

7 August 2020

## Meow is the time to celebrate our Cats

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that pets can be a great source of comfort and joy. Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) is encouraging cat owners to celebrate International Cat Day this Saturday 8 August by making sure their cat's needs are also being met.

In Australia, 27% of households have a cat with an estimated total of 3.8 million pet cats across the country. Executive Director of AMA, Ben Stapley, said that for Australians who have been spending more time at home throughout 2020, the human-animal bond has provided an incredible level of comfort.

"There are many benefits to responsible pet ownership including reduced loneliness, improved health outcomes and a sense of connection with the wider community. This year Australians are valuing their pets more than ever," Mr Stapley said.

"Cats are not simply considered a "pet", they are regarded by most owners as a member of the family. Cat owners have told us that the main reason they brought a cat into their families was for companionship, to give their cat a home and to help their children develop a sense of responsibility.

"Cat owners spend an average of 3.4 hours a day with their cats, and 14% of cat owners spend six hours or more with their cats every day.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew that around 20% of Australia's 3.7 million pet free households were interested in getting a cat, and there is certainly evidence that Australians have been considering how a pet will help to make their lives better in this difficult time.

"We also know that potential "pet parents" are conscious of the responsibility that comes with caring for a pet including providing for health and welfare needs and providing a suitable environment for their pet.

"Our research shows that 36% give their pets a gift on special occasions, but the best thing Australians can do for their cat to celebrate International Cat Day is to make sure they continue to receive regular care from a veterinarian. In addition to a general check-up, a veterinarian can:

- Ensure their vaccinations are up to date
- Provide dietary advice
- Provide dentistry services
- Advise on parasite control and prevention.

"While COVID-19 has brought many disruptions to the everyday lives of Australian, ensuring continuity of veterinary care for your cat will help to ensure the benefits of companionship and love of the human animal bond are felt for as long as possible.

"In some circumstances Australians may be required to stay at home due to COVID-19 restrictions, however it may be possible to arrange for a telemedicine or online consultation with your veterinarian."

For further information the *Pets in Australia: a national survey of pets and people* report can be found [here](#).

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[Animal Medicines Australia](#) is the peak body that represents the leaders of the animal health industry in Australia. Our member companies are responsible for a range of veterinary medicine products that prevent, control and cure disease across the companion animal and livestock sectors.