

EMBARGO: 5AM TUESDAY 17 AUGUST 2021

PETS BOOST PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING PANDEMIC

Australians are overwhelmingly claiming the relationship with their pets had marginally good impacts for their mental health during the pandemic, with a significant number of Australians valuing the quality time with their furry friends.

The Animal Medicine Associations' "Pandemic pets – a snapshot of pets and people amidst a pandemic" survey found 70% of owners said pets have had a positive experience on their lives during the pandemic – with almost half (47%) feeling 'very positive'.

This was driven by the companionship provided and their animals giving people a constant source of joy in their lives.

Some of the positive impacts included good companion/someone to talk to (36%), a source of joy/happiness/comfort (14%), spending more time with pet (13%).

While around half of all owners reported now spending more time with their pets than prior to the pandemic, their perceived quality of relationship with their pets have remained relatively consistent over time.

The majority of owners didn't notice any changes in their pets during the pandemic. Those who did observe (or recall) any difference were most likely to feel their pets were more active and playful, as well as sleeping more and eating more.

As with their pets, most owners didn't perceive any changes in their own behaviours, noting that ratings of self-behaviour are often over or underestimated. Owners were most likely to recall talking to their pets more, giving more treats, and taking more walks.

Animal Medicines Australia is a peak body representing leading animal health companies in Australia, and we provide up-to-date, authoritative data on pets and pet ownership in Australia to help deliver better animal health and industry outcomes across the country.

Research included four moderated focus groups and a nationally representative online survey with 1,017 adult participants from across Australia. Newgate Australia was commissioned to deliver research and a report on behalf of Animal Medicines Australia, as they did with the 2019 'Pets in Australia' survey.

The overall robust margin error is +/- 3% at the 95% confidence level.

Quotes attributable to Animal Pets Association Spokesperson:

"These numbers speak for themselves – one of the many things which have gotten a lot of people through lockdowns and other pandemic stresses is their pets."

"A lot of people have been cut off from their family and friends for various reasons in the last 18 months, and their pets have provided comfort as a companion and someone to talk to."

"Other research we've done indicates more Australians have either purchased a brand-new pet or a considering purchasing a pet, showing how many people may need a furry friend to help get them through this difficult time."

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