22%
Cooked meat	14%
Semi-moist food (e.g. rolls)	9%

Bird (n=1,521)

Seeds	71%
Fruit and vegetables	66%
Grains (e.g. rice, oats)	41%
Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	39%
Hay/ grass	22%

Fish (n=1,329)

Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	75%
Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)	17%
Insects	5%
Fruit and vegetables	3%
Raw meat	2%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Fruit and vegetables	85%
Hay/ grass	83%
Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)	36%
Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	34%
Grains (e.g. rice, oats)	23%

Large mammal (n=764)

Hay/ grass	89%
Grains (e.g. rice, oats)	47%
Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	21%
Fruit and vegetables	15%
Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)	8%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Insects	54%
Fruit and vegetables	34%
Other	32%
Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	20%
Raw meat	18%

Insect (n=105)

Other	48%
Insects	33%
Fruit and vegetables	21%
Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)	13%
Nectar	11%

WHATFEED. What do you feed your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

As shown in Figure 22 overleaf, pet owners had a range of considerations when deciding what and how often to feed their pet, and these considerations varied by pet type.

In deciding how to feed their pet, dog, cat and small mammal owners were more likely to consider recommendations from veterinary practices than other pet owners. In contrast, fish and reptile/ amphibian owners were more likely to consider advice from pet shops or specialty shops (reflecting that pet shops and specialty shops are a main source of acquisition for these pet types).

> *"I just asked the pet shop what to feed [my turtle] when I got him from them and then went and bought whatever they recommended"*—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

> *"I go by the vet recommendations and try to balance [my cat's] preferences with the health requirements they tell me about"*—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

At an overall level, pet owners also commonly considered nutrition/ benefits to the health of their pet, their pet's preferences and drew on their prior experience in deciding what to feed their pet.

> *"For me [deciding what to feed my dog] is all about maintaining his nutrition… but also a bit about his preferences too"*—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria

Figure 22: Deciding what/ how often to feed pet (Top 5)

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Recommendations from vet practice	39%
Pet age/ weight	36%
Nutrition/ benefits for health	35%
Pet's preferences	24%
It's what I've always done	22%

Cat (n=12,056)

Pet's preferences	40%
Recommendations from vet practice	34%
Nutrition/ benefits for health	28%
Pet age/ weight	28%
In response to animal behaviour	27%

Bird (n=1,521)

It's what I've always done	31%
Pet's preferences	30%
Nutrition/ benefits for health	26%
Natural diet in the wild	18%
Trial and error	18%

Fish (n=1,329)

Advice from pet shop or specialty shop	40%
It's what I've always done	27%
Trial and error	17%
Pet's preferences	10%
Online recommendations	9%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Recommendations from animal organisations	40%
Recommendations from vet practice	39%
Nutrition/ benefits for health	39%
Pet's preferences	36%
It's what I've always done	21%

Large mammal (n=764)

Nutrition/ benefits for health	40%
Pet age/ weight	33%
It's what I've always done	27%
Natural diet in the wild	20%
Recommendations from vet practice	20%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Advice from pet shop or specialty shop	34%
Natural diet in the wild	31%
In response to animal behaviour	26%
Pet's preferences	25%
Nutrition/ benefits for health	24%

Insect (n=105)

Natural diet in the wild	51%
Breeder recommendations	30%
Online recommendations	23%
Recommendations from animal organisations	20%
In response to animal behaviour	16%

WHYFEED. How do you decide what/ how often to feed your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

Housing

Dogs and cats

Most dog and cat owners kept their pets inside their house. Dog owners were more likely than cat owners to keep their dog in their backyard or wider property, or in a kennel, crate or pen. Dog owners living in non-metropolitan areas were more likely to keep their dog in their backyard/ wider property (74%, compared to 60% of dog owners in metropolitan areas) or in a kennel, crate or pen (17%, compared to 13%).

Over one tenth (12%) of cat owners allowed their cat to roam outside their property boundaries (compared to only around 2% of dog owners). Cat owners living in houses (14%) were most likely to allow their cat to roam, followed by those living in units/ townhouses (9%) and apartment buildings (4%). Cat owners living in regional areas were also slightly more likely to allow their cats to roam outside their property (13%) compared to those in metropolitan areas (11%).

Cat ownership was also associated with a higher likelihood of living in an apartment (15%) compared to owners of all other pet types (1-10%), thus limiting the available areas for some cats to access at home.

> *"We have no choice [but to keep our cat inside] because we live in a high-rise building. We let her out on the balcony, but only when we're [watching her]"*—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Figure 23: Where dog/ cat is kept/ allowed

Base: All dog and cat owners, merged sample
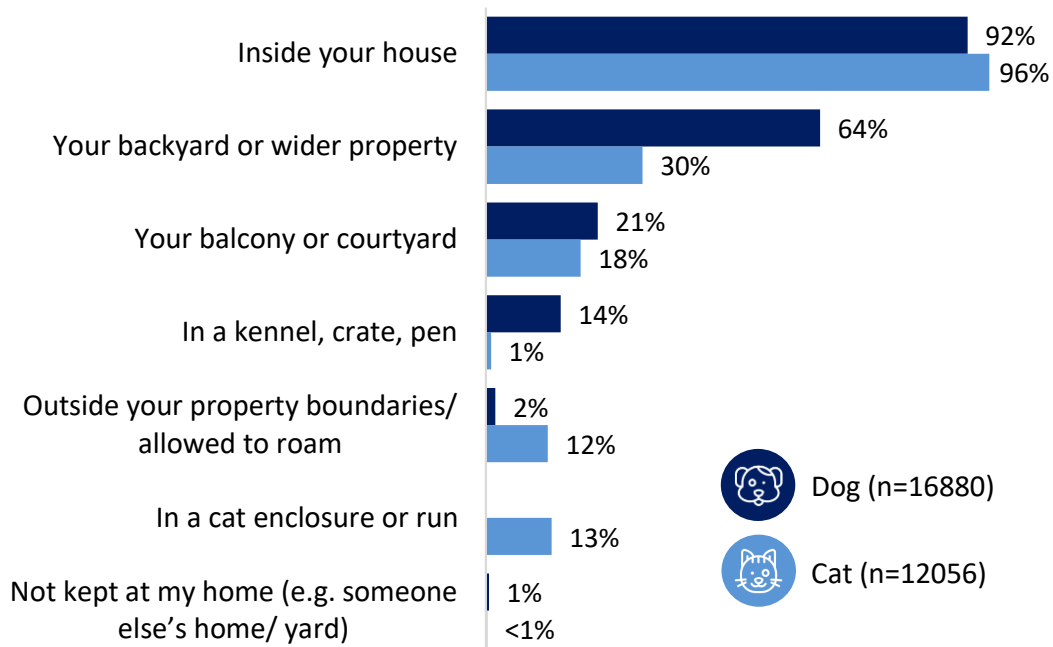
Category	Dog	Cat
Inside your house	92%	96%
Your backyard or wider property	64%	30%
Your balcony or courtyard	21%	18%
In a kennel, crate, pen	14%	1%
Outside your property boundaries/ allowed to roam	2%	12%
In a cat enclosure or run		13%
Not kept at my home (e.g. someone else's home/ yard)	1%	<1%

Dog (n=16880)
Cat (n=12056)

PETKEPT. Where is your PETCATEGORY(s) kept/ allowed to access at home? Please think about where your pets are left or allowed when unattended. [Multiple response]

Dog owners were more likely to use tools to keep their pet within property boundaries (83%) compared to cat owners (39%) – reflecting that most cats were not permitted in backyards or courtyards. Fencing was the most common tool used to keep dogs and cats within property boundaries.

15% of cat owners used an outdoor enclosure (such as a cat run) to keep their pets within property boundaries, higher than 3% of dog owners.

Figure 24: Tools used to keep dogs/ cats within property boundaries

Base: All dog and cat owners, merged sample
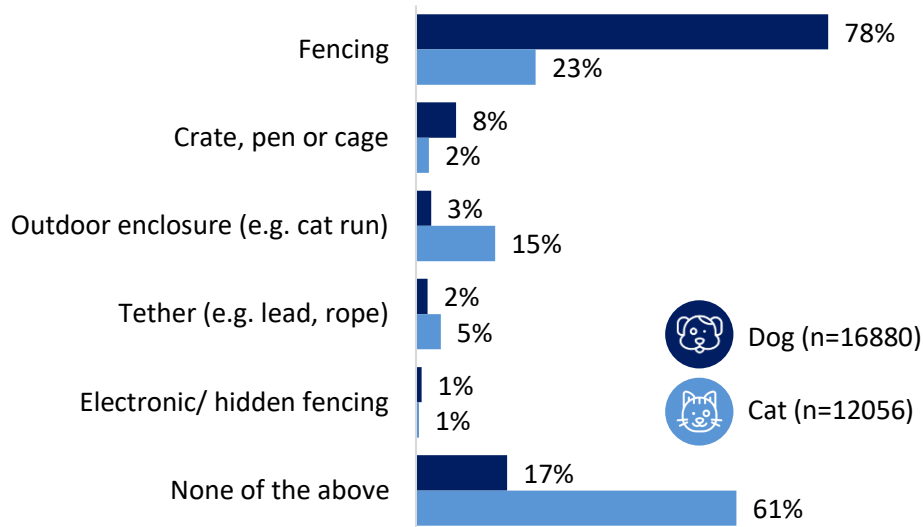
TOOLS. Do you use any of the following to keep your PETCATEGORY within your property boundaries? [Multiple response]

Among dog and cat owners who allowed their pets to roam outside their property boundaries, the majority only allowed them to roam during daylight hours. Dog and cat owners living in regional areas were slightly more likely to allow their pets to roam both during daylight hours and at night (38% and 31% respectively) compared to those in metropolitan areas (34% and 27% respectively).

Figure 25: Times dogs/ cats allowed outside to roam

Base: Dog and cat owners who let their pets wander outside their property, merged sample

■ During daylight hours only (between sunrise and sunset)
■ During the night (between sunset and sunrise)
■ Both during daylight hours and at night
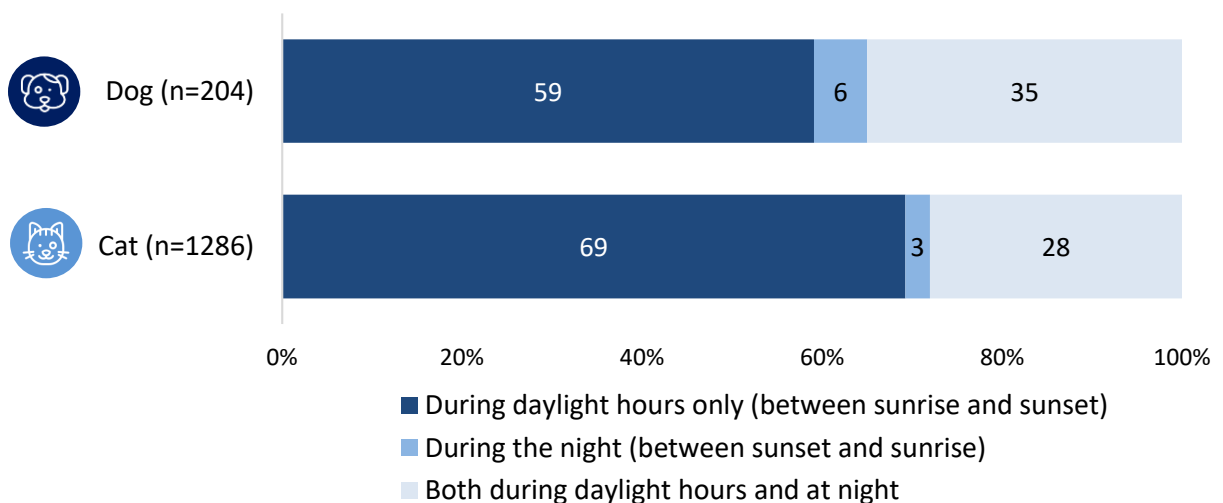
TIMEOUTSIDE. You mentioned your PETCATEGORY(s) is allowed to roam outside your property. During what times of day are they generally allowed to roam outside? [Single response]

The main reasons for allowing their pet to roam outside differed between dog and cat owners. Among cat owners, the most common reasons were:

- They don't wander far from home (63%);

- Their cat's personality means they enjoy being outside (60%); and

- For stimulation/ preventing boredom (51%).

> *"[My cat] doesn't even go far, just out past the front yard"*—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

A notable proportion of cat owners said their cat vocalises or disrupts them if they are not let outside (28%, compared to only 3% of dog owners).

Among dog owners who allowed their dogs to roam, nearly half (45%) supervised their dog while they were outside. The other main reasons for allowing their dogs to roam included exercise (39%), they do not cause any trouble/ harm (30%) and they do not wander from home (28%).

Figure 26: Reasons for allowing dog/ cat outside

Base: Dog and cat owners who let their pets wander outside their property, merged sample

Reason	Dog	Cat
Does not wander far from home	28%	63%
Personality/ prefers to wander outside	19%	60%
Stimulation/ prevent boredom	23%	51%
Exercise	39%	43%
Does not cause any trouble/ harm (e.g. to other animals or wildlife)	30%	35%
Vocalises or disrupts me/ my family if not let outside	3%	28%
Neighbours like them	22%	23%
Promote independence	16%	18%
Pet escapes/ gets out	9%	15%
They are supervised	45%	7%
Avoid damage to home	10%	5%
Other	12%	8%

Dog (n=204)
Cat (n=1286)
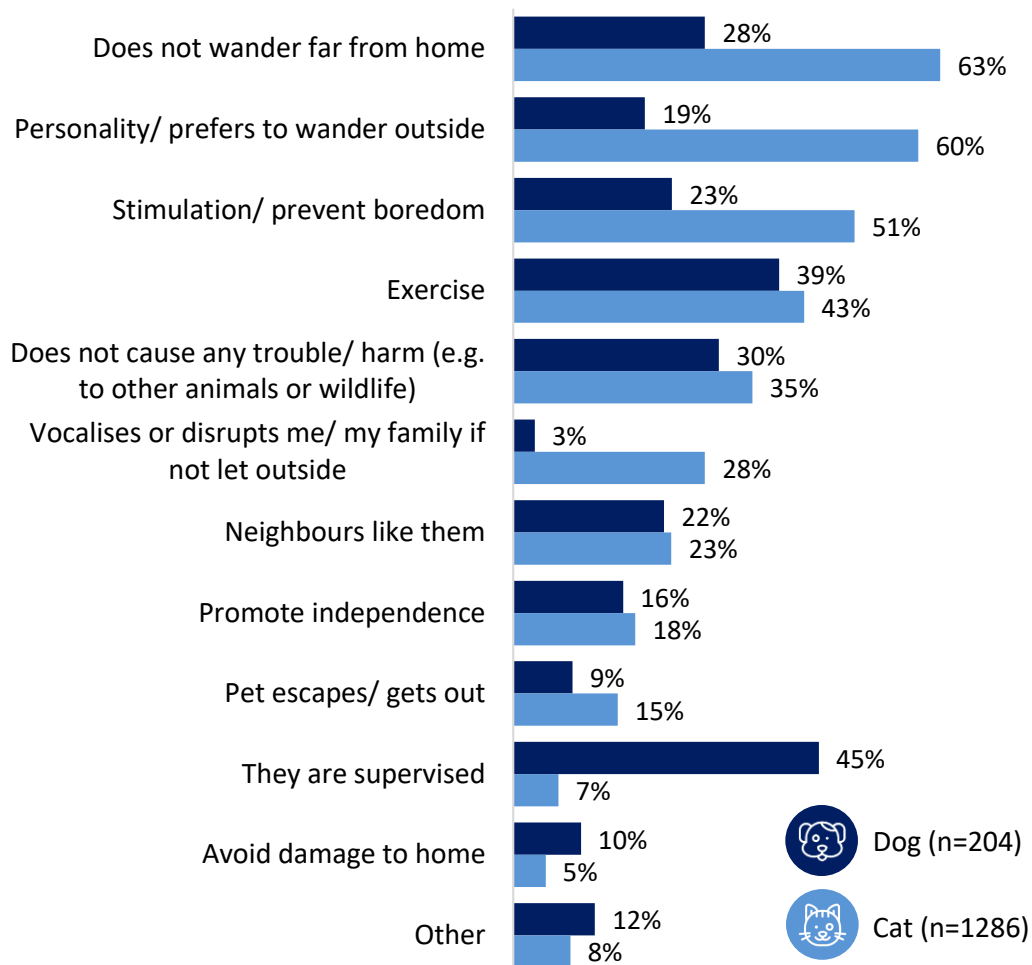
PETOUTSIDE. You mentioned your PETCATEGORY is allowed to wander outside your property boundaries. What are the main reasons you allow your pet to wander outside your property? [Multiple response]

Among cat owners who did *not* let their cat roam outside, the main reasons they preferred to keep them inside were:

- For their cat's own safety (81%);
- They were scared of their cat straying or getting lost (63%); and
- To avoid damage/ nuisance to native wildlife (58%).

> *"[I keep my cat indoors] because I'm worried that he'll get hurt in a catfight [if he goes outside]. I also don't trust him to come back, he'll get lost."*—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Other reasons provided (5%) for why owners kept their cats inside included wanting to protect their cat from skin cancer, fleas or diseases, particularly for cats with Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) or other health conditions, protecting them from unfriendly neighbours or people within the community, perceptions that keeping cats inside is the responsible thing to do as an owner, and following advice from vets or animal welfare organisations.

> *"Cat is deaf and white coloured – vet recommends indoor only due to cancer risk and also risk of being harmed due to not hearing anything coming (e.g. cars or predators)."*— Cat owner, online survey comment

> *"I know first-hand the risks associated with cats being free-roaming, and I believe a responsible owner should have their cats in their property at all times. Cat runs should be bare minimum requirements."*—Cat owner, online survey comment

Figure 27: Reasons for keeping cats inside

Base: Cat owners who do not let their cats outside their property, merged sample (n=6,939)
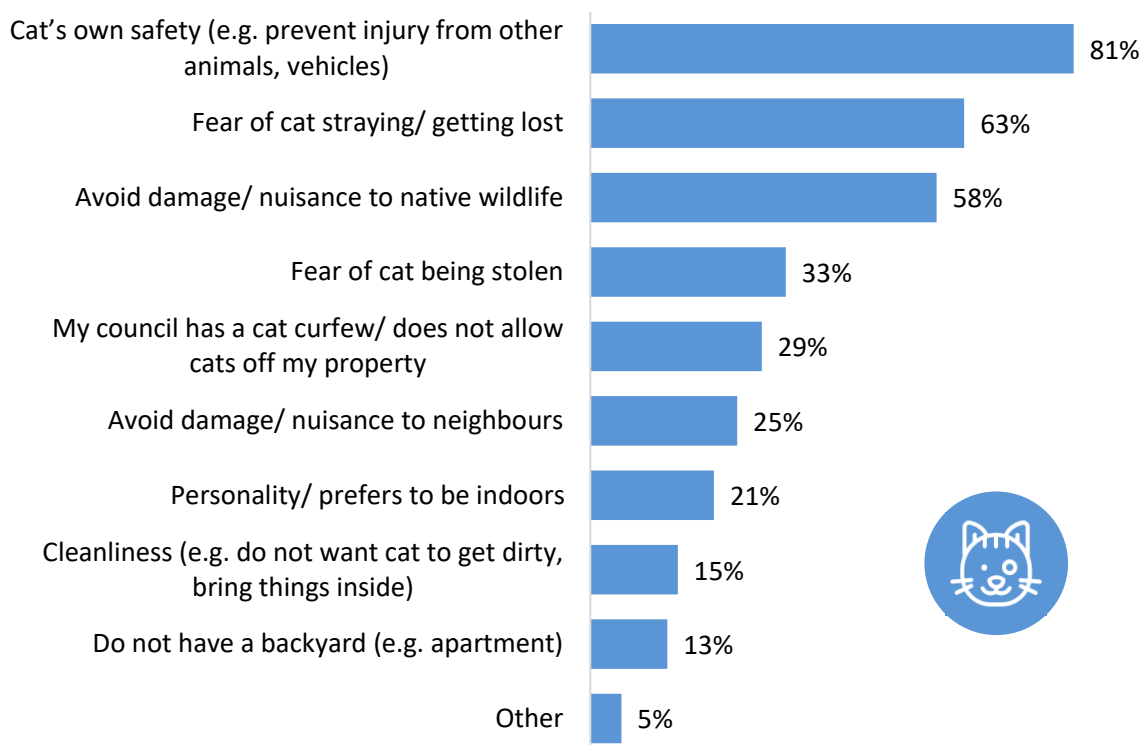
CATINSIDE. You mentioned your cat(s) is only allowed inside your house or in an enclosure/run (and not outside your property). What are the main reasons you do not allow your cat to roam outside? [Multiple response]

Other pets

Where pet owners kept their pets varied intuitively by type of pet. Some differences existed between subgroups of pet categories, including:

- Birds – non-poultry bird owners were more likely to keep their pets in a cage or hutch (54%, compared to 13% of poultry bird owners) and inside the house (52%, compared to 1%). Instead, poultry bird owners were more likely to keep their pets in a coop or aviary (74%, compared to 29% of non-poultry bird owners) and in their backyard or wider property (49%, compared to 7%).

- Fish – pond fish were more likely to be kept in a pond (83%), whereas aquarium fish were more likely to be kept in a tank (71%) and inside the house (46%).

- Small mammals – rabbits were more likely to be kept inside the house (73%), compared to other small mammals (55%) and guinea pigs (49%).

- Large mammals – horses were more likely to be kept in agistment or not on their owners' property (41%, compared to 6% of other large mammals).

Figure 28: Type/ location of housing

Base: All pet owners except cats and dogs, merged sample
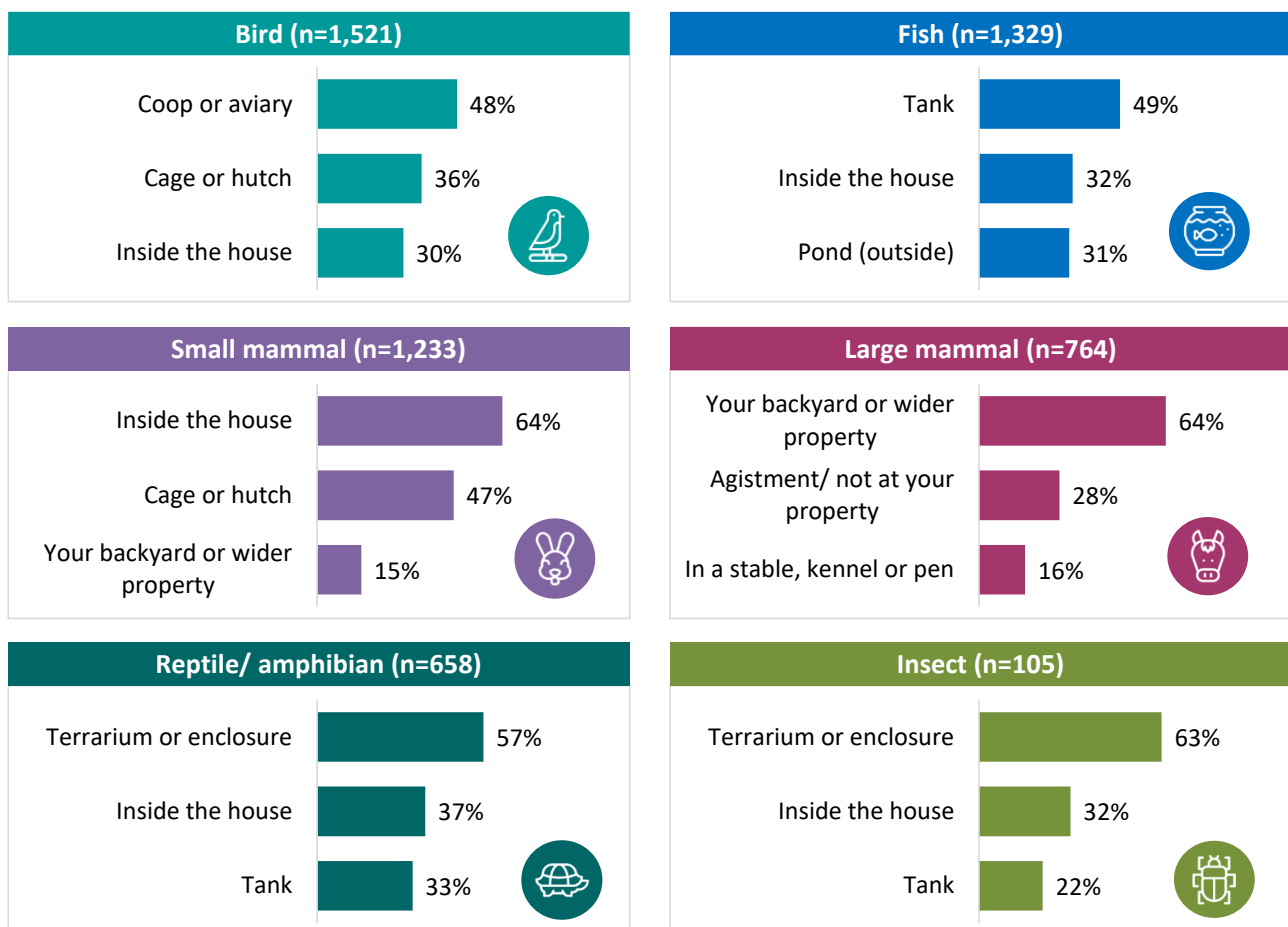
OTHPETKEPT. Where is your PETCATEGORY(s) mainly housed? [Multiple response]

Among those who owned multiple types of pets or multiple pets of the same type, small and large mammals were most likely to share spaces with other pets. In contrast, reptiles/ amphibians and insects were least likely to share spaces.

When only considering people who owned multiple pets of the same type, likelihood of sharing spaces increased across all pet types but the broad pattern remained the same – with small and large mammals being most likely to share spaces and reptiles/ amphibians and insects being least likely.

Figure 29: Pets sharing spaces

Base: Pet owners with multiple pets (excluding dog and cat owners), merged sample
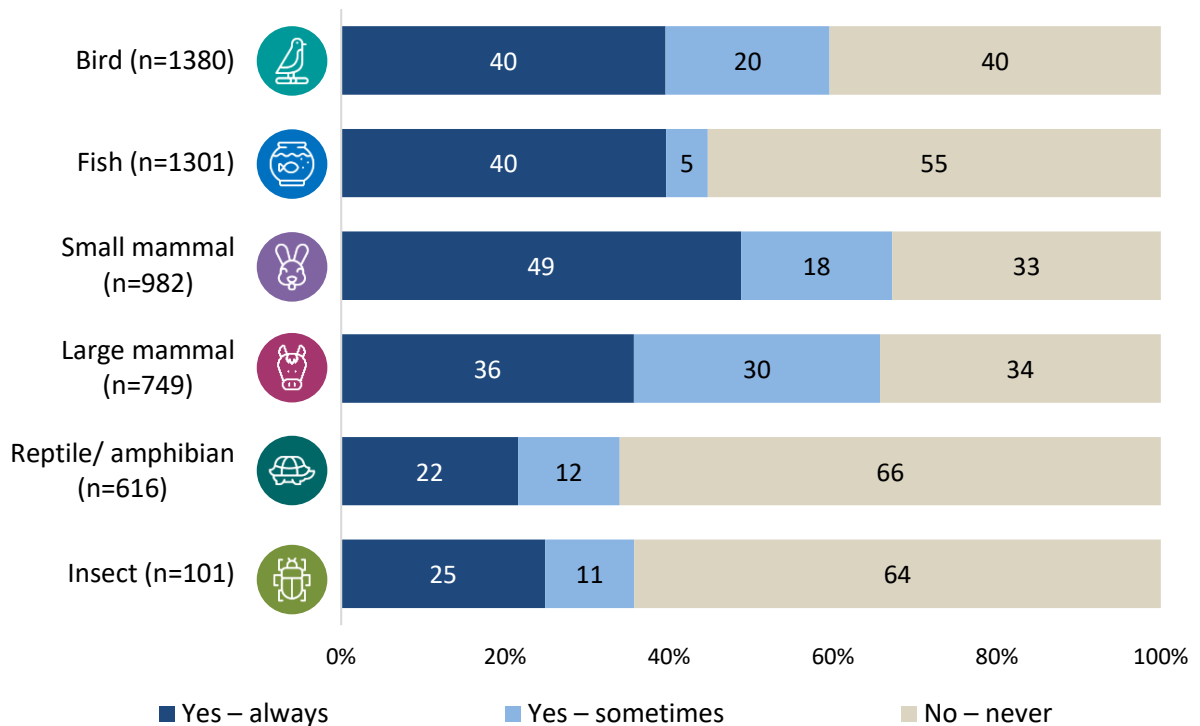
OTHPETSHARE. *Do your PETCATEGORY(s) share housing or share the same spaces together (or with any of your other pets)? [Single response]*

Reptile/ amphibian owners were most likely to have or adjust environmental controls for their pets, followed by aquarium fish owners. Bird and pond fish owners were less likely to have or adjust environmental controls.

> *"We use UV lighting and temperature controls in a big tank for [our reptile]"*—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Having air or water filtration was most common among fish owners, particularly aquarium fish. Adjusting humidity was most common among reptile/ amphibian owners.

Figure 30: Environmental controls (Reptiles/ Amphibians, Fish and Birds only)

Base: All reptile/ amphibian, fish and bird owners, merged sample
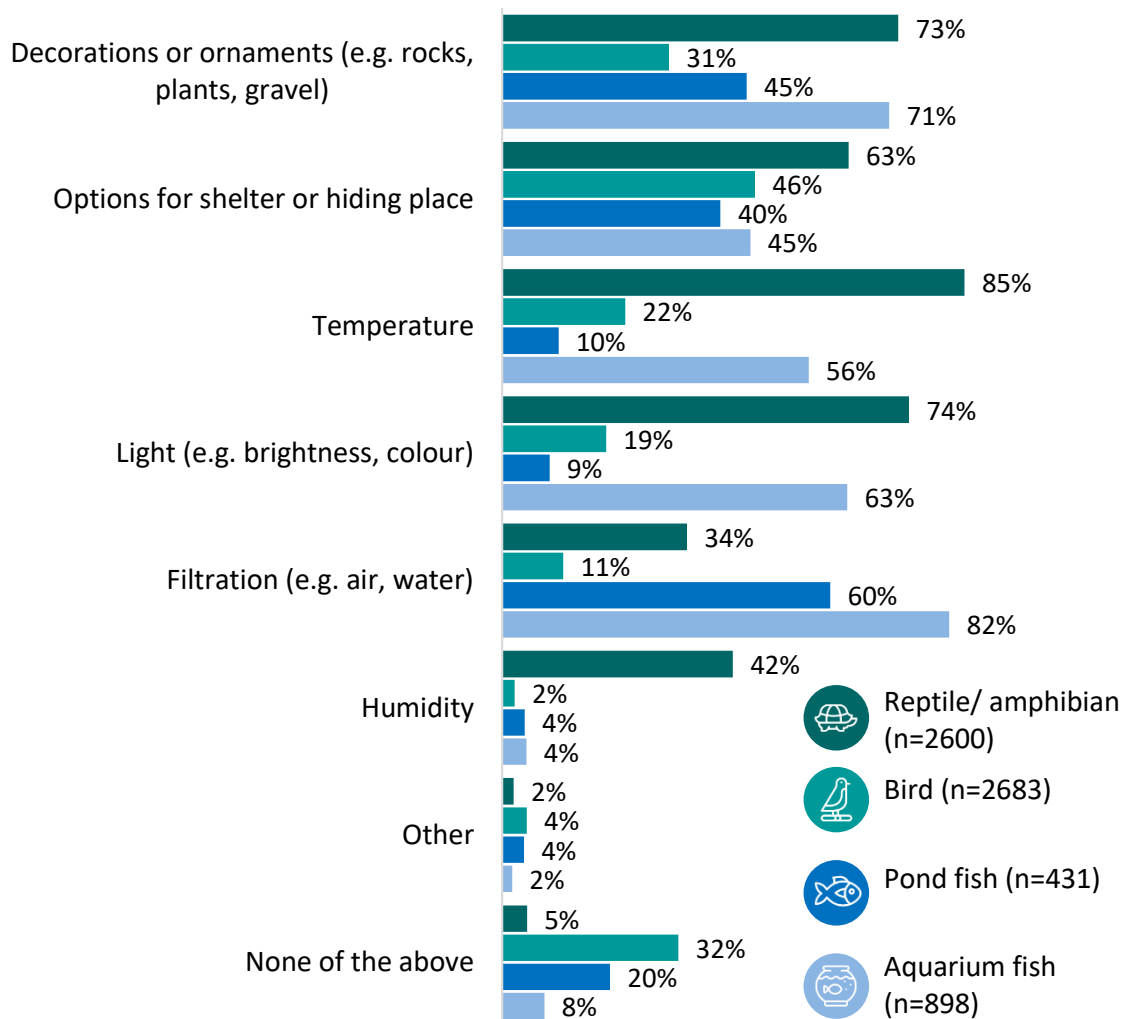
Decorations or ornaments (e.g. rocks, plants, gravel)
- 73%
- 31%
- 45%
- 71%

Options for shelter or hiding place
- 63%
- 46%
- 40%
- 45%

Temperature
- 85%
- 22%
- 10%
- 56%

Light (e.g. brightness, colour)
- 74%
- 19%
- 9%
- 63%

Filtration (e.g. air, water)
- 34%
- 11%
- 60%
- 82%

Humidity
- 42%
- 2%
- 4%
- 4%

Other
- 2%
- 4%
- 4%
- 2%

None of the above
- 5%
- 32%
- 20%
- 8%

Legend:
- Reptile/ amphibian (n=2600)
- Bird (n=2683)
- Pond fish (n=431)
- Aquarium fish (n=898)

KEPTCONTROL. Do you have or adjust any of the following environmental controls for your PETCATEGORY(s) or their housing? [Multiple response]

Among pet owners who kept their pet in a tank or pond, amphibian owners changed the water in their pets' housing most frequently on balance. Most aquarium fish and turtle owners changed the water in their pet's tank or pond at least once a month.

> *"I recently learnt that I was changing [the water in my fish tank] too often and that once a month is what's best for them"*—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

In contrast, pond fish owners changed water much less often – and a notable proportion had never changed their pet's water.

Figure 31: Changing water

Base: Fish, turtle and amphibian owners who kept their pet in a tank or pond, merged sample
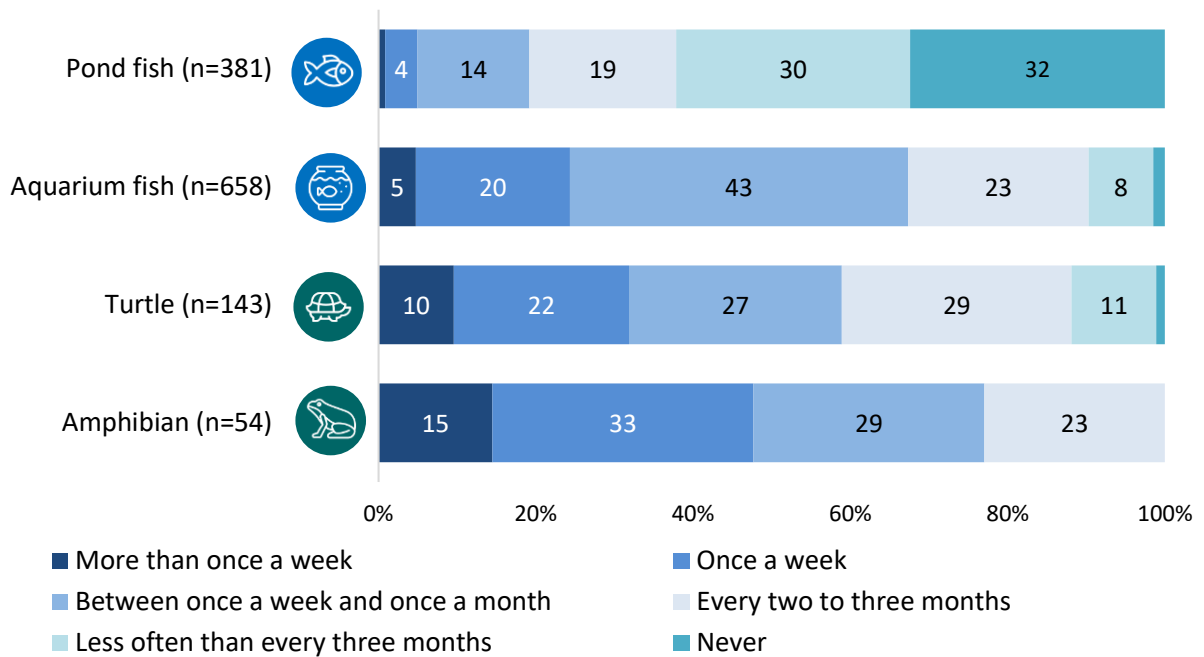
CHANGEWATER. How often do you change the water in your PETCATEGORY's tank or pond? [Single response]

Among those who kept their pet in a cage, hutch, coop, aviary, tank, pond or terrarium/ enclosure, small mammal owners cleaned their pet's housing most often on balance. In contrast, fish owners cleaned their pet's housing least often – particularly pond fish owners (including 20% who never cleaned their housing and 13% who reported they did not need to clean it).

Among bird owners, non-poultry bird owners reported cleaning their pet's housing more often (92% at least once a month) compared to poultry bird owners (72%).

Among reptile/ amphibian owners, snake owners (74% at least once a month) and amphibian owners (71%) reported cleaning their pet's housing more often compared to turtle (60%) and lizard (65%) owners.

Figure 32: Cleaning housing

Base: Pet owners who kept their pet in a cage, hutch, coop, aviary, tank, pond or terrarium/ enclosure, merged sample
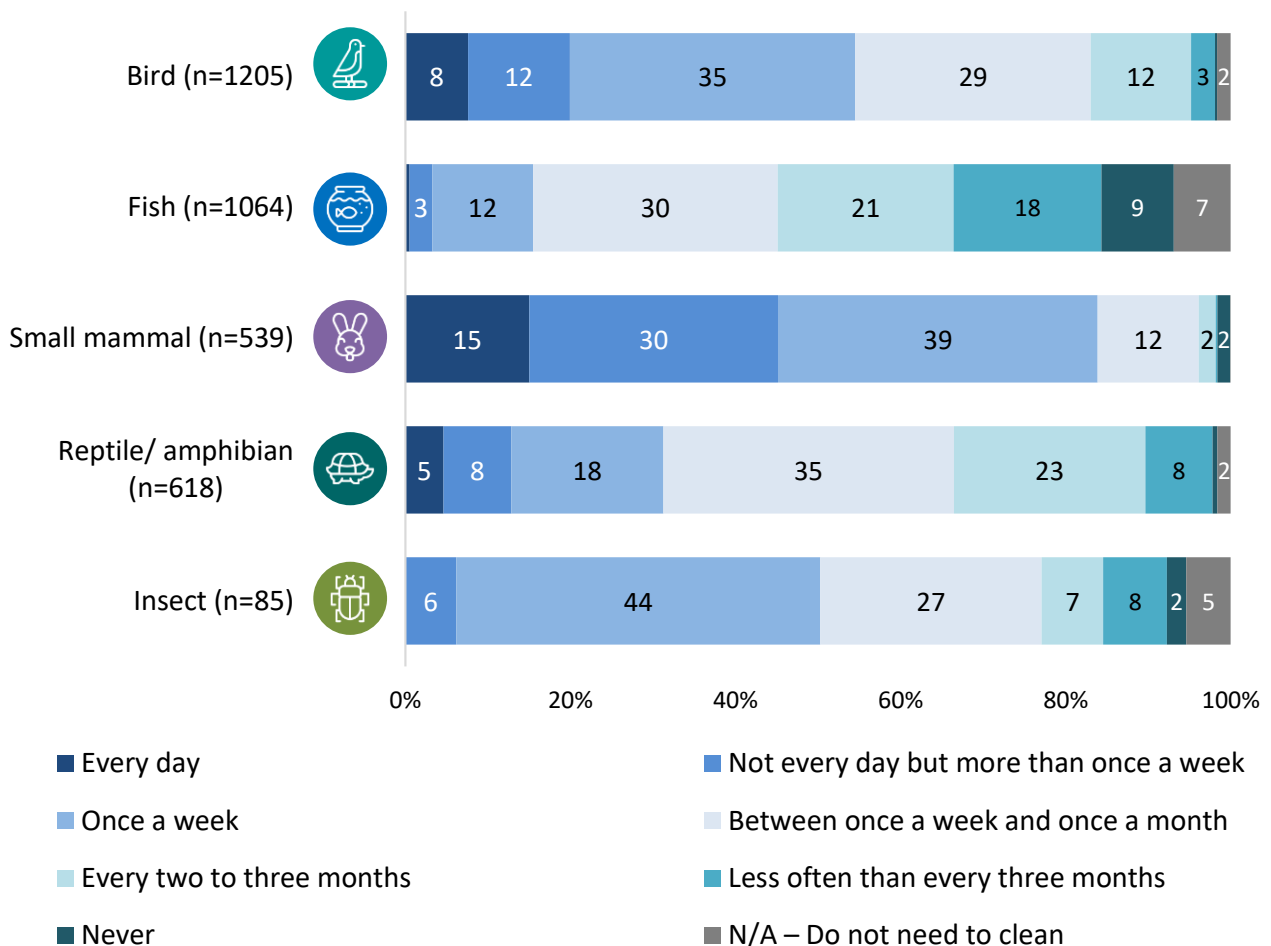
CLEANHOUSE. How often do you clean your PETCATEGORY's housing? Please think about any cleaning you do beyond changing tank or pond water. [Single response]

Grooming

Most dog (89%), cat (69%), small mammal (80%) and large mammal (85%) owners groomed their pet(s) in some way. While less prevalent, some bird (36%) and reptile/ amphibian (28%) owners also groomed their pet(s).

The types of grooming undertaken by pet type are outlined in Figure 34 overleaf. Common types of grooming across all pet types included bathing/ washing/ cleaning their body, trimming nails/ claws/ hooves and brushing fur/ hair.

Figure 33: Grooming

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample
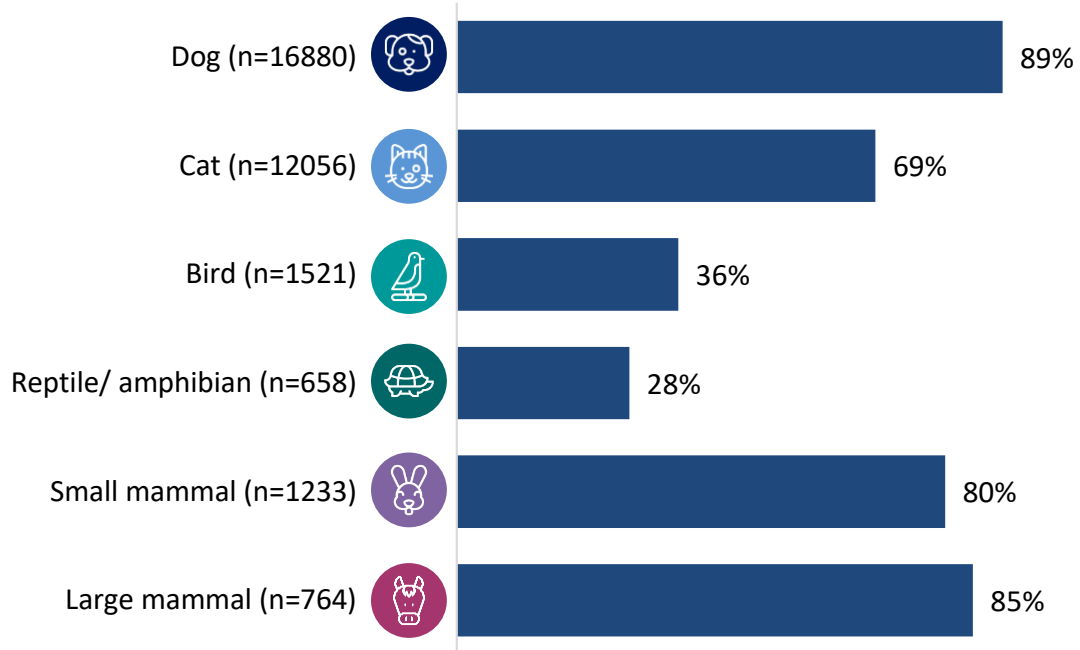
Dog (n=16880) — 89%
Cat (n=12056) — 69%
Bird (n=1521) — 36%
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658) — 28%
Small mammal (n=1233) — 80%
Large mammal (n=764) — 85%

GROOM Do you ever groom your PETCATEGORY(s) or have your pet(s) groomed (e.g. wash/ bathe them, trim nails/ claws, brush fur/ hair, clean teeth)? Please include any grooming you do yourself or through a grooming service. [Single response]

Figure 34: Type of grooming

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Grooming type	%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	82%
Trim nails/ claws	67%
Brush fur/ hair	59%
Clean ears	38%
Trim or shear	34%
Clean teeth	27%

Cat (n=12,056)

Grooming type	%
Brush fur/ hair	58%
Trim nails/ claws	42%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	18%
Clean ears	14%
Clean teeth	12%
Trim or shear	8%

Bird (n=1,521)

Grooming type	%
Trim nails/ claws	21%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	21%
Trim or shear	10%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Grooming type	%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	23%
Trim nails/ claws	10%
Other	5%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Grooming type	%
Trim nails/ claws	69%
Brush fur/ hair	62%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	27%
Trim or shear	17%
Clean ears	15%
Clean teeth	5%

Large mammal (n=764)

Grooming type	%
Trim nails/ claws/ hooves	70%
Brush fur/ hair	64%
Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	52%
Trim or shear	35%
Clean teeth	20%
Clean ears	14%

WHATGROOM. What kind of grooming do you undertake/ arrange for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

Among pet owners who groomed their pet in each of these ways, brushing fur/ hair was the most frequent type of grooming followed by cleaning teeth. Frequency of grooming varied by pet type for each type of grooming. In summary:

- Large mammal owners **brushed their pet's fur or hair** most frequently (75% once a week or more often) – mainly reflecting horse owners (81%) – followed by cat owners (67% once a week or more often);

- Dog and cat owners **cleaned their pet's teeth** most often (48% and 47%, respectively);

- Bird owners **bathed/ washed/ cleaned their pet's body** most frequently (42%) – primarily non-poultry bird owners (53%, compared to 9% of poultry bird owners);

- Cat owners **trimmed their pet's nails/ claws** most often (62% once a month or more often); and

- Small mammal (44%) and cat (42%) owners **trimmed their pet's fur** most frequently.

Figure 35: Frequency of grooming

Base: Pet owners who groomed their pet, merged sample
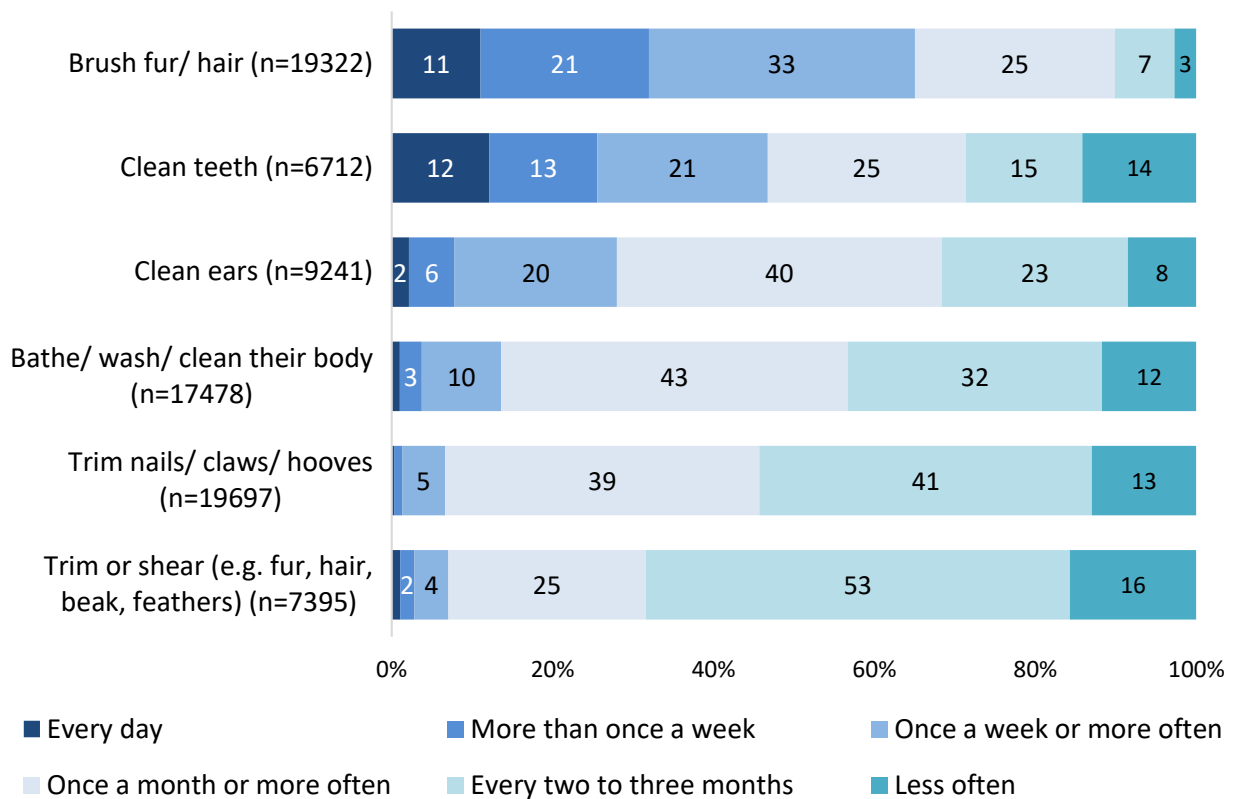
GROOMFREQ. Of the types of grooming you give your PETCATEGORY(s), how often do you do each of the following? [Single response]

Enrichment

Nearly all pet owners (94%) provided some form of enrichment for their pet(s). Among the different pet types, reptile/ amphibian (84%) and bird (87%) owners were less likely to provide enrichment for their pets compared to other pet types. As shown below, some differences in the types of enrichment received existed by pet type:

- Dogs generally received the most varied enrichment, with the majority of dog owners indicating they provided most types of enrichment for their dog;

- Providing time to roam was a more core form of enrichment among birds, reptiles/ amphibians and small mammals; and

- Exercise, training and socialisation was more common among large mammals and dogs.

Figure 36: Types of enrichment (Top 8 for dogs and cats, Top 5 for other pet types)

Base: All pet owners (excluding fish and insects), merged sample

Dog (n=16,880)

Enrichment	%
Play with them	92%
Exercise them	87%
Give them toys/ food puzzles	81%
Pet/ hold them	81%
Socialise them with other animals	66%
Giving them time to roam	57%
Train them	55%
Set up activities for them	25%

Cat (n=12,056)

Enrichment	%
Play with them	89%
Pet/ hold them	87%
Give them toys/ food puzzles	74%
Giving them time to roam	28%
Socialise them with other animals	22%
Set up activities for them	20%
Exercise them	18%
Train them	16%

Bird (n=1,521)

Enrichment	%
Giving them time to roam	62%
Pet/ hold them	51%
Give them toys/ food puzzles	47%
Play with them	41%
Train them	24%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)

Enrichment	%
Pet/ hold them	61%
Giving them time to roam	48%
Play with them	33%
Set up activities for them	14%
Give them toys/ food puzzles	13%

Small mammal (n=1,233)

Enrichment	%
Pet/ hold them	85%
Play with them	78%
Giving them time to roam	72%
Give them toys/ food puzzles	72%
Set up activities for them	42%

Large mammal (n=764)

Enrichment	%
Exercise them	58%
Socialise them with other animals	51%
Pet/ hold them	49%
Train them	44%
Giving them time to roam	40%

ENRICH. Have you done any of the following with your PETCATEGORY to keep them entertained/ stimulated? [Multiple response]

Walking (dogs only)

The majority of dog owners (68%) walked their dog at least once a day. Frequency of dog walking was higher among:

- Those living in **metropolitan** areas (70% at least once a day, compared to 62% of those living in non-metropolitan areas);

- Those **aged 55+ years** (76%, compared to 66% of those aged 35-54 years and 63% of those aged under 35 years);

- Those living in **smaller households with one or two people** (74%, compared to 58-64% of those living in larger households); and

- Those with just **one dog** (72%, compared to 59% of those with two dogs and 50% of those with three or more dogs).

Figure 37: Frequency of dog walking

Base: All dog owners, merged sample (n=16,880)

More than twice a day	Twice a day	Once a day	Every two to three days	Less often	Never
7	22	40	19	11	2
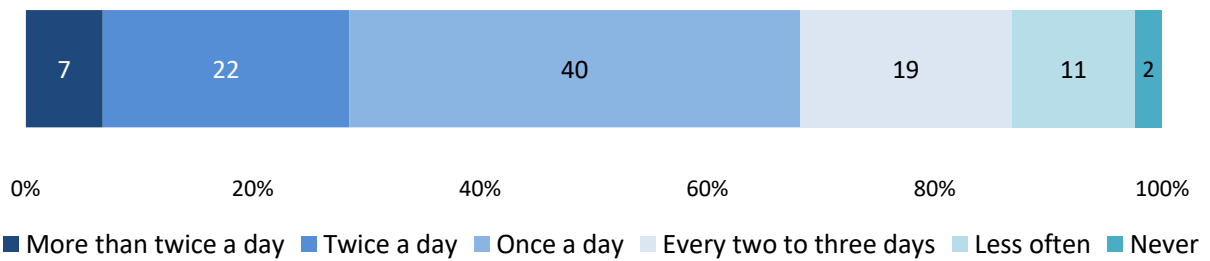
WHENWALK. How often do you (or does somebody else) take your dog(s) on walks? [Single response]

The majority of dog owners allowed their dog off leash (71%) – mainly in designated off leash areas, parks and beaches. The following groups were more likely to walk their dog off leash:

- Those living in **metropolitan** areas (73%, compared to 66% of those living in non-metropolitan areas);

- Those aged **under 35 years** (74%, compared to 71% of those aged 35-54 years and 69% of those aged 55+ years);

- **Males** (74%, compared to 68% of females); and

- Those with an **annual household income over $120,000** (76%, compared to 71% of those with an income between $60,000 to under $120,000 and 69% of those with an income under $60,000).

Figure 38: Off leash dog walking

Base: All dog owners, merged sample (n=16,880)

Category	Percentage
Designated off leash areas	55%
Park	36%
Beach	31%
Hiking/ walking trails	16%
On your neighbourhood streets	13%
Walking around shops/ cafes	4%
None of the above – dog(s) is always on leash/ does not leave property	29%

WHEREWALK. Do you ever allow your dog(s) off leash in any of the following public areas? [Single response]

VII. Use of services

Summary of service usage

Overall use of services in the last year was highest among dog owners, followed by large mammal and cat owners. In contrast, service usage was fairly low among reptile/ amphibian and bird owners. Only a very small number of fish and insect owners indicated that they had used services to assist with caring for their pet(s) in the last year, so these results are not reported on in this section.

Usage of services at an aggregate level was higher among:

- **Females** (83%, compared to 80% of males);

- Those living in **metropolitan** areas (83%, compared to 76% of those living in non-metropolitan areas); and

- Those with an **annual household income over $120,000** (85%, compared to 76% of those with an annual income under $60,000).

The most common service used across all pet types was veterinary services.

Table 6: Summary of service usage in last year by pet type

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

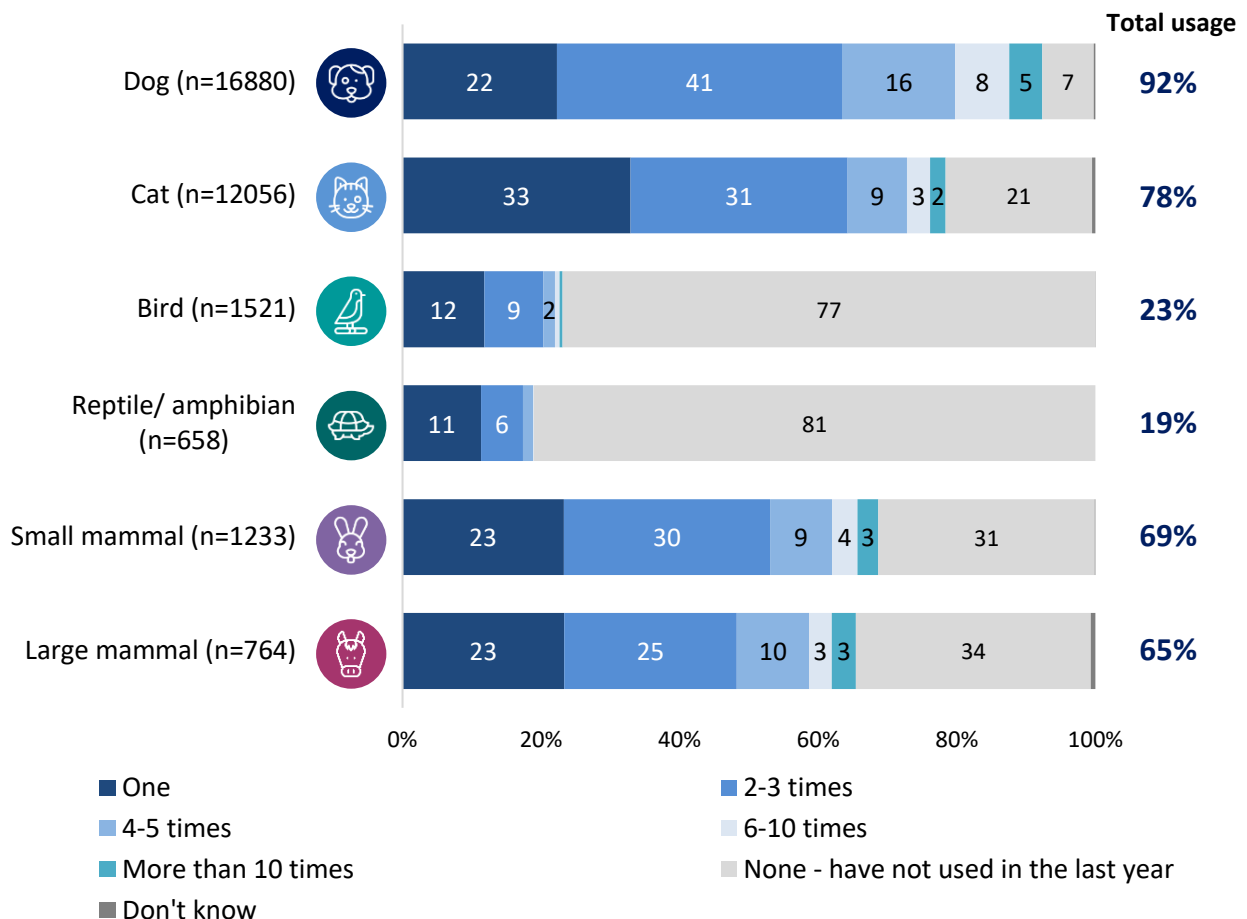| Type of service	Dog (n=16,880)	Cat (n=12,056)	Birds (n=1,521)	Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	Small mammals (n=1,233)	Large mammals (n=764)
Overall usage	96%	83%	32%	25%	72%	86%
Veterinary services	92%	78%	23%	19%	69%	65%
Grooming services	53%	12%	7%	3%	19%	57%
Pet sitting services	16%	13%	8%	5%	10%	9%
Boarding services	17%	16%	2%	1%	10%	2%
Training services (dogs only)	20%	-	-	-	-	-
Dog walking services (dogs only)	5%	-	-	-	-	-
Pet transport services	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	15%
Cleaning services	1%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	2%
Other services (e.g. rehabilitation)	5%	2%	1%	2%	1%	30%
Pet insurance	29%	12%	1%	2%	2%	6%

Veterinary services

Overall vet usage was highest among dogs and cats, with the majority of dog and cat owners visiting up to five times in the last year. In contrast, vet usage was lowest among bird and reptile/ amphibian owners.

In the qualitative research, fish owners felt that it generally 'wasn't worth' them taking their fish to the vet, as there was a very quick timeframe between their fish becoming unwell and dying and perceptions that there was limited ability for a vet to do anything. This sentiment was also evident among fish and insect owners in the quantitative research.

> *"Goldfish just die and you get more – not feasible or worthwhile to take to vet."*—Fish owner, online survey comment

Figure 39: Frequency of vet usage in last year

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

		Total usage
Dog (n=16880)	22 / 41 / 16 / 8 / 5 / 7	**92%**
Cat (n=12056)	33 / 31 / 9 / 3 / 2 / 21	**78%**
Bird (n=1521)	12 / 9 / 2 / 77	**23%**
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	11 / 6 / 81	**19%**
Small mammal (n=1233)	23 / 30 / 9 / 4 / 3 / 31	**69%**
Large mammal (n=764)	23 / 25 / 10 / 3 / 3 / 34	**65%**

Legend:
- One
- 2-3 times
- 4-5 times
- 6-10 times
- More than 10 times
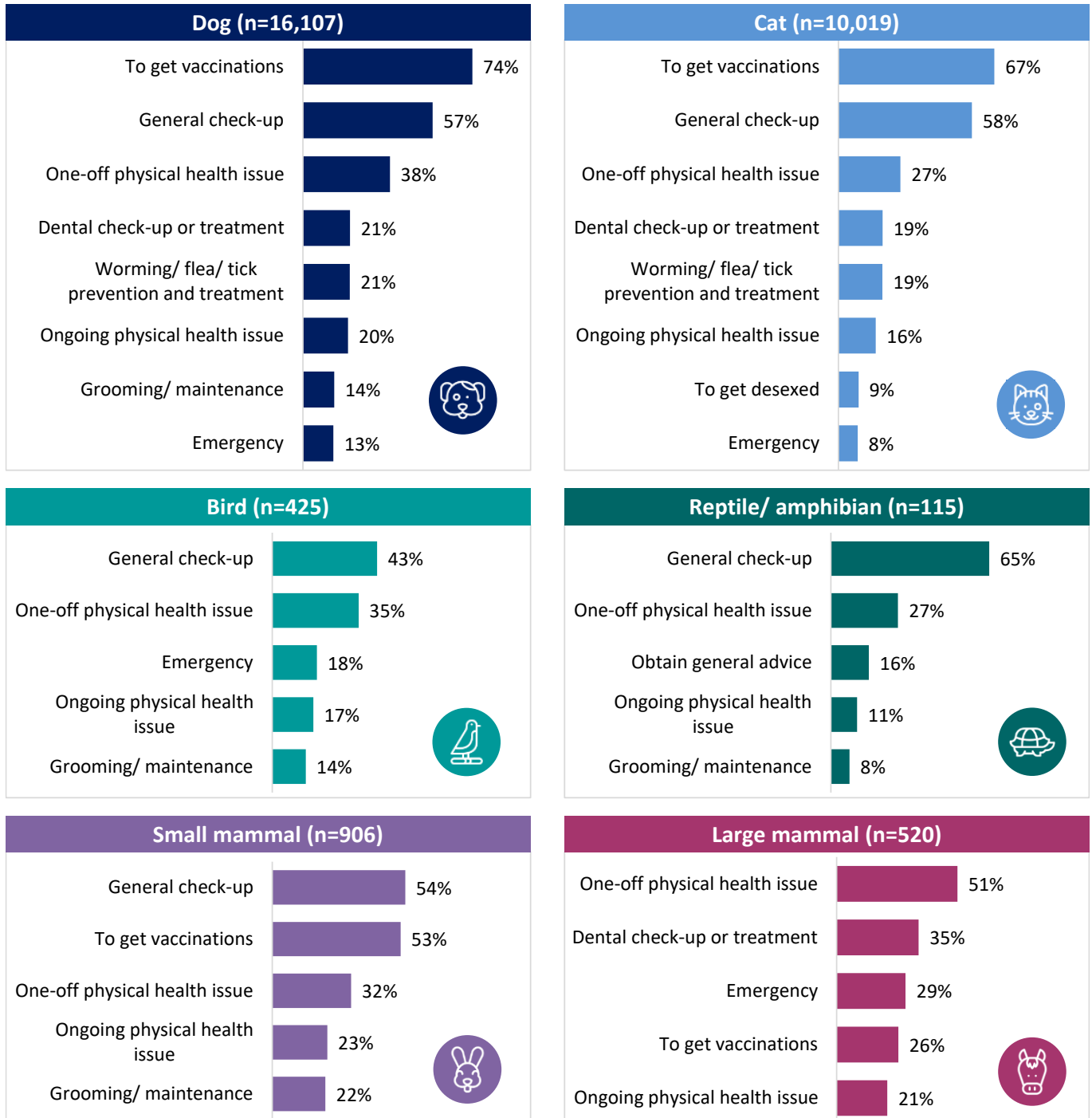- None - have not used in the last year
- Don't know

VETFREQ. In the last 12 months, how many times have you used veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]

Among pet owners who took their pet to the vet in the last year, the main reasons for visiting were broadly similar across pet types: general check-ups and one-off physical health issues. Vaccinations were also a common reason for visiting the vet among mammal-type pets, particularly dogs and cats.

Figure 40: Reasons for vet usage (Top 8 for dogs and cats, Top 5 for other pets)

Base: Pet owners (except fish and insect owners) who took their pet to the vet in last year, merged sample

Dog (n=16,107)

Reason	%
To get vaccinations	74%
General check-up	57%
One-off physical health issue	38%
Dental check-up or treatment	21%
Worming/ flea/ tick prevention and treatment	21%
Ongoing physical health issue	20%
Grooming/ maintenance	14%
Emergency	13%

Cat (n=10,019)

Reason	%
To get vaccinations	67%
General check-up	58%
One-off physical health issue	27%
Dental check-up or treatment	19%
Worming/ flea/ tick prevention and treatment	19%
Ongoing physical health issue	16%
To get desexed	9%
Emergency	8%

Bird (n=425)

Reason	%
General check-up	43%
One-off physical health issue	35%
Emergency	18%
Ongoing physical health issue	17%
Grooming/ maintenance	14%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=115)

Reason	%
General check-up	65%
One-off physical health issue	27%
Obtain general advice	16%
Ongoing physical health issue	11%
Grooming/ maintenance	8%

Small mammal (n=906)

Reason	%
General check-up	54%
To get vaccinations	53%
One-off physical health issue	32%
Ongoing physical health issue	23%
Grooming/ maintenance	22%

Large mammal (n=520)

Reason	%
One-off physical health issue	51%
Dental check-up or treatment	35%
Emergency	29%
To get vaccinations	26%
Ongoing physical health issue	21%

WHYVET. You mentioned you used veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY in the last 12 months. What were the main reasons you used these services? [Multiple response]

Cost was by far the greatest perceived barrier to accessing veterinary services among pet owners. However, some pet owners in the qualitative and quantitative research noted that this would not stop them from taking their pet to the vet.

> *"Cost is a strain, but we adopted both [dogs] and promised to always put them first, so we do."*—Dog owner, online survey comment

While overall perceived barriers were broadly similar by pet type, some differences existed:

- Vet visits being stressful for their pet was a greater barrier among cat (27%) and small mammal (20%) owners; and

- Limited access to a vet who had experience or specialised in their type of pet was a greater barrier among bird (31%), reptile/ amphibian (45%) and small mammal (41%) owners.

> *"Avarian vets are hard to find and I have to travel 50 kms to get there. Very stressful for a bird."*—Bird owner, online survey comment

Around one third of pet owners did not perceive any barriers to accessing veterinary services. Fish (46%) and insect (49%) owners were least likely to perceive any barriers, reflecting sentiment that vet visits generally weren't required for these types of pets.

> *"Never needed a vet, not sure there is much they could do for a stick insect."*—Insect owner, online survey comment

> *"Fish don't necessarily need vets, it's more about educating yourself on creating a healthy tank environment."*—Fish owner, online survey comment

Figure 41: Barriers to vet usage

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)
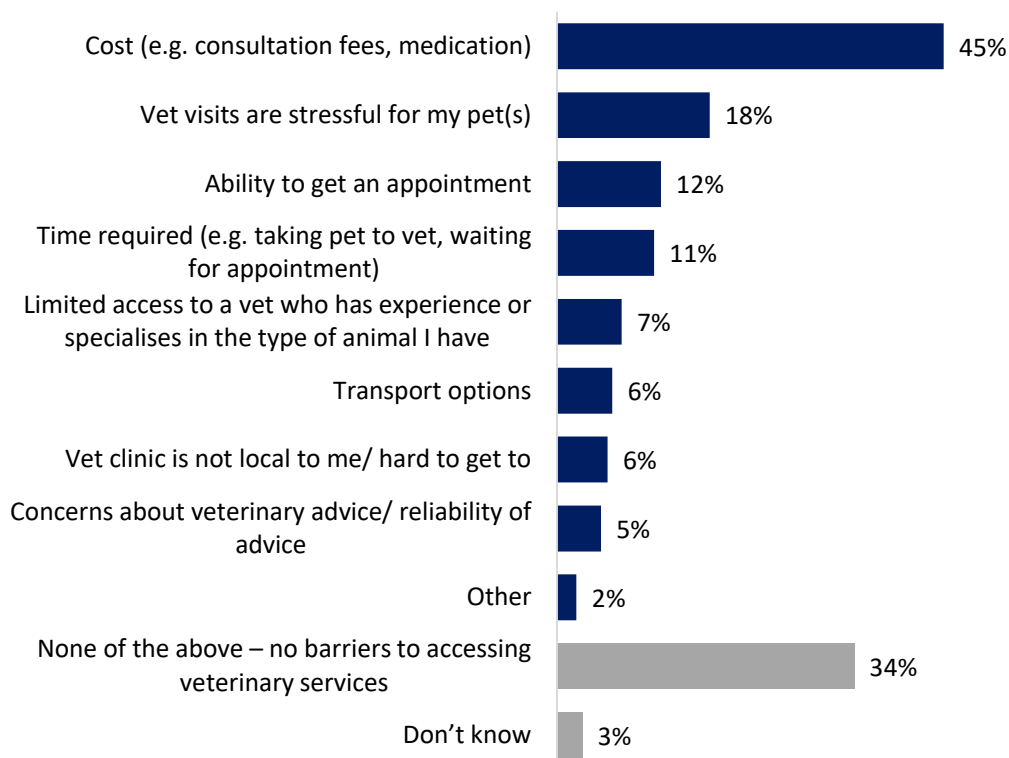
VETBARR. What barriers, if any, do you experience to accessing veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

Pet insurance

Slightly less than one in five (18%) pet owners had pet insurance at the time of the survey. Dog owners (29%) were by far most likely to have pet insurance, followed by cat owners (12%).

Figure 42: Usage of pet insurance

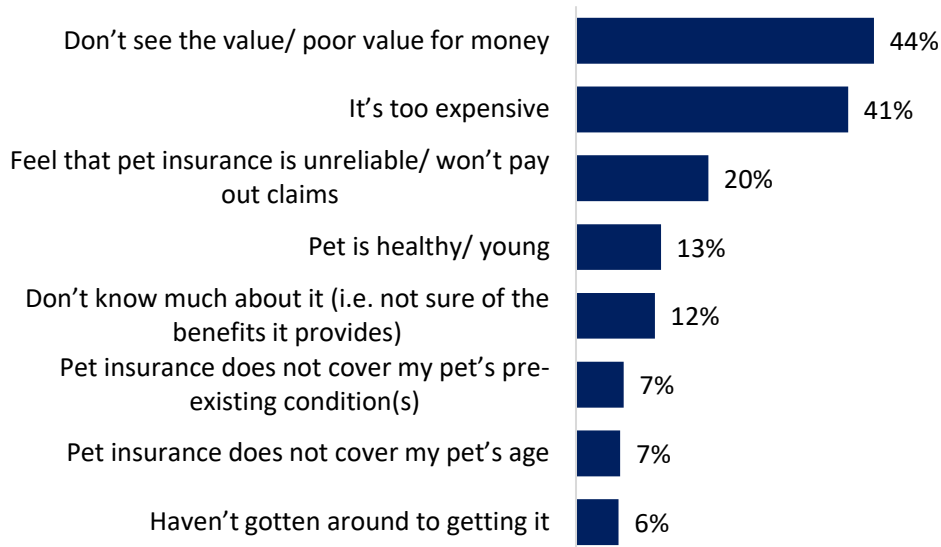Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample
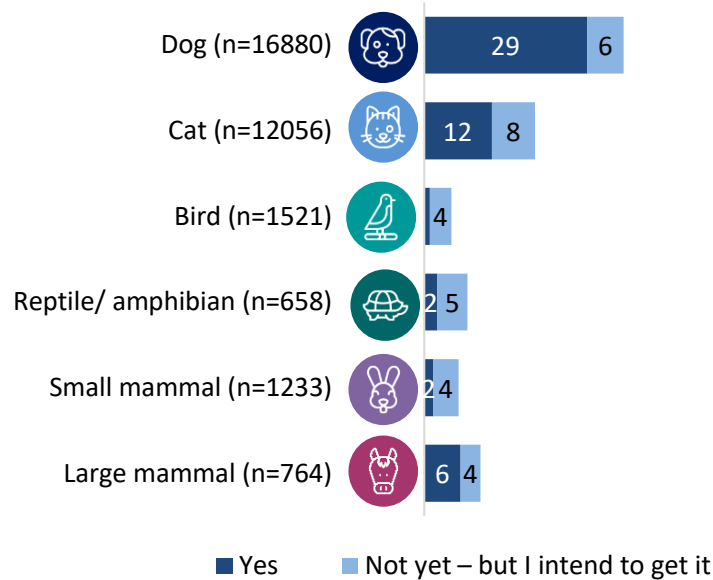
Dog (n=16880) 29 6
Cat (n=12056) 12 8
Bird (n=1521) 4
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658) 2 5
Small mammal (n=1233) 2 4
Large mammal (n=764) 6 4

■ Yes   ■ Not yet – but I intend to get it

PETINS. Do you currently have pet insurance for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]

Among those who did not have pet insurance, the main reasons why were because they did not see the value in having it, it was too expensive or they felt it was unreliable/ would not pay out claims.

" *"Would rather put the money aside to be used if a cost comes up than pay out something that isn't used regularly."*—Guinea pig owner, online survey comment

Figure 43: Reasons for not having pet insurance

Base: Pet owners who did not have pet insurance, merged sample (n=27,532)

Don't see the value/ poor value for money 44%
It's too expensive 41%
Feel that pet insurance is unreliable/ won't pay out claims 20%
Pet is healthy/ young 13%
Don't know much about it (i.e. not sure of the benefits it provides) 12%
Pet insurance does not cover my pet's pre-existing condition(s) 7%
Pet insurance does not cover my pet's age 7%
Haven't gotten around to getting it 6%

WHYPETINS. Why do you not have pet insurance for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response]

Grooming services

Usage of grooming services was highest among dog and large mammal owners, compared to other pet types. In particular, dog owners used grooming services for the widest range of grooming.

Grooming services were most commonly used by owners to trim their pet's nails, claws or hooves across all pet types.
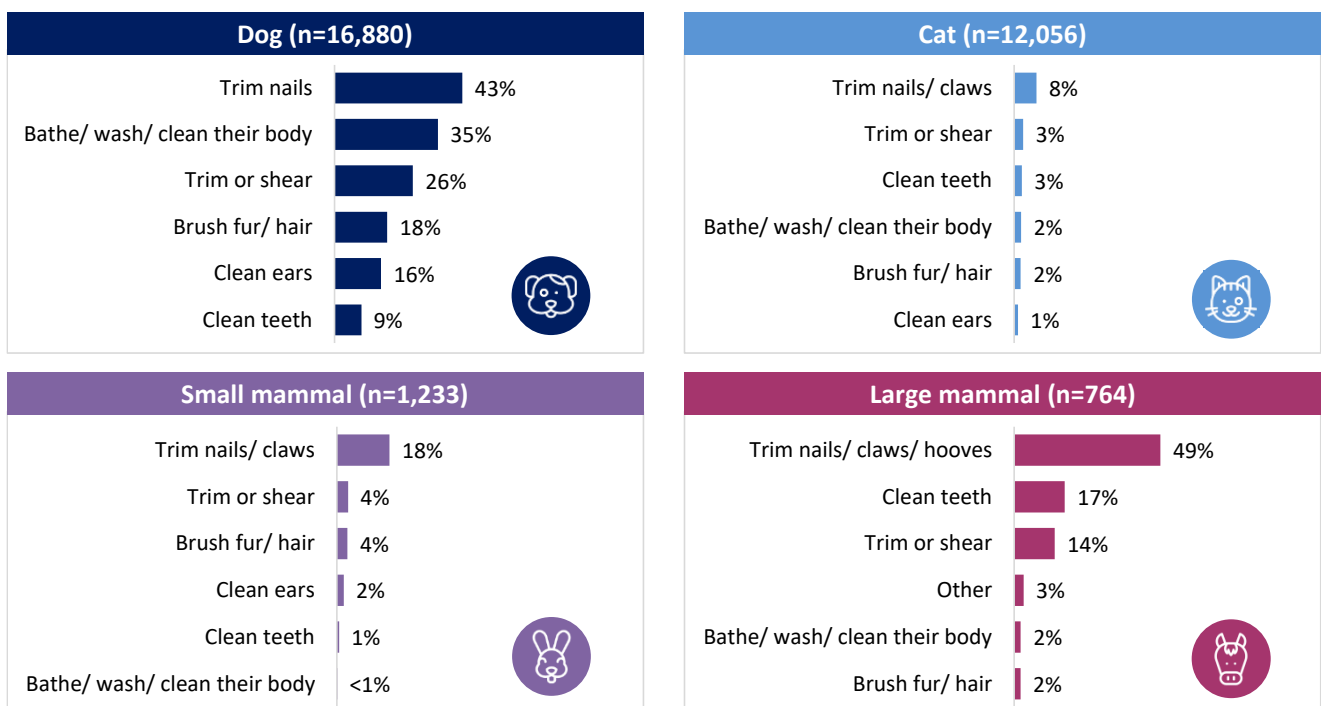
Figure 44: Usage of grooming services

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample
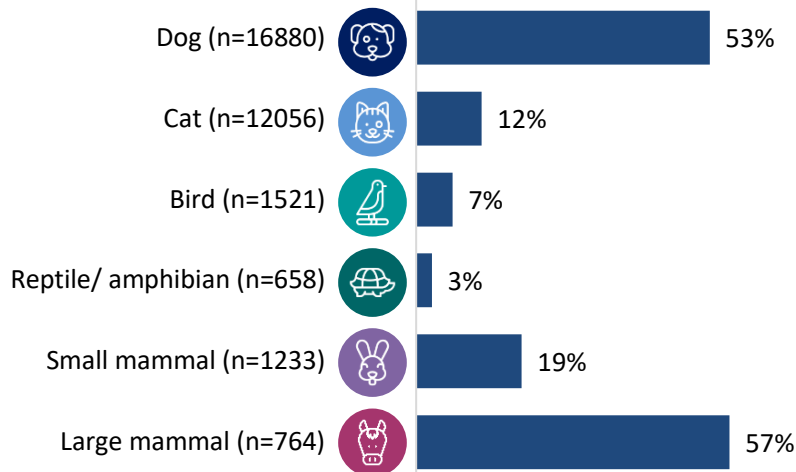
HOWGROOM. Of the types of grooming you give your PETCATEGORY(s), what do you do yourself and what do you use a grooming service for? [Single response]

Figure 45: Types of grooming pet owners used grooming services for (Top 6)

Base: All pet owners (except bird, reptile/amphibian, fish and insect owners), merged sample

HOWGROOM. Of the types of grooming you give your PETCATEGORY(s), what do you do yourself and what do you use a grooming service for? [Single response]

Pet minding and boarding services

Pet owners most commonly relied on family and friends to look after their pets while they were away from home (e.g. while on holiday).

Around one fifth (19-21%) of pet owners had previously used boarding services or pet minding services to look after their pet. The proportion who had used each *in the last year* was somewhat lower (14% had used boarding services and 13% had used pet minding services in the last year).

As shown in Figure 47 and Figure 48 overleaf, usage of boarding and pet minding services was most common among dog, cat and small mammal owners.

Figure 46: How pets are looked after while their owners are away from home

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)
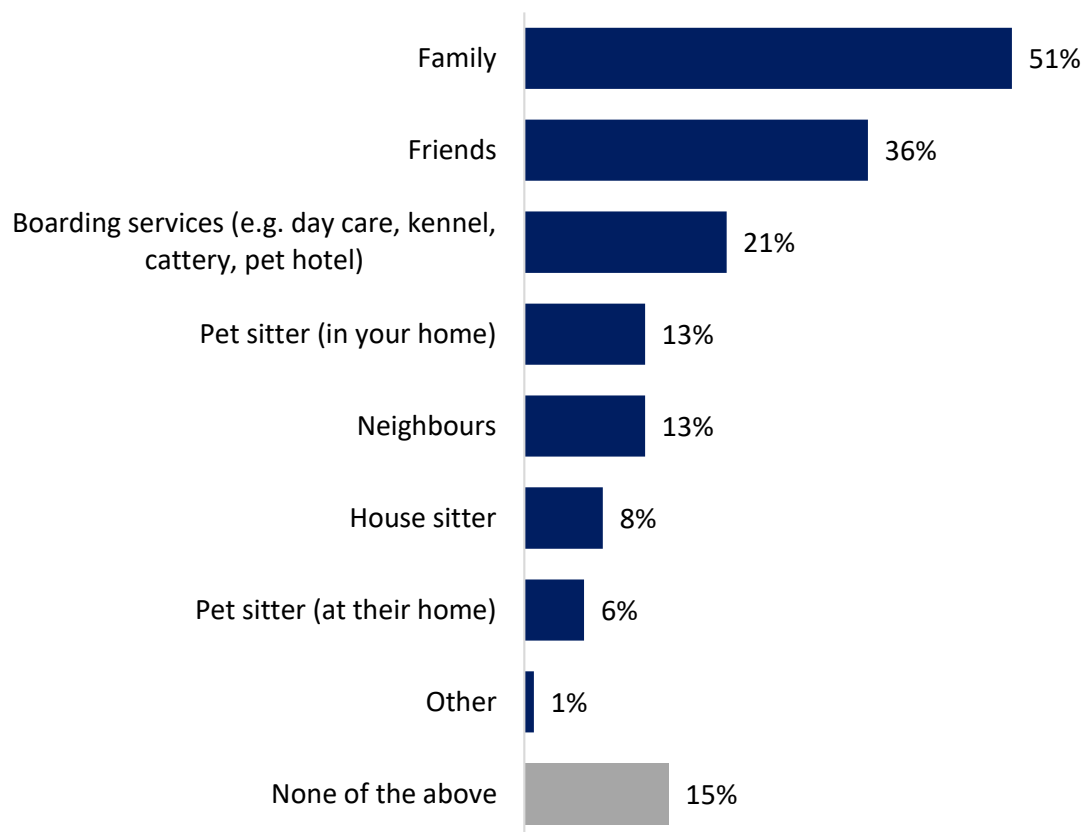
LOOKAFTER. Have you ever used any of the following to look after your PETCATEGORY(s) while you were away from home? [Multiple response]

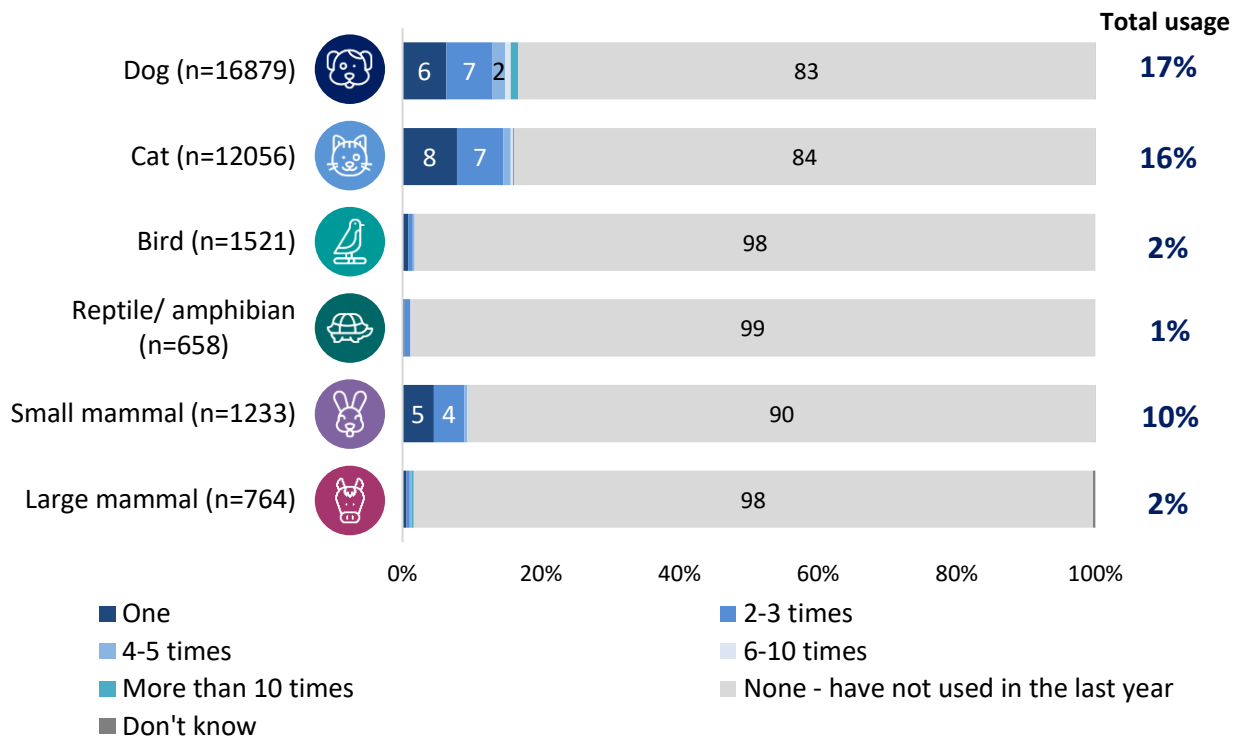**Figure 47: Usage of pet minding services in last year**

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

Pet category	Total usage
Dog (n=16880)	16%
Cat (n=12056)	13%
Bird (n=1521)	8%
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	5%
Small mammal (n=1233)	10%
Large mammal (n=764)	9%

Legend: One · 2-3 times · 4-5 times · 6-10 times · More than 10 times · None - have not used in the last year · Don't know
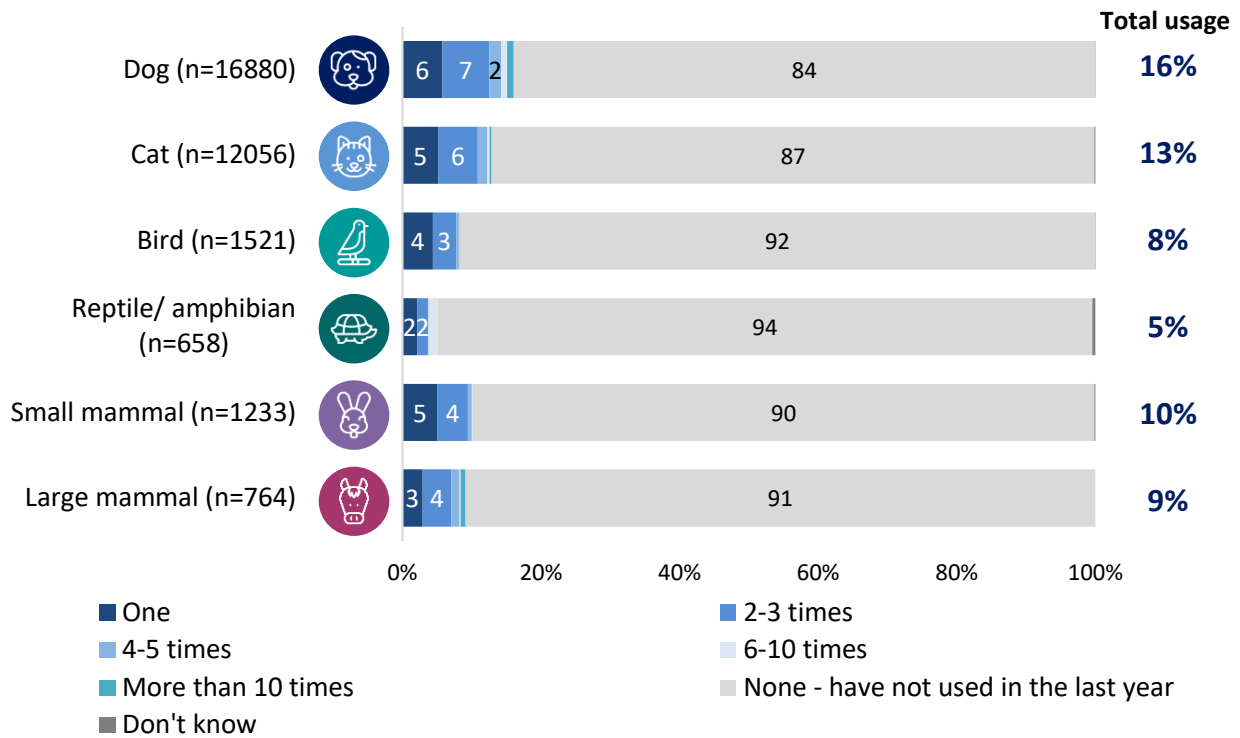
MINDSERVICESFREQ_a. In the last 12 months, how many times have you used a PET SITTER for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]

Figure 48: Usage of boarding services in last year

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

Pet category	Total usage
Dog (n=16879)	17%
Cat (n=12056)	16%
Bird (n=1521)	2%
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	1%
Small mammal (n=1233)	10%
Large mammal (n=764)	2%

Legend: One · 2-3 times · 4-5 times · 6-10 times · More than 10 times · None - have not used in the last year · Don't know

MINDSERVICESFREQ_b. In the last 12 months, how many times have you used BOARDING SERVICES for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]
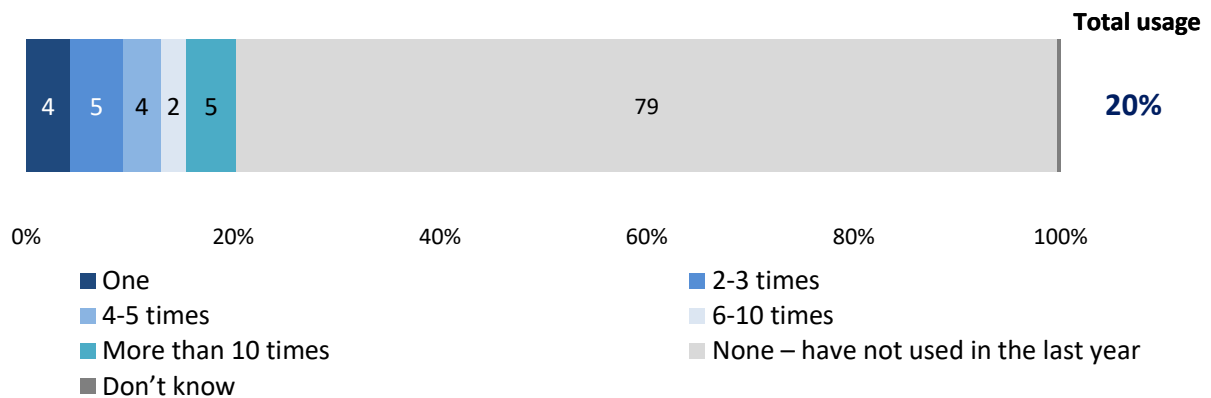
Training services (dogs only)

Most dog owners (80%) had trained their dog(s) at some point, including 59% who had used a training service. However, only around one third (35%) of dog owners had used training services in the last year. Use of training services in the last year was highest among those with dogs aged between 3 months to 2 years old (53%).

Among those who had used training services for their dog, the main reasons were for obedience training, puppy school and socialisation.

Figure 49: Usage of training services in last year (dog owners only)

Base: All dog owners, merged sample (n=16,880)

Total usage

20%

One	4
2-3 times	5
4-5 times	4
6-10 times	2
More than 10 times	5
None – have not used in the last year	79

- ■ One
- ■ 4-5 times
- ■ More than 10 times
- ■ Don't know
- ■ 2-3 times
- ■ 6-10 times
- ■ None – have not used in the last year

TRAINFREQ. In the last 12 months, how many times have you used training services for your dog(s)? [Single response]

Figure 50: Types of dog training services used

Base: Dog owners who had ever used training services, merged sample (n=11,218)

Obedience training (e.g. walking to heel, sit/stay and off-lead recall)	70%
Puppy school (including through a vet clinic)	64%
Socialisation	56%
Toilet training	23%
Addressing behavioural concerns (e.g. reactivity, aggression)	22%
Tricks	20%
Working skills or dog sports (e.g. herding, scent detection, agility)	7%
Assistance/ service training	4%
Training to use an electronic collar	2%
Other	1%
Don't know	<1%

WHATTRAIN. You mentioned you used training services for your dog(s). What did that training include? [Multiple response]
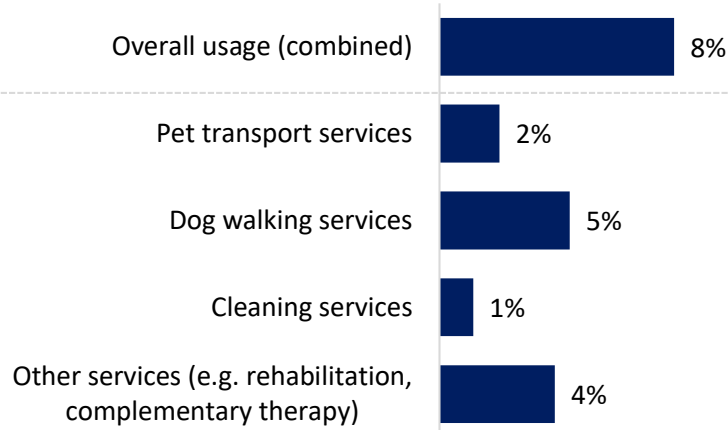
Other services

Very few pet owners had used 'other' services in the last year, including pet transport services, dog walking services, cleaning services, rehabilitation treatments, complementary therapies, acupuncture, animal psychics/ interpreters/ communicators, whelping/ kittening/ animal birthing services and any other pet services not covered in the survey.

Dog (12%) and large mammal (39%) owners were most likely to have used 'other' services in the last year. Among dog owners, this mainly comprised dog walking services (5%) and 'other' services (5%) including rehabilitation treatments and complementary therapies. Among large mammal owners, this mainly comprised pet transport services (15%) and 'other' services (30%) including rehabilitation treatments and complementary therapies.

Figure 51: Usage of 'other' services in last year

Base: All pet owners, merged sample (n=34,546)

Overall usage (combined)	8%
Pet transport services	2%
Dog walking services	5%
Cleaning services	1%
Other services (e.g. rehabilitation, complementary therapy)	4%

OTHSERVICESFREQ_a-d. In the last 12 months, how many times have you used OTHER SERVICES for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]
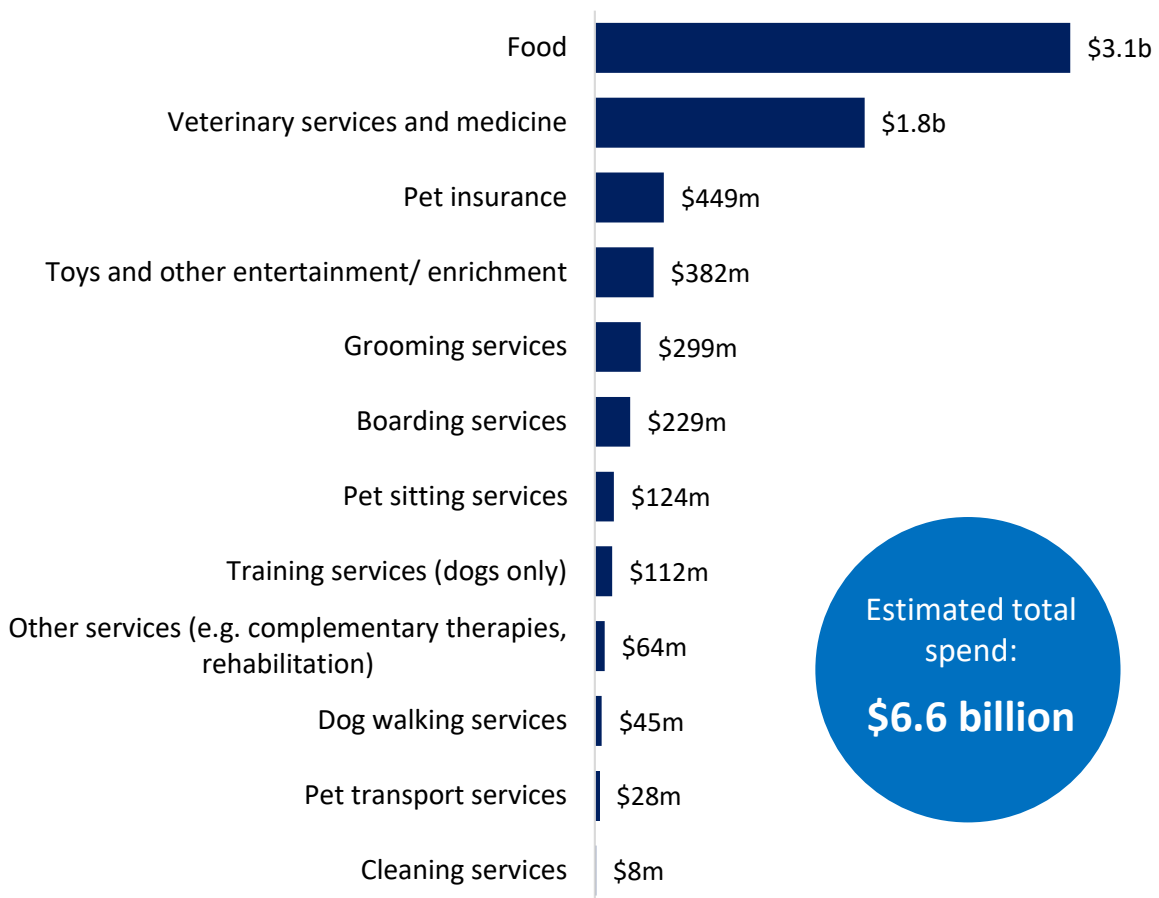
VIII. Ongoing pet costs

Victorians spent an estimated $6.6 billion ($b) on their pets in the year leading up to the survey (2022-23) on products/ services covered in the survey (noting spend on other ad hoc products such as housing, bedding, clothing, etc. were not covered in the survey). Food ($3.1b) was by far the largest expenditure among pet owners, followed by veterinary services/ medicines ($1.8b).

As shown in Table 7 overleaf, dog owners ($4.3b) contributed the most to total spend, followed by cat owners ($1.4b). These figures reflect both that dogs and cats are the most common types of pets, as well as having among the highest average annual costs per pet ($3,116 for dogs and $1,563 for cats). Large mammals also had one of the highest average costs per pet ($2,179) and their owners spent more on 'other' services ($17 million) compared to all other types of pets except dogs – mainly including rehabilitation and complementary therapies for horses. The total average cost for horses was particularly high at $3,085 per year, while other medium or large mammals cost an average of $648 annually.

When asked to calculate their pet-related expenses, many qualitative participants reported feeling 'surprised' that the financial cost was higher than anticipated.

Figure 52: Total estimated cost in last year by product/ service ($ billions and $ millions)

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Food	$3.1b
Veterinary services and medicine	$1.8b
Pet insurance	$449m
Toys and other entertainment/ enrichment	$382m
Grooming services	$299m
Boarding services	$229m
Pet sitting services	$124m
Training services (dogs only)	$112m
Other services (e.g. complementary therapies, rehabilitation)	$64m
Dog walking services	$45m
Pet transport services	$28m
Cleaning services	$8m

Estimated total spend:

$6.6 billion

Extrapolations were made based on survey data and 2021 ABS Census data
Insects have not been included in calculating average annual spend.

Table 7: Average costs in last year by pet type

Base: *Total costs:* All pet owners, merged sample

Costs per product/ service: Pet owners <u>who used each product/ service</u>

Average annual spend per pet ($)	Dog (n=16,880)	Cat (n=12,056)	Fish (n=1,329)	Birds (n=1,521)	Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	Small mammals (n=1,233)	Large mammals (n=764)
Food	$1,363	$882	$40	$231	$274	$555	$1,289
Training services	$415	-	-	-	-	-	-
Veterinary services and medicine	$987	$522	-	$252	$224	$537	$813
Pet insurance	$953	$692	-	-	-	-	$1,099
Grooming services	$342	$143	-	$73	-	$92	$433
Toys and other entertainment/ enrichment	$182	$83	$16	$62	$43	$69	$122
Pet sitting services	$405	$204	$69	$90	$54	$221	$159
Boarding services	$714	$420	-	$188	-	$319	-
Dog walking services	$723	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pet transport services	$505	$323	-	-	-	-	$253
Cleaning services	$134	$243	-	-	-	-	-
Other services (e.g. cleaning, transport)	$567	$222	-	-	-	-	$364
Total average annual cost per pet	**$3,116**	**$1,563**	**$50**	**$372**	**$357**	**$1,068**	**$2,179**
Total average annual cost per household	**$3,664**	**$2,134**	**$183**	**$829**	**$497**	**$1,854**	**$5,270**
Estimated total spend by pet type	**$4.3b**	**$1.4b**	**$49m**	**$234m**	**$30m**	**$150m**	**$365m**

Average costs per pet for each product/ service excludes outliers in calculations. If a result is not reported, this is due to low usage of that service among that pet type (less than n=30) or service not being eligible for pet type.
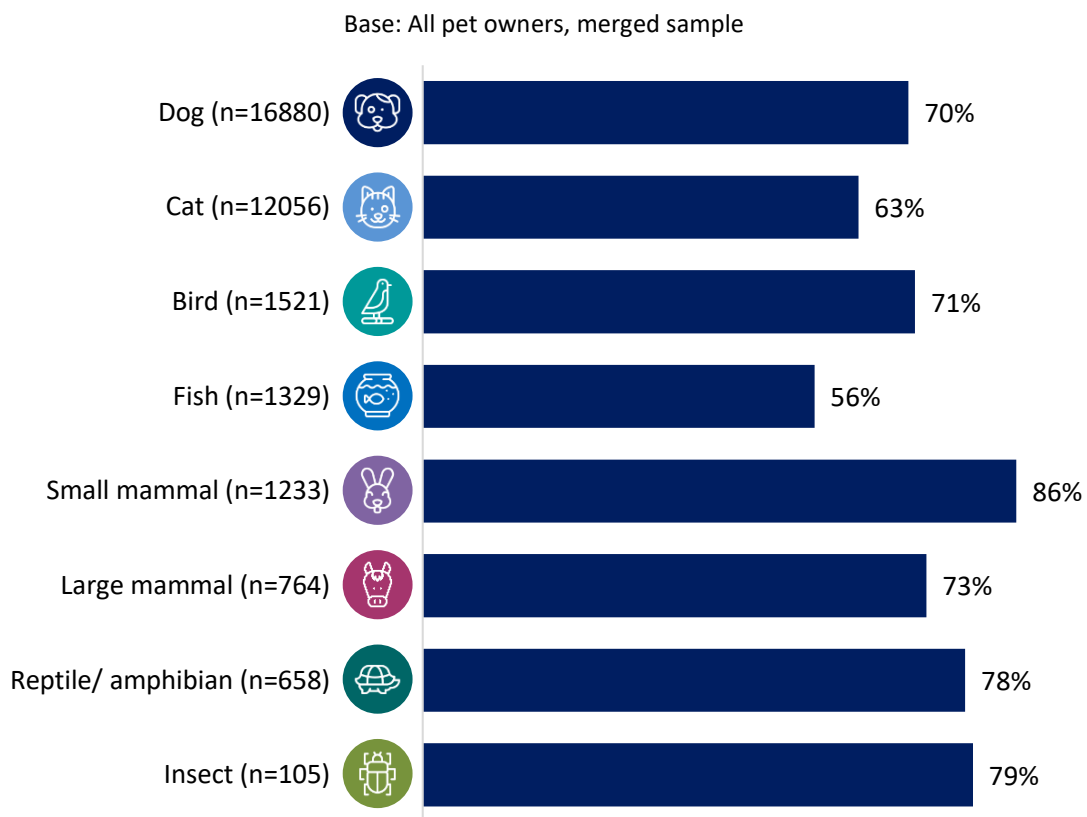
Note that the total average annual cost per pet does not equal the sum of the average cost per pet for each product/ service as the average cost per product/ service is calculated using a base of <u>those who used</u> each product/ service, while the total average annual cost per pet is calculated using a base of <u>all respondents</u>.

IX.   Information seeking

Around two thirds (68%) of pet owners indicated that since obtaining their pet, they had looked for information to aid in looking after them. Owners of small mammals were most likely to have looked for information (86%), while just over half (56%) of those who owned fish had sought information about looking after them.

> "[I look for information] about helping with [my cat's] behavioural problems. I also look at different food options, because he is a fussy eater"—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Figure 53: Whether owners of different pet types had looked for information to help them look after their pet

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Pet type	Percentage
Dog (n=16880)	70%
Cat (n=12056)	63%
Bird (n=1521)	71%
Fish (n=1329)	56%
Small mammal (n=1233)	86%
Large mammal (n=764)	73%
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	78%
Insect (n=105)	79%

INFOSEARCH. Since obtaining your PETCATEGORY(s), have you looked for any information to help you look after them? [Single response]

The majority of pet owners who sought information had looked into general health requirements or issues related to their pet (61%), as well as information about food requirements, such as the type of food or frequency of feeding (55%), and any products their pet may need, such as toys, beds or clothing (55%).

> *"[I find out about] new toys to buy and other good ideas for enrichment online and through the pages I follow on social media"*—Current dog owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Figure 54: Information sought

Base: Pet owners who looked for information about looking after their pet, merged sample (n=25,345)

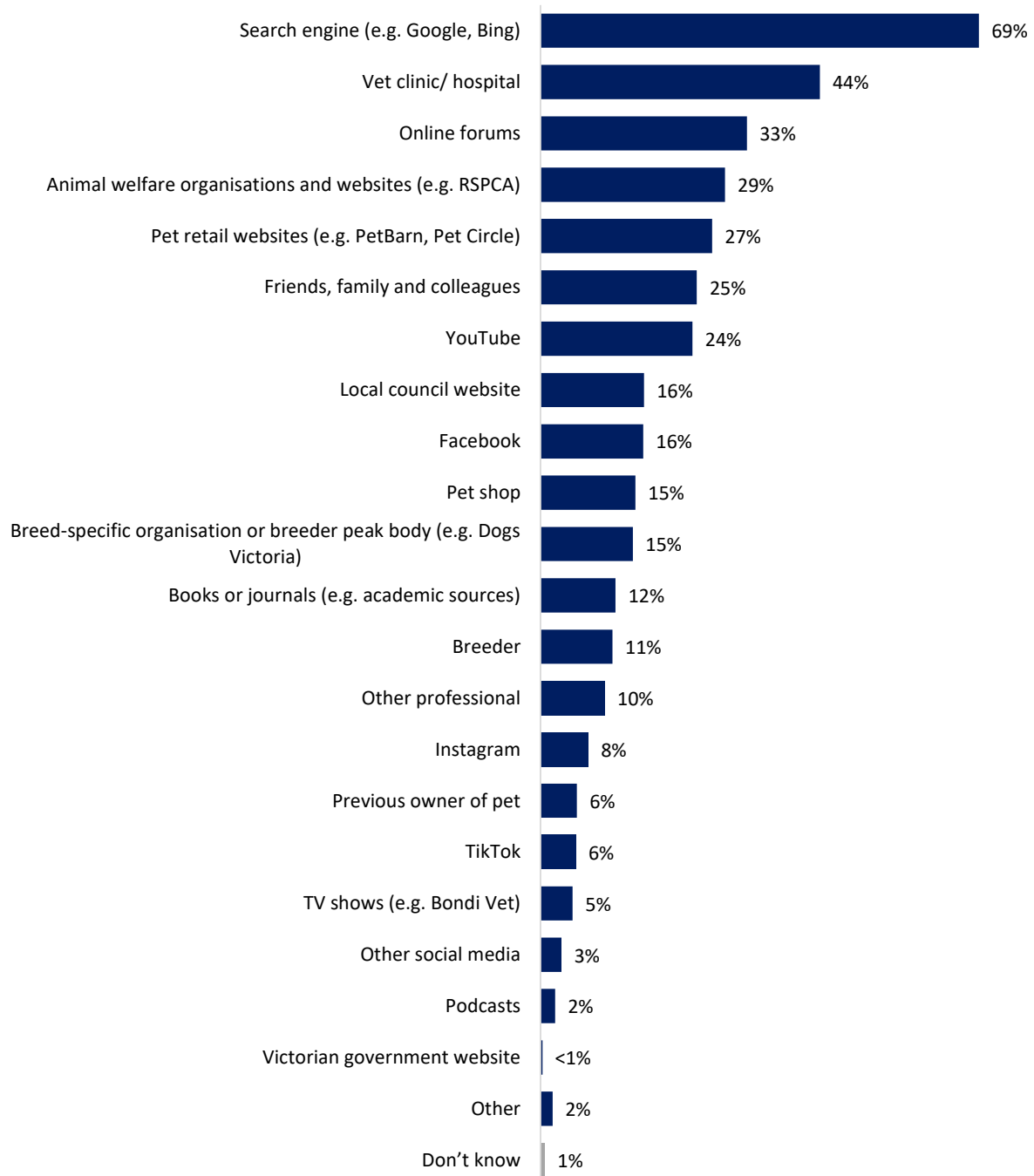| Information sought	%
General health requirements/ issues	61%
Information about food required (e.g. type of food, frequency of feeding)	55%
Products for pet (e.g. toy, beds, clothing)	55%
Information about specific health conditions	46%
Behavioural issues (e.g. anxiety)	42%
Enrichment opportunities (e.g. how to keep pet occupied, entertained)	41%
Breed/ species characteristics	40%
Grooming (e.g. how to, what grooming required)	31%
Services (e.g. grooming, training, boarding)	30%
Training/ supervision (e.g. how to train certain tricks)	30%
Legal requirements for owning pet (e.g. registration, microchipping)	27%
Information about desexing/ microchipping/ vaccination	22%
Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank required)	20%
Cleaning requirements or processes (e.g. changing water)	19%
Environmental requirements or processes (e.g. temperature)	17%
Other	1%
Don't know	1%

$WHATSEARCH. What information have you looked for? [Multiple response]

More specialised information needs differed between owners of different types of pets. Those who owned fish were most likely to have looked for information about cleaning requirements (64%), such as changing the water in their fish tank, while insect (74%) and reptile/ amphibian (64%) owners were most likely to have searched for information about environmental requirements, such as temperature.

Figure 55: Information sought by pet category (Top 5)

Base: Pet owners who looked for information about looking after their pet, merged sample

Dog (n=12,950)

General health requirements/ issues	61%
Products for pet (e.g. toys, bed, clothing)	60%
Food requirements	53%
Breed/ species characteristics	50%
Information about specific health conditions	47%

Cat (n=5,584)

General health requirements/ issues	62%
Products for pet (e.g. toys, bed, clothing)	58%
Food requirements	54%
Behavioural issues	46%
Information about specific health conditions	45%

Bird (n=884)

General health requirements/ issues	64%
Food requirements	57%
Breed/ species characteristics	51%
Information about specific health conditions	43%
Products for pet (e.g. toys, bed, clothing)	38%

Fish (n=678)

Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing water)	64%
Food requirements	52%
Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature)	52%
General health requirements/ issues	47%
Information about specific health conditions	35%

Small mammal (n=928)

General health requirements/ issues	70%
Food requirements	71%
Products for pet (e.g. toys, bed, clothing)	61%
Enrichment opportunities	56%
Information about specific health conditions	56%

Large mammal (n=537)

General health requirements/ issues	65%
Information about specific health conditions	62%
Food requirements	54%
Training/ supervision (e.g. how to train certain tricks)	37%
Breed/ species characteristics	32%

Reptile/ amphibian (n=546)

Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature)	64%
Food requirements	61%
General health requirements/ issues	59%
Breed/ species characteristics	49%
Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing water)	47%

Insect (n=84)

Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature)	74%
General health requirements/ issues	60%
Breed/ species characteristics	56%
Food requirements	55%
Cleaning requirements (e.g. changing water)	54%

$WHATSEARCH. What information have you looked for? [Multiple response]

Using search engines (69%), such as Google or Bing, to find information online was the main channel that pet owners used to search for information about looking after their pet. Other common information sources used were vet clinics or hospitals (44%), online forums (33%), animal welfare organisations and websites (29%), and pet retail websites (27%).

Victorian government websites were reported as the *least* used source of information – suggesting that any information about pet ownership may be most effectively disseminated through other channels such as through animal welfare organisation partners and social media.

Figure 56: Sources of information

Base: Pet owners who looked for information about looking after their pet, merged sample (n=25,345)

Source	%
Search engine (e.g. Google, Bing)	69%
Vet clinic/ hospital	44%
Online forums	33%
Animal welfare organisations and websites (e.g. RSPCA)	29%
Pet retail websites (e.g. PetBarn, Pet Circle)	27%
Friends, family and colleagues	25%
YouTube	24%
Local council website	16%
Facebook	16%
Pet shop	15%
Breed-specific organisation or breeder peak body (e.g. Dogs Victoria)	15%
Books or journals (e.g. academic sources)	12%
Breeder	11%
Other professional	10%
Instagram	8%
Previous owner of pet	6%
TikTok	6%
TV shows (e.g. Bondi Vet)	5%
Other social media	3%
Podcasts	2%
Victorian government website	<1%
Other	2%
Don't know	1%

$WHERESEARCH. Where did you look for or seek this information? [Multiple response]

X. Future pet ownership

Overall, 10% of Victorian adults were planning to get a pet in the next 12 months – most commonly dogs (6%) and cats (2%). Victorians without any pets currently were more likely to report they were planning to get a pet (12%) compared to those with pets already (8%). In addition, non-current pet owners that had owned pets in the past (14%) were more likely to be planning to get a pet compared to those who had never owned a pet (7%).

Figure 57 below shows the estimated number of each type of pet expected to be acquired in the next 12 months, based on the proportion of respondents planning on getting each type of pet and the estimated number of Victorian households. However, these should be considered *under*estimations as this question did not allow for respondents to say if they were planning to get multiple pets of the same type or multiple pets of different types (only the type of pet they planned to get soonest).

Figure 57: Estimated number of pets expected to be acquired in next 12 months

Base: All respondents, panel sample (n=5,069)
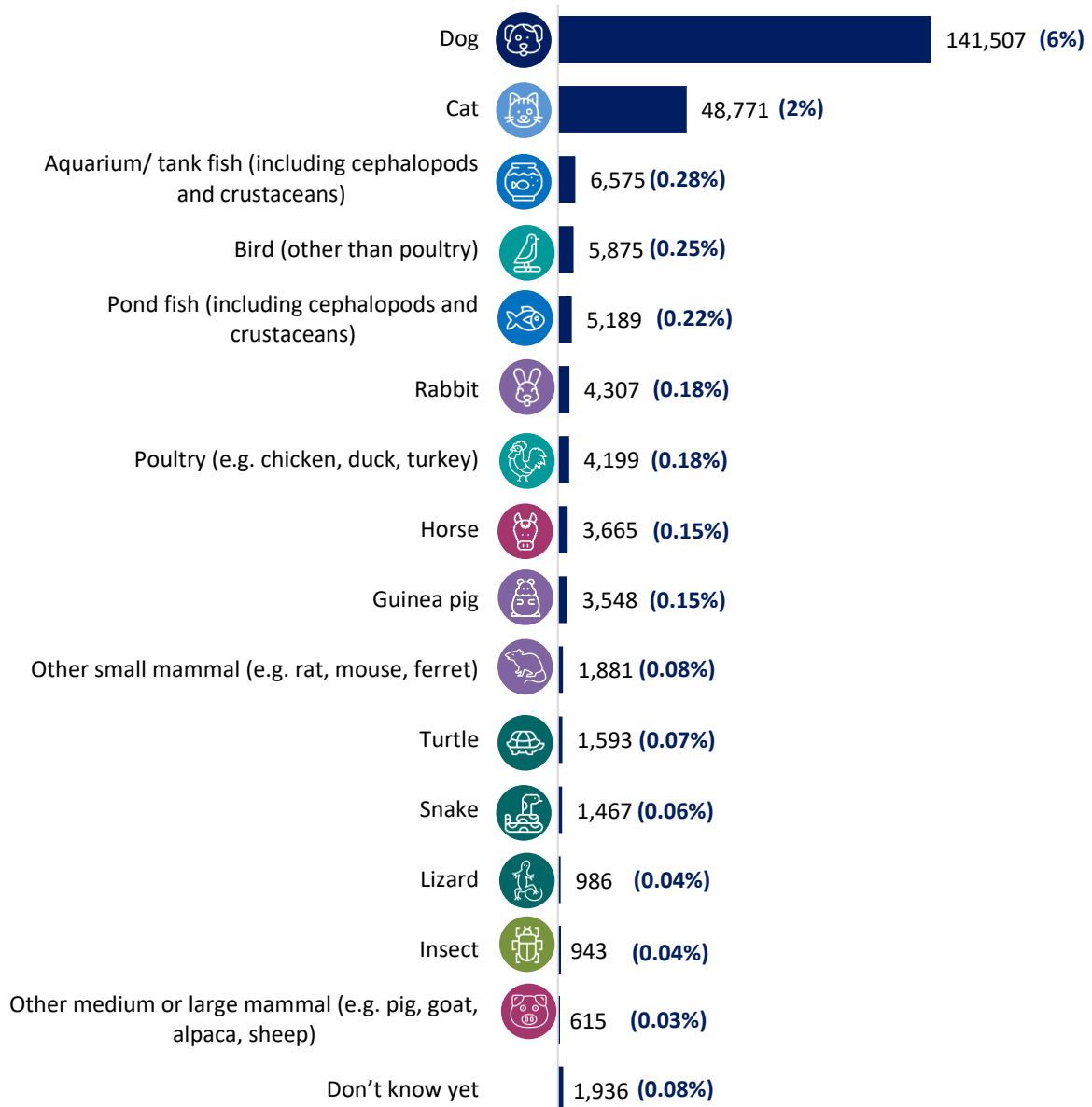
FUTOWNTYPE. What type of pet do you plan to get in the next 12 months? If you are planning to get multiple pet(s), please select the type you plan to get soonest. [Single response]

Among non-current pet owners who were planning to get a pet in the next 12 months, the main reasons they wanted one were very similar to the reasons why current pet owners wanted their pets, primarily: companionship/ love (62%) and for mental health/ emotional support (35%).

Reasons for wanting a pet were broadly similar among potential dog and cat owners. However, potential cat owners were more likely to say they wanted a cat because they wanted to help or save the animal (24%) and potential dog owners were more likely to say they wanted a dog for their physical health (36%).

Figure 58: Reasons for wanting a pet

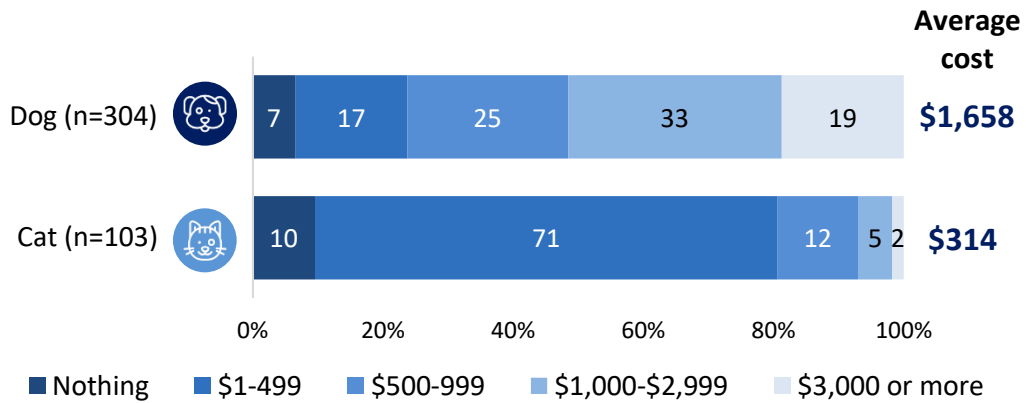Base: Respondents who want a pet in next 12 months (but do not currently have one), merged sample (n=450)
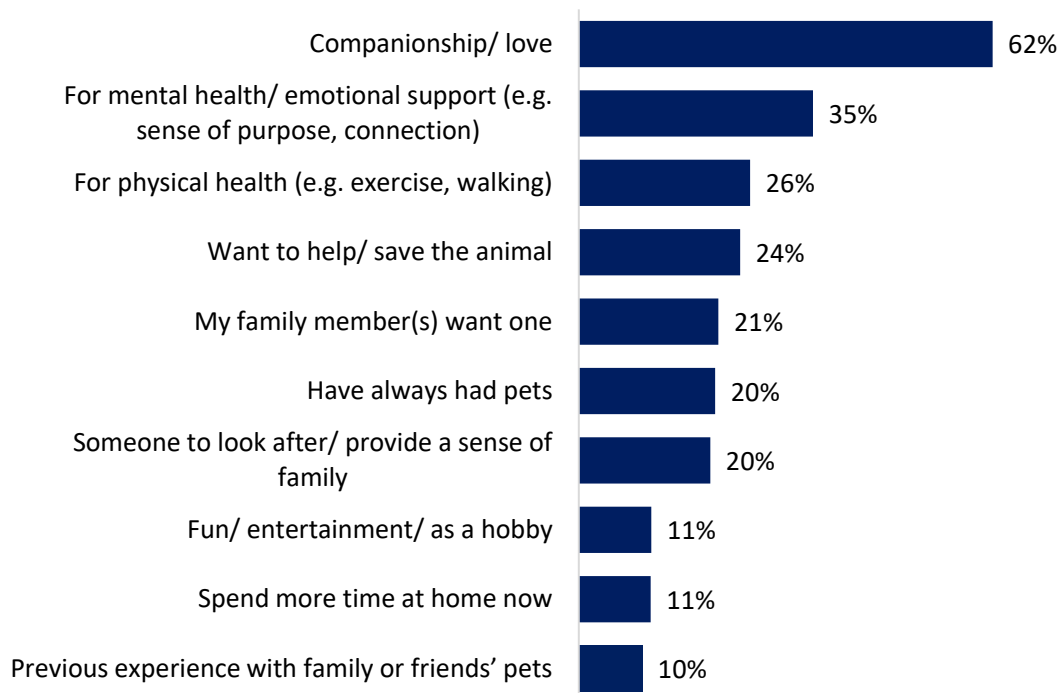
WHYFUTGET. What are the main reasons you want to get a pet in the next 12 months? Please select up to three. [Multiple response]

Future dog and cat owners were mostly planning to get their future pet from rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisations, animal shelters/ pounds or breeders. Future dog owners were more likely to be planning to get their pet from a breeder, compared to future cat owners.

As shown in Figure 60 overleaf, those planning to get their pet from a breeder mainly wanted to do so because they wanted a specific breed or species.

Among those planning to get their pet from a rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation or animal shelter, the main reason was because they wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal.

Figure 59: Where planning to get pet from

Base: Respondents planning to get a dog or cat in next 12 months (but do not currently have one), merged sample

	Dog (n=304)	Cat (n=103)
Rescue/ rehoming organisation or volunteer run organisation	48%	57%
Animal shelter/ pound	46%	71%
Breeder	43%	9%
Pet shop	9%	8%
Vet clinic	5%	8%
From a family member or friend	5%	8%
Speciality shop	3%	5%
From an acquaintance	2%	3%
Other	1%	1%
Don't know	7%	3%
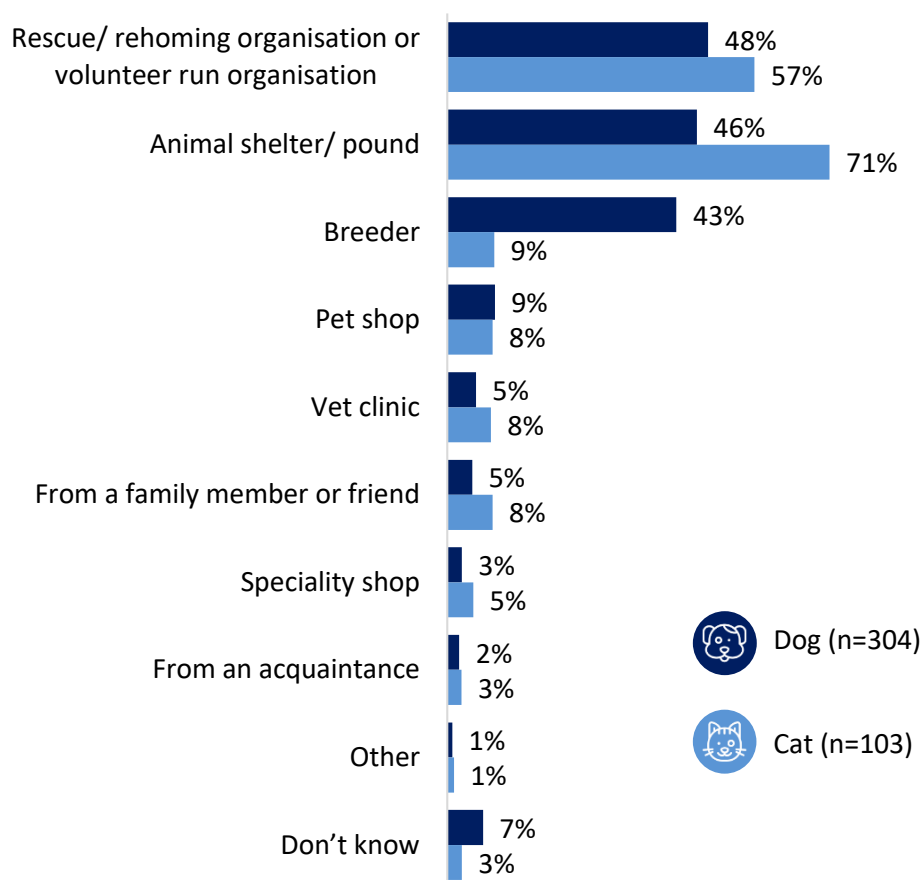
FUTSOURCE. Where are you planning to get your FUTPETCATEGORY? [Multiple response]

Figure 60: Reasons for wanting a pet from particular source

Base: Respondents who want a pet in next 12 months (but do not currently have one), merged sample

Note: Respondents were able to select more than one potential source so split results include respondents who selected more than one potential source

Breeder (n=144)

Reason	
Want a specific breed or species	63%
Reputation (e.g. quality/ experience)	37%
Health of animals	34%
Breeding practices	30%
Want a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	25%

Animal shelter (n=219)

Reason	
Want a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	77%
Animal welfare	43%
Health of animals	22%
Reputation (e.g. quality/ experience)	20%
Cost/ value for money	19%

Rescue/ rehoming or volunteer run organisation (n=220)

Reason	
Want a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal	79%
Animal welfare	44%
Health of animals	23%
Reputation (e.g. quality/ experience)	21%
Cost/ value for money	20%

WHYFUTSOURCE. Why are you planning to get your FUTPETCATEGORY from this source? [Single response]

The large majority (70%) of potential pet owners had already done some research about their future pet. Those who had already done some research sought information about several things, but most commonly:

- Breed/ species characteristics (61%);

- Medical/ health requirements (50%) – such as pre-existing conditions and vet care requirements;

- Costs associated with having a pet (44%);

- Size of pet/ space required (44%);

- Whether their potential pet was desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated (43%); and

- Where to get or purchase the pet they wanted (42%).

Figure 61: Information seeking prior to getting pet

Base: Respondents who want a pet in next 12 months (but do not currently have one), merged sample (n=450)
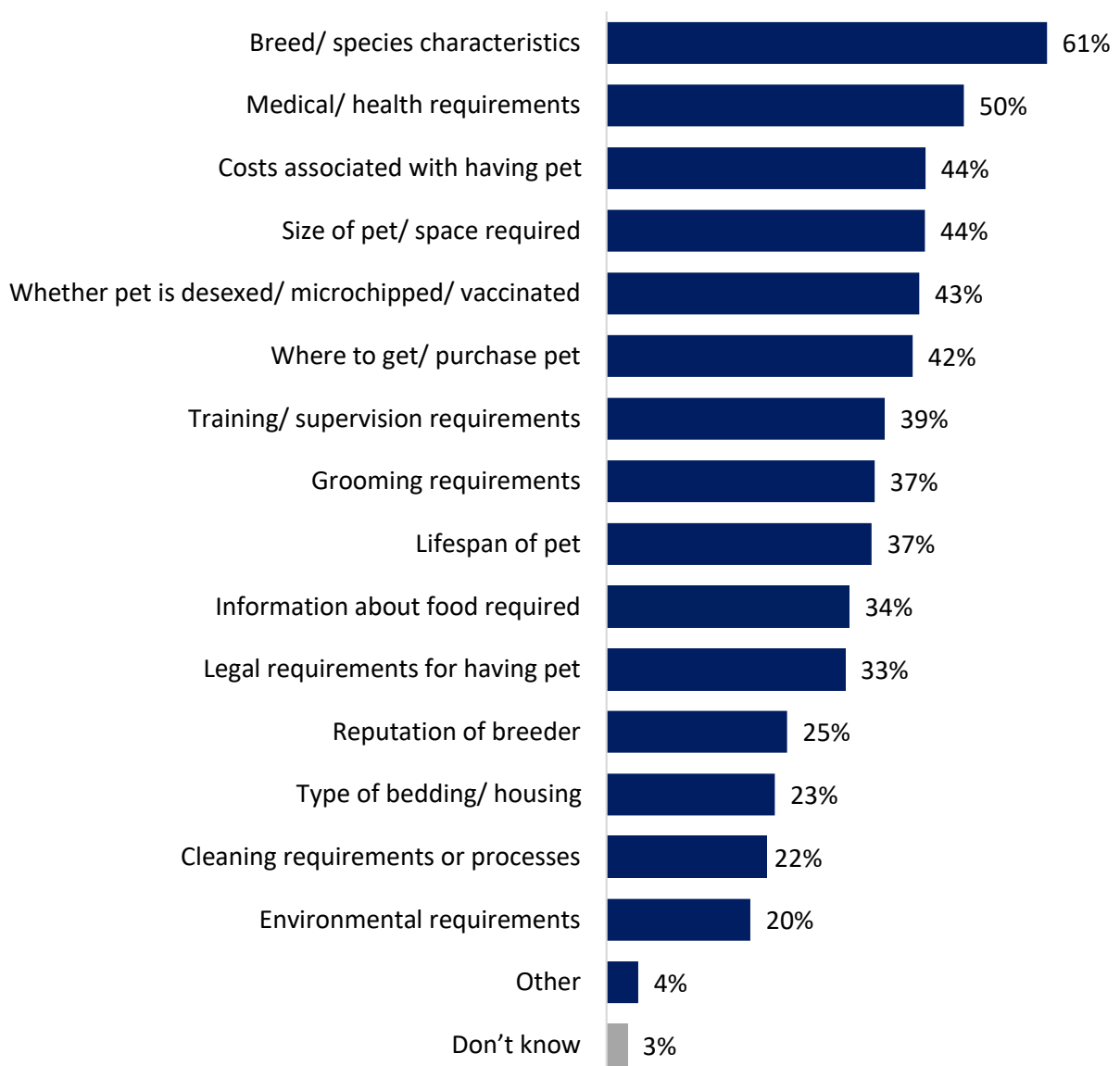
FUTINFO. What information have you looked for? [Multiple response]

On average, potential dog owners expected to pay $1,658 for their future pet and potential cat owners expected to pay $314. These figures closely reflect the actual costs paid by current dog and cat owners for their pets.

Figure 62: Costs

Base: Respondents who want a pet in next 12 months (but do not currently have one), merged sample

FUTPETCOST. Approximately how much do you expect to pay for the FUTPETCATEGORY you want? If you do not plan to pay anything for this pet, please enter '0'. [Numerical entry]

ORIMA

XI. Legal requirements

Self-rated understanding of legal requirements

Self-rated understanding of the legislation and legal requirements for ownership of each pet type was fairly modest across the board (see Figure 63 overleaf). This included limited understanding of the legal obligations held by breeders and sellers before getting a pet, as well as the legal responsibilities of individuals once the pet was in their care. Notably, most participants in the qualitative research felt that meeting their legal requirements would be 'straightforward' and involve 'common sense' behaviours.

> " *"[My legal responsibilities to my pet] are similar to my responsibilities for my child… I take care of them; I don't leave them in the car. It just feels more common sense to be honest"*—Current dog owner, Regional Victoria

Many qualitative participants felt it would be useful to understand the legal requirements, particularly to inform their acquisition source, and to ensure they were being a 'responsible' pet owner.

> " *"[I'd like information on breeder obligations] because we spent a lot of time trying to work it out ourselves… sometimes the low costs [offered by certain breeders] were a red flag… and I don't want to rely on dodgy information"*—Current other pet owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

As shown in Figure 63 overleaf, self-rated understanding was highest among large mammal owners and reptile/ amphibian owners. In contrast, understanding was lowest among fish and small mammal owners. At an overall level, self-rated understanding (45%) was lower among those who planned on getting a pet in the next 12 months (but did not currently have one), compared to pet owners (54%).

> " *"I wouldn't know anything [about the formal legal requirements]. Nothing has come to me from the government since I moved here and I would have liked to have seen something that detailed [all of the requirements]"*—Potential pet owner, Regional Victoria

Figure 63: Perceived understanding of legislation and legal requirements among current pet owners
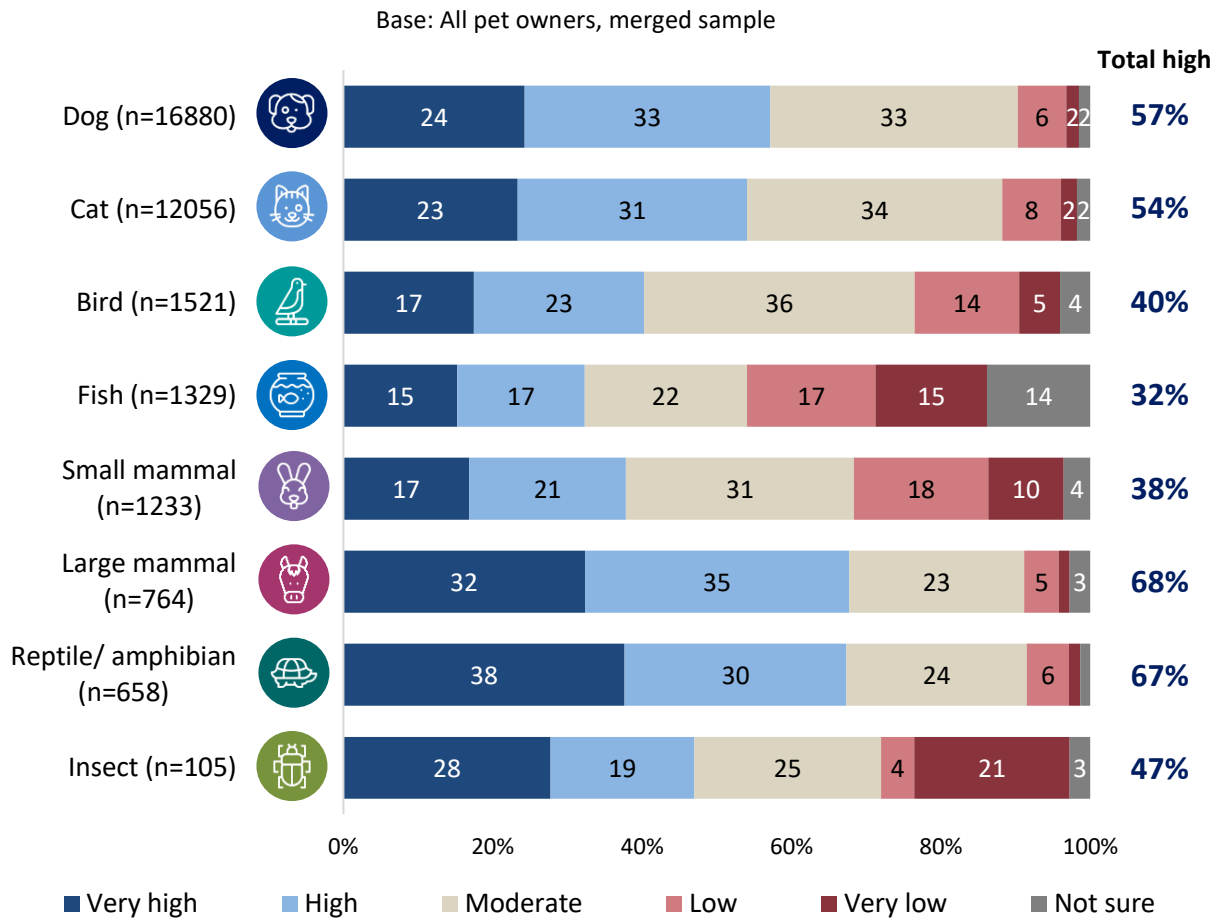
Base: All pet owners, merged sample

Total high

Category	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low	Not sure	Total high
Dog (n=16880)	24	33	33	6	2	2	**57%**
Cat (n=12056)	23	31	34	8	2	2	**54%**
Bird (n=1521)	17	23	36	14	5	4	**40%**
Fish (n=1329)	15	17	22	17	15	14	**32%**
Small mammal (n=1233)	17	21	31	18	10	4	**38%**
Large mammal (n=764)	32	35	23	5	3		**68%**
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	38	30	24	6			**67%**
Insect (n=105)	28	19	25	4	21	3	**47%**

■ Very high ■ High ■ Moderate ■ Low ■ Very low ■ Not sure

LEGALUND. Overall, how would you rate your understanding of the legislation and legal requirements around ownership of FUTPETCATEGORY/PETCATEGORYs in Victoria? [Single response]

Compliance with legal requirements

Most dog and cat owners had registered their pet(s) with their local council, and a small proportion intended to register them. Cat registration was lower compared to dogs.

The proportion who had registered their cat or dog was higher among:

- Those who only had **one dog** (86%, compared to 83% of those who had two dogs and 73% of those who had three or more dogs) or only one cat (78%, compared to 75% of those with two cats and 63% of those with three or more cats);

- Those with an **annual household income over $120,000** (84%, compared to 78% of those with an income between $60,000 and $120,000 and 79% of those with an income under $60,000); and

- Older respondents aged **55+ years** (89%, compared to 83% of those aged 35-54 years and 75% of those aged under 35 years).

Figure 64: Registration (Dogs and cats only)

Base: All dog and cat owners, merged sample

	Yes	No – but I intend to
Dog (n=16880)	87	6
Cat (n=12056)	75	7
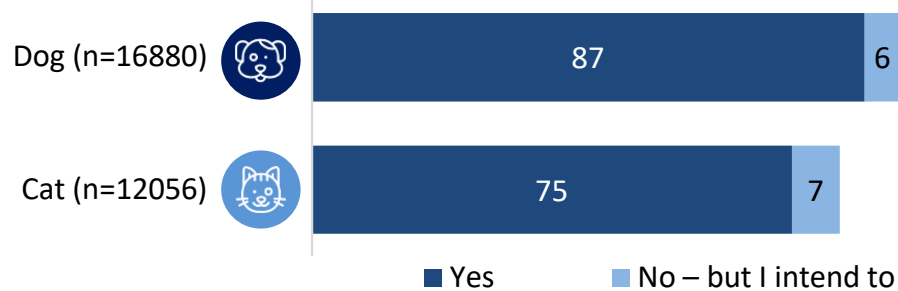
LEGALREQ. Is your PETCATEGORY… Registered with your local council? [Single response]

Among those who had *not* registered their dog or cat, the reasons for not registering were broadly similar. These included not having got around to it, viewing registration costs as too expensive and failing to see the benefits of registration. Many qualitative participants who hadn't registered their dog or cat expressed reservations about the 'value for money' they received from paying their registration fees and had limited awareness of the benefits offered by councils as a result of collecting these fees (e.g. maintaining dog parks and implementing animal welfare initiatives).

> *"Registering with the council is just revenue raising because they don't do anything [to support pets] with the money"*— Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Cat owners were more likely to report that they had not registered their cat because they were unlikely to stray or get lost. Many qualitative participants with unregistered cats felt that since their cats mostly stayed indoors, it seemed 'unnecessary' or of no benefit for them to expend money on council registration.

A notable proportion of respondents mentioned 'other' reasons for not registering their pet – mainly including comments that they had recently moved (and therefore changed councils/ were still registered with the old council) and they were waiting until their pet was desexed (as it is cheaper).

Figure 65: Reasons for not registering pet (Dogs and cats only)

Base: Dog and cat owners who had not registered pet, merged sample
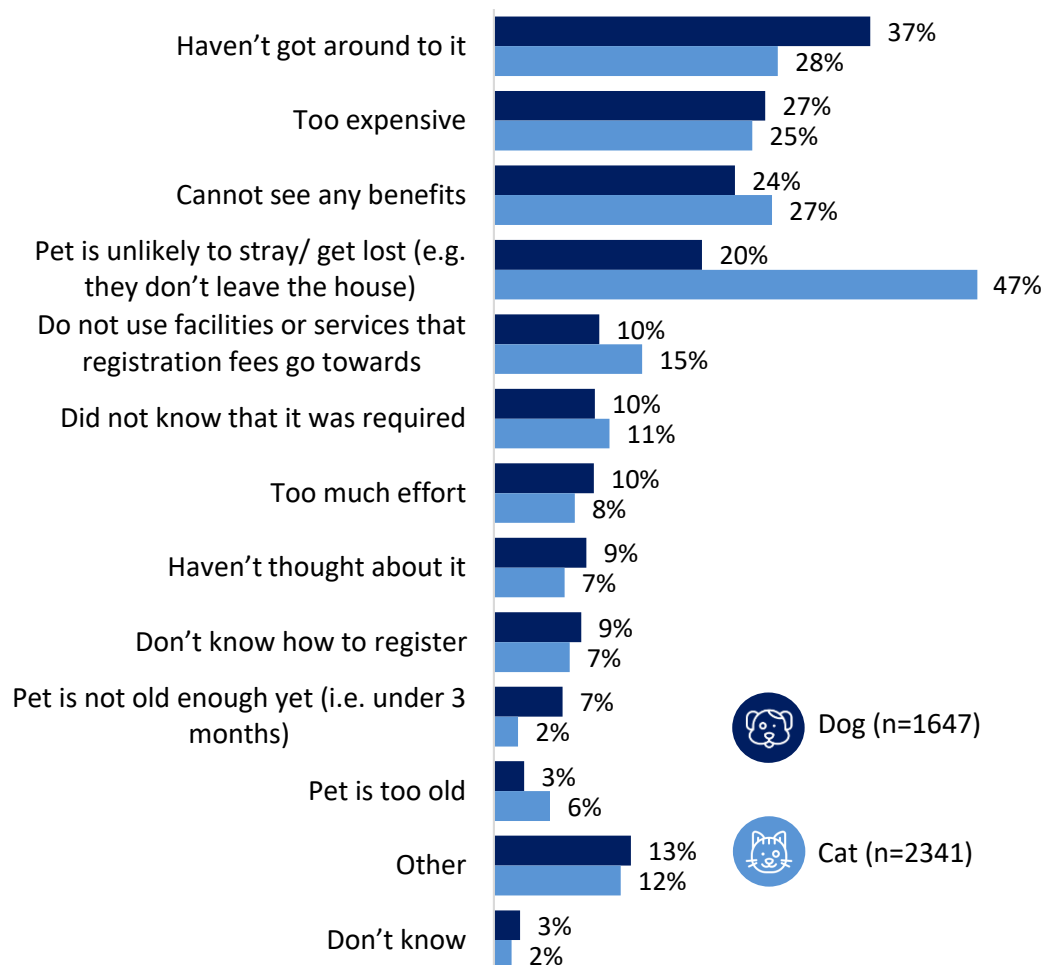
WHYNOTREGISTERED. What are the main reasons you have not registered your PETCATEGORY? [Multiple response]

Nearly all dog and cat owners reported their pet(s) was microchipped, much higher than the proportion who had registered their pets. Among small mammals, rabbits (41%) were more likely to be microchipped/ identified compared to guinea pigs (10%) and other types of small mammals (24%). Among large mammals, horses (62%) were more likely to be microchipped/ identified than other types of large mammals (44%).

Figure 66: Microchipping/ identification

Base: All pet owners (except fish and insect owners), merged sample

Pet category	Yes	No – but I intend to
Dog (n=16880)	95	
Cat (n=12056)	93	2
Bird (n=1521)	8	2
Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	3	4
Small mammal (n=1233)	30	2
Large mammal (n=764)	56	2
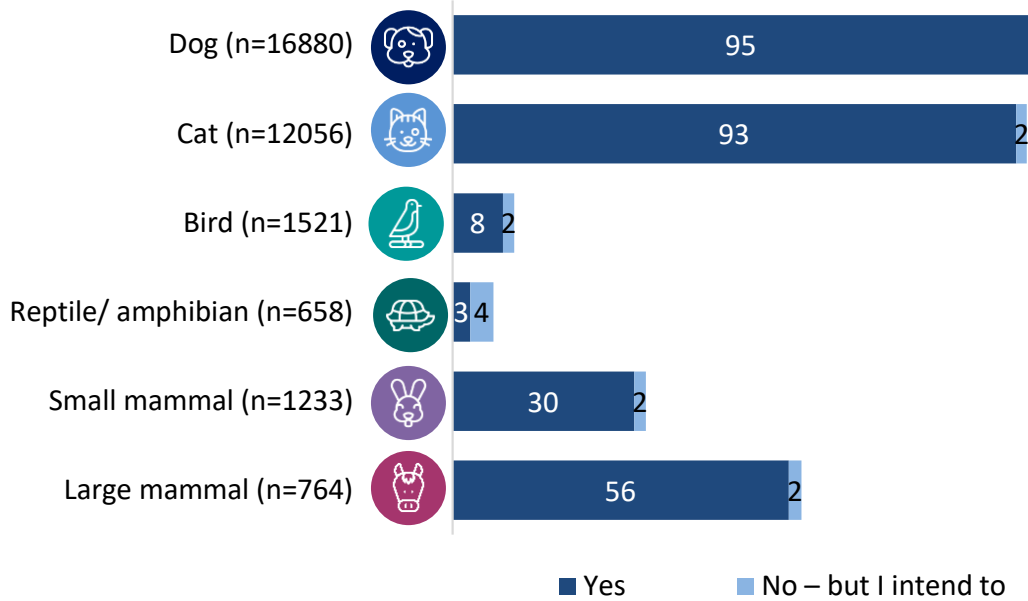
LEGALREQ. Is your PETCATEGORY… Microchipped/ appropriately identified? [Single response]

Most dog and cat owners had desexed their pet(s), though cat owners were slightly more likely compared to dog owners. Qualitative participants reported desexing their cat as it was a requirement of the breeder and/or wanted to contribute to minimising the stray cat population.

The majority of small and large mammal owners had also desexed their pet(s). Rates of desexing were higher among rabbits (82%) compared to guinea pigs (17%) and other small mammals (44%). Among large mammals, rates of desexing were similar among horses (59%) and other types of large mammals (58%).

> "*My breeder made me [desex my cat]. I also just don't want to add to the population problem*"—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

Figure 67: Desexing

Base: All pet owners (except fish, reptile/ amphibian and insect owners), merged sample

Dog (n=16880)   85   6
Cat (n=12056)   95   2
Bird (n=1521)   3
Small mammal (n=1233)   59   4
Large mammal (n=764)   59   2

■ Yes   ■ No – but I intend to
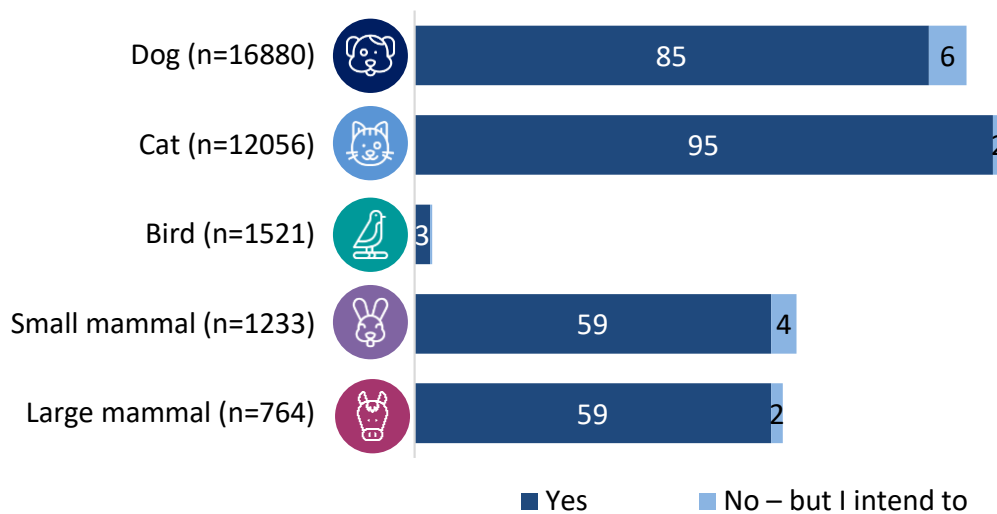
LEGALREQ. Is your PETCATEGORY… Desexed? [Single response]

Nearly all dogs and cats had been vaccinated. Vaccination rates were also quite high among large mammals, but were lower among small mammals and birds. Among large mammals, horses (80%) were more likely to be vaccinated compared to other types of large mammals (63%). Among small mammals, rabbits (82%) were more likely to be vaccinated compared to guinea pigs (15%) and other small mammals (25%). Among birds, poultry birds (31%) were more likely to be vaccinated compared to non-poultry birds (10%).

Figure 68: Vaccination

Base: All pet owners (except fish, reptile/ amphibian and insect owners), merged sample

	Yes	No – but I intend to
Dog (n=16880)	96	
Cat (n=12056)	90	2
Bird (n=1521)	19	
Small mammal (n=1233)	55	2
Large mammal (n=764)	74	4
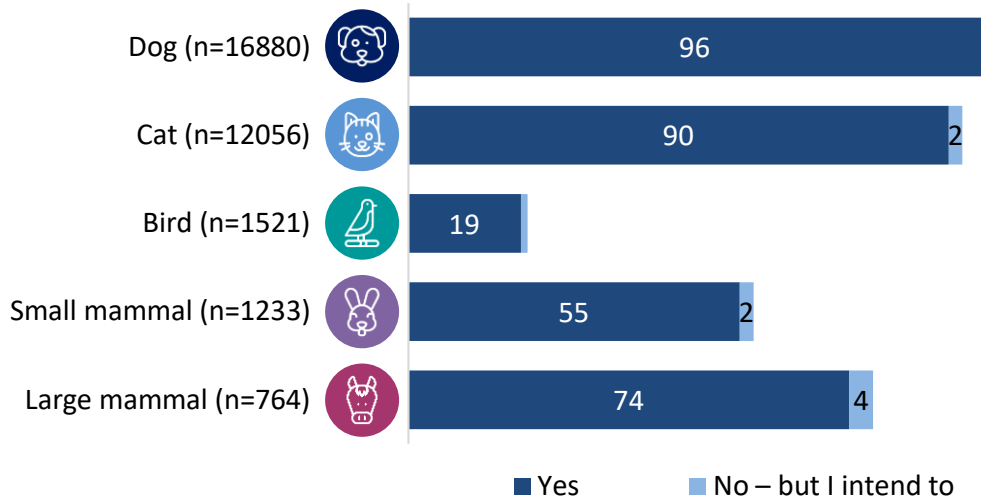
LEGALREQ. Is your PETCATEGORY… Vaccinated? [Single response]

Among pet owners of species potentially requiring a licence, snake owners were most likely to have obtained a licence for their pet, followed by lizard and amphibian owners.

Figure 69: Licensing (Bird, reptile and amphibian owners only)

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

	Yes	Not yet– but I intend to	No	Not applicable – type of pet does not require a licence
Bird (n=868)	6		17	76
Lizard (n=247)	60		5	35
Turtle (n=164)	16		14	69
Snake (n=136)	97			2
Amphibian (n=108)	57		5	38
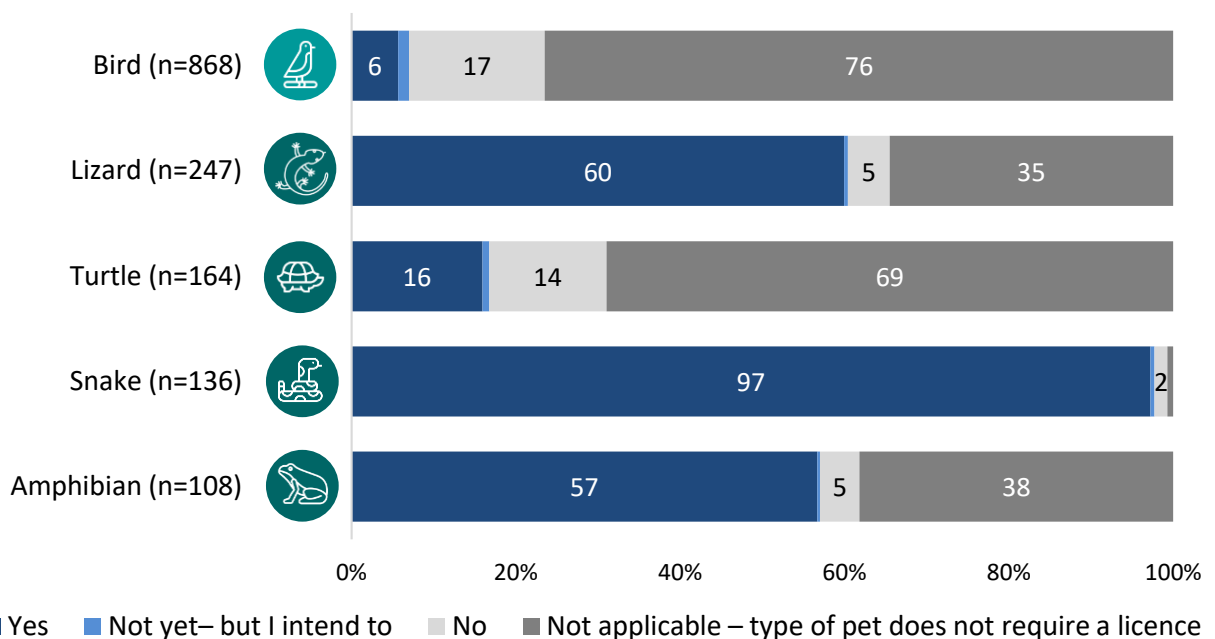
LICENCE. Do you have a licence to keep your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Single response]

Dog bites/ attacks

Among dog owners, 3% reported that their dog had ever bitten or attacked them, their family or another pet – causing an injury that required medical or veterinary treatment. Another 3% reported their dog had ever bitten or attacked somebody else (e.g. member of the public) or another animal.

However, the reported rate of their family or their dog(s) being attacked by *somebody else's dog* in the past (that caused an injury requiring medical or veterinary treatment) was much higher (21%).

Awareness of legislation relevant to pet ownership

Self-reported awareness of legislation relevant to pet ownership was fairly low among the general community. However, awareness of legislation was higher among pet owners compared to non-pet owners.

Among the legislation tested, awareness of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* was higher than the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Figure 70: Awareness of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986

Base: General community overall – All respondents, panel sample

Base: Pet owners and non-pet owners – All respondents, merged sample
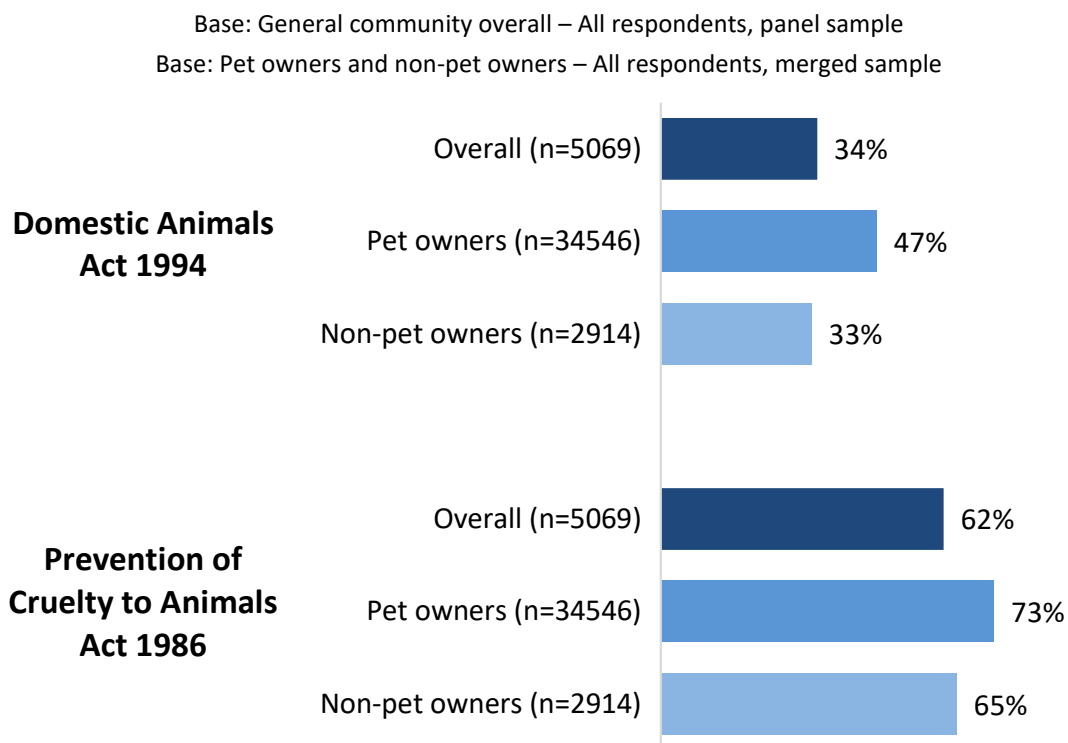
AWAREDAA. Before today, had you heard of the Domestic Animals Act 1994? [Single response]

AWAREPOCTA. Before today, had you heard of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986? *[Single response]*

Of the legal requirements tested in the survey, the general community was most likely to be aware of laws relevant to the personal keeping of pets, including:

- An owner failing to provide veterinary care to a sick or injured animal may constitute an animal cruelty offence (80% 'fully' or 'partially' aware); and
- There are limits on the number and type of animals you can keep on your property, depending on the zoning of your property (77%).

On the other hand, the general community was least likely to be aware of laws relevant to the broader pet industry restrictions, particularly that:

- Use of electronic collars for dogs and cats is restricted and requires veterinary or trainer oversight (46%); and
- People breeding from 1-2 female dogs or cats do not need to register as a breeder (36%).

Reported awareness of all aspects was higher among pet owners compared to non-pet owners.

Figure 71: Awareness of specific laws and regulations

Base: General community overall – All respondents, panel sample (n=5,069)

Base: Pet owners and non-pet owners – All respondents, merged sample (n=34,546 pet owners and n=2,914 non-pet owners)

	Total 'aware' Pet owners	Non-pet owners
An owner failing to provide veterinary care to a sick or injured animal may constitute an animal cruelty offence (47 / 33 / 20)	89%	79%
There are limits on the number and type of animals you can keep on your property, depending on the zoning of your property (39 / 37 / 23)	88%	76%
Codes of Practice exist for the private keeping of cats and dogs (27 / 42 / 32)	76%	65%
Codes of Practice exist for the housing of caged birds, the private keeping of reptiles, the welfare of horses, and the welfare of amphibians in captivity (22 / 41 / 38)	67%	62%
Pet shops are only allowed to sell dogs and cats sourced from shelters, pounds or foster carers registered with council (23 / 33 / 44)	70%	51%
Any advertisement of a dog or cat for sale must include the animals unique microchip number and a valid source number (24 / 28 / 48)	65%	44%
Use of electronic collars for dogs and cats is restricted and requires the oversight of a veterinarian or other suitably qualified trainer (18 / 28 / 54)	54%	40%
People keeping and breeding from 1-2 female dogs or cats in Victoria do not need to register as a breeder with their council or abide by a Code of Practice for breeding (13 / 23 / 64)	39%	28%

■ Fully aware   ■ Partially aware   Not aware

AWARE. Before today, were you aware that… [Single response]

Only a minority of dog (23%) and cat owners (36%) were aware of laws set by their local council around dog or cat ownership (when asked to specify which local laws they are aware of, if any). Awareness of local council laws was higher among:

- Those living in **non-metropolitan** areas (36%, compared to 26% of those living in metropolitan areas);

- Older respondents aged **55+ years** (37%, compared to 30% of those aged 35-54 years and 20% of those aged under 35 years);

- **Females** (33%, compared to 23% of males); and

- Those who only **spoke English at home** (30%, compared to 19% of those who spoke another language at home).

Among those aware of local council laws, the most common laws mentioned by dog owners (see Figure 72 overleaf) were:

- Curfews and restrictions on when pets were allowed outside (47%) – such as pets (particularly cats) being required to be inside by a particular time;

➢ Comments that mentioned timing of the curfew generally specified that pets were required to be inside at nighttime; and

- Rules around dogs being on lead (19%) – such as dogs not being allowed off lead unless in designated areas.

Among cat owners, the most common laws mentioned were:

- Curfews and restrictions on when pets were allowed outside (69%); and

➢ A few cat owner participants in the qualitative research were aware of 'cat curfew' requirements imposed by some councils, which mandated keeping cats confined to their owner's property during specific hours, often overnight. These participants generally understood those requirements and expressed a strong intent to comply, including to reduce their cat's impact on local wildlife.

"[Responsible pet ownership is] abiding by the curfews and bringing [your cat] in at night to protect all the birds and local wildlife"—Current cat owner, Metropolitan Melbourne

- Restrictions not allowing pets to be outside property boundaries at all (19%).

Figure 72: Awareness of local council laws

Base: Dog and cat owners aware of local council laws, panel sample only

Curfew/ restrictions on when pet can be outside	Dog: 47%	Cat: 69%
Pet not allowed outside property boundaries	Dog: 5%	Cat: 19%
Dogs must be on lead	Dog: 19%	Cat: 1%
Limits on number of pets	Dog: 8%	Cat: 7%
Registration	Dog: 6%	Cat: 6%
Park/ beach rules	Dog: 11%	Cat: 0%
Pet must be desexed	Dog: 3%	Cat: <1%
Pet must be microchipped	Dog: 1%	Cat: 1%
Restrictions on dog breeds	Dog: <1%	Cat: 0%

● Dog (n=186)
● Cat (n=235)
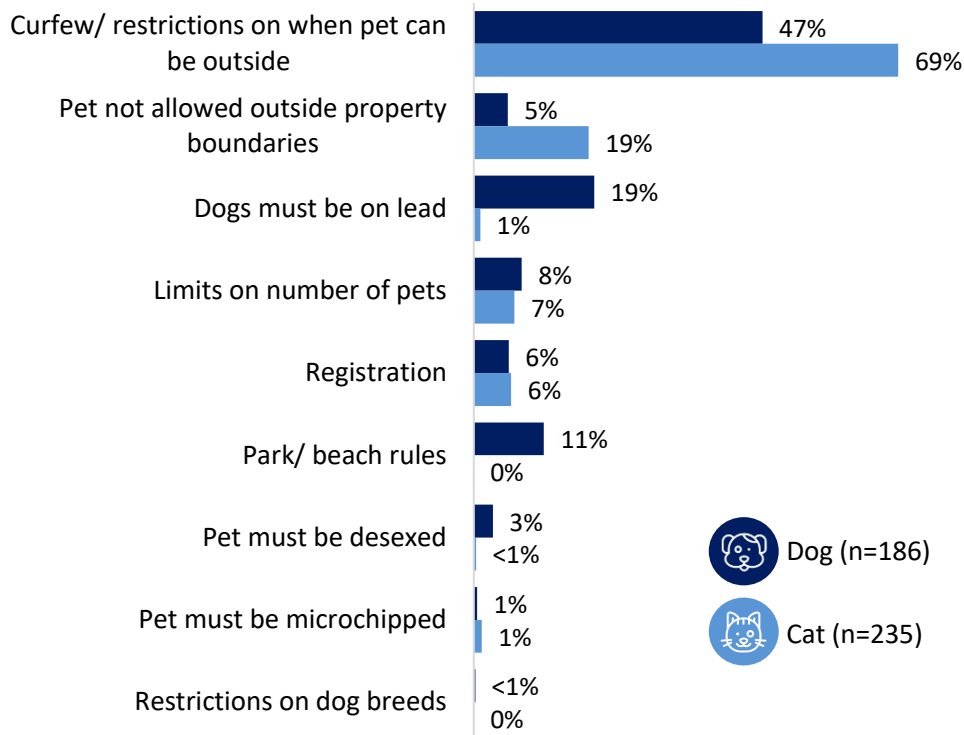
LOCALRESTR. Does your local council set any of their own laws around dog or cat ownership (e.g. cat curfews)? [Multiple response]

Perceptions of responsible pet ownership

Of the aspects of responsible ownership tested, pet owners across all pet types thought that providing adequate and appropriate food and water and a comfortable and safe living environment were the most important things to ensure their pet's wellbeing. However, perceptions of the importance of other aspects varied considerably by pet type (see Table 8 overleaf).

Dog, cat and large mammal owners generally felt that all aspects were more important for their pet's wellbeing compared to other pet owners (except for allowing expression of natural behaviours among dog owners). In particular, dog owners were more likely to feel that providing mental stimulation, grooming and training/ exercise were important for their pet. Among cat owners, meeting legal responsibilities was perceived to be particularly important.

Perceived importance of each aspect was generally lower among fish, reptile/ amphibian and insect owners. Among these pet types, allowing expression of natural behaviours was perceived to be more important compared to other aspects of pet care (excluding food/ water and safe/ comfortable environment).

Table 8: Perceptions of responsible pet ownership

Base: All pet owners, merged sample

% 'Very high' or 'high' importance	Dog (n=16,880)	Cat (n=12,056)	Bird (n=1,521)	Fish (n=1,329)	Small mammal (n=1,233)	Large mammal (n=764)	Reptile/ amphibian (n=658)	Insect (n=105)
Providing adequate and appropriate food and water	97%	97%	96%	84%	96%	98%	94%	96%
Comfortable and safe living environment	95%	95%	95%	77%	97%	94%	93%	95%
Grooming	77%	55%	31%	12%	64%	69%	29%	7%
Training/ exercise	85%	33%	28%	10%	30%	57%	14%	9%
Providing mental stimulation/ companionship/ meeting social needs	92%	84%	70%	28%	82%	83%	54%	34%
Allowing expression of natural behaviours	66%	83%	87%	43%	81%	86%	84%	78%
Maintaining health	93%	88%	64%	35%	81%	92%	59%	32%
Meeting legal responsibilities	77%	91%	11%	10%	61%	52%	9%	6%
Containment/ avoiding public nuisance	82%	77%	52%	24%	47%	68%	68%	38%

RESPOWNERSHIP How important do you consider each of the following to be for an owner of FUTPETCATEGORY/PETCATEGORYs to ensure their pet's wellbeing? [Single response]

Top 3   Bottom 3

XII. Pet surrendering

Overall, around one in six respondents (16%) indicated that they had had to surrender or rehome (i.e. give away or give up) a pet at some time in their lives.

There was no notable difference between the incidence of pet surrendering for current pet owners (17%) compared to those who did not currently own a pet (15%). However, younger respondents aged under 35 years (23%), those from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background (53%) and those with a disability (27%) were more likely to report that they had surrendered a pet before.

Among those who had surrendered a pet, the majority (61%) said they had surrendered a dog, while more than one third (36%) had surrendered a cat.

Figure 73: Type of pets surrendered

Base: Respondents who had surrendered a pet, panel sample (n=542)

Dog	61%
Cat	36%
Bird (other than poultry)	4%
Rabbit	4%
Horse	3%
Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	3%
Guinea pig	2%
Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	2%
Poultry (e.g. chicken, duck, turkey)	2%
Insect	2%
Turtle	1%
Snake	1%
Other medium or large mammal (e.g. pig, goat, alpaca, sheep)	1%
Lizard	<1%
Amphibian (e.g. frog, toad, salamander)	<1%
Other small mammal (e.g. rat, mouse, ferret)	<1%
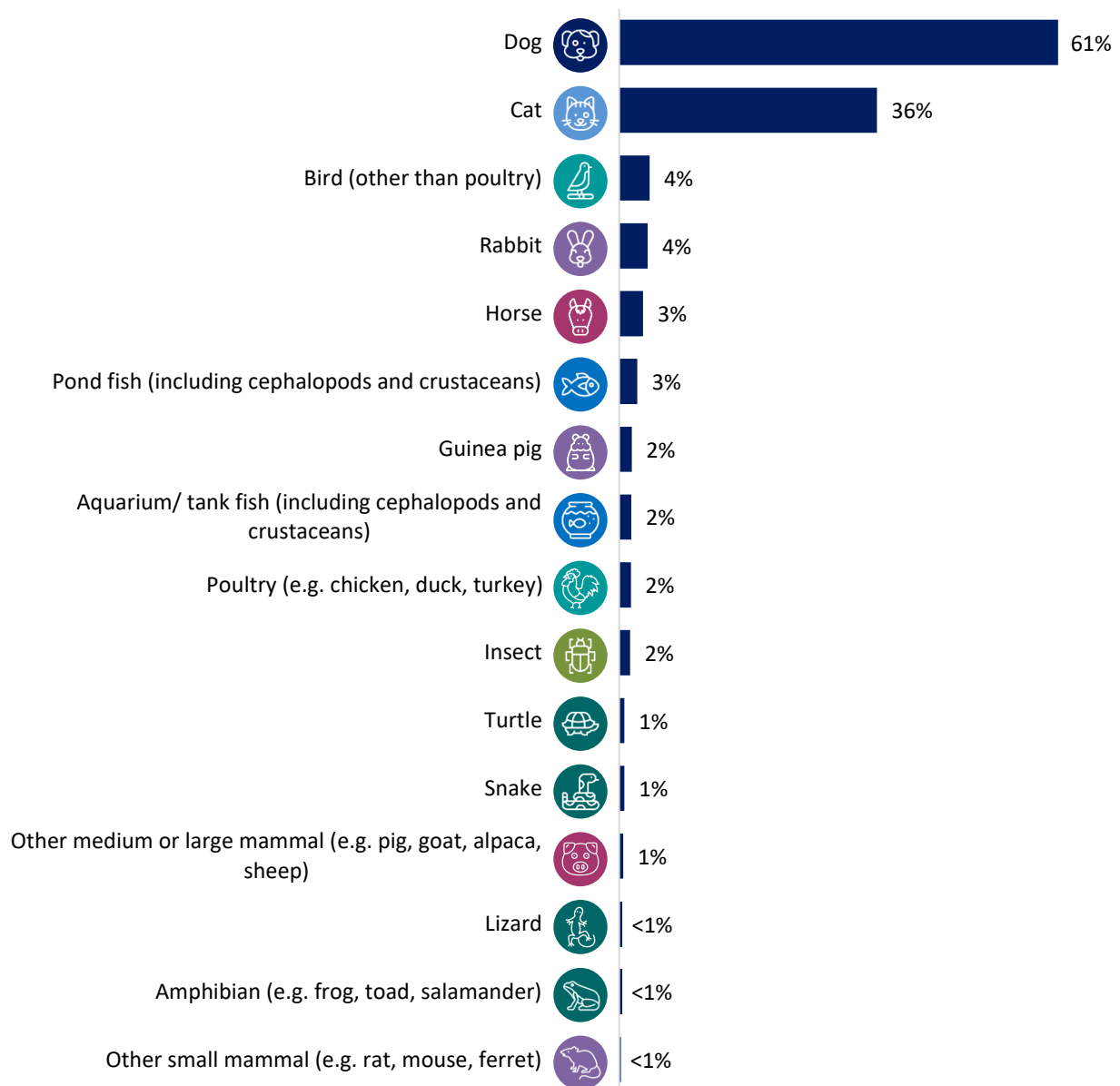
SURRENDERTYPE. What type of pet(s) have you had to surrender or rehome? [Multiple response]

As shown in Figure 74 overleaf, the most common reasons for surrendering pets was due to aggressive or reactive behaviours (23%). This was particularly prevalent among those who had surrendered a bird (36%), dog (27%) or horse (25%). Anxiety or neurotic behaviours also contributed to the decision to surrender a pet for 16% of respondents – those who had surrendered horses (20%) or cats (18%) were slightly more likely to provide this reason.

Other common reasons for having to surrender a pet related to the owner's living situation or movements rather than the pet's behaviour, including moving into a new home or neighbourhood that did not suit or allow the pet (17%), or moving overseas (13%). Moving was a more common reason for surrendering pond fish (38% moved overseas and 32% moved into a new home/ neighbourhood), horses (37% moved overseas), rabbits (23% for both reasons) and cats (22% moved into a new home/ neighbourhood).

A notable proportion of respondents (12%) provided other additional reasons why they had surrendered a pet, including:

- Difficulty looking after the pet or catering to its needs;

- Issues with the pet settling in or being unhappy;

- The pet not getting along with existing pets or other animals in the area;

- Having too many pets to look after;

- Rehoming litters (i.e. puppies, kittens) when unable to keep them all;

- Family or relationship break-ups/ divorce/ domestic issues; and

- Changes in living situation/ loss of home.

Figure 74: Reasons for surrendering pet

Base: Respondents who had surrendered a pet, panel sample (n=542)

Reason	%
Aggressive or reactive behaviours (e.g. biting, aggression towards people or other animals)	23%
Moving into a new home/ neighbourhood that did not suit/ fit/ allow pet	17%
Anxiety or neurotic behaviours (e.g. separation anxiety, toileting issues, escaping)	16%
Moving overseas	13%
Home/ neighbourhood did not suit/ fit/ allow pet	11%
Did not have enough time to look after pet	10%
Ongoing costs to look after pet (e.g. food)	9%
Could not afford medical costs to prevent or treat injury or disease	7%
Damage to property	7%
Not home enough	6%
Family member or household member did not like pet	5%
Allergies	4%
Excessive noise	4%
Had children	3%
Deterioration in your own health (e.g. illness, disability)	3%
Did not understand how to properly care for pet	2%
Boredom/ disinterest with pet	1%
Other	12%
Don't know	2%

SURRENDERWHY. Why did you surrender or rehome your pet(s)? [Multiple response]

Among those who had surrendered a pet:

36% gave their pet to somebody they knew, like a friend or family member

> Those who surrendered rabbits (67%), birds (58%), cats (42%) or dogs (35%) were most likely to have given the pet to somebody they knew.

30% gave their pet to an animal shelter

> Those who surrendered horses (45%) were most likely to have given the pet to an animal shelter, while around one third of dogs (34%) and cats (33%) were donated this way.

16% gave their pet to someone they did not know (e.g. via an online platform)

13% gave their pet to a volunteer group or not-for-profit organisation

12% surrendered their pet to a Local Council (i.e. a pound)

8% gave their pet to a vet clinic or animal hospital

2% released their pet into the wild

Figure 75: Where pets were surrendered to

Base: Respondents who had surrendered a pet, panel sample (n=541)

Category	Percentage
Somebody you know (e.g. friend or family member)	36%
Animal shelter	30%
Somebody you do not know (e.g. via an online platform)	16%
Volunteer group or not-for-profit organisation	13%
Local Council (i.e. pound)	12%
Vet clinic/ hospital	8%
Released into the wild	2%
Other	3%
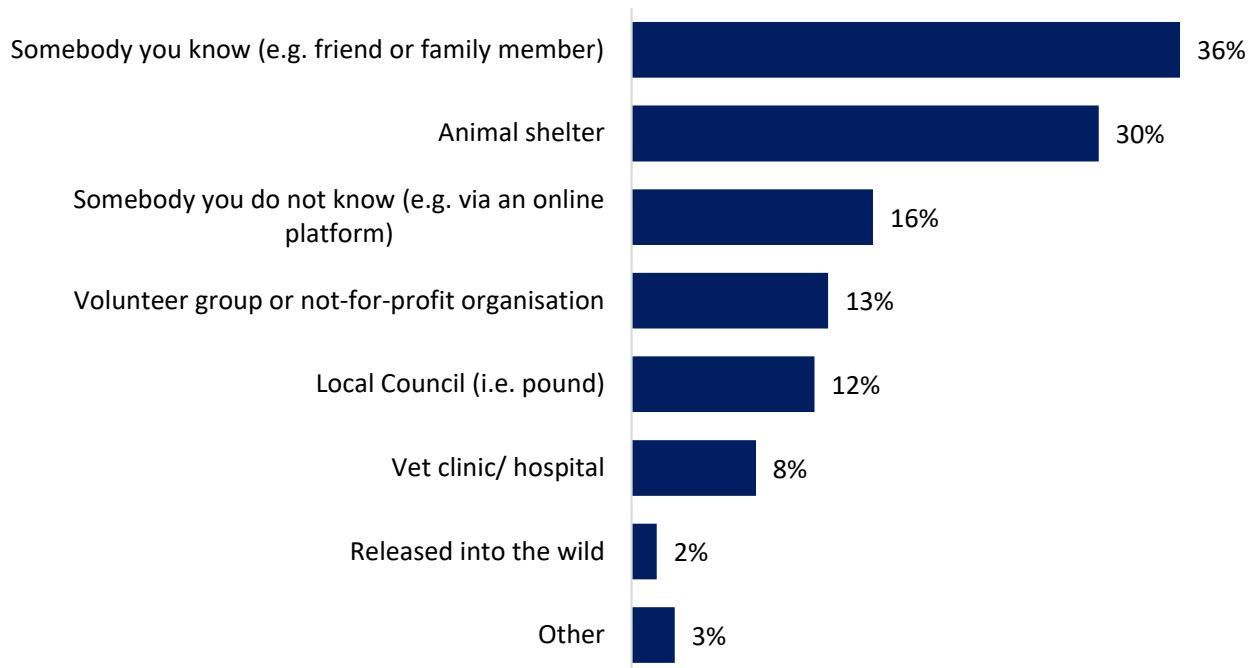
SURRENDERWHERE. Where did you surrender or rehome the pet(s) to? [Multiple response]

XIII.   Stray cats

Over one in five (22%) general community respondents reported that stray cats regularly entered their property or roamed around their neighbourhood. This figure was higher among **non-metropolitan** respondents (28%), compared to metropolitan respondents (21%). A quarter of respondents (25%) indicated that cats did come onto their property or were around their neighbourhood, but they were not sure if they were strays.

Figure 76: Stray cats in neighbourhood

Base: All general community respondents, panel sample
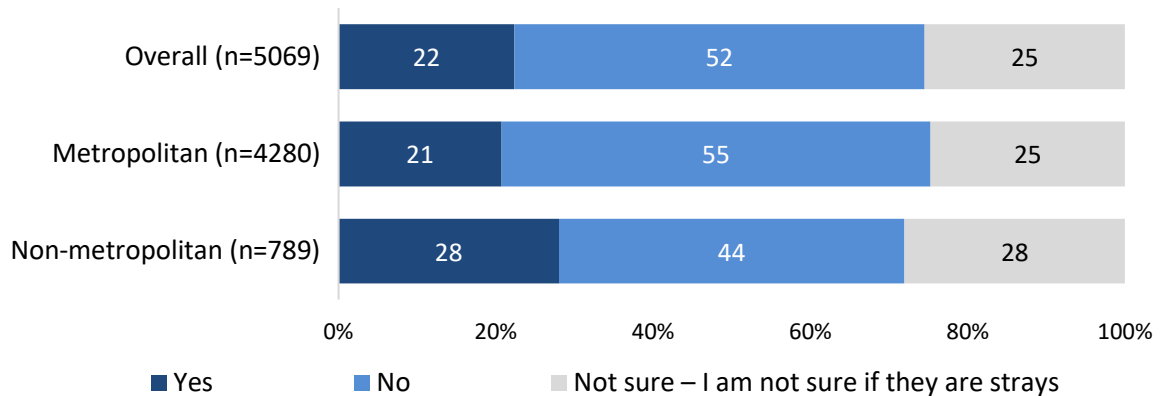
	Yes	No	Not sure – I am not sure if they are strays
Overall (n=5069)	22	52	25
Metropolitan (n=4280)	21	55	25
Non-metropolitan (n=789)	28	44	28

STRAY. Do any cats that you do not consider as your own (stray cats) regularly enter your property or roam around your neighbourhood? [Single response]

Among those who had stray cats in their neighbourhood, only around one quarter (26%) had contacted their local council about the cat(s). The main reason people had *not* contacted local council about the stray cat(s) was because they were not causing any trouble (see Figure 77). 'Other' reasons for not contacting local councils included perceptions that local councils would not do anything about them and that they do not hang around for long, uncertainty around whether the cats are strays or if they belong to someone in the area, and perceptions that stray cats help with pest control.

> *"Because councils don't think it is their responsibility to tackle stray cats, let alone anything else. They will just tell me to pay money to remove the cat from my property."*—Cat owner, online survey comment

> *"Contacted previously about the issue, but no further action was taken."*—Dog owner, online survey comment

> *"They probably belong to someone who lets them roam."*—Cat owner, online survey comment

> *"They don't stay long enough, not sure if it is a stray."*—Non-pet owner, online survey comment

> *"They catch ALL the mice in the neighbourhood."*—Dog owner, online survey comment

Figure 77: Reasons for not contacting local council about stray cat(s)

Base: General community respondents who did not contact council about stray cats, panel sample (n=826)

Reason	Percentage
They are not causing any trouble	45%
Didn't know to contact council	17%
Too much effort	17%
Don't want to be responsible for them	15%
Worried they might be euthanised	11%
Contacted somebody else about the stray cats (e.g. vet clinic, rescue group)	5%
Want to continue caring for cat(s)/ want cat(s) to visit	3%
Other	10%
Don't know	8%
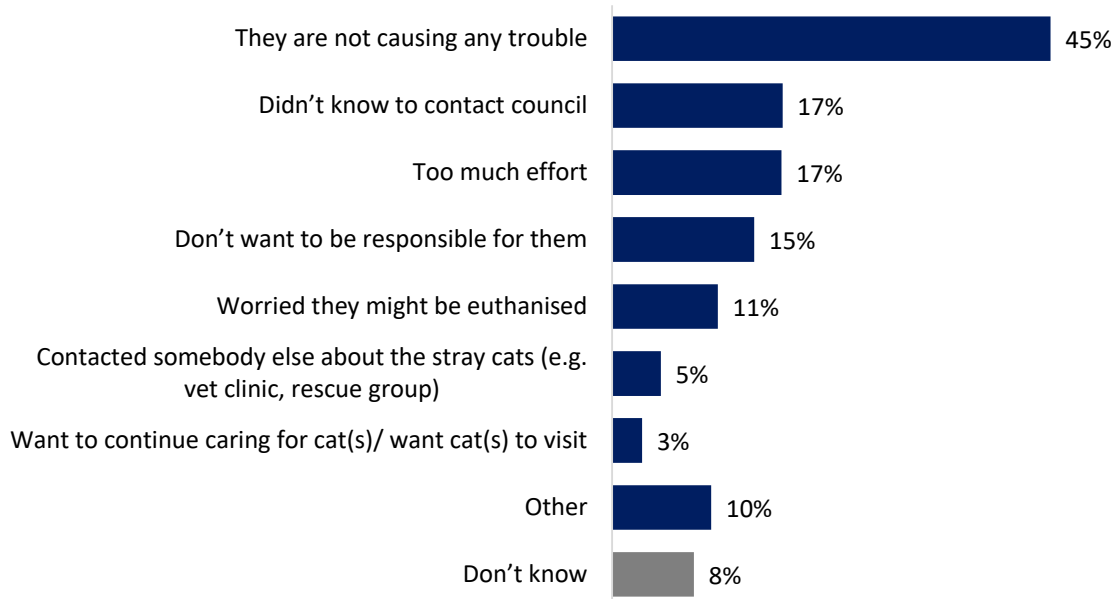
STRAYCONTACT. Why have you not contacted your local council about the stray cat(s)? [Multiple response]

Overall, one in twenty-five (4%) respondents reported that they were regularly involved caring for stray cats (including 2% caring for one cat and 2% caring for two or more cats). Among those involved in caring for stray cats, the main reasons why they had not taken ownership of them were:

- Financial costs (23%);

- Not having enough space in their home (18%); and

- Uncertainty about the cat's history (16%), such as its health and ownership status.

Figure 78: Reasons for not taking ownership of stray cat(s) (Top 10)

Base: General community respondents involved in caring for stray cats, panel sample (n=207)

Reason	Percentage
Financial costs	23%
Do not have enough space in home	18%
Uncertainty about cat's history	16%
Allergies	15%
Do not want a pet full-time	15%
Do not have time to look after them	14%
Not at home enough	13%
Not sure what the process is to adopt them	12%
Would not fit in with other pets	12%
Ability to take a holiday/ leave them alone	12%
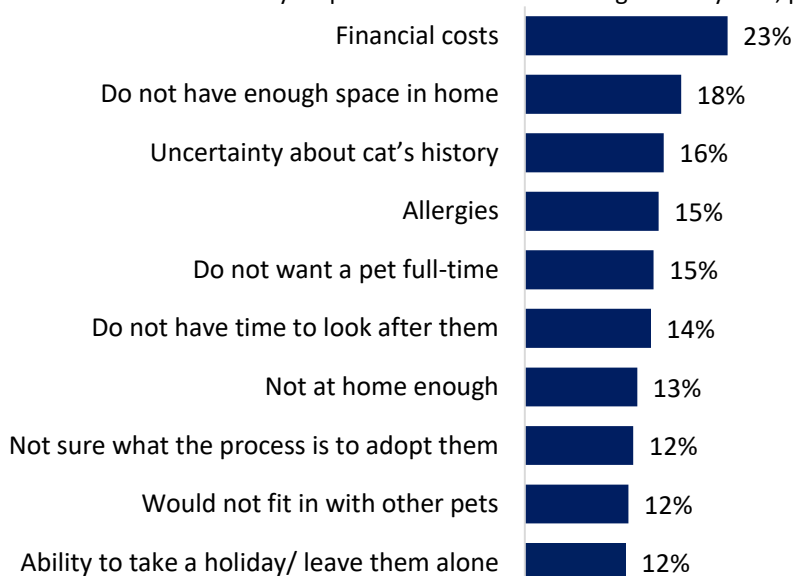
STRAYOWN. What is preventing you from taking full ownership of the cat(s)? [Multiple response]

APPENDIX A: Demographic profile of qualitative research participants

Demographic profile of qualitative research participants

All participants

Current or potential pet owner

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Current pet owner	27	79%
Potential pet owner	7	21%
Total	**34**	

Status. Current or potential pet owner

Age

	Number of respondents	Percentage
18-24 years	2	6%
25-29 years	3	9%
30-39 years	7	21%
40-49 years	7	21%
50-59 years	10	29%
60-69 years	4	12%
70-79 years	1	3%
Total	**34**	

Age. What is your age?

Gender

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Female	17	50%
Male	16	47%
Another gender	1	3%
Total	**34**	

Gender. What is your gender?

Type of home

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Standalone / detached home	23	68%
Townhouse / semi-detached home	3	9%
Apartment / unit / flat	7	21%
Large property / farm	1	3%
Total	**34**	

Home. What type of home do you currently live in?

Background

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Culturally and/or linguistically diverse	6	18%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1	3%
Neither of the above	27	79%
Total	**34**	

Background. Are you…?

Life situation

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Working full time	18	60%
Working part-time / casually	4	13%
Self-employed	1	3%
Unemployed / job seeking	1	3%
Home / caring duties receiving a Centrelink payment	1	3%
Retired / semi-retired / self-funded retiree	5	17%
Total	**30**	

Situation. Which of the following best describes your life situation currently?

Total household income

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Under $30,000	3	9%
$30,000 - $49,999	3	9%
$50,000 - $69,999	4	12%
$70,000 - $89,999	5	15%
$90,000 - $109,999	6	18%
$110,000 - $129,999	6	18%
$130,000 - $149,999	3	9%
$150,000 - $199,999	2	6%
$200,000 or more	2	6%
Total	**34**	

Income. What is your annual total household income before tax?

Current pet owners

Species of pet(s) currently owned

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Cat	19	70%
Dog	17	63%
Rabbit or guinea pig	2	7%
Mice or rats	0	0%
Bird	4	15%
Amphibian (e.g. frogs)	0	0%
Chicken	2	7%
Reptile	2	7%
Fish	6	22%
Other	1	4%
Total	**27**	

$PetOwn. Which species of pet(s) do you currently own? (Multiple Response)

Other species of pet currently owned (n=1):

- "Horse"

Age of pet(s) currently owned

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 year old	4	15%
1-2 years old	7	26%
2-5 years old	9	33%
5-10 years old	8	30%
10+ years old	11	41%
Total	**27**	

$PetAge. How old are the pets you currently own? (Multiple Response)

How long they have owned pets

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than a year	1	5%
1-2 years	1	5%
2-5 years	5	23%
5-10 years	1	5%
10+ years	14	64%
Total	**22**	

LengthOwn. How long have you owned pets?

Where pets were sourced from in the past

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Breeder	15	58%
Pet shop	7	27%
Shelter/ rescue/ pound	13	50%
Friend or family	10	38%
Other	6	23%
Total	**26**	

$Source. Where have you gotten your pets from in the past? (Multiple Response)

Other places pets were sourced from (n=6):

- "Newspaper" (n=1)
- "Stray" (n=3)
- "Vet Clinic" (n=1)

Potential pet owners

Species of pet(s) potential owners plan to get

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Cat	2	29%
Dog	5	71%
Rabbit or guinea pig	1	14%
Mice or rats	0	0%
Bird	1	14%
Amphibian (e.g. frogs)	0	0%
Chicken	2	29%
Reptile	0	0%
Fish	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	**7**	

$PetPlanned. Which species of pet(s) do you plan on getting? (Multiple Response)

APPENDIX B: Survey questionnaire

Animal Welfare Victoria

Domestic Animals Pet Census 2023

Phase One questionnaire

FINAL

29 June 2023

Target sample

Semi-stratified sampling approach of n=5,000 Victorian residents aged 18 and over, broadly representative of the population in terms of location, age and gender.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey.

The survey is being conducted by ORIMA Research, an independent social research company, on behalf the Victorian Government.

In this survey, we are going to ask about your experiences with pets. It is just as important for us to hear from people who do not have any pets, so please take this opportunity to tell us about your views and experiences.

The average completion time for the survey is 15 minutes.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and the information and feedback you provide will be treated as private and confidential. No individual will be able to be identified from the research results.

A.   Screening questions

POST What is the postcode of your home address?

_____ [Accept valid Victorian postcodes only]

AGE What is your age?
   1   Less than 18 years old [Thank and end]
   2   18-19
   3   20-24
   4   25-29
   5   30-34
   6   35-39
   7   40-44
   8   45-49
   9   50-54
   10   55-59
   11   60-64
   12   65-74
   13   75-84
   14   85 or over

GENDER What is your gender?

1   Man

2   Woman

3   Self-describe *[Please specify]* _____

4   Prefer not to say

['Thank and end' script:

Thank you for answering these initial questions. Unfortunately, you are not part of the target audience for this survey. Thanks again for your interest in participating.

Survey continuation script:

Thank you for answering these initial questions. We are pleased to confirm that you are part of the target audience for the survey.]

B.   Pet ownership

OWN Do you currently own a pet?

This includes any pets you <u>own yourself</u> (even if they are not kept on your property), but does not include:
- any animals you may be caring for temporarily (e.g. through foster care or for a family member);
- any animals kept for primary production purposes (e.g. farming); and
- any wild animals that may come and go from your property.

1   Yes

2   No [Go to PASTOWN (Past/ future pet ownership module)]

PETTYPE What type of pet(s) do you currently own? [Please select all that apply] [Do not randomise]

1   Dog

2   Cat

3   Horse

4   Bird (other than poultry)

5   Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

6   Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

7   Rabbit

8   Guinea pig

9   Lizard

10   Turtle

11   Snake

12   Poultry (e.g. chicken, duck, turkey)

13   Amphibian (e.g. frog, toad, salamander)

14   Other small mammal (e.g. rat, mouse, ferret) *[Please specify]* _____

15   Other medium or large mammal (e.g. pig, goat, alpaca, sheep) *[Please specify]* _____

16   Other reptile *[Please specify]* _____

17   Insect

NUMBERPETS1-14 How many pets do you currently own? Please indicate how many next to each type below. [Only show categories selected at PETTYPE]

Type of pet	Number of pets [Record number, allow 1-999]
1 Dog	_____
2 Cat	_____
3 Horse	_____
4 Bird (other than poultry)	_____
5 Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	_____
6 Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	_____
7 Rabbit	_____
8 Guinea pig	_____
9 Lizard	_____
10 Turtle	_____
11 Snake	_____
12 Poultry	_____
13 Amphibian	_____
14 Other small mammal	_____
15 Other medium or large mammal	_____
16 Other reptile	_____
17 Insect	_____

BREED1-14 And what breed or species are your pets? [Only show categories selected at PETTYPE]

Type of pet	Breed or species [Free text response]	Don't know
1 Dog(s)	_____	99
2 Cat(s)	_____	99
3 Horse	_____	99
4 Bird(s) (other than poultry)	_____	99
5 Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	_____	99
6 Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)	_____	99
7 Rabbit(s)	_____	99
8 Guinea pig(s)	_____	99
9 Lizard(s)	_____	99
10 Turtle(s)	_____	99
11 Snake(s)	_____	99
12 Poultry	_____	99

Type of pet	Breed or species [Free text response]	Don't know
13 Amphibian	_____	99
14 Other small mammal	_____	99
15 Other medium or large mammal	_____	99
16 Other reptile	_____	99
17 Insect	_____	99

WHYGET What are the main reasons for why you decided to get your pet(s)? Please select up to three. [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96-99]

1   Someone to look after/ provide a sense of family

2   Have always had pets

3   Companionship for me/ my family

4   Companionship for another pet

5   For my/ my family's mental health (e.g. sense of purpose, connection)

6   Service/ assistance animal

7   Security for me/ my family

8   Fun/ entertainment/ as a hobby (e.g. sport, showing or competition)

9   Wanted to help/ save the animal

10   For my/ my family's physical health (e.g. exercise, walking)

11   Previous experience with family or friends' pets

12   Impact from COVID-19 lockdowns (e.g. spent more time at home, boredom)

13   My family member(s) wanted one

14   Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)

15   For work or products (e.g. breeding, farm working dogs, egg-laying)

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

97   I did not decide to get my pet (e.g. it was given to me, I inherited it)

98   Don't know

BENEFITS What do you consider are the main benefits of having a pet? Please select up to three. [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 98]

1   Someone to look after/ provide a sense of family

2   Companionship/ love

3   Improved mental health/ emotional support (e.g. sense of purpose, connection)

4   Improved physical health or ability (e.g. exercise, walking, mobility support)

5   Fun/ entertainment

6   Sense of pride/ achievement

7   Social connection with others (e.g. family/ friends, community)

8   Products/ income (e.g. breeding, egg-laying)

9 Teaches children responsibility/ respect/ patience

10 Safety/ sense of security

11 Learning new skills

12 They understand me/ meet my emotional needs

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

98 None of the above – no benefits of having a pet

DRAWBACKS What do you consider are the main drawbacks of having a pet? Please select up to three. [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 98]

1 Financial costs (e.g. of ongoing pet ownership and care)

2 Training/ exercising pet regularly

3 Spending time with pet/ giving them attention

4 Keeping pet(s) groomed

5 Damage to home/ items

6 Cleaning associated with pet/ mess/ smell

7 Worrying about pet's happiness/ wellbeing/ behaviour (including unwanted behaviours)

8 Reduces ability for me/ my family to take a holiday/ spontaneous trips

9 Interrupted sleep (e.g. due to unwanted noises)

10 Managing pet's health (e.g. managing preventative health such as vaccinations, ongoing health conditions)

11 Death of pet (e.g. emotional impact)

12 Health impacts on me/ my family (e.g. allergies)

13 Limits housing options (e.g. rental properties, building requirements)

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

98 None of the above – no drawbacks of having a pet

IMPACT On balance, what kind of impact has having your pet(s) had on your life?

Very negative	Negative	Neither	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	99

C.   Decision-making process

[If own multiple types of pets, randomly allocate one type of pet for remainder of questions. Randomly allocate least common animals first, followed by less common animals and most common animals until quotas are met (as per table below). Once quotas are met, randomly allocate all types of animals.]

	Value	Pet category	Targeted sample
Least common	17	Insect	N/A

	16	Other reptile	n=100 for each type
	15	Other medium or large mammal	
	14	Other small mammal	
	13	Amphibian	
	12	Poultry bird	
	11	Snake	
	10	Turtle	
	9	Lizard	
Less common	8	Guinea pig	n=200 for each type
	7	Rabbit	
	6	Aquarium/ tank fish	
	5	Pond fish	
	4	Bird	
	3	Horse	
Most common	2	Cat	N/A
	1	Dog	

Create variable 'PETCATEGORY' – value labels to align with PETTYPE]

For the remainder of the survey, we would like you to answer each question about your PETCATEGORY(s).

We are asking the rest of the questions in this survey about all types of pets, so please ignore any response options that don't apply to your pet.

YEARACQUIRED In what year did you get your current PETCATEGORY(s)? Please provide your best estimate.

[ONLY SHOW IF NUMBERPETS>1 FOR PETCATEGORY: Since you have multiple PETCATEGORY(s), please record when you got your first PETCATEGORY and when you got your most recent PETCATEGORY. If you got them at the same time, please enter the same year.] [Allow numeric responses from 1910 to 2023]

[ONLY SHOW HEADING IF NUMBERPETS>1] **First** PETCATEGORY

1 Year:_____

[SHOW IF NUMBERPETS>1] **Most recent** PETCATEGORY

2 Year: _____

WHYPET What are the main reasons you decided to get a PETCATEGORY over other types of pets? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96-99]

1   Companionship/ support/ provide a sense of family

2   Lifespan of pet

3   Size of pet/ amount of space required for pet

4   Low maintenance/ easy to look after/ cleanliness

5   Hypoallergenic

6   Safe for children

7   Easy to train

8   Inexpensive

9   Species/ breed enthusiast

10   Interesting (e.g. thought it was cool, different)

11   Like how it looks (e.g. cute, colourful)

12   Entertainment/ enjoyment/ as a hobby

13   Pet's personality/ energy levels

14   Previous experience with type of pet

15   Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)

16   For work or products (e.g. breeding, farm working dogs, egg-laying)

17   I wanted to help/ save the animal

18   My family member(s) wanted this type of pet

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

97   I did not decide to get my pet (e.g. pet was given to me, I inherited them)

99   Don't know

D.   Acquisition

[ONLY SHOW IF NUMBERPETS>1: For the next few questions, please answer thinking about the PETCATEGORY you most recently acquired.]

PETNAME What is your PETCATEGORY's name?

_____

98   Does not have a name

PETAGE How old was your PETCATEGORY when you first acquired them? Please provide your best estimate. [Allow numeric responses from 0 to 100]

_____ Weeks

_____ Months

_____ Years

99   Don't know

PETAGENOW And how old is your PETCATEGORY now? Please provide your best estimate. [Allow numeric responses from 0 to 100]

_____ Weeks

_____ Months

_____ Years

99   Don't know

PETCOST How much did your PETCATEGORY cost to purchase or adopt? If you did not pay anything for this pet, please enter '0'. [Record number]

$_____

99 Don't know

SOURCE Where did you acquire your PETCATEGORY? [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1 Pet shop

2 Breeder

3 Animal shelter

4 Council pound

5 Rescue/ rehoming organisation or volunteer run organisation

6 From a family member or friend

7 From an acquaintance

8 Vet clinic

9 Speciality shop (e.g. aquarium)

10 Market

11 On the street/ in the wild

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99 Don't know

WHYSOURCE Why did you acquire your PETCATEGORY from this source? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1 Previous experience in obtaining pets from this source

2 Location (e.g. convenient, close to you)

3 Cost/ value for money

4 Family or friend recommendation

5 Online recommendation/ reviews

6 Health of animals

7 Staff expertise

8 Reputation (e.g. high animal welfare standards)/ experience

9 What you got with pet (e.g. food, bedding, cage)

10 Breeding practices (e.g. responsible/regulated breeder) [ONLY SHOW IF SOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]

11 Wanted a specific breed or species

12 Wanted a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal

13 Spontaneous opportunity (e.g. pet was offered to me, on sale)

14 Previous owner could no longer care for pet/ no longer wanted the pet

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

PETPARENTS [ASK IF SOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]

You mentioned you got your PETCATEGORY from a breeder. Did you get to meet your pet's parents before purchasing?

1   Yes

1   No

BREEDERTYPE [ASK IF SOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]

How did you identify or find your PETCATEGORY's breeder?

1   Through a family member or friend

2   Through an acquaintance

3   Through the breeder's website

4   Through a breeder peak body (e.g. Dogs Victoria, ANCATS)

5   Through Facebook or other social media

6   Through Gumtree or other online advertising platform

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

PRIORRESEARCH Did you do any research prior to getting your PETCATEGORY?

1   Yes

2   No [GO TO DIFFICULTY]

3   Don't know [GO TO DIFFICULTY]

PRIORWHATINFO [ASK IF PRIORRESEARCH=1]

What information did you look for? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Where to get/ purchase pet

2   Size of pet/ space required

3   Food required (e.g. type of food, frequency of feeding)

4   Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank) required

5   Lifespan of pet

6   Cost to purchase or adopt pet

7   Ongoing costs associated with owning pet (e.g. housing, food)

8   Legal requirements for owning pet (e.g. registration, microchipping)

9   Breed/ species characteristics (e.g. behaviours, health conditions, physical features)

10   Reputation of breeder [ONLY SHOW IF SOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]

11   Grooming requirements

12   Medical/ health requirements (e.g. pre-existing conditions, vet care requirements)

13   Whether pet was desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated

14   Level of supervision required/ social needs

15   Training requirements

16   Exercise requirements

17   Cleaning requirements or processes (e.g. changing fish tank water)

18   Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)

19   Suitability for me/ my family (e.g. young children)

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

E.   Pet care and use of services

The next few sets of questions are about the different things you do and services you use to look after your pet(s).

[ONLY SHOW IF NUMBERPETS>1: For the rest of the survey, please answer thinking about all the PETCATEGORY(s) that you have.]

DIFFICULTY Overall, how easy or difficult do you find it to look after your PETCATEGORY(s)?

Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult
1	2	3	4	5

Diet and feeding

We'd now like to ask about about diet and feeding.

WHENFEED How often do you feed your PETCATEGORY(s) currently?

1   More than twice a day

2   Twice a day

3   Once a day

4   Once every few days

5   Once a week

6   Less than once a week

7   Do not feed them regularly (e.g. they eat grass, forage, feed themselves)

WHATFEED What do you feed your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response] [Do not randomise]

1   Dry food (e.g. kibble, biscuits)

2   Canned food

3   Semi-moist food (e.g. rolls)

4   Seeds

5   Grains (e.g. rice, oats)

6   Hay/ grass

7   Fruit and vegetables

8 Nectar

9 Raw meat

10 Cooked meat

11 Dried meat (e.g. pig's ear, jerky)

12 Bones

13 Insects

14 Dairy (e.g. cheese)

15 Manufactured pellets/ flakes (e.g. fish food, poultry feed)

16 Home cooked meals

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99 Don't know

WHYFEED How do you decide what/ how often to feed your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 98]

1 It's what I've always done

2 Trial and error (e.g. what seems to work best)

3 Pet's preferences (e.g. what it likes to eat)

4 Cost/ value for money

5 Convenience/ accessibility (e.g. feeding multiple pets, food availability)

6 Nutrition/ benefits for health (e.g. good for skin, teeth, bones)

7 Treatment for health condition

8 Recommendations from vet practice

9 Breeder recommendations

10 Recommendations from animal organisations (e.g. RSPCA, breed specific organisations, rescue organisation)

11 Online recommendations (e.g. researched, including from other experts/academic sources) *[Please specify from where]* _____

12 Advice from pet shop or specialty shop

13 Advice from friends/ family

14 In response to animal behaviour (e.g. pet lets you know when it's hungry)

15 Natural diet in the wild

16 Pet age/ weight

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99 Don't know

COSTFEED In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on food for your PETCATEGORY(s)? Please report your best estimate in weeks, months or years. [Record number]

$_____ per week OR $_____ per month OR $_____ per year

Training

We'd now like to ask about pet training.

TRAIN Have you (or has somebody else) ever trained your PETCATEGORY(s)?

  1   Yes

  2   No [GO TO VET IF PETCATEGORY>1]

Training and exercise [DOGS ONLY – PETCATEGORY=1]

TRAINSERVICE Have you ever used a training service to train your dog(s) (e.g. puppy school, dog trainer/ behaviourist, obedience classes)?

  1   Yes

  2   No [GO TO WHENWALK]

WHATTRAIN [ONLY SHOW IF TRAINSERVICE=1 (USED TRAINING SERVICE)] You mentioned you used training services for your dog(s). What did that training include? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

  1   Puppy school (including through a vet clinic)

  2   Obedience training (e.g. walking to heel, sit/stay and off-lead recall)

  3   Assistance/ service training

  4   Socialisation

  5   Toilet training

  6   Addressing behavioural concerns (e.g. reactivity, aggression)

  7   Training to use an electronic collar

  8   Working skills or dog sports (e.g. herding, scent detection, agility)

  9   Tricks

  96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

  99   Don't know

TRAINFREQ [ONLY SHOW IF TRAINSERVICE=1 (USED TRAINING SERVICE)] In the last 12 months, how many times have you used training services for your dog(s)?

None – have not used in the last year	One	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	99

COSTTRAIN [ONLY SHOW IF TRAINFREQ=2-6 (USED TRAINING SERVICE IN LAST YEAR)] In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on training services for your dog? Please report your best estimate. [Record number]

$_____

WHENWALK How often do you (or does somebody else) take your dog(s) on walks?

1 More than twice a day

2 Twice a day

3 Once a day

4 Every two to three days

5 Less often

6 Never

WHEREWALK Do you ever allow your dog(s) off leash in any of the following public areas? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 7]

1 Beach

2 Park

3 Designated off leash areas

4 On your neighbourhood streets

5 Walking around shops/ cafes

6 Hiking/ walking trails

7 None of the above – dog(s) is always on leash/ does not leave property

BITE1 Has your dog(s) ever bitten or attacked a person or animal causing an injury that required medical or veterinary treatment (including you or your family)? [Multiple response]

1 Yes – dog has bitten/ attacked me, my family or other pet

2 Yes – dog has bitten/ attacked somebody else (e.g. member of the public) or another animal

3 No [Exclusive]

BITE2 Have you, your family or your dog(s) ever been bitten or attacked by somebody else's dog that caused an injury that required medical or veterinary treatment?

1 Yes

2 No

Veterinary services

We'd now like to ask about use of veterinary services.

VET Have you ever used veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY(s)? This may include going to a vet clinic, online vet consultations and home visits.

1 Yes

2 No [GO TO VETBARR]

VETFREQ [ONLY SHOW IF VET=1 (USED VETERINARY SERVICE)] In the last 12 months, how many times have you used veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

None – have not used in the last year	One	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	99

WHYVET [ONLY SHOW IF VETFREQ=2-6 (TOOK PET TO VET IN LAST YEAR)] You mentioned you used veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY in the last 12 months. What were the main reasons you used these services? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   General check-up

2   To get vaccinations

3   To get microchipped

4   To get desexed

5   Dental check-up or treatment

6   Worming/ flea/ tick prevention and treatment

7   Behavioural issues (e.g. reactivity, anxiety)

8   One-off physical health issue, such as an injury (e.g. cut, limp) or illness (e.g. vomiting, sick)

9   Ongoing physical health issue (e.g. disease, condition)

10   Hereditary health issue

11   Grooming/ maintenance (e.g. nail clipping, anal gland expression)

12   Training (e.g. classes, puppy school)

13   Obtain general advice (e.g. about diet, enrichment opportunities)

14   Emergency

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

VETBARR What barriers, if any, do you experience to accessing veterinary services for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96-99]

1   Cost (e.g. consultation fees, medication)

2   Vet clinic is not local to me/ hard to get to

3   Vet visits are stressful for my pet(s)

4   Transport options

5   Concerns about veterinary advice/ reliability of advice

6   Time required (e.g. taking pet to vet, waiting for appointment)

7   Limited access to a vet who has experience or specialises in the type of animal I have

8   Ability to get an appointment

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

98   None of the above – no barriers to accessing veterinary services

99   Don't know

COSTVET [ONLY SHOW IF VETFREQ=2-6 (TOOK PET TO VET IN LAST YEAR)]
In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on veterinary services and medicines for your PETCATEGORY(s)? Please report your best estimate. [Record number]

$_____

PETINS Do you currently have pet insurance for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

1   Yes

2   Not yet – but I intend to get it

3   No

COSTPETINS [ASK IF PETINS=1 (HAVE PET INSURANCE)] In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on pet insurance for your PETCATEGORY(s)? Please report your best estimate in weeks, months or years. [Record number]
$_____ per week OR $_____ per month OR $_____ per year

WHYPETINS [ASK IF PETINS=2 OR 3 (DO NOT HAVE PET INSURANCE)] Why do you not have pet insurance for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96-99]

1   It's too expensive

2   Don't see the value/ poor value for money

3   Haven't gotten around to getting it

4   Pet insurance does not cover my pet's pre-existing condition(s)

5   Pet insurance does not cover my type of pet (i.e., species or breed of pet)

6   Pet insurance does not cover my pet's age

7   Did not know it was available

8   Don't know much about it (i.e. not sure of the benefits it provides)

9   Pet is healthy/ young

10   Feel that pet insurance is unreliable/ won't pay out claims

11   Friend/ family recommendations

12   Have previously had pet insurance, and did not use it sufficiently/ did not like it

13   I have a vet subscription

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

F.   Grooming

We'd now like to ask about grooming.

GROOM Do you ever groom your PETCATEGORY(s) or have your pet(s) groomed (e.g. wash/ bathe them, trim nails/ claws, brush fur/ hair, clean teeth)? Please include any grooming you do yourself or through a grooming service.

1   Yes

2   No [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

WHATGROOM [ASK IF GROOM=1 (GROOM PET)] What kind of grooming do you undertake/ arrange for your PETCATEGORY(s)? [Multiple response] [Do not randomise]

1   Bathe/ wash/ clean their body

2   Trim nails/ claws/ hooves

3   Trim or shear (e.g. fur, hair, beak, feathers)

4   Brush fur/ hair

5   Clean teeth

6   Clean ears

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

HOWGROOM [ASK IF GROOM=1 (GROOM PET)]

Of the types of grooming you give your PETCATEGORY(s), what do you do yourself and what do you use a grooming service for?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES SELECTED AT WHATGROOM	Do yourself/ at home	Use a grooming service	Both
a Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	1	2	3
b Trim nails/ claws/ hooves	1	2	3
c Trim or shear (e.g. fur, hair, beak, feathers)	1	2	3
d Brush fur/ hair	1	2	3
e Clean teeth	1	2	3
f Clean ears	1	2	3
g Other [SHOW TEXT]	1	2	3

GROOMFREQ [ASK IF GROOM=1 (GROOM PET)]

Of the types of grooming you give your PETCATEGORY(s), how often do you do each of the following?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES SELECTED AT WHATGROOM	Every day	More than once a week	Once a week or more often	Once a month or more often	Every two to three months	Less often
a Bathe/ wash/ clean their body	1	2	3	4	5	6
b Trim nails/ claws	1	2	3	4	5	6
c Trim or shear (e.g. fur, hair, beak, feathers)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d Brush fur/ hair	1	2	3	4	5	6
e Clean teeth	1	2	3	4	5	6
f Clean ears	1	2	3	4	5	6
g Other [SHOW TEXT]	1	2	3	4	5	6

COSTGROOM [ASK IF ANY OF HOWGROOM=2 OR 3 (USE A GROOMING SERVICE)]

In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on grooming services for your PETCATEGORY(s)? Please report your best estimate. [Record number]

$_____

G. Housing [CATS AND DOGS ONLY (PETCATEGORY=1 OR 2)]

We'd now like to ask about where your pet(s) is kept or allowed.

PETKEPT Where is your PETCATEGORY(s) kept/ allowed to access at home? Please think about where your pets are left or allowed when unattended. [Multiple response] [Do not randomise]

1   Inside your house

2   Your balcony or courtyard

3   Your backyard or wider property

4   In a kennel, crate, pen

5   In a cat enclosure or run [ONLY SHOW IF PETCATEGORY=2 (CAT)]

6   Outside your property boundaries/ allowed to roam

7   Not kept at my home (e.g. someone else's home/ yard)

CATINSIDE [ASK IF PETKEPT=1 OR 5 ONLY (CAT ONLY)] You mentioned your cat(s) is only allowed inside your house or in an enclosure/run (and not outside your property). What are the main reasons you do not allow your cat to roam outside? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96]

1   Cat's own safety (e.g. prevent injury from other animals, vehicles)

2   Fear of cat straying/ getting lost

3   Fear of cat being stolen

4   Do not have a backyard (e.g. apartment)

5   Avoid damage/ nuisance to neighbours

6   Avoid damage/ nuisance to native wildlife

7   Cleanliness (e.g. do not want cat to get dirty, bring things inside)

8   My council has a cat curfew/ does not allow cats off my property

9   Personality/ prefers to be indoors

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

TIMEOUTSIDE [ASK IF PETKEPT=6] You mentioned your PETCATEGORY(s) is allowed to roam outside your property. During what times of day are they generally allowed to roam outside?

1   During daylight hours only (between sunrise and sunset)

2   During the night (between sunset and sunrise)

3   Both during daylight hours and at night

PETOUTSIDE [ASK IF PETKEPT=6] You mentioned your PETCATEGORY is allowed to wander outside your property boundaries. What are the main reasons you allow your pet to wander outside your property? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96]

1   Neighbours like them

2   Does not cause any trouble/ harm (e.g. to other animals or wildlife)

3   Does not wander far from home

4   Exercise

5   Stimulation/ prevent boredom

6   Promote independence

7   Avoid damage to home

8   Vocalises or disrupts me/ my family if not let outside

9   Personality/ prefers to wander outside

10   Pet escapes/ gets out

11   They are supervised (e.g. by me or someone else) when they are outside my property

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

TOOLS Do you use any of the following to keep your PETCATEGORY within your property boundaries? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 98]

1   Fencing

2   Electronic/ hidden fencing

3   Tether (e.g. lead, rope)

4   Crate, pen or cage

5   Outdoor enclosure (e.g. cat run)

98   None of the above [Exclusive]

H.   Housing [OTHER TYPES OF PETS ONLY (PETCATEGORY>2)]

We'd now like to ask about where your pet(s) is housed.

OTHPETKEPT Where is your PETCATEGORY(s) mainly housed? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96]

1   Inside the house

2   Your balcony or courtyard

3   Your backyard or wider property

4   In a stable, kennel or pen

5   Cage or hutch

6   Coop or aviary

7   Tank

8   Pond (outside)

9   Terrarium or enclosure

10   Agistment/ not at your property

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

KEPTCONTROL Do you have or adjust any of the following environmental controls for your PETCATEGORY(s) or their housing? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 98]

1 Temperature

2 Light (e.g. brightness, colour)

3 Filtration (e.g. air, water)

4 Humidity

5 Decorations or ornaments (e.g. rocks, plants, gravel)

6 Options for shelter or hiding place

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

98 None of the above

OTHPETSHARE [ASK IF NUMBERPET>1 (HAVE MORE THAN ONE PET)] Do your PETCATEGORY(s) share housing or share the same spaces together (or with any of your other pets)?

1 Yes – always

2 Yes – sometimes

3 No – never

CHANGEWATER [ASK IF OTHPETKEPT=7 OR 8 (TANK OR POND)]
How often do you change the water in your PETCATEGORY's tank or pond?

Every day	Not every day but more than once a week	Once a week	Between once a week and once a month	Every two to three months	Less often than every three months	Never	N/A – Do not have any water in tank or pond
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

CLEANHOUSE [ASK IF OTHPETKEPT=5- 9] How often do you clean your PETCATEGORY's housing? [SHOW IF CHANGEWATER<7: Please think about any cleaning you do beyond changing tank or pond water.]

Every day	Not every day but more than once a week	Once a week	Between once a week and once a month	Every two to three months	Less often than every three months	Never	N/A – Do not need to clean
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	99

I. Enrichment

We'd now like to ask about pet enrichment.

ENRICH Have you done any of the following with your PETCATEGORY to keep them entertained/ stimulated? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 98]

1 Play with them

2 Pet/ hold them

3 Give them toys/ food puzzles

4 Set up activities for them (e.g. scavenger hunt, obstacle course)

5   Train them (e.g. teach them tricks)

6   Exercise them

7   Participate in events/ competitions

8   Socialise them with other animals

9   Giving them time to roam (e.g. off leash time, letting out of cage)

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

98   None of the above

COSTENRICH ASK IF ENRICH<98 (ENRICHMENT) In the last 12 months, how much did you spend on toys and other entertainment for your PETCATEGORY(s)? Please report your best estimate. [Record number]

$_____

J.   Pet minding and boarding services

We'd now like to ask about pet minding and related services.

LOOKAFTER Have you ever used any of the following to look after your PETCATEGORY(s) while you were away from home? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 98]

1   Family

2   Friends

3   Neighbours

4   House sitter

5   Pet sitter (in your home)

6   Pet sitter (at their home)

7   Boarding services (e.g. day care, kennel, cattery, pet hotel)

8   Other *[Please specify]* _____

9   None of the above

MINDSERVICESFREQ [ONLY ASK IF USED PAID SERVICES (LOOKAFTER=5-7] In the last 12 months, how many times have you used these services for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES SELECTED AT LOOKAFTER/OTHSERVICES	None – have not used in the 12 months	One	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times	Don't know
a Pet sitter [LOOKAFTER=5 OR 6]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99
b Boarding services [LOOKAFTER=7]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99

BOARDING [ASK IF MINDSERVICESFREQb>1] You mentioned that you used boarding services in the last 12 months. What are the main reasons why you chose to use boarding services while you

were away, rather than other pet minding services? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Nobody I knew was available to look after my pet (e.g. friends, family, neighbours)

2   Usual pet sitter was unavailable

3   Could not find a suitable pet sitter

4   Cost (was cheaper)

5   Location

6   Socialisation benefits

7   Keep pet entertained/ more activities for pets to do

8   Quality of care (e.g. more reliable, better supervision, regulated by council)

9   Did not want people (e.g. pet sitter) in your home

10   Health needs of pet (e.g. provides medical support or monitoring)

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

COSTMINDSERVICES In the last 12 months, approximately how much have you spent on these services for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES MINDSERVICESFREQ>1 and <99	
a Pet sitter	$_____
b Boarding services	$_____

K.   Other services

OTHSERVICES Have you ever used any other paid services for your PETCATEGORY(s), that have not already been covered in this survey?

1   Pet transport services

2   Dog walking services [ONLY SHOW IF PETCATEGORY=1 (DOG)]

3   Cleaning services (e.g. pooper scooper, specialist cleaner)

4   Complementary therapies (e.g. naturopathy)

5   Rehabilitation treatments (e.g. physiotherapy, chiropractic, massage, water therapy)

6   Acupuncture

7   Animal psychics/ interpreters/ communicators

8   Whelping/ kittening/ animal birthing services

9   Other *[Please specify]* _____

98   None of the above

OTHSERVICESFREQ [ONLY ASK IF USED PAID SERVICES (OTHSERVICES=1-9] In the last 12 months, how many times have you used these services for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES SELECTED AT LOOKAFTER/OTHSERVICES	None – have not used in the 12 months	One	2-3 times	4-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times	Don't know
a Pet transport services [OTHSERVICES=1]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99
b Dog walking services [OTHSERVICES=2]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99
c Cleaning services [OTHSERVICES=3]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99
d Other services [OTHSERVICES=4-9]	1	2	3	4	5	6	99

COSTOTHSERVICES In the last 12 months, approximately how much have you spent on these services for your PETCATEGORY(s)?

ONLY SHOW CATEGORIES OTHSERVICESFREQ>1 and <99	
a Pet transport services	$_____
b Dog walking services	$_____
c Cleaning services	$_____
d Other services	$_____

L.   Information seeking

We'd now like to ask about information seeking.

INFOSEARCH Since obtaining your PETCATEGORY(s), have you looked for any information to help you look after them?

  1   Yes

  2   No [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

WHATSEARCH [ASK IF INFOSEARCH=1] What information have you looked for? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

  1   Information about food required (e.g. type of food, frequency of feeding)

  2   Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank) required

  3   Legal requirements for owning pet (e.g. registration, microchipping)

  4   Breed/ species characteristics

  5   Enrichment opportunities (e.g. how to keep pet occupied, entertained)

  6   Behavioural issues (e.g. anxiety)

  7   General health requirements/ issues

  8   Information about specific health conditions

  9   Information about desexing/ microchipping/ vaccination

10   Grooming (e.g. how to, what grooming required)

11   Services (e.g. grooming, training, boarding)

12   Training/ supervision (e.g. how to train certain tricks)

13   Cleaning requirements or processes (e.g. changing water)

14   Environmental requirements or processes (e.g. temperature)

15   Products for pet (e.g. toy, beds, clothing)

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

WHERESEARCH [ASK IF INFOSEARCH=1] Where did you look for or seek this information? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 21 to 99]

1   Facebook

2   Instagram

3   YouTube

4   TikTok

5   Friends, family and colleagues

6   Pet retail websites (e.g. PetBarn, Pet Circle)

7   Local council website

8   Victorian government website *[Please specify]* _____

9   Search engine (e.g. Google, Bing)

10   Online forums

11   TV shows (e.g. Bondi Vet)

12   Vet clinic/ hospital

13   Other professional

14   Breeder

15   Breed-specific organisation or breeder peak body (e.g. Dogs Victoria)

16   Animal welfare organisations and websites (e.g. RSPCA)

17   Previous owner of pet

18   Pet shop

19   Books or journals (e.g. academic sources)

20   Podcasts

21   Other social media

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

WHATMEDIA [ASK IF WHERESEARCH=1-4 OR 21] You mentioned you looked for information on social media. Do you follow or go to any particular accounts for information (e.g. individuals/ influencers or organisations)?

   1   Yes *[Please specify what accounts]* _____

   2   No

M. Past/ future pet ownership module

[SHOW IF OWN=1 (YES): Now we'd like to ask about whether you have owned any pets in the past, or are planning to get any in the next 12 months.]

PASTOWN [ASK ALL] [IF OWN=1 SHOW: Apart from any pets you currently own,] Have you owned any pets in the past?
This includes any companion or hobby animals you <u>owned yourself</u>, but excludes:
- any animals you may have cared for temporarily (e.g. through foster care or for a family member)
- any animals kept for primary production
- wild animals.

   1   Yes

   2   No [Go to FUTOWN]

PASTPETTYPE [ASK IF PASTOWN=1] What type of pet(s) have you previously owned? [Please select all that apply] [Do not randomise]

   1   Dog

   2   Cat

   3   Horse

   4   Bird (other than poultry)

   5   Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

   6   Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

   7   Rabbit

   8   Guinea pig

   9   Lizard

   10   Turtle

   11   Snake

   12   Poultry (e.g. chicken, duck, turkey)

   13   Amphibian (e.g. frog, toad, salamander)

   14   Other small mammal (e.g. rat, mouse, ferret) *[Please specify]* _____

   15   Other medium or large mammal (e.g. pig, goat, alpaca, sheep) *[Please specify]* _____

   16   Other reptile *[Please specify]* _____

   17   Insect

FUTOWN [ASK ALL] Do you plan on getting [IF OWN=2 (DO NOT CURRENTLY OWN PET) SHOW: a] [IF OWN=1 (CURRENTLY OWN PET) SHOW: another] pet in the next 12 months?

1   Yes

2   No

3   Not sure

FUTOWNTYPE [ASK IF FUTOWN=1] What type of pet do you plan to get in the next 12 months? If you are planning to get multiple pet(s), please select the type you plan to get soonest. [Do not randomise]

1   Dog

2   Cat

3   Horse

4   Bird (other than poultry)

5   Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

6   Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

7   Rabbit

8   Guinea pig

9   Lizard

10   Turtle

11   Snake

12   Poultry (e.g. chicken, duck, turkey)

13   Amphibian (e.g. frog, toad, salamander)

14   Other small mammal (e.g. rat, mouse, ferret) *[Please specify]* _____

15   Other medium or large mammal (e.g. pig, goat, alpaca, sheep) *[Please specify]* _____

16   Other reptile *[Please specify]* _____

17   Insect

18   Don't know yet

WHYNOTGET [ASK IF FUTOWN=2 AND OWN=2 (DO NOT CURRENTLY OWN PET AND DO NOT PLAN TO)] What are the main reasons you do not want to get a pet in the next 12 months? Please select up to three. [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Do not want a pet/ do not like animals

2   Do not have time/ ability to look after pet

3   Do not have enough space in home

4   Landlord/ building does not allow pets

5   Financial costs

6   Have/ planning to have children

7   Not at home enough (e.g. at work, studying, socialising)

8   Damage to home/ items

9 Cleanliness/ cleaning required

10 Reduced ability to take a holiday/ leave pet alone

11 Noise

12 Allergies

13 Recently lost a pet

14 My family or household member(s) do not want one

15 Having to meet legal requirements (e.g. planning provisions, obtaining excess animal permits, registration)

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99 Don't know

ASK REMAINDER OF QUESTIONS IN SECTIONS OF NON-CURRENT PET OWNERS ONLY (FUTOWN=1 AND OWN=2)

WHYFUTGET What are the main reasons you want to get a pet in the next 12 months? Please select up to three. [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96-99]

1 Have always had pets

2 Someone to look after/ provide a sense of family

3 Companionship/ love

4 For mental health/ emotional support (e.g. sense of purpose, connection)

5 Service/ assistance animal

6 Fun/ entertainment/ as a hobby

7 Want to help/ save the animal

8 For physical health (e.g. exercise, walking)

9 Previous experience with family or friends' pets

10 For work or products (e.g. breeding, farm working dogs, egg-laying)

11 Spend more time at home now

12 My family member(s) want one

96 Other *[Please specify]* _____

99 Don't know

FUTSOURCE Where are you planning to get your FUTPETCATEGORY? [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1 Pet shop

2 Breeder

3 Animal shelter/ pound

4 Rescue/ rehoming organisation or volunteer run organisation

5 From a family member or friend

6 From an acquaintance

7 Vet clinic

8   Speciality shop

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

WHYFUTSOURCE Why are you planning to get your FUTPETCATEGORY from this source? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Location (e.g. convenient, close to you)

2   Cost/ value for money

3   Family or friend recommendation

4   Online recommendation

5   Animal welfare (e.g. how animals were treated)

6   Health of animals

7   Staff expertise

8   Reputation (e.g. quality)/ experience

9   What you get with pet (e.g. food, bedding, cage)

10   Breeding practices e.g. way they breed certain species [ONLY SHOW IF FUTSOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]

11   Want a specific breed or species

12   Want a rescue animal or wanted to help/ save the animal

13   Previous owner can no longer care for pet/ no longer wants the pet

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

FUTPETCOST Approximately how much do you expect to pay for the FUTPETCATEGORY you want? If you do not plan to pay anything for this pet, please enter '0'. [Record number]

$_____

FUTRESEARCH Have you done any research about your potential FUTPETCATEGORY?

1   Yes

2   No [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

FUTINFO What information have you looked for? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Where to get/ purchase pet

2   Size of pet/ space required

3   Information about food required (e.g. type of food, frequency of feeding)

4   Type of bedding/ housing (e.g. cage, tank) required

5   Lifespan of pet

6   Costs associated with having pet

7   Legal requirements for having pet (e.g. registration, microchipping)

8	Breed/ species characteristics
9	Reputation of breeder [ONLY SHOW IF FUTSOURCE=2 (BREEDER)]
10	Grooming requirements
11	Medical/ health requirements (e.g. pre-existing conditions, vet care requirements)
12	Whether pet is desexed/ microchipped/ vaccinated
13	Training/ supervision requirements
14	Cleaning requirements or processes (e.g. changing water)
15	Environmental requirements (e.g. temperature, moisture)
96	Other [Please specify] _____
99	Don't know

N. Legal requirements

[Ask current and future pet owners]

Programming note: Ask current pet owners (OWN=1) about their current pet (PETCATEGORY) and future pet owners (OWN=2 and FUTOWN=1) about their future pets (FUTPETCATEGORY)

We'd now like to ask about your understanding and perceptions of pet ownership requirements.

LEGALUND Overall, how would you rate your understanding of the legislation and legal requirements around ownership of **FUTPETCATEGORY/PETCATEGORYs** in Victoria?

Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Not sure
1	2	3	4	5	6

RESPOWNERSHIP How important do you consider each of the following to be for an owner of FUTPETCATEGORY/PETCATEGORYs to ensure their pet's wellbeing? [Randomise a-i]

		Very low importance	Low importance	Moderate importance	High importance	Very high importance	Don't know
a	Providing adequate and appropriate food and water	1	2	3	4	5	6
b	Comfortable and safe living environment (e.g. protected from elements/ predation, sufficient space, hygienic/ clean)	1	2	3	4	5	6
c	Grooming (e.g. trimming fur/ hair, washing/ bathing)	1	2	3	4	5	6
d	Training/ exercise (e.g. obedience, tricks, walks)	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Very low importance	Low importance	Moderate importance	High importance	Very high importance	Don't know
e	Providing mental stimulation/ companionship/ meeting social needs (e.g. positive interactions with humans/ other animals, appropriate handling to minimise distress, interactive play)	1	2	3	4	5	6
f	Allowing expression of natural behaviours (e.g. climbing, scratching)	1	2	3	4	5	6
g	Maintaining health (e.g. vet check-ups, prevention/ treatment of illness/ injury, deworming)	1	2	3	4	5	6
h	Ensuring they are desexed	1	2	3	4	5	6
i	Meeting legal responsibilities (e.g. registration, permits, microchipping, transport)	1	2	3	4	5	6
j	Containment/ avoiding public nuisance (i.e. keeping them inside your house or property boundaries, keeping them under control in public)	1	2	3	4	5	6

[ASK CURRENT PET OWNERS ONLY (OWN=1)]

LICENCE [ASK IF PETCATEGORY=4, 9, 10, 11, 13 or 16 (NON-POULTRY BIRD, REPTILE OR AMPHIBIAN)]
Do you have a licence to keep your PETCATEGORY(s)?

1   Yes

2   Not yet– but I intend to

3   No

4   Not applicable – type of pet does not require a licence

LEGALREQ [ONLY SHOW IF NUMBERPETS>1 FOR PETCATEGORY: Thinking about the PETCATEGORY you most recently obtained,] Is your PETCATEGORY…

		Yes	No – but I intend to	No	Not sure	Not applicable to type of pet
a	Registered with your local council?	1	2	3	4	5
b	Microchipped/ appropriately identified (e.g. PIC, EID)?	1	2	3	4	5
c	Desexed?	1	2	3	4	5
d	Vaccinated?	1	2	3	4	5

WHYNOTREGISTERED [ONLY ASK IF PETCATEGORY=1 OR 2 (DOG OR CAT)] [ASK IF REGISTERED=2 OR 3 (NOT REGISTERED)] What are the main reasons you have not registered your PETCATEGORY? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Haven't got around to it

2   Haven't thought about it

3   Too expensive

4   Pet is too old

5   Pet is unlikely to stray/ get lost (e.g. they don't leave the house)

6   Cannot see any benefits

7   Don't know how to register

8   Do not use facilities or services that registration fees go towards

9   Pet is not old enough yet (i.e. under 3 months)

10   Too much effort

11   Did not know that it was required

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

[Ask current and future pet owners]

LOCALRESTR ASK IF FUTPETCATEGORY/PETCATEGORY=1 or 2 (DOG or CAT) Does your local council set any of their own laws around dog or cat ownership (e.g. cat curfews)?

1   Yes *[Please specify what local laws]* _____

2   No

3   Not sure

[ASK ALL]

Now we'd like to ask about your awareness and understanding of the animal welfare laws and regulations in place in Victoria.

AWAREDAA Before today, had you heard of the Domestic Animals Act 1994?

1   Yes

2   No

AWAREPOCTA Before today, had you heard of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986?

1   Yes

2   No

AWARE Before today, were you aware that… [Randomise]

		Not aware	Partially aware	Fully aware
a	Codes of Practice exist for the private keeping of cats and dogs	1	2	3

		Not aware	Partially aware	Fully aware
b	Codes of Practice exist for the housing of caged birds, the private keeping of reptiles, the welfare of horses, and the welfare of amphibians in captivity	1	2	3
c	Use of electronic collars for dogs and cats is restricted and requires the oversight of a veterinarian or other suitably qualified trainer	1	2	3
d	Pet shops are only allowed to sell dogs and cats sourced from shelters, pounds or foster carers registered with council	1	2	3
e	People keeping and breeding from 1-2 female dogs or cats in Victoria do not need to register as a breeder with their council or abide by a Code of Practice for breeding	1	2	3
f	An owner failing to provide veterinary care to a sick or injured animal may constitute an animal cruelty offence	1	2	3
g	Any advertisement of a dog or cat for sale must include the animals unique microchip number and a valid source number	1	2	3
h	There are limits on the number and type of animals you can keep on your property, depending on the zoning of your property	1	2	3

O. Stray cats module [ASK ALL]

The next few questions relate to stray cats.

STRAY Do any cats that you do not consider as your own (stray cats) regularly enter your property or roam around your neighbourhood? This does not include foster cats or cats that you know belong to other people that are let outside.

    1   Yes

    2   No [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

    3   Not sure – cats come onto my property/ are in my neighbourhood but I am not sure if they are strays [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

STRAYCARE Are you regularly involved in caring for any stray cats on your property or in your neighbourhood? Caring for stray cats may include feeding or sheltering them.

    1   Yes

    2   No [GO TO STRAYCOUNCIL]

STRAYNUMBER ASK IF STRAYCARE=1 In the last 12 months, how many stray cats have you provided care for?

_____

STRAYOWN ASK IF STRAYCARE=1 What is preventing you from taking full ownership of the cat(s)? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

    1   Do not want a pet full-time

    2   Do not have time to look after them

    3   Do not have enough space in home

    4   Landlord/ building does not allow pets

    5   Financial costs

    6   Have children

    7   Not at home enough (e.g. at work, studying, socialising)

    8   Damage to home/ items

    9   Cleanliness/ cleaning required

    10   Ability to take a holiday/ leave them alone

    11   Noise

    12   Allergies

    13   Recently lost a pet

    14   My family or household member(s) do not want one

    15   Uncertainty about cat's history (e.g. health, ownership status)

    16   Not sure what the process is to adopt them

    17   Having to meet legal requirements (e.g. planning provisions, obtaining excess animal permits, registration)

18   Would not fit in with other pets [ONLY SHOW IF CURRENT PET OWNER]

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

STRAYCOUNCIL ASK IF STRAY=1 Have you contacted your local council about stray cat(s) on your property or in your neighbourhood?

1   Yes

2   No

STRAYCONTACT ASK IF STRAYCOUNCIL=2 Why have you not contacted your local council about the stray cat(s)? [Multiple response] [Randomise except 96 and 99]

1   Want to continue caring for cat(s)/ want cat(s) to visit

2   Worried they might be euthanised

3   Too much effort

4   Don't want to be responsible for them

5   Didn't know to contact council

6   Contacted somebody else about the stray cats (e.g. vet clinic, rescue group)

7   They are not causing any trouble

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

99   Don't know

P.   Pet surrendering [PREVIOUS OWNERS ONLY, PASTOWN=1]

The last few questions are about pet surrendering.

SURRENDER Have you ever had to surrender or rehome (i.e. give away/ give up) a pet?

1   Yes

2   No [GO TO NEXT SECTION]

SURRENDERTYPE [ASK IF SURRENDER=1] What type of pet(s) have you had to surrender or rehome? [Please select all that apply] [Do not randomise]

1   Dog

2   Cat

3   Horse

4   Bird (other than poultry)

5   Pond fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

6   Aquarium/ tank fish (including cephalopods and crustaceans)

7   Rabbit

8   Guinea pig

9   Lizard

10   Turtle

11   Snake

12   Poultry (e.g. chicken, duck, turkey)

13   Amphibian (e.g. frog, toad, salamander)

14   Other small mammal (e.g. rat, mouse, ferret) *[Please specify]* _____

15   Other large mammal (e.g. pig, goat, alpaca, sheep) *[Please specify]*_____

16   Other reptile *[Please specify]* _____

17   Insect

SURRENDERWHY [ASK IF SURRENDER=1] Why did you surrender or rehome your pet(s)? [Please select all that apply] [Do not randomise]

1   Aggressive or reactive behaviours (e.g. biting, aggression towards people or other animals)

2   Anxiety or neurotic behaviours (e.g. separation anxiety, toileting issues, escaping)

3   Ongoing costs to look after pet (e.g. food)

4   Could not afford medical costs to prevent or treat injury or disease

5   Moving overseas

6   Home/ neighbourhood did not suit/ fit/ allow pet

7   Moving into a new home/ neighbourhood that did not suit/ fit/ allow pet

8   Did not have enough time to look after pet

9   Damage to property

10   Excessive noise

11   Family member or household member did not like pet

12   Did not understand how to properly care for pet

13   Not home enough

14   Boredom/ disinterest with pet

15   Had children

16   Allergies

17   Deterioration in your own health (e.g. illness, disability)

96   Other *[Please specify]*_____

99   Don't know

SURRENDERWHERE [ASK IF SURRENDER=1] Where did you surrender or rehome the pet(s) to? [Please select all that apply] [Do not randomise]

1   Somebody you know (e.g. friend or family member)

2   Somebody you do not know (e.g. via an online platform)

3   Animal shelter

4   Local Council (i.e. pound)

5   Volunteer group or not-for-profit organisation

6   Vet clinic/ hospital

7   Released into the wild

96   Other *[Please specify]* _____

Q.   Demographics [Ask all]

The final few questions are about you, to help us analyse the results from this survey.

PROPERTY Which of the following best describes where you are currently living? [Do not randomise]

1   Mobile home/ caravan/ van

2   Apartment

3   Unit/ townhouse/ bungalow

4   House on an urban/ suburban block

5   House on an acreage

6   Other *[Please specify]* _____

HOWLIVE Do you own or rent the property where you are currently living? [Do not randomise]

1   Own

2   Rent

3   Living at home (e.g. with family)

4   Other *[Please specify]* _____

EMPLOYMENT Are you…? Please select all that apply. [Multiple response] [Do not randomise]

1   Working in paid employment (full-time)

2   Working in paid employment (part-time)

3   Working in paid employment (casual or contract)

4   Self-employed

5   A stay-at-home parent, partner or carer

6   A student

7   [EXCLUSIVE OF 1-4, 8, 9] Unemployed – looking for work

8   [EXCLUSIVE OF 1-4, 7, 9] Unemployed – not looking for work

9   [EXCLUSIVE OF 1-4, 7, 8] Retired

10   Other *[Please specify]* _____

EDUCATION What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed? [Do not randomise]

1   Year 11 or below

2   Finished Year 12 at school

    3   Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree

    4   Bachelor Degree

    5   Master's Degree, Postgraduate Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, or Doctorate

    6   Other *[Please specify]* _____

    7   Prefer not to say

HOUSEHOLD Which of the following best describes you? [Do not randomise]

    1   Married, defacto or partnered

    2   Single, divorced, separated or widowed

    3   Prefer not to say

HOUSENUM How many people (including you) live in your household? [Record number]

_____

CHILD Are you a parent, primary carer or a guardian of any children (i.e. under 18 years old)? Please select all that apply. [MULTIPLE RESPONSE] [Do not randomise]

    1   Yes – at least one aged under 5 years

    2   Yes – at least one between the ages of 5-12 years

    3   Yes – at least one between the ages of 13 -17 years

    4   [EXCLUSIVE] No

INCOME What is the gross annual income of your household before tax? Please note that gross income is defined as income from all sources (e.g. wages, salary, rent, dividends, government payments); do not deduct tax, superannuation or life insurance. [Do not randomise]

    1   Under $30,000

    2     $30,000 to under $60,000

    3     $60,000 to under $90,000

    4     $90,000 to under $120,000

    5     $120,000 to under $150,000

    6     $150,000 to under $180,000

    7     $180,000 and over

    8   Prefer not to say

ABORIGINAL Are you from…?

    1   An Aboriginal background

    2   A Torres Strait Islander background

    3   Both an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background

    4   None of the above

LANG Do you speak a language other than English at home?

    1   Yes *[Please specify]* _____

    2   No – English only

    3   Prefer not to say

DISB Do you have a disability, an impairment or a condition that impacts on your daily activities, communication and/ or mobility, and has lasted or is likely to last 6 months or more?

    1   Yes

    2   No

    3   Prefer not to say

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time.