Animal Medicines Australia

Animal Medicines Australia
Representing the best in animal health

Pets in Australia:
A national survey of pets and people

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Animal Medicines Australia

Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) is the industry body representing the leading animal health companies in Australia.

AMA members are the local divisions of global innovators, manufacturers, formulators and registrants of a broad range of veterinary medicines. These companies work at the cutting edge of animal health science to prevent, control and treat illness and injury in our pets, livestock and horses.

As part of our role, AMA provides up-to-date data and information on trends to inform decision-making and policy development, with this triennial report part of that work.

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AVA – Australian Veterinary Association

PFIAA – Pet Food Industry Association Australia

PIAA – Pet Industry Association

Message from the President

Millions of Australians cherish their pets for companionship, emotional support, and the positive impact they have on families and communities. The human-animal bond is stronger than ever. This report provides insights into pet ownership trends and experiences in Australia.

The animal health industry supports sustainable pet ownership by developing products that prevent and treat illnesses, contributing to pet well-being and fostering strong bonds between pets and owners. Responsible pet ownership benefits both animals and the community.

Supportive and consistent policies are crucial for broader pet ownership access. This includes better housing options, support for vulnerable communities, and a nationally consistent companion animal policy. The current fragmented approach creates inconsistencies and barriers to pet ownership, potentially impacting animal welfare.

Animal Medicines Australia advocates for a collaborative national policy framework involving governments, industries, and stakeholders to improve companion animal management. This would enhance pet health and welfare, promote responsible ownership, and strengthen pets' roles in our communities.

A strong veterinary workforce, especially in rural areas, is essential. Supporting initiatives like rural placements for veterinary students and programs for vulnerable pet owners, along with improved emergency response capacity and consistent funding for veterinary services during natural disasters remains crucial.

With an estimated 31.6 million pets in 73% of Australian households, thoughtful policy is important. While pet ownership remains strong post-COVID, challenges like rising living costs and housing insecurity impact pet owners. Understanding these pressures enables the creation of systems and policies that promote positive, long-term pet ownership. This report aims to inform policymakers and industry partners in making decisions that reflect the importance of pets in Australian lives.

Hendrik Van der Walt
President

Animal Medicines Australia

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1. Research and methodology

Notes to the reader

This study was conducted online among a representative sample of Australian adults. Questionnaires from previous surveys in 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022, along with a special pandemic-focussed 2021 edition, were updated to address emerging issues for Animal Medicines Australia and its stakeholders.

Percentages presented in charts and tables throughout this report may not add up to 100% due to rounding on single-response questions or because the question allowed multiple responses. Percentages included in the commentary are not presented as full datasets; rather, they represent only results that are statistically significant at the best-practice 95% confidence level and are relevant to the objectives of this report.

The base (number and type of respondents) and the actual survey questions are shown underneath the charts and tables; this is typically expressed as "Base: year: type of respondent, n=count of respondents". The results throughout the report are weighted to reflect population characteristics and to enhance data accuracy.

Any statistically significant differences reported are at the 95% confidence level and noted using arrows (↑↓) or different font colours (**red** meaning significantly lower than other groups, **green** meaning significantly higher than other groups). While some differences may appear significant, they may not be considered statistically reliable due to small sample sizes.

Technical notes

Fieldwork: The primary quantitative research informing this report was administered online from 25 February - 10 March 2025 by the accredited fieldwork agency Cint, using participants drawn from professional research panels. Quotas were set using population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Census by place of residence, as well as gender interlocked with age - ensuring a representative sample of the adult population.

Sampling: This survey included boosted samples for Western Australia and South Australia to improve the robustness of findings at the state level. The total sample size was n=2,450, resulting in an excellent overall maximum error margin of +/-2.0% at the 95% confidence level; please note the error margins are larger for sub-groups. Survey results were weighted using ABS Census data to correct any sampling bias.

Weighting: Given most findings were related to household characteristics, weights were applied by household location interlocked with household size. For findings relating to individual attitudes and behaviours, weights were applied by place of residence and gender interlocked with age.

Stacking: Most results for dogs and cats have been re-based on the total number of animals rather than the number of owners. These results have been weighted by household data from the ABS Census, as outlined above. Findings relating to dog and cat breeds were based on verbatim responses, corrected for misspellings; synonyms have been retained as entered by participants. Similarly, variant spellings for cat and dog names have been taken as given.

Extrapolations by total households or persons have been based on the ABS Household and Family Projections, Australia for 2025[1] – placing the estimated number of households nationally at 10.6 million under a medium-growth scenario, the total population at 27.3 million, and the number of adults at 21.5 million. Note these are estimates only and should not be considered definitive quantification of total pet populations or sales data.

Expenditure data: Participants reported spending on various pet-related items (e.g. food, vet care, healthcare products) for each category of pet they own; specifically as the amount they typically spend within their usual purchasing frequency. This spending estimate was then extrapolated to an annual average spend equivalent, excluding outliers (see below). These averages were then further extrapolated to all Australian pet-owning households based on reported pet ownership rates from this survey. Readers should note methodological limitations, including potential biases in participant recall, accuracy, or social desirability, as well as limitations in extrapolating from a regular spend to an annual equivalent, and from averages to a national scale.

Expenditure outliers: In 2025, a more rigorous and scientific approach to removing outliers was adopted for reporting expenditure averages. This involved using the IQR (Interquartile Range) method, which is a widely accepted statistical technique for finding outliers in data. When using the IQR, the full dataset is split into four equal segments, or quartiles, and in this case we excluded numerical responses entered by participants that were *higher* than Q3 + 1.5 * IQR, where Q3 is the 75th percentile or third quartile, and IQR is the difference between the 75th percentile (Q3) and the 25th percentile (Q1). To enable comparability against the previous wave of the survey, the 2022 expenditure has been re-calculated for this report, using the same approach to removing outliers as in 2025.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD): for analysis purposes this report defines CALD participants as those who either speak a language other than English at home, one or both parents were born overseas or who migrated to Australia in the last 10 years.

Comparisons: In line with previous triennial reports, this report has focused primarily on comparing results between the 2025, 2022 and 2019 surveys. In 2025 the survey was updated to ensure that detailed questions about specific pets were only asked of people who *personally* own and look after those pets i.e. and not asked of people who live with pets they don't look after or people only temporarily looking after pets.

Quality: This research was conducted per the international quality standard for market and social research (ISO 20252) and the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards; a methodology disclosure statement appears at the end of the report.

[1]Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Household and Family Projections, Australia*, www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/household-and-family-projections-australia/latest-release

2. Top insights

Pet ownership continues to rise, with **73%** of households now owning a pet, and an estimated pet population of **31.6 million.** Dogs remain the most popular pets, owned by **49%** of Australian households.

Most pet owners have high regard for the quality of care provided by their vets, with **87%** providing a high rating of 7 or more out of 10 for their most recent visit – and a notable **35%** gave a perfect score of 10 out of 10.

A large majority of cats and dogs have received at least one vaccination in their lifetime. However, just **66%** of cats and **77%** of dogs have had a vaccination in the last 12 months, with cost and perceived lack of need being the most common barriers.

In the 12 months to March 2025, we spent an estimated **$21.3 billion** to feed and look after our pets, with food representing a substantial **46%** of this spend.

Most dog-owners walk or exercise their dog/s at least once a day (**70%**). However, a somewhat startling three in ten dog owners (**30%**) walk or exercise their dog/s less than once a day, with **15%** reporting that they only take them once a week or less often... if ever.

While cost-of-living doesn't appear to be significantly affecting most owners, **12%** required financial assistance for veterinary care. Concerningly, the research shows that this cohort are feeling the pressure a lot more and are more likely to surrender their pet or resort to health-related sacrifices, such as skipping regular check-ups and vaccinations for their pets.

In the face of turbulent times and a cost-of-living crisis, pets have remained a reliable source of love and happiness in the lives of Australians, with **86%** of owners saying their pets have positively impacted their lives.

Vets also remain a highly trusted source of pet advice, but some owners are also turning to free or digital sources like social media, YouTube, and even AI tools for advice on pet healthcare – especially those who are financially struggling and younger, less experienced pet owners.

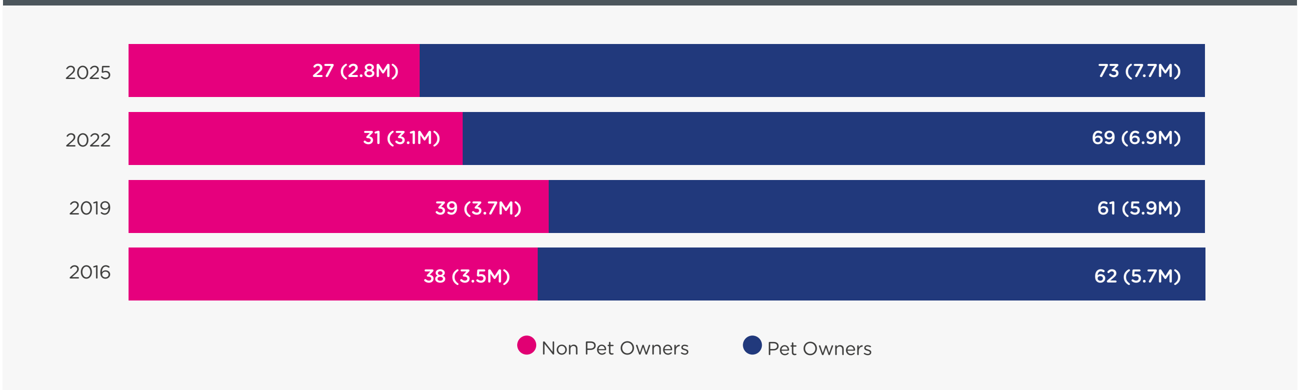
3.

Pet ownership in Australia

As of March 2025, Australia's estimated pet population is 31.6 million, with the survey data suggesting 7.7 million households have a pet today.

This equates to 73% of all households – and is significantly higher than in both 2022 (69%) and before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 (61%) and 2016 (62%), suggesting that pet ownership continues to rise. Throughout this chapter we explore the breadth and depth of pet ownership and adoption in Australia today.

How many households have a pet? (%)



A7. Which of these pets, if any, do you have in your household? Base: All participants, 2025 (n=2,450), 2022 (n=2,453), 2019 n=2,013) and 2016 (n=2,022)

Ownership rates and trends

Following a boom in pet ownership during the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey indicates that Australia's pet ownership rate continued to rise in 2025.

Dogs remain the most popular pet, with half of Australian households having at least one dog (49%, up from 40% in 2019 and in line with 48% in 2022). Cats continue to be Australia's second most popular pet, with 34% of households having at least one cat (up from 27% in 2019 and in line with 33% in 2022).

Consistent with previous AMA surveys, around one in ten Australian households have fish (11%) and/or birds (9%), while a very small minority own small mammals (3%), reptiles (3%) or other types of pets (1%).

Among those who have at least one pet in the household, 64% have just one type of pet, 25% have two types of pets and 11% have three or more types. This is largely consistent with previous years.

As noted in previous years, the number of each type of pet owned varies depending on the animal. For example, dog and cat owners have on average 1.4 and 1.6 of each – whereas owners of fish tend to have around 10 on average and owners of birds have 4.4 on average.

When extrapolated against the number of households in Australia, the survey data suggests that 7.8m households have pets and we collectively have around 31.6 million pets - outnumbering the 27.3 million people living in Australia[2].

Following a boom in first time pet owners post-pandemic (from 13% in 2021 to 20% in 2022), the proportion of first-time pet owners has remained consistent in 2025 (20% of current pet owners). Four in five pet owners (80%) have had pets before, with 56% classifying themselves as experienced pet owners.

"The past 12 months as a pet owner have been a heartwarming journey filled with unconditional love, responsibility, and countless joyful moments."

Bird, Cat, Fish, Small mammal and Reptile owner, Queensland

[2]Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National State and Territory Population*, www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/sep-2024#key-statistics

Pet Ownership in Australia, 2025				
Pet type	**Household penetration** (%)	**Total owner households** ('000s)	**Animals personally own or live with** (A7. = A+B) (average)	**Total pet animals** ('000s)
Dogs	49.3	5,241.5	1.4	7,367.3
Cats	33.6	3,567.0	1.6	5,834.7
Fish	11.5	1,219.5	10.0	12,138.9
Birds	9.5	1,005.8	4.4	4,447.9
Small mammals	3.0	315.1	2.4	769.5
Reptiles	2.7	290.1	1.8	511.9
Other pets	0.9	95.9	6.0	571.8
Pet owners	**73.0**	**7,750.0**		**31,641.9**
Non-owners	**26.8**	**2,844.8**		

A7. Which of these pets, if any, do you have in your household? A8X. How many pets do you have? A. Number I personally own. B. Number I live with but don't personally own/care for. Base: All participants (n=2,450). Extrapolations based on survey data and ABS population and household estimates and based on number of pets personally own plus the number of pets they live with but don't personally own or care for. See technical notes for further information.

"I love my cats, they are my life and bring me so much joy."

Cat owner,
New South Wales

"My pets are my friends and my companions and help cheer me up. I feel they understand me. They give me a purpose for living my life."

Cat and Dog owner,
Tasmania

"My dog has improved both my mental and physical health significantly over the past 12 months."

Dog owner,
New South Wales

Who are Australia's pet owners?

The following table shows the specific nuances in who are more or less likely to own pets. It also suggests that if you visit a younger, higher earning rural household with kids and a mortgage, you can be very confident of finding at least one pet living there too.

As seen in previous reports, many of these traits of pet owners and non-owners tend to 'cluster'. For example, older Australians are more likely to live alone, be empty-nesters, be retired and own their home outright.

Similarly, those in larger households also tend to be families with a mortgage and with higher incomes. As in the past, a notable exception is a higher propensity for rural households to have pets despite being more likely to have lower incomes – bucking an overall correlation between income and pet ownership.

In fact, pet ownership rates are highly comparable amongst those who say they are having some or a lot of financial difficulty (74%) compared to those who are doing well and making ends meet (73%).

Pet owners 73% nationally - are more likely to be...		**Non-owners** 27% nationally - are more likely to be...	
Aged 18 to 24 Aged 25 to 29 Aged 30 to 39	**90%** **85%** **81%**	Aged 60 or over	**43%**
Families with kids in the home	**85%**	Those living alone / couples without kids	**35%**
Mortgage holders	**85%**	Own the home outright	**34%**
Those in households with three or more people	**84%**	Those living alone or with one other person	**35%**
Those who identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community	**84%**	Those who do not identify as part of the LGBTQI+ community	**28%**
Households with incomes of $100,000 or more per annum	**81%**	Households with incomes of less than $50,000 per annum	**40%**
Those in rural areas	**81%**	Those in regional areas	**31%**
Employed by other people Studying	**82%** **90%**	Retired Unemployed	**45%** **37%**
Those in larger free-standing homes	**78%**	Those living in an apartment or unit	**43%**
Those who do not receive any social security benefits	**78%**	Those who do receive social security benefits	**36%**
Not culturally or linguistically diverse	**77%**	Culturally or linguistically diverse	**34%**
Males	**75%**	Females	**30%**
Household member does not require regular care	**74%**	Household member requires regular care	**40%**

Dogs

Dogs continue to be our most popular pets with half of Australian households owning a dog (49%) – equating to an estimated 7.4 million pet dogs nationwide. Families with children under 18 are far more likely to have a dog (66%), particularly compared to those living alone (34%) or couples without kids (43%). They are also more common among households with higher incomes of $100,000 or more (62% vs. 41% among lower income households).

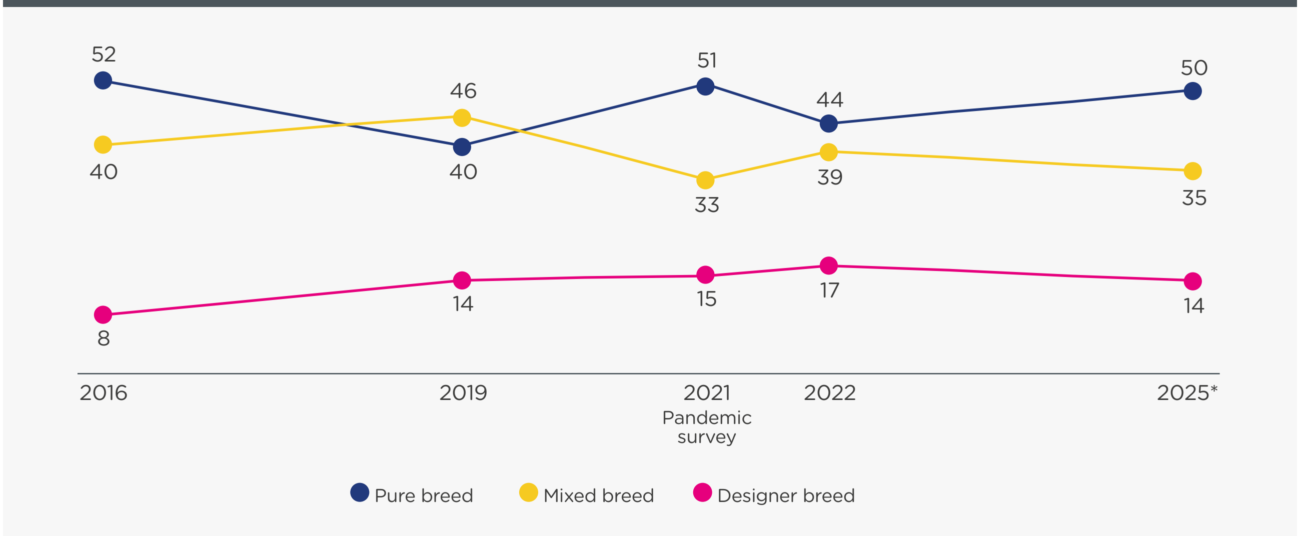
While dog-owning households have 1.4 dogs on average, the large majority (70%) have only one dog, 23% have two and 6% have three or more dogs.

Dog sizes remain quite mixed. Around two in five dogs (38%) are small dogs weighing up to 10kg, including 9% that weigh up to only 4kg (though some of these may still be puppies) while 38% weigh 10 to 25kg. One in four (24%) are large dogs weighing more than 25kg.

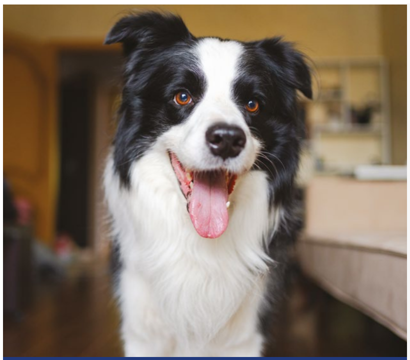
Most dog owners keep their dogs both inside and outside of the home (79%) while 13% keep them indoors only and 8% keep them outdoors only. Notably, dogs that are older than 15 years are more likely to be kept inside only (23%) compared to younger dogs (13%).

Half of Australian dogs (50%) are purebred with certificates and one in three (35%) are mixed breed. After a spike in 2019, rates of designer breeds (crossed between two purebred parents) have remained fairly consistent in 2025, at 14%.

Trends in dog breed popularity (2016-2022) (%)



*D2. What type of dog is [name]? Base: Dog owners, 2016 (n=1,059), 2019 (n=1,013), 2021 (n=648), 2022 (n=1,218), *People who personally own dogs 2025 (n=1,188)*



Common breeds named by dog owners include Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds, Border Collies, Kelpies and Jack Russells.

Pure breeds

Breeders have remained the top channel for acquiring a pure-bred dog (53%) followed by family, friends or neighbours (18%) or pet shops (13%).

Around 23% of all purebred dogs were obtained for free, up from 14% in 2022. Among those who paid for their dog, the majority paid $1,000 or more (56%), while 20% paid between $500 and $999 and 24% paid less than $500.The average cost among those who paid for their pure-bred dog was $1,551, slightly less than $1,731 in 2022.

Consistent with the 2022 survey, companionship is the number one reason for getting a pure breed dog (59%), followed by the breed having a good temperament (32%), for mental health reasons (28%) or for relaxation (25%). Owners of purebred dogs were significantly more likely to say they obtained their dog for security (17% vs 11% among other types of dogs).

Those living in an urban or suburban area (52%) were significantly more likely to have a pure breed dog compared to those living in a regional or rural area (43%).

Poodle crosses were the most popular designer breeds mentioned, particularly cavoodles, labradoodles and groodles.

Designer breeds

Breeders are still, by and large, the most common avenue for acquiring a designer dog (51%, up from 41% in 2022, followed by pet shops (16%).

Around 25% of all designer dogs were obtained for free, up from 15% in 2022. The cost of designer breeds was similar to pure breeds in that the majority of those who paid for one paid $1,000 or more (55%), 23% paid between $500 and $999 and 22% paid less than $500. The average cost among those who paid for their designer-bred dog was $1,793, slightly more than $1,534 in 2022 but nearly double what people were paying in 2019 ($985).

Similar to pure breeds, the most common reason for getting designer breeds was companionship (53%). However, designer breeds were more likely to have been chosen for their size (35% vs. 20% non-designer breeds) or for their low-shedding or hypoallergenic qualities (22% vs 8%).

Mixed-breed dog owners named a range of different breeds, commonly mentioning mixes of Kelpies, Maltese, Jack Russells, Staffies, Chihuahuas and Labradors. Notably, many mixed-breed dog owners were uncertain about the exact breeds within their dogs.

Mixed breeds

These dogs were far more likely to have been adopted i.e. from an animal shelter or as a lost or stray pet (29% vs. 8% among those with pure or designer breeds). Similarly, they were also more likely to be acquired through personal connections (e.g. inherited or through family, friends or neighbours - 30% vs 20%) - and much less likely to be obtained from breeders (22% vs 53%).

Not surprisingly, given that mixed breeds are more likely to be adopted, around 30% were obtained for free (compared to 23% among other breeds). Among those who did pay, mixed breed owners were also far less likely to pay over $1,000 for their dog (27% vs. 55% among other breeds) and on average are spending around $900 – almost half of what pure breed or designer dog owners paid ($1,600 and $1,800 respectively).

While the top reasons for acquisition were consistent with other dogs (55% said for companionship, 26% said mental health), mixed breeds were much more likely to have been adopted (24% vs 8% other breed types).

Cats

Cats remain the second most popular pet, with a third of Australian households owning a cat (34%), and the estimated number of pet cats at 5.8 million. People aged 30 to 34 (42%) and 40 to 59 (38%) are more likely to have a cat, as are families with children aged under 18 (42%).

In line with the 2022 survey, cat-owning households each have 1.6 cats on average, however the majority (64%) have only one cat, a quarter (25%) have two cats and the remainder (11%) have three or more cats.

Consistent with the previous wave, the top reasons for getting a cat included companionship (48%), rescue (32%), relaxation (23%) or for mental health benefits (23%).

Two in five cats in Australia (40%) were obtained in the last two years. Unlike for dogs, cats are more likely to have been adopted from an animal shelter or a lost or stray cat (41%) or they were given to people by a friend, family member, neighbour or through inheritance (28%). Around one in ten obtained their cat either from a breeder (13%) or from a pet shop (11%).

Among those who have cats, 61% described themselves as experienced pet owners which is notably higher than other types of pet owners (55%).

Half of cat owners keep them both indoors and outdoors (50%). Of note is that there has been an increasing trend in the proportion of cat owners who keep them indoors only (36% in 2019 to 42% in 2022 to 48% this year) potentially reflecting stricter cat curfews in some states or growing concerns about the dangers of keeping them outside. The majority of those who keep their cats outdoors for some of the time leave them free to roam (74%) with the remaining 26% confining them to a lead or a cat run.

Fish

Fish ownership has remained steady with around one in ten Australian households having pet fish (11%), with the estimated number of pet fish at 12.1 million. Fish ownership is most common among 18–24-year-olds (17%) and 35- to 39-year-olds (19%) and families with kids under 18 years of age (16%). Interestingly, they are also more common among those who live in share housing (20%).

Households that own fish have around 10 fish on average (median of 4 fish per household) with 13% having only one fish, and 28% having more than 10.

The most common types of fish held by Australian households are cold water tank or fishbowl varieties (46%), followed by tropical freshwater fish (32%) and these types of fish are largely kept indoors only (86% and 85% of households respectively). One in four households (25%) keep pond fish with 60% keeping them outdoors only and 25% keeping them both indoors and outdoors.

The most common motivation for getting fish remains relaxation (49%) following by for a hobby (37%) and due to them being low maintenance (30%).

Birds

One in ten Australian households (9%) have birds as pets, representing an estimated 4.4 million pet birds. Households in a larger, free-standing home (11%) are more likely to own birds compared to those in apartments or smaller, semi-detached homes (7%). Birds are also more common among larger households with five or more people (16%) compared to smaller households (9%).

The average number of birds per bird-owning household is 4.4 (median of 2) with 31% of households having just one bird, 30% having two birds and the remaining 39% having three or more (11% had 10 or more).

The most popular type of birds owned were caged indoor birds (kept by 62% of all bird-owning households). One in five bird owners keep chickens (20%), however this represents a significant drop since 2022 (34%). Ownership of aviary birds continue to decline, from 37% in 2019, to 31% in 2022 and now 26%.

The most common reasons for keeping birds are consistent with the previous survey and include: for their company (37%), for a hobby (30%), relaxation (27%) and for mental health reasons (23%). Those who own chickens were significantly more likely to say they obtained birds for their eggs (73% vs. 10% among other types of birds). Those with aviary birds were more likely to say they decided to get them to breed them (18% vs. 7% among other types of birds).

Small mammals

Whilst ownership of small mammals remains the lowest of all pet types at 3% of Australian households, there are still an estimated 770,000 held nationally. Mammal-owning households each have 2.4 on average (with a median of 2), with 48% having only one animal, 27% having two animals, and the remaining 25% having three or more.

In line with previous years, the most popular small mammals to keep as pets are rabbits (51% of small mammal-owning households) and guinea pigs (43%), followed by ferrets (18%) and mice or rats (17%).

The most common reasons for keeping small mammals remain companionship (34%), for a hobby (33%) and for relaxation (32%). Notably, substantially more small mammal owners are getting them for mental health reasons (29%, up from 8% in 2022).

Reptiles

Ownership rates of reptiles are similar to small mammals, with 3% of Australian households keeping pet reptiles, and an estimated total of 512,000 pet reptiles nationally. Households in South Australia are more likely to own reptiles (5%) compared to those living in other states or territories (2%).

On average, 1.8 reptiles (median of 1) can be found in reptile-owning households – with 50% owning only one, 34% owning two reptiles, and the remaining 16% owning three or more. Reptiles are also more common among households with five or more people (6%) compared to smaller households (2%).

The most popular reptiles among reptile owning households are turtles and tortoises (38%), snakes (32%) and lizards (29%) - followed by frogs and salamanders (18%).

The most common reasons for keeping reptiles are for a hobby (24%), their relatively low-maintenance nature (25%), for relaxation (19%) or for their mental health (15%).

Pet adoption

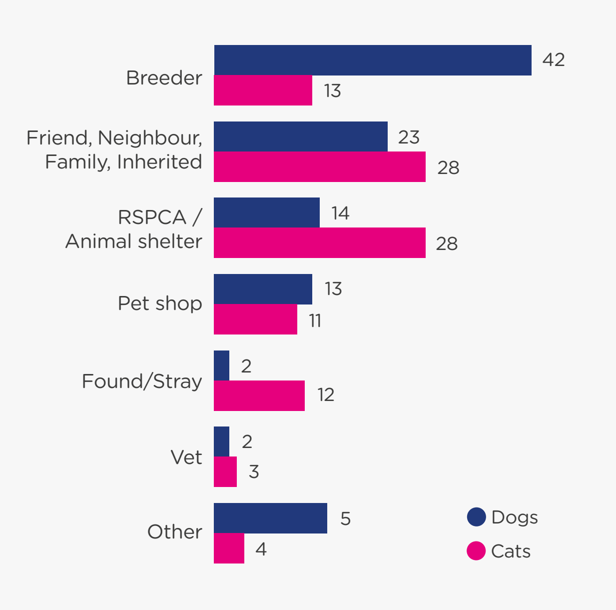
When considering where people got their cats and dogs from, some substantial differences can be seen between cats vs. dogs. The large majority of cats were adopted (not obtained from a breeder or pet shop), at 75% compared with 45% of dogs – which are far more likely to have come from a breeder (42% vs just 13% of cats). This is not surprising given there are more than twice as many stray cats than dogs[3].

Examining demographic trends across both dog and cat owners, higher adoption rates are evident among more experienced pet owners (48% vs 41% of less experienced dog owners and 79% vs 70% of less experienced cat owners).

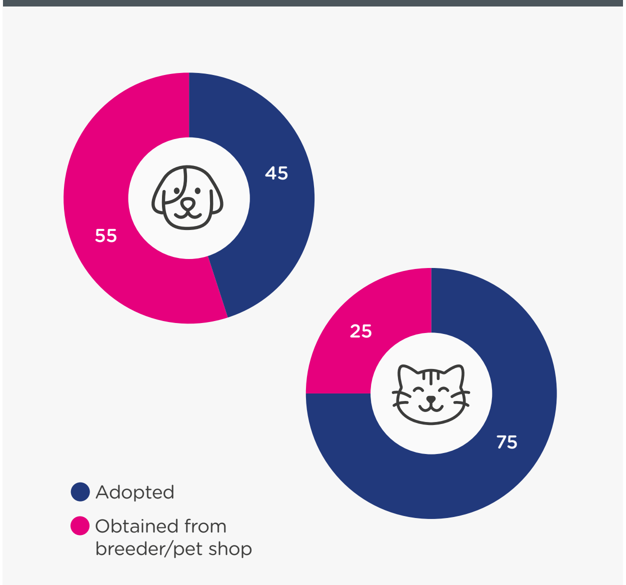
Among dog owners specifically, higher adoption rates are evident among those with higher financial vulnerability (52% v 41% of those with lower vulnerability).

While among cat owners, higher adoption rates are evident among a number of different cohorts: pet owners aged 60+ years (85% v 73% of younger pet owners), female pet owners (81% v 70% of male pet owners), renters (81% v 73% of homeowners), and those with a school or trade level of education (79% vs 71% of university educated pet owners).

Where dogs and cats were obtained (%)



Dogs and cats that we adopted (not obtained from a breeder/pet shop) (%)



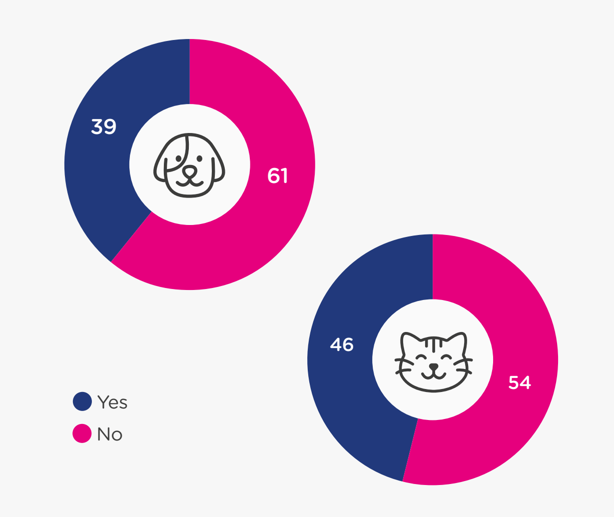
C2/D3. Where did you get [name]? Base: Cat owners 2025 (n=779) and dog owners 2025 (n=1188)

"My dog has completely changed my life. It has showed me the value in having a pet, he has been such a joy to look after and brings me so much happiness. He has improved my mental health and just my day to day."

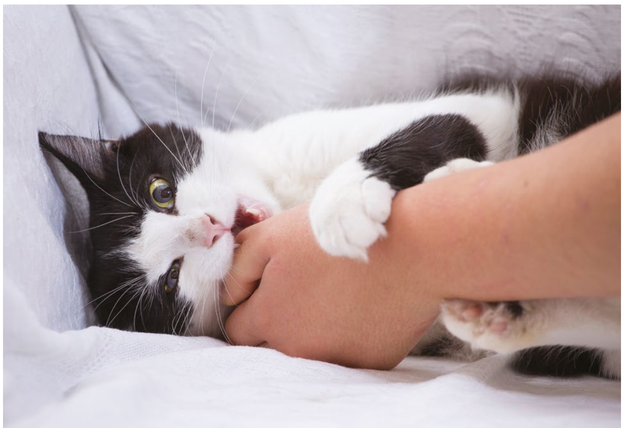
Dog owner, New South Wales

[3] State of Pet Homelessness Project, *State of Pet Homelessness Report (2024)*, cms.stateofpethomelessness.com/s3media/2024-01/soph-australia.pdf?VersionId=OmvWhR0AdsyoL.gfPpBf2QXUAqt.16Tp

Looked into or considered adopting a dog or cat (%)



C2A/D3A. Did you look into or consider a rescue cat/dog when you got [name]? Base: Cat owners who did not rescue their animal 2025 (n=190), Dog owners who did rescue their animal 2025 (n=662)



"I love it, I have grown up with pets my whole life so I don't know any different. They are the greatest friend you could ever have."

Cat and Dog owner, Western Australia

Among cat and dog owners who did not adopt their pets, the majority (61%) of dog owners and more than half (54%) of cat owners had not looked into or considered adopting a dog or cat.

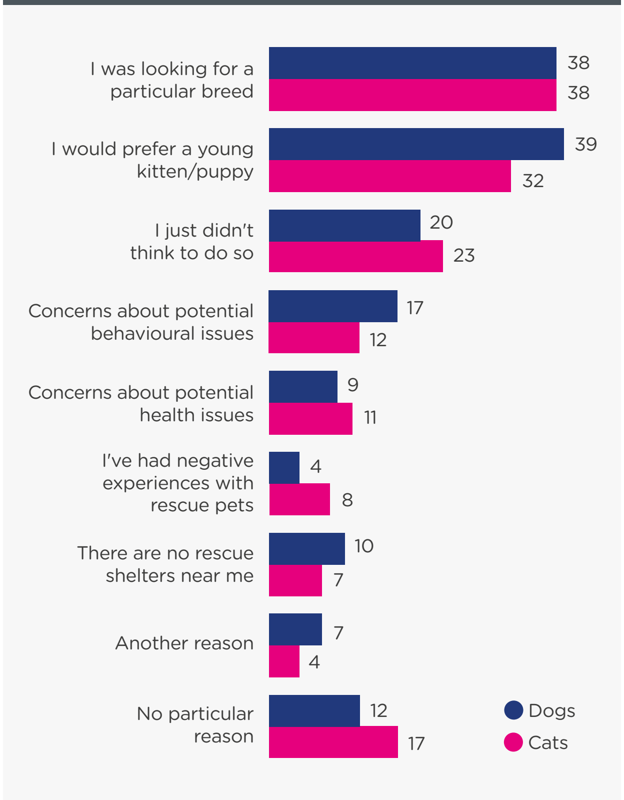
Looking at different demographics, those more likely to consider an adopted dog or cat included: those aged 25-39 (48% of dog owners, 63% of cat owners) and dog owners on household salaries of $100,000 or more (46% vs 32% of those on lower household salaries).

The top reason among cat owners for not considering adopting a cat was their interest in acquiring a particular breed of cat (38%), this also being one of the top reasons for dog owners to not consider adopting a dog (38%). Among dog owners, preference for a puppy over an adult dog was the top reason (39%). Females were more likely to be looking for a particular breed of cat (54% of females vs 27% of males) or dog (43% of females vs 32% males), as were middle aged to older cat owners (51% vs 21% of those aged 18-39 years).

For 40% of cat owners and 32% of dog owners, there was either no particular reason for not considering adopting a pet, or it was just something they didn't think to look into. This was more prominent among male dog owners (37% vs 27% of female dog owners).

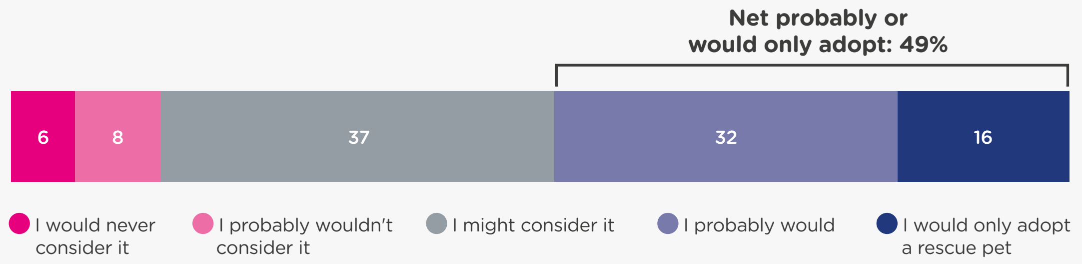
These findings suggest communications promoting adoption of animals should highlight that they can cater to all types of preferences around breeds and pet ages.

Reasons for not considering adopting a rescue dog or cat (%)



C2B/D3B. Are there any particular reasons why you did not consider a rescue dog/cat? Base: Cat owners who did not rescue their cat or consider a rescue cat, 2025 (n=100), Dog owners who did rescue their dog or consider a rescue dog, 2025 (n=400)

Which statement best matches your view on adopting a rescue pet? (%)

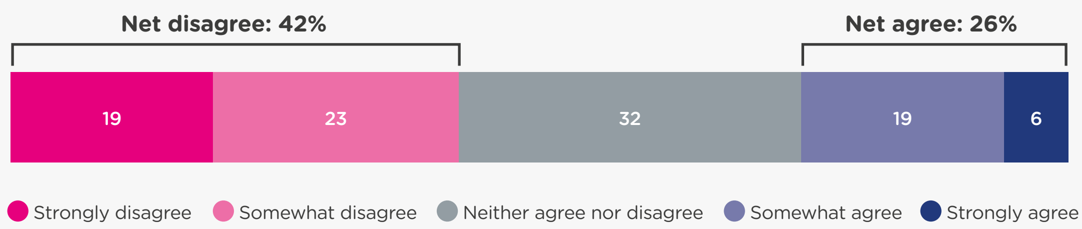


F36: Which of the following applies most to you in relation to rescue pets, say if you were thinking about getting a new pet? Base: Pet owners (n=1,848).

Nearly half (49%) of pet owners say they would probably (32%) or would only (16%) adopt if they were thinking about getting a new pet. More than one in three (37%) said they might consider adopting an animal and just a minority (14%) probably would not (8%) or would never (6%) consider this.

- Those more likely to say they would probably or only adopt an animal included more experienced pet owners (56% vs 40% of less experienced pet owners), females (54% vs 44% of males) and those with higher financial vulnerability (53% vs 46% of those with lower vulnerability).

Do you agree that it's better to buy from breeders or pet shops because rescue animals tend to have health or behaviour problems? (%)

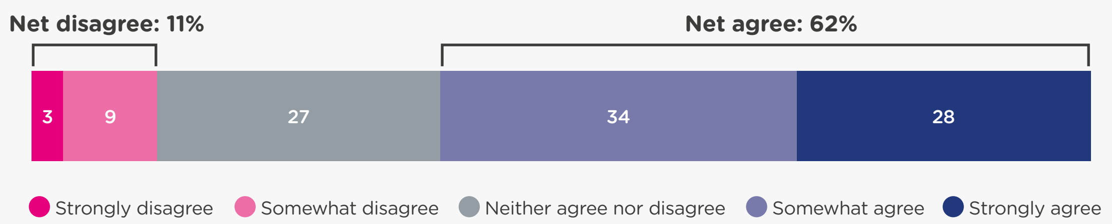


F37_A. Do you personally agree or disagree with these things other people have said? It's better to buy from breeders or pet shops because rescue animals tend to have health or behaviour problems. Base: Pet owners (n=1,848).

Only around one in four (26%) pet owners agree that 'it's better to buy from breeders or pet shops because rescue animals tend to have health or behaviour problems'. Around two in five (42%) disagree with this statement, however 32% are on the fence, saying they neither agree nor disagree.

- Looking at demographics, agreement with this barrier-related statement was more prevalent among: younger pet owners aged 18-39 (31% vs 21% of those aged 40+), male pet owners (30% vs 21% of females), university-educated pet owners (33% vs 20% of those with school or trade education-level education), those living in urban or inner city areas (34% vs 23% of those in suburban, regional or rural areas), and those with higher household incomes of $100k or more (31% vs 22% of those with lower household incomes). Notably, close to half of those who had required financial assistance for veterinary care in the last 12 months (46% vs 23% of those who had not required assistance) also agreed.
- In contrast, disagreement that rescue animals tend to have health or behaviour problems was higher among more experienced pet owners (48% vs 34% of those less experienced, those aged 60+ years (47% vs 40% of those aged younger) and female pet owners (49% vs 36% males).

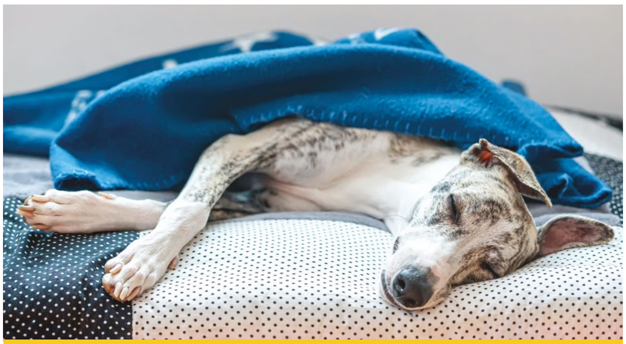
Do you agree that there are so many animals in shelters waiting for adoption, there's no need to buy from breeders or pet shops? (%)



F37_B. Do you personally agree or disagree with these things other people have said? There are so many animals in shelters waiting for adoption, there's no need to buy from breeders or pet shops. Base: Pet owners (n=1,848).

A majority of around three in five pet owners (62%) agree there's 'no need to buy from breeders or pet shops when there are so many animals in shelters waiting for adoption'. Just 11% disagreed with this statement, and around one in four (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

- Agreement was higher among: more experienced pet owners (67% vs 55% of less experienced pet owners), middle aged and older pet owners aged 40 years and over (67% vs 55% of younger pet owners), females (66% vs 58% of male pet owners) and those with school or trade education levels (64% vs 59% of university educated pet owners).
- In contrast, disagreement was higher among those aged under 40 years (16% vs 8% of middle aged and older) and less experienced (14% vs 9% of more experienced) pet owners.



"I love my greyhound more than anything in the world, he was a retired racing dog at the RSPCA when I adopted him, I live for my dog."

Dog owner, New South Wales

Factors to consider when adopting a pet

With animal shelters across Australia seeing increased numbers of pets being surrendered, adopting a pet can be a great way to bring a new companion into your home while also helping an animal in need . Animals of all species, breeds and ages are available through shelters, community rescue or adoption organisations or vet clinics. These pets may have ended up in these organisations for a variety of reasons – being adopted into a loving, stable home is the best outcome for them to live a happy, healthy life.

By working with your local organisations and vet, you can help find the right companion for you – that suits your lifestyle and needs.

Whether you are considering adopting or purchasing a pet, here are some factors to consider:

Species and breed

- Consider what type of pet might suit your home. For example, do you live in a house or an apartment, and will the pet have access to outdoor space? Do you live with children or other people? Do you have any other pets? Will your pet have company when you are not home?
- Consider the time you have available and your lifestyle. For example, younger pets may be more energetic, while older pets may prefer a slower pace of life. Some pets need more grooming or shed their coat more than others.

Temperament

- Discuss your lifestyle, family situation, home and the sorts of traits you would like in a new pet when you visit the shelter or rehoming organisation.
- Animals can end up in shelters for a variety of reasons – and sometimes this may relate to behavioural concerns that their previous owners were not able to manage. If you aren't confident about training your new pet, seek advice and assistance from your vet or veterinary behaviourist.

Health

- As for any pet, be aware of any pre-existing health conditions and ongoing management needs. All animals are assessed by a veterinarian before being rehomed through a shelter or adoption organisation. Pre-existing health issues don't mean an animal won't be a great companion – many health conditions can be managed easily with assistance from your veterinarian.
- Most pets will be desexed, vaccinated and treated for parasites like worms and fleas before being rehomed. Its important to keep up to date with these preventative health measures to keep them healthy and well.
- Talk to your vet about health considerations associated with certain breeds. The Australian Veterinary Association partnered with the RSPCA to develop a joint initiative called "Love is Blind" which provides more information about welfare concerns associated with certain breeds.
- Also consider your own health – do you have any allergies or health conditions that might impact your ability to live with or care for a certain type or breed of pet?

Integration with other pets

- Discuss any pets you already have with the shelter or rehoming facility.
- Some animals enjoy or may need the company of another animal, while others may prefer to be an only pet.
- Animals should not be forced to live with each other if they are incompatible – this can have detrimental impacts on either animal's wellbeing or safety.
- It can be helpful to introduce new pets to each other slowly and with supervision.
- Seek professional advice on other steps to take in introducing a new pet to your home that considers your specific context.

Cost

- Be aware of ongoing costs associated with having a pet, including food, routine veterinary care, pet insurance or funds for emergencies, equipment, training costs etc.
- Some pets cost more than others – always consider your budget before adopting a pet [5].

[5] Vet Voice, Adopting a rescue cat or dog, www.vetvoice.com.au/ec/pet-ownership/adopting-a-rescue/

4.

Pets and people

In the face of turbulent times and a cost-of-living crisis, pets have remained a reliable source of love and happiness in the lives of Australians over the last few years, with a consistent 86% of owners saying their pets have positively impacted their lives.

Pets are an important part of our lives and the way we talk and engage with our pets reflects this, with 'pet-parenting' behaviours and activities becoming popular ways to connect with our pets. For many, companionship remains a key reason for acquiring a pet, with an increase in pet ownership for mental health benefits also observed this year.

If we find ourselves unable look after our pets in the longer term, most owners would opt to give their pet to someone they know such as a family member or friend. However, compared to previous surveys more pet owners would now also consider alternatives such as donating their pet to a charity, a person in need, or a healthcare service if faced with this difficult choice.

Benefits and impacts of pet ownership

When asked to describe how they have felt about being a pet owner in the last 12 months, sentiment was overwhelmingly positive (90%) with pet owners describing feelings of happiness, love, pride, gratitude and contentment. There was a small minority of people who described a more negative experience (4%), such as 'expensive' or 'sad'.

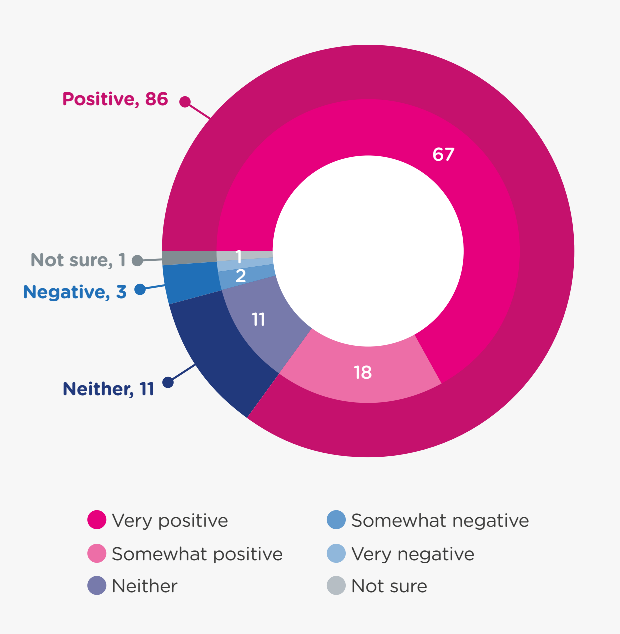
"I love my pets they are a part of my family, they are like my children."

Bird, Cat and Dog owner, Tasmania

In a single word, how would you describe the way you feel about being a pet owner in the past 12 months?

Z1. In a single word, how would you describe the way you feel about being a pet owner in the past 12 months? Base: Pet Owners (n=1,848)

Impact of pet ownership on life (%)



F18. On balance, what kind of impact – positive or negative – has being a pet owner had on your life? Base: Pet owners (n=1,848).

In line with previous findings, the vast majority (86%) of pet owners feel having pets has impacted their lives positively (on par with 85% in 2022 and 88% in 2019). This trend towards a largely positive impact was noted regardless of pet type.

The proportion of pet owners who feel that pet ownership has impacted them negatively remains stable at 3%. Pet owners who have accessed financial assistance in the last 12 months to cover the cost of veterinary care (16%), and less experienced pet owners (5%) were more likely to report a negative impact on their life.

Overall, the people who own pets continue to be strong advocates for the benefits of pet ownership. More than half (56% and in line with 59% in 2022) are 'promoters' of pet ownership - i.e. giving a rating of 9-10 out of 10 when asked how likely they are to recommend getting a pet to a friend or family member.

While the 'Net Promoter Score' (NPS) has fallen slightly to +39% from +45% in 2022, this still remains a strong score and indicates a very healthy 'brand image' for pets and pet ownership – especially when also considering that 43% gave a top rating of 10.

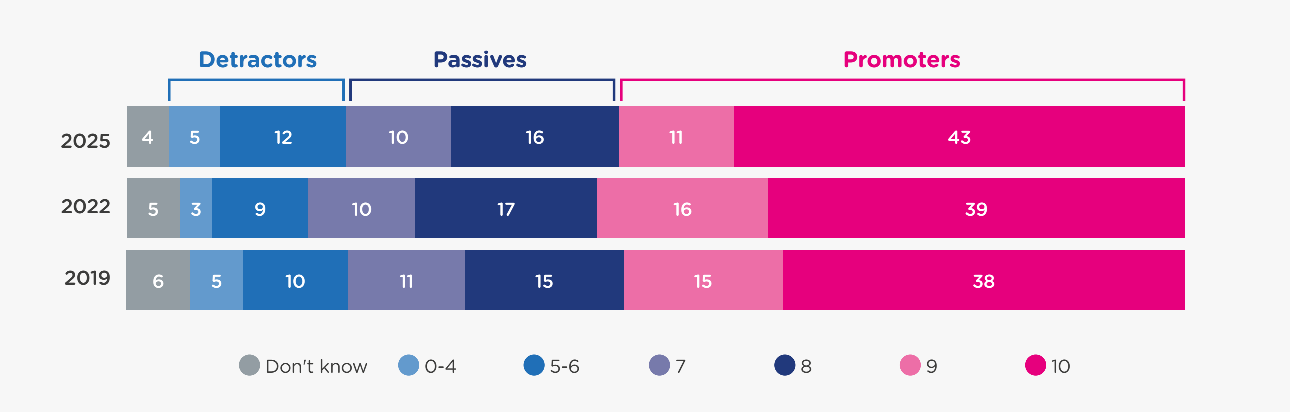
This decrease in NPS reflects a significant rise in the proportion of 'detractors' (with 17% giving a rating of 0-6 out of 10, up from 13% in 2022).

Those more likely to be detractors included:

- pet owners who have accessed financial assistance to cover veterinary care in the last 12 months (25%)
- those aged between 18-24 (23%)
- those who are less experienced pet owners (22%)

These results suggest that recent increases in financial stress and the prevalence of less experienced pet owners may be contributing to a rise in detractors.

Likelihood to recommend getting a pet (Net Promoter Score): +39 (%)



F20. All things considered, how likely would you be to recommend getting a pet to a friend or family member who didn't have one? Base: Pet owners 2025 (n=1,848), 2022 (1,724), 2019 (n=1,221)

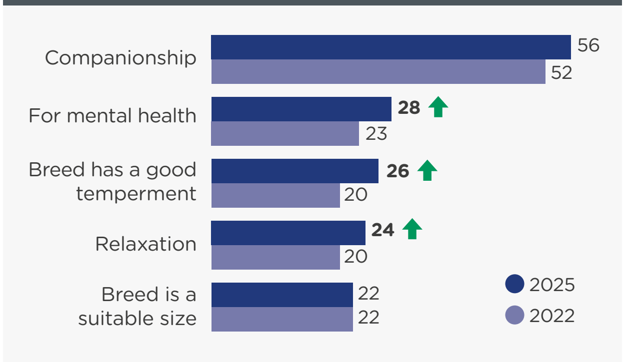
Reasons for getting a pet

Typical reasons for getting a pet include companionship, to rescue them and give them a home, as a hobby, and for relaxation or mental health.

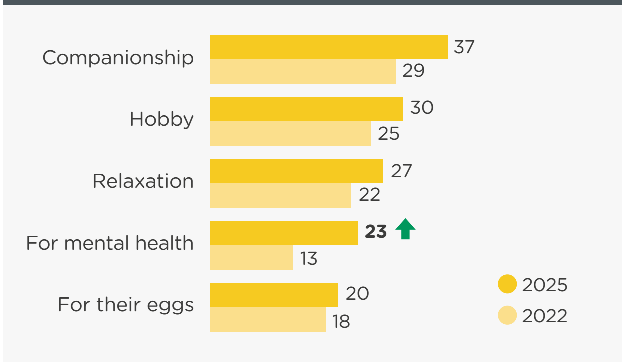
In line with 2022, companionship is the most common reason for getting a dog (56%), cat (48%) or bird (37%), with small mammal-owners in 2025 also citing this as their top reason (34%).

The top reason for getting a fish was relaxation (49%) while for reptiles it is due to their low maintenance qualities (25%). In particular, acquiring small mammals, birds and dogs for mental health reasons has increased since 2022. Breed-specific reasons also remain common considerations, including certain animals being lower-maintenance or a more suitable temperament or size, with around one-in-four dog owners (26%) citing good temperament as a factor.

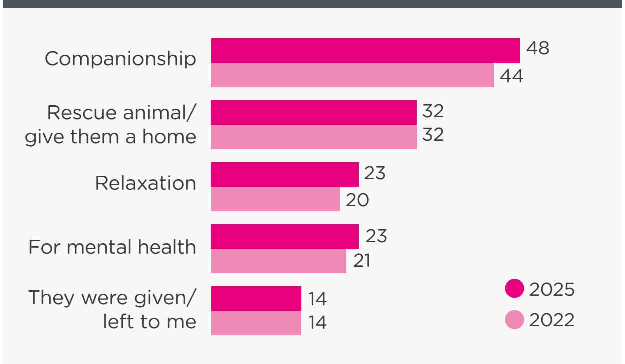
Top five reasons for getting a dog (%)



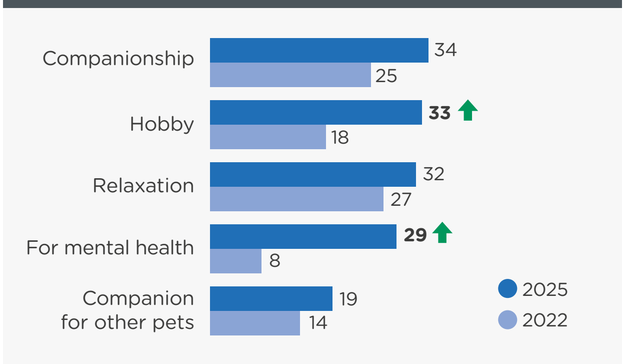
Top five reasons for getting a bird (%)



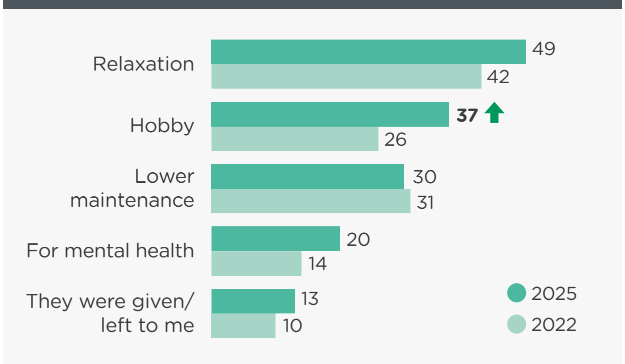
Top five reasons for getting a cat (%)



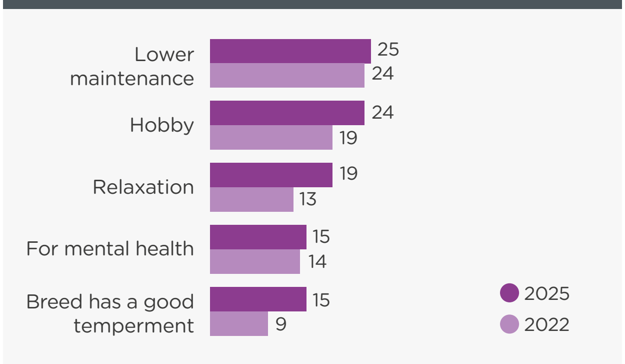
Top five reasons for getting a small mammal (%)



Top five reasons for getting fish (%)



Top five reasons for getting a reptile (%)



D9B, C8B, B3B, E5B, H2B, I3B. What were the reasons that made you decide to get your pet?
Base: Dog owners (2025 n=1,188, 2022 n=1,215), Cat owners (2025 n=779 2022 n=838), Bird owners (2025 n=207, 2022 n=265), Fish owners (2025 n=275, 2022 n=309), Reptile owners (2025 n=69, 2022 n=86), Small mammal owners (2025 n=65 2022 n=93).

↑ Significantly higher than 2022

Trends in what we're calling our dogs and cats

Short, sharp and catchy names continue to dominate for dogs and cats in 2025. The top dog names submitted by our survey participants this year included Bella, Buddy, Milo, Ruby, and Daisy - while popular cat names included Luna, Tiger, Coco, Kitty and Fluffy. Notably, there were names which were commonly used for *both* dogs and cats including: Bob, Lucy, Rocky, Jack, Milo, Toby, Daisy, Coco, Luna and Tilly.

Across both cats and dogs many are human names, reflecting a tendency to treat pets as family members. Some common examples included: Harry, George, Bob, Jack, Charlie, Lucy, Daisy and Ruby. In 2025, we are also seeing a trend towards some more unique and quirky names, including some food-related ones like: Taco, Whisky, Cookie, Honey, Peanut, Brownie and Oreo.

Popular dog names in 2025

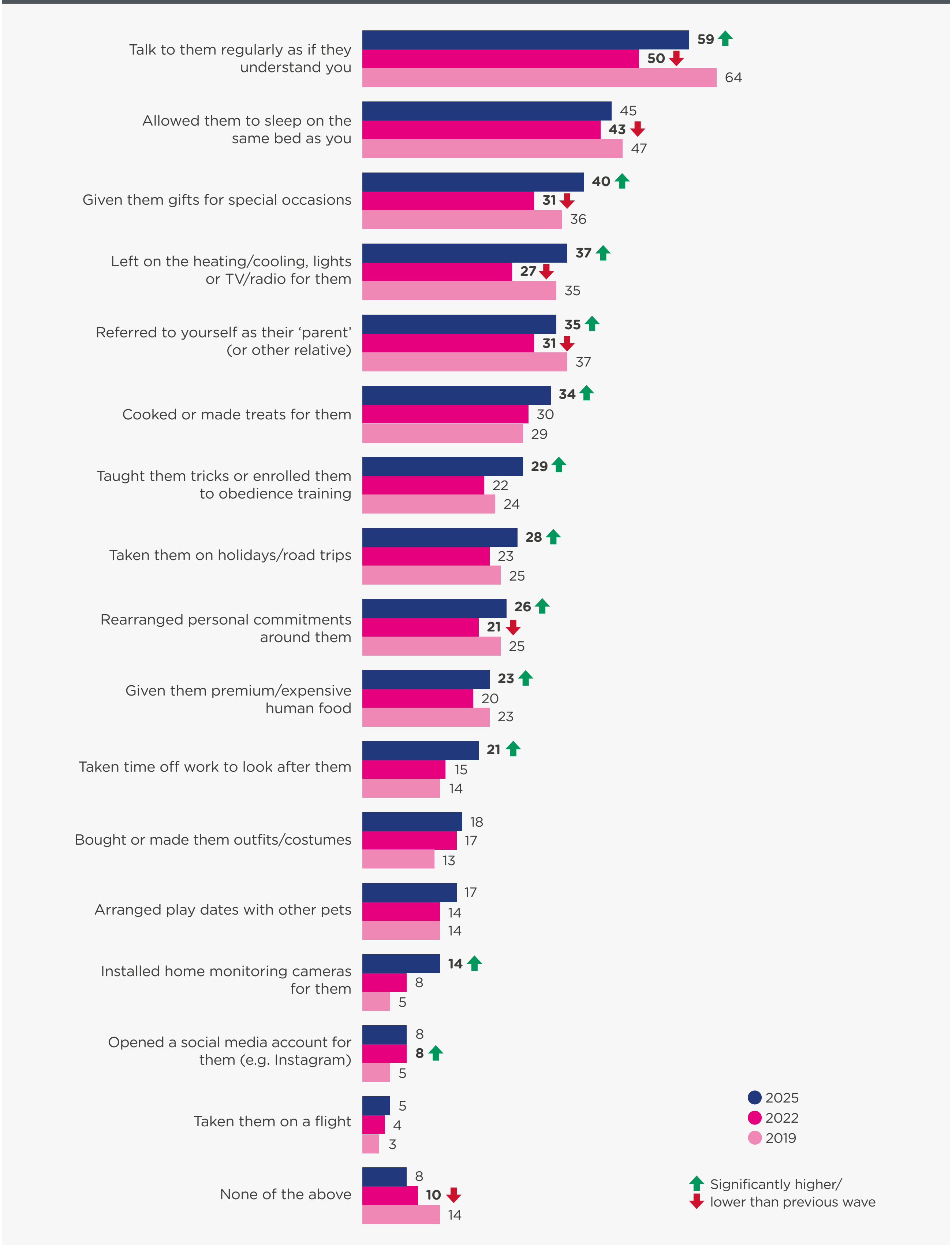
A9dogs. What is the name of your dog?
Base: People who personally own dogs 2025 (n=1,188)

Popular cat names in 2025

A9cats. What is the name of your cat?
Base: People who personally own cats 2025 (n=779)

Confessions of pet parents

Activities done with pet (%)



F17 - Have you ever done any of the following for any of your pet/s? Base: Pet owners (2025 n=1,848, 2022 n=1,724, 2019 n-=1,221)

The popularity of pet parenting activities remains high, with participation in many activities bouncing back to pre-pandemic levels this year.

Pet parenting activities that have continued to rise in popularity this year include cooking or making treats for them (34% vs. 30% in 2022), taking them on holidays or road trips (28% vs. 23%) and teaching them tricks or enrolling them in obedience training (29% vs. 22%).

Pet parenting activities that have *regained* popularity since 2022 (back to pre-pandemic levels) include talking to their pets 'as if' they understand (59% up from 50% in 2022), gift giving on special occasions (40% vs. 31%), leaving on the heating / cooling / lights / TV / radio (37% vs. 27%), referring to themselves as their mum or dad (35% vs. 31%), and rearranging personal commitments around them (26% vs. 21%).

Pet owners are also more likely to take time off work to look after their pets (21% vs. 15% in 2022), and to install home monitoring cameras (14% vs. 8%) compared to three years ago, perhaps due to an increase in workers heading back to the office on a regular basis in 2025 but wanting to check in on them during the day.

Those more likely to do *any* of these activities included:

- pet owners on higher incomes: 95% of those on household incomes of $100,000 or more said they'd done at least one of the activities asked about in the chart, compared with 89% of those on lower incomes of less than $50,000
- those with multiple types of pets (94% vs 90% of those with only one kind of pet)
- families with younger children under 12 years (95% vs 90% of couples with no children)

On the other hand, these 'special' pet activities were less common among:

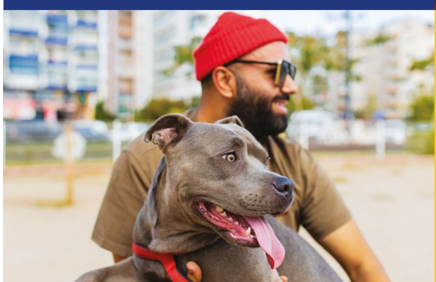
- pet owners who live in suburban or regional / rural areas (10% said they'd done *none* of those activities, compared to 4% in urban or inner city areas)
- those on lower household incomes (11% of those on household incomes of $50,000 or less vs 5% of those on incomes of $100,000 or more)
- those aged 60+ (15% vs 7% of those aged under 60)

"Oscar is a very sweet dog and has brought a lot a joy and happiness in our lives."

Dog owner, Western Australia

"I need the company of my beloved quaker parrot. He brings me lots of joy."

Bird owner, Queensland



"I can have a reassuring cuddle with my ferret and a chat when I feel a bit lonely."

Small mammal owner, Tasmania

"As I have reached over 70, I value a pet as a companion."

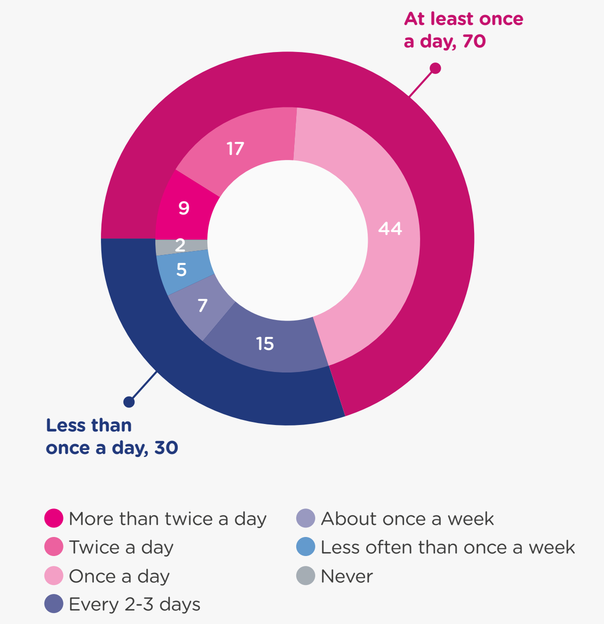
Bird and Dog owner, Western Australia

"They have helped improve my mental health because I'm stuck at home all day."

Bird owner, Queensland

How often are we walking our dogs?

Frequency of dog walking (%)



D31. How often do you walk or exercise [name]?
Base: Dog owners (2025, n=1,188)

The large majority of dog-owners walk or exercise their dog/s at least once a day (70%), with nearly half reporting they walk or exercise them once a day (44%) and around one in four (26%) walking or exercising them more than once a day. **However, a somewhat startling three in ten dog owners (30%) walk or exercise their dog/s less than once a day, with 15% reporting they take them only every two to three days, and the same proportion again (15%) saying less often, if ever.**

Walking or exercising their dog/s at least once a day was more common among:

- those who live in urban and inner-city areas (81%)
- those who have higher household incomes (75%)

While walking or exercising their dog less regularly than once a day was more common among:

- those living in larger households of five or more (43%)
- those who own older dog/s (aged 6 years and older) (38%, compared with 26% of those with younger dogs aged 2 years or less)
- those with a higher level of financial vulnerability (35%)
- those who live in a suburban or regional/rural area (34%)

"It's nice to come back home and have your companions wait eagerly for you at the door."

Cat, Dog and Fish owner, New South Wales

What if you can't look after your pet?

In line with trends seen last wave, if they found themselves unable to look after their pet in the longer term, most pet owners (81%) say they would give their pet to a family member (67%) or friend (51%). Pet owners are more likely to consider these options than they were three years ago, in addition to other alternatives such as sending their pet to a shelter (24% compared to 15% in 2022), donating them to a charity or person in need (22% vs. 20%) and donating them to a health care service (13% vs. 8%). Selling or euthanising their pet/s remain the least popular options.

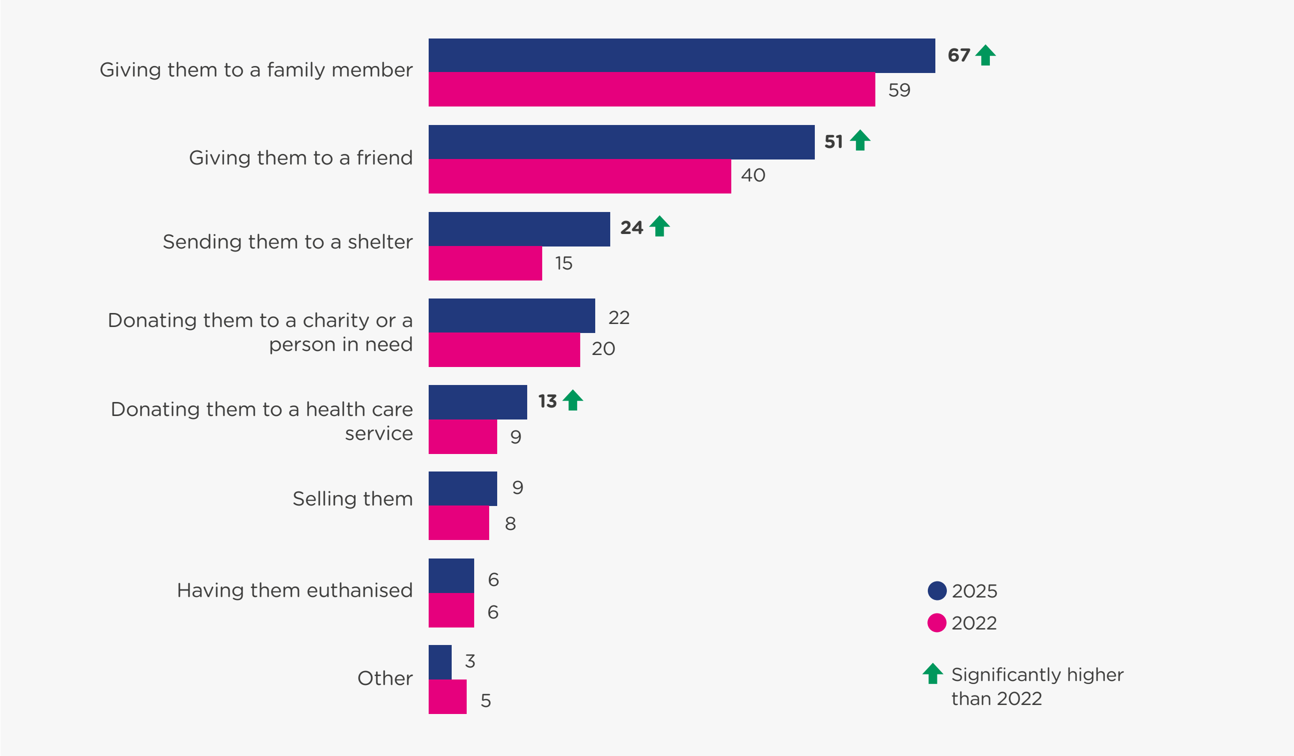
Gender differences are noted in 2025 as they were three years ago, with men more likely than women to consider the following options:

- donating their pet to a charity or person in need (25% v 19% of women)
- donating to a health care service (15% v 10% of women)
- selling them (12% v 6% of women)

Meanwhile women were more likely to consider giving their pet to someone 'closer to home' - a family member or friend (84% vs 78% of men).

Despite the current cost of living pressures in Australia, there has not been a significant shift in the number of pet owners who would consider selling their pet/s in 2025.

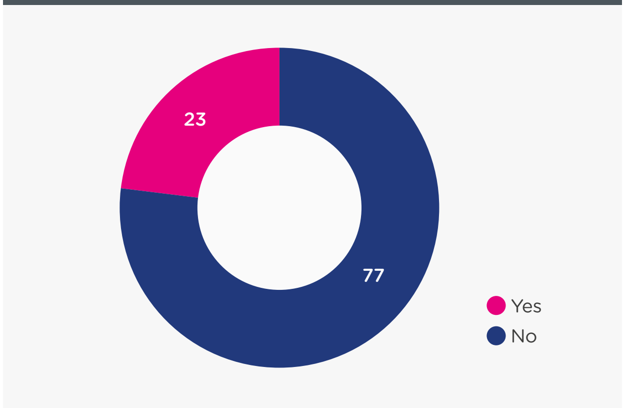
What would you consider doing if you couldn't look after your pet (%)



F16. If you could no longer look after your pet, which of the following options would you consider? Base: All current pet owners (2025 n=1,848, 2022 n=1,724)

Pet surrendering

Have you ever surrendered a pet? (%)



A18. Have you ever had to surrender a pet in the past - e.g. give them away to family, friends or an animal shelter because you could no longer look after them? Base: All former pet owners (2025 n=1,935)

Among former pet owners (i.e. those who have owned a pet in the past), surrendering of their pet/s was not uncommon, with around one in four (23%) having surrendered their pet/s to family, friends or an animal shelter when they could no longer look after them.

For those who have surrendered a pet, the majority did so more than two years ago (71%), with 15% giving their pet/s away in the last 18-24 months and 14% giving them away more recently.

As was evident in 2022, pet surrendering was shown to be more common among:

- families with younger children (33%)
- those living in share houses (29%)

These findings suggest that perhaps pet owners in busier, larger households with competing priorities may be more likely to find themselves in situations where it is not possible to keep their pet/s.

Unsurprisingly, surrendering was also more common among:

- those who have required financial assistance to cover veterinary care costs in the last 12 months (47%)
- those who indicate some form of financial vulnerability (26%)

5.

Barriers and challenges

As pet ownership continues to grow, so does interest in getting a pet.

In addition to the 7.7 million households that already own a pet, a further 700,000 pet-less households are actively looking to get a pet – if they all did so, this would bring the total households with a pet to around 8.4 million.

Further, of those who already have a pet, 30% are actively considering another one, which could potentially add at least another 3.2 million pets to Australian households.

New pets

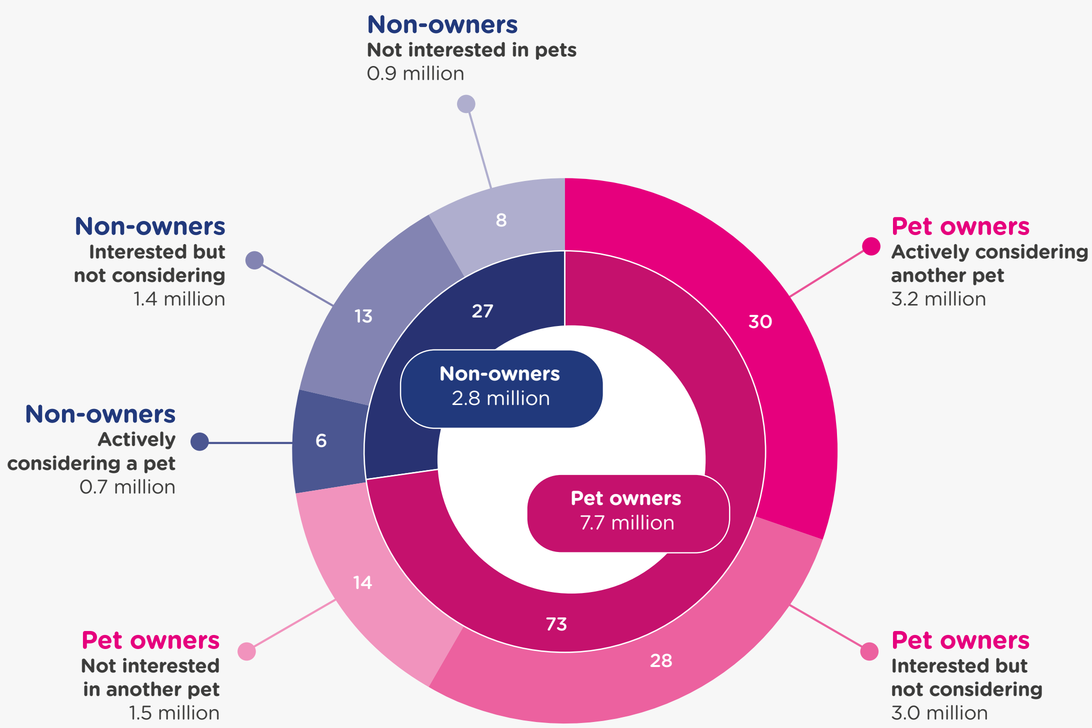
Among those who would like a/another pet, the biggest barriers remain price, ongoing costs of owning a pet as well as the ongoing responsibility. For renters, the biggest challenge is limited space and landlords not allowing pets.

Current pet owners are increasingly experiencing difficulties in owning a pet, with 82% of owners experiencing at least some difficulty: up from 79% in 2022 and 66% in 2019.

Close to one-third (32%) mention costs as a top three hurdle (up from 24% in 2022). Meanwhile three in ten (29%) say they struggle with leaving their pet at home alone (up from 23% in 2022), and this is especially true for those who live in a suburban area (33%) compared to those who are rural or regionally based (22%).

On the surface, the cost of living crisis does not appear to be significantly affecting existing pet owners and their ability to look after the pets, but it does play a role in whether people are likely to get a new pet in future, with cost being one of the biggest factors for this decision. Concerningly, the research shows that those who have previously required financial assistance for vet care (likely an unexpected expense) are feeling the pressure a lot more and are more likely to resort to extreme health related sacrifices for their pets.

Australian households by current and prospective pet ownership, 2025 (%)



A9. Which of these pets, if any, would you like to have? A13B. Are you actively planning on getting a new pet in the next 12 months? If so, what type/s? Base: All participants (n=2,450). Extrapolations based on survey data and ABS population and household estimates. See technical notes for further information.

Of the 27% of Australian households currently without a pet, 70% are interested in getting one, a jump of 10 percentage points from 2022 (60%). Although interest in an additional pet has dropped for existing owners from 87% in 2022 to 80%, they remain relatively more keen on adding to their ‘pack’ than prospective owners.

By pet type, Australians are most interested in getting a dog (54%), with cats a distant second (30%). Households with pets are more than twice as likely as pet-less Australian homes to wish for pets other than cats or dogs (37% would like a bird, fish, reptile or small mammal, compared to only 17% of non-owners).

There are some notable differences in interest in a pet and pet preferences.

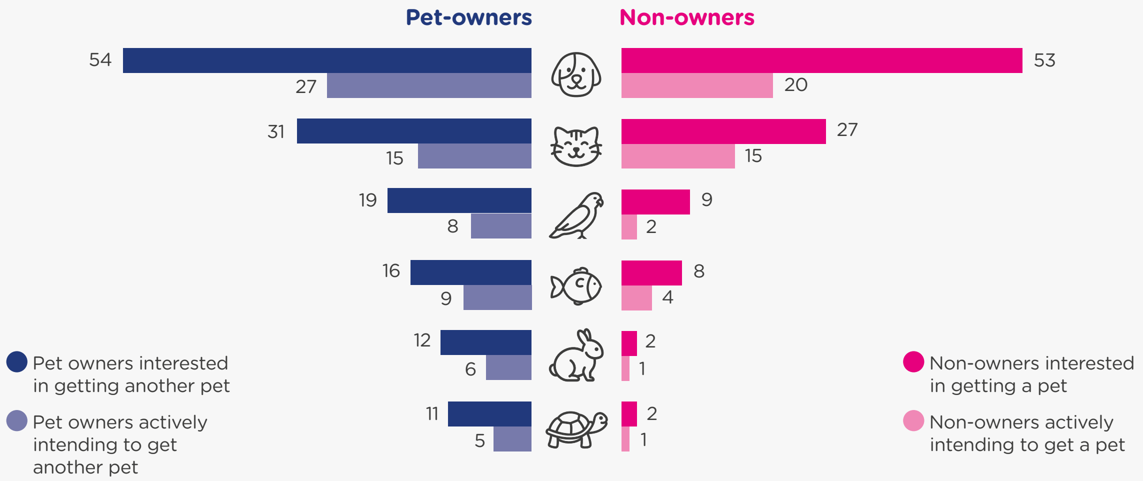
- The desire for a pet significantly decreases as we age. Young adults, 18-24 (93%) and those 25-39 (89%) are most likely to say they would like a pet compared to those aged 60+ (63%).
- Similarly, Australians who are studying (93%) or employed (84%) are much more interested in getting a pet compared to retirees (60%).
- First Nations people are more interested than Australians of other backgrounds in getting a new pet (90% compared 77%).
- In line with 2022, renters (83%) are more likely than homeowners (75%) to want to add a/another pet to the family, mainly dogs (59% compared to 51% of homeowners).
- Those who are part of the LGBTQI+ community are more likely to want a cat (42% compared to 30% of the rest of the population) or a bird (25% vs 16%).
- Those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds are less likely to want a dog (49% compared to 57% of those from a non-CALD background).
- Pet owners who required financial assistance for veterinary care (i.e. going on a payment plan, borrowing money, etc.) in the last twelve months were more likely to wish for a reptile as a pet (19% vs. 10% among pet owners who did not require financial assistance) – perhaps because reptiles generally cost less to look after than other types of pets.

However, dog people tend to be dog people. The majority of existing dog owners would like to have another dog (60%) but only 27% want a cat. Cat owners on the other hand, do not have such strong preferences and are interested in a cat (46%) or dog (47%) equally.

Australians looking to get a new pet in the next 12 months are most likely to be *actively* planning to get a dog (25%) or a cat (15%). Dog and cat owners tend to plan for the same type of pet: dog owners for another dog (34%), cat owners for another cat (23%). Notably, in pet-less households active consideration for a cat has jumped significantly from 4% in 2022 to 15% in 2025.

Families with children under 18 are around *twice* as likely to be actively planning on getting a pet (67%) compared to most other household structures, e.g.: families with older children aged 18+ (29%), couples without children (39%), and those who live on their own (36%). Positively, financial vulnerability does not appear to be an indicator for actively planning to get a new pet.

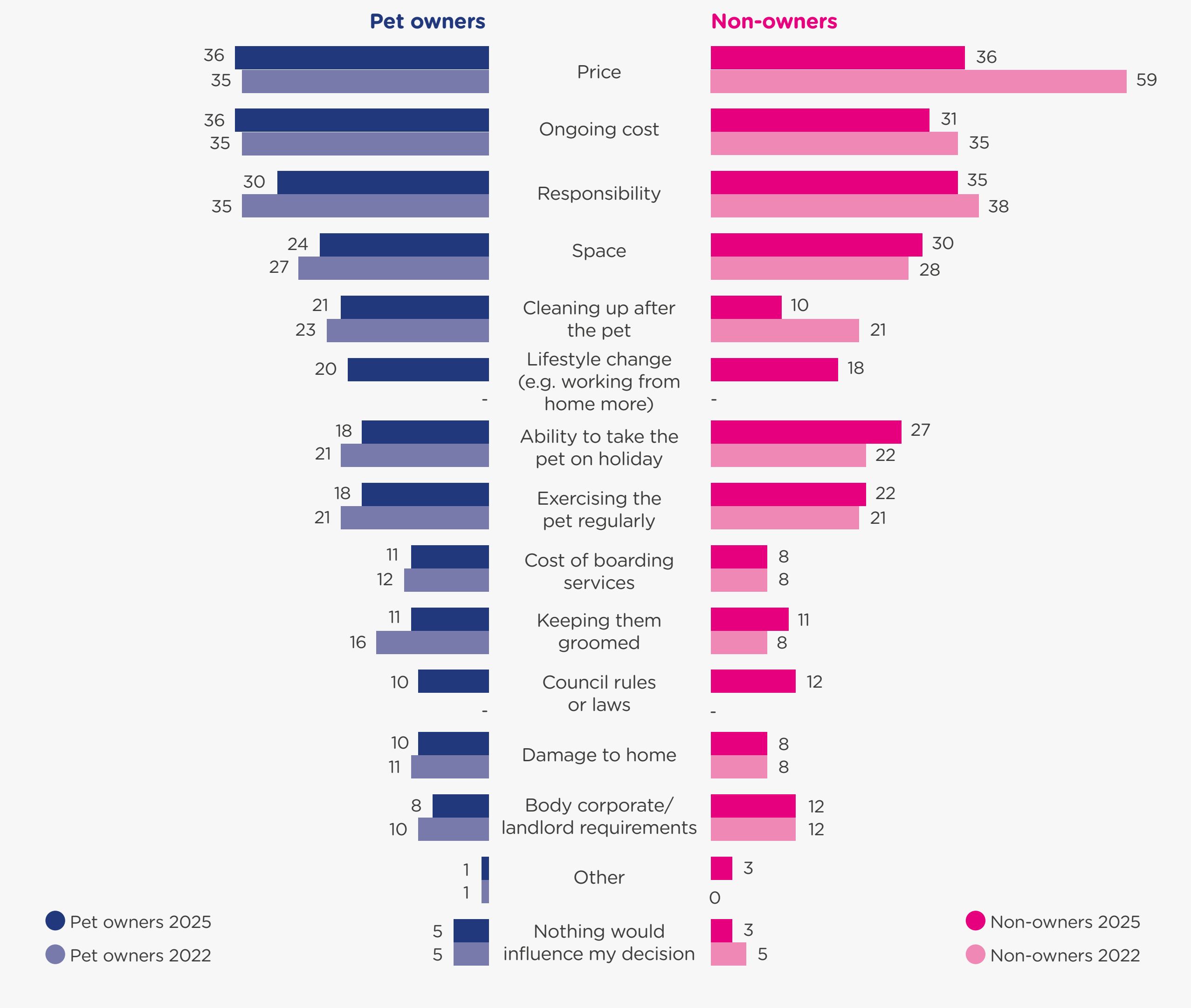
Interest vs Active intent in getting a(nother) pet (%)



A9. Which of these pets, if any, would you like to have? Base: All participants (n=2,450). A13B. Are you actively planning on getting a new pet in the next 12 months? Base: Those would like a/nother pet (n=1,927)

Factors influencing pet acquisition

Factors influencing active intent to get a(nother) pet (%)



A14B. Of the following factors, please select the top three that would most influence your decision to get a(nother) pet in the future.
Base: Prospective non-owners (2022: n=121, 2025: n=150) and prospective current owners (2022: n=752, 2025: n=814)

Price (36%), ongoing costs (35%) and the responsibilities (30%) are the top three considerations factoring into the decision to get a/another pet among those actively planning for one. Other common considerations include: space (25%), the ability to take the pet on holiday (20%) and cleaning up after the pet (20%) – the order and magnitude of influencing factors remain roughly the same compared to 2022.

The top three factors are the same for pet-less households, but the price of pets is considerably less of a factor for pet-less households than it was three years ago (36% selected this in their top three, compared with 59% in 2022). Price is also less of a factor for higher income families of 200k+ (20%) compared to families on household incomes of less than $100k (which 45% nominated).

Cleaning up after a pet is less of an influence on the decision to get a pet for non-owners (10%) compared to current owners (21%) – likely because it is an ongoing reality for those with pets. In fact, the more pets Australians have, the more this issue factors into their decision to add to the pack, as much as two and even *three* times more (3+ pets 28%, 2 pets 19%, 1 pet 12%, no pets 10%) suggesting that non-owners may not be fully aware of this aspect of pet ownership. Cleaning up after a pet also plays a bigger role for families with children (26%), and even more so for those with younger children under 12 years of age (28%) who are likely quite time poor.

Space is more of an influence on the decision to get a pet for renters (32% vs. 20% homeowners) and apartment dwellers (43% vs. 20% in a freestanding home or townhouse) – and is especially the case for pet-less homes (44% for renters and 55% for apartment dwellers).

Barriers to pet ownership

Beyond broad considerations, the survey participants were also asked to consider specific reasons why they do not currently have their desired pet/s.

Ongoing cost is the main barrier to pet ownership among those who would like a/another pet. One-quarter (26%) cite it as the main barrier, followed by lifestyle (21%), the responsibility of looking after pets or the initial cost of acquiring a pet (both 19%). The order is not too dissimilar from 2022 findings, however ongoing cost as a barrier has jumped a significant 5 percentage points from 21%, potentially reflecting the increased cost of living pressure in Australia (see Pets in a cost-of-living crisis on page 34). Ongoing costs are a higher barrier for:

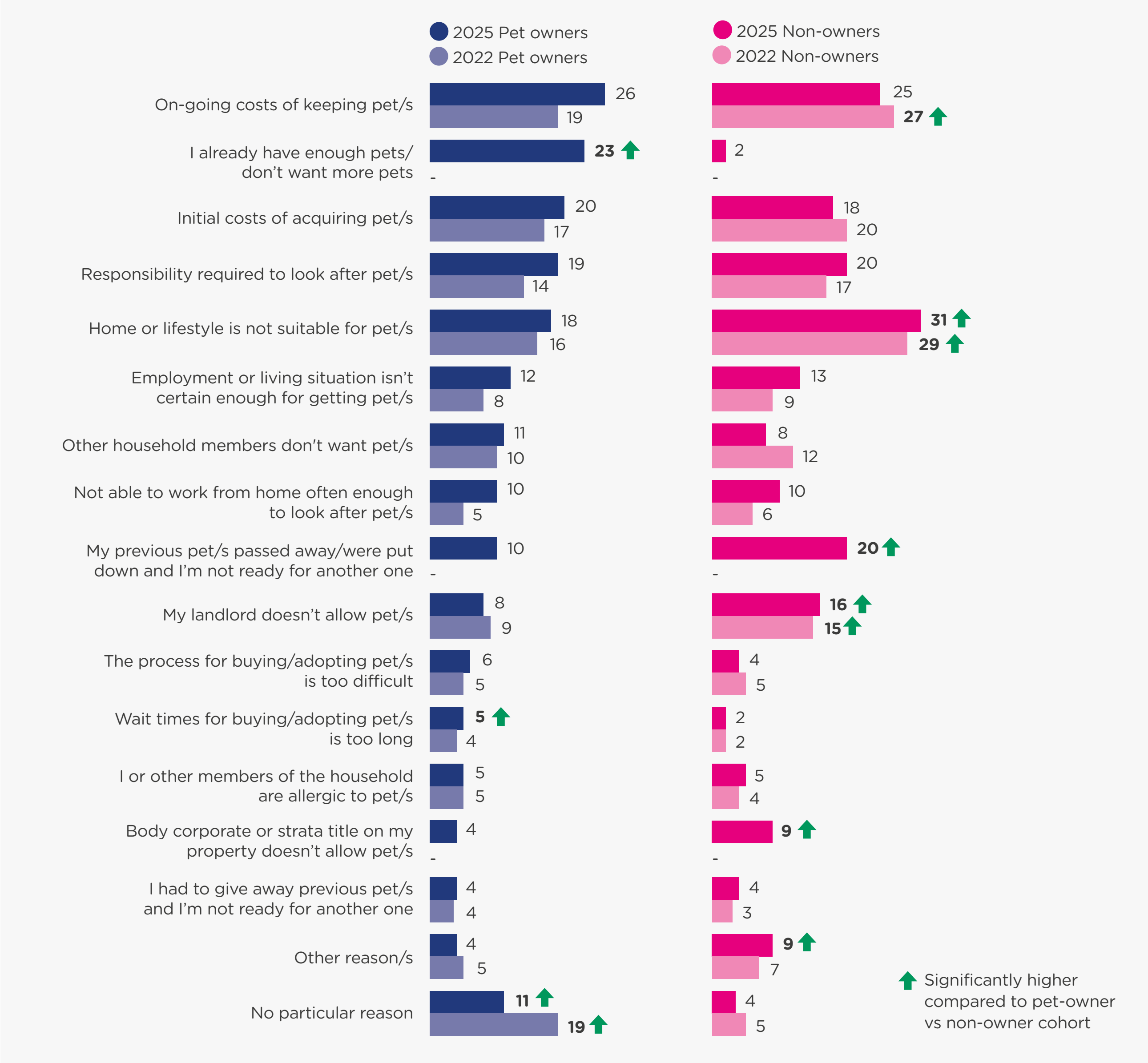
- those facing financial vulnerability (31% vs. 22% of those with lower vulnerability)
- Melburnians (33%) compared to the rest of the country (24%), and even more so among Melburnians facing higher financial vulnerability (42%)
- women compared to men (30% vs 21%)

Non-owners are more likely to say that their home or lifestyle is not suitable for the pets they want (31% compared to 18% of pet owners).

One in five renters (21%) say that their landlord does not allow pets, and this is even higher among non-owners (38% vs. 15% of pet owners) and among renters living in New South Wales (25%), Western Australia (26%) and South Australia (24%), reflecting more lenient landlord rules in these states when it comes to refusing pets.

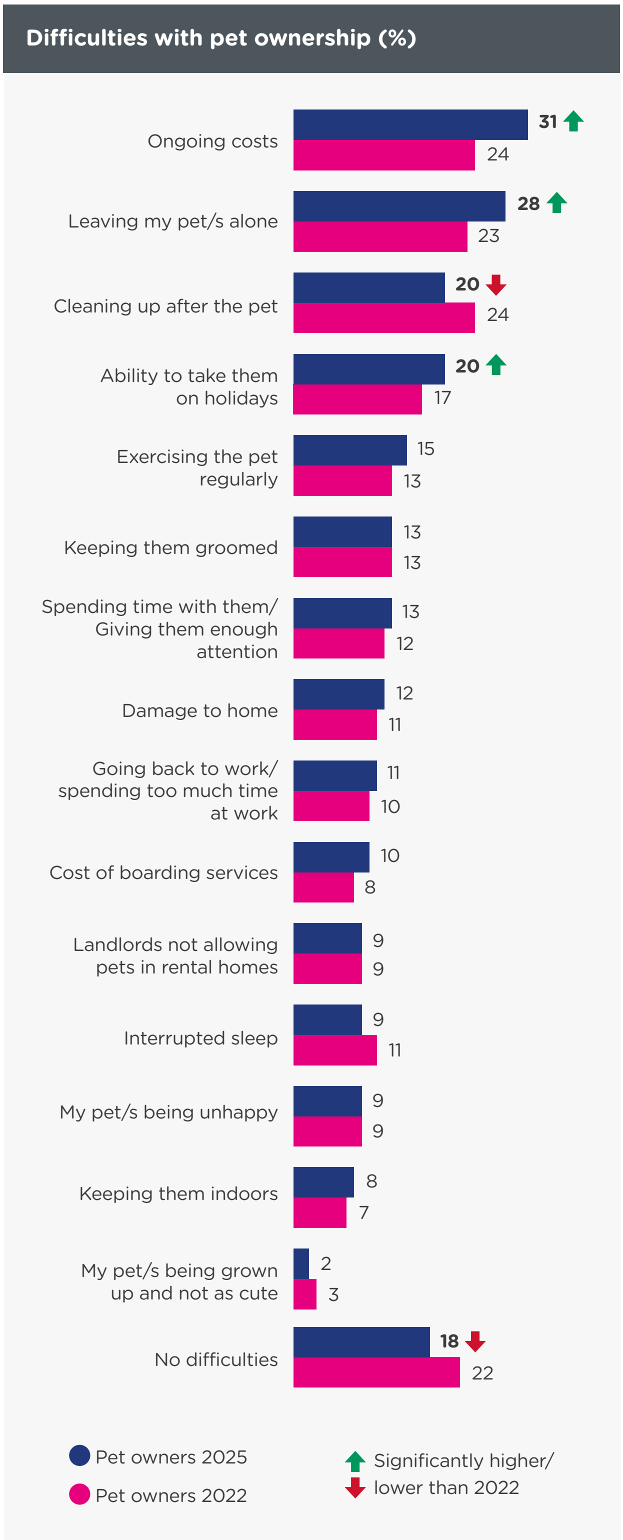
As shown in the chart below, the results reveal quite a different hierarchy of barriers for current vs non-owners.

Reasons for not owning desired pet/s (%)



A10C. What are the reasons you do not currently have the pet/s you would like to have?
Base: Prospective non-owners (2022: n=436, 2025: n=425) and prospective current owners (2022: n=1,491, 2025: n=1,502)

Challenges in pet ownership



F13B. What are the top three difficulties that you experience with pet ownership? Base: All current pet owners (2022: n=1,724, 2025: 1,848)

As with the 2022 study, most pet owners reported some level of difficulty in owning (82% up significantly from 79% in 2022). Ongoing costs represent the main challenge, with a sizeable jump of eight percentage points (31% vs 24% in 2022). For financially vulnerable Australians ongoing costs are even more of a struggle (37% compared to 27% lower financial vulnerability).

Leaving pets on their own is another challenge for owners, increasing in magnitude from 23% in 2022 to 28% in 2025. Now that working from home is more commonplace, Australians have grown accustomed to spending more time at home with our pets – and so leaving them on their own when a day in the office is required can be challenging for both pets and owners. Those who live in suburban areas tend to struggle with leaving their pets alone more so than those who are rural or regionally based (30% vs 23%).

Exercising pets regularly tends to be more challenging for families with young children compared to those living alone (19% vs 9%).

Another challenge is the inability to take pets on holidays, again slightly higher than in previous waves (20% vs 17% in 2022).

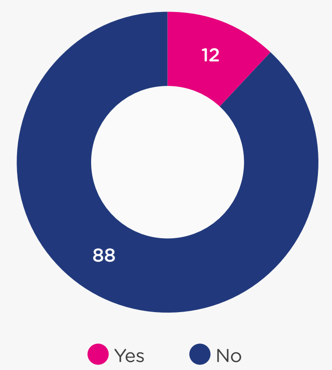
Pets in a cost-of-living crisis

As additional context for this survey, SEC Newgate's latest *Mood of the Nation* report (a nationally representative online survey of n=1,865 adults fielded around the same time as this survey in February 2025) showed that cost of living is a major concern for Australians, with a staggering 71% mentioning this *unprompted* among the most important issues to them right now. When prompted, a similar proportion (73%) rated 'reducing cost increases for household bills and other expenses' as 'extremely important' to them as a national priority.

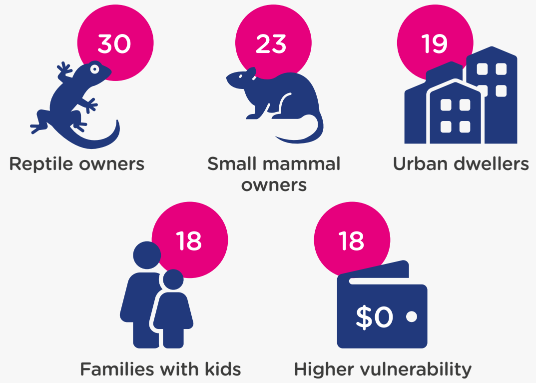
Specific cost concerns were highest for grocery prices (89%), insurance premiums (78%), rent (78%), electricity bills (77%) and mortgage repayments (75%). Within the two months prior to the survey, 56% had to reduce spending on entertainment and 44% had cut back or stopped spending on holidays, while more than one in four had been unable to buy their usual groceries (27%) or had used less heating or cooling in their home than usual (31%). Notably, around one in five had been unable to pay bills on time (19%) or had to rely on family or friends to help them financially (19%).

Financial challenges for pet owners

Required financial assistance for veterinary care (%)



Those requiring financial assistance were... (%)



F38. Over the past 12 months, have you required any financial assistance for veterinary care i.e. going on a payment plan, borrowing money etc? (Base: Current pet owners n=1,848)

Just over 1 in 10 pet-owning households (12%) required financial assistance to cover veterinary care, some more than others:

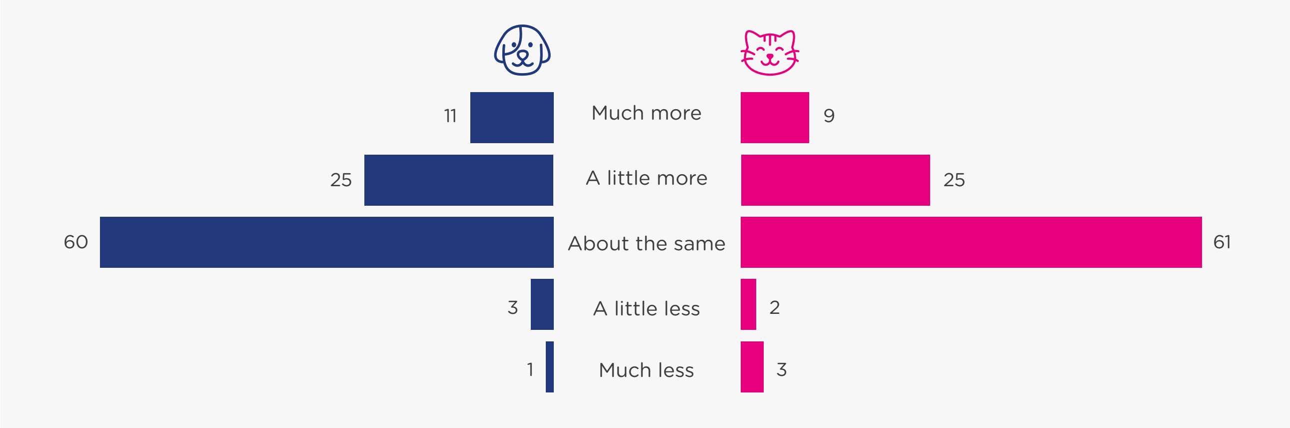
- reptile and small mammal owners (30% and 23% respectively)
- those living in cities/urban areas (19%)
- families with children under 18 (18%)
- those with higher financial vulnerability (18%)
- less experienced pet owners (18%).

Further, close to one in five cat owners (18%) and dog owners (19%) say they have been taking them to the vet less often than usual in the past year because they could not afford the consultation fees, or because they could not afford the cost of medicines or procedures (14% cats and 16% dogs). When combining these reasons, just over one in five cat owners (22%) and three in ten dog owners (30%) admitted to less frequent vet visits specifically because they could not afford it.

Vaccination rates also appear to be driven by cost-related factors, with 26% of cat owners and 21% of dog owners naming the cost of vaccination as a reason for not vaccinating their pet in the last 12 months.

About one-third of pet owners say they spent more money on their pet in the last twelve months than usual (33% on cats and 36% on dogs) and a large majority say they have spent the usual amount (61% on cats and 60% on dogs). Pet owners who required financial assistance with vet bills were significantly more likely to say they spent more (cats: 58% vs 29% and dogs: 71% vs 31%), suggesting that unexpected medical bills may have been included in the extra spend. Notably, just 5% of cat owners and 4% of dog owners say they have spent *less* on these animals in the past 12 months, however this was notably higher among those who are unemployed (9% cats and dogs 16%).

Have you spent more or less on your dog or cat in the last year? (%)



C32A/ D35A. In the past 12 months, would you say you've spent more or less money on your cat/s/dog/s than you normally would have? (Base: Cats n=779, Dogs n=1,188)

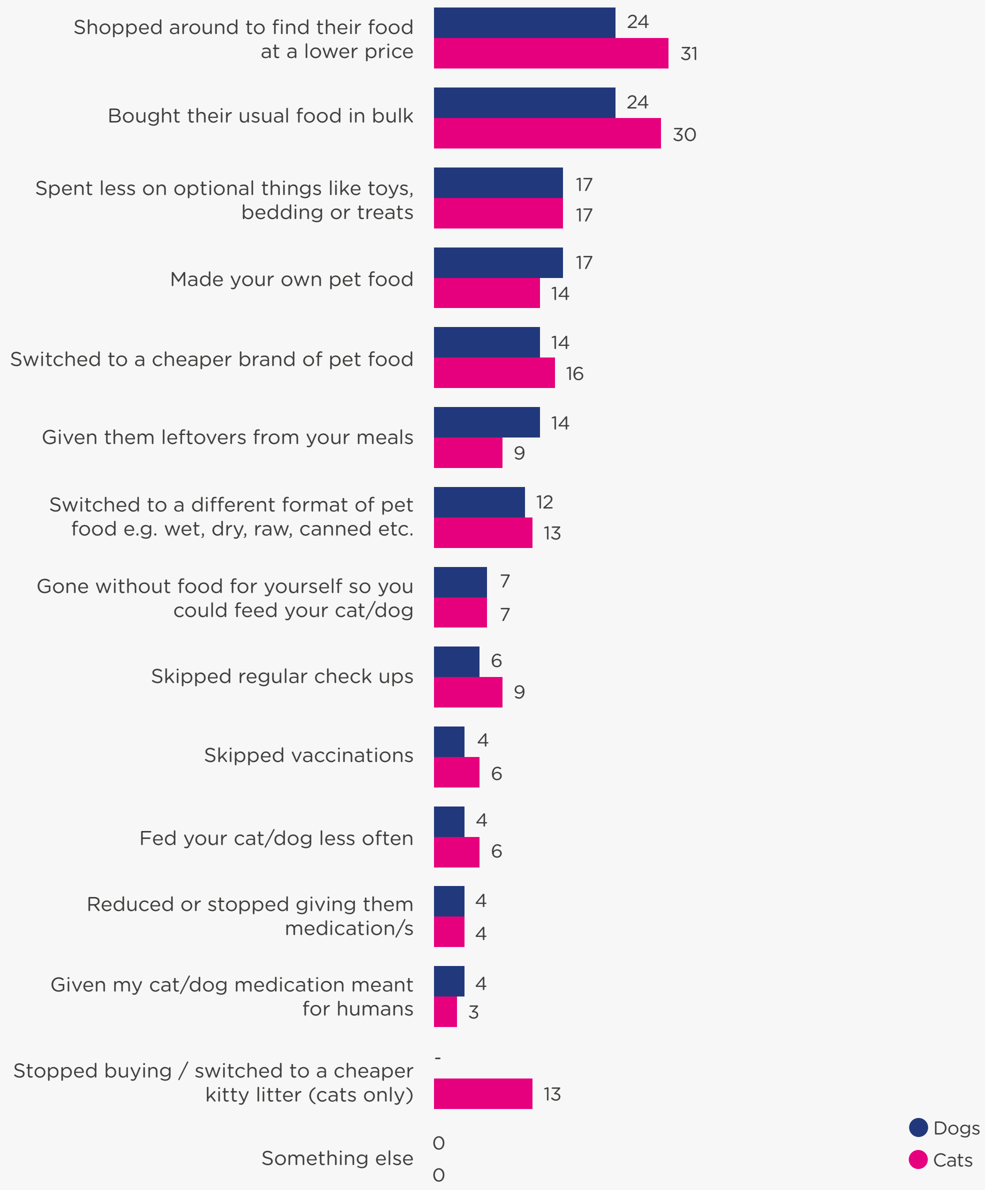
Actions taken to reduce spend on cats and dogs

Food is where pet owners have tried to save money or reduce spending on their cats and dogs, mainly by shopping around to find food at a lower price (cats 31% and dogs 24%), buying the usual food in bulk (cats 30% and dogs 24%) or switching to a cheaper brand of food (cats 16% and dogs 14%). Other cost-cutting measures include spending less on optionals like toys, bedding or treats (17% for both cats and dogs).

Concerningly, around one in six cat and dog owners (cats 18% and dogs 14%) resorted to more extreme health-related sacrifices, including skipping regular check-ups and vaccinations, reducing or stopping medication or giving their pet medication meant for humans. Further, 7% of cat and dog owners went without food so they could feed their pet and a small minority fed their pets less often to save money or reduce spending (cats 6% and dogs 4%).

- Even more worryingly, cat owners who required financial assistance with their vet bills were *four times* as likely to have gone without food (21% vs 5%), *three times* as likely to have skipped regular check-ups (20% vs 7%), and vaccinations (15% vs 5%) or fed their cats less (13% vs 5%), and *twice* as likely to have made their own cat food (25% vs 12%). One in ten also reduced or stopped giving their cat medication (9% vs 3%) or gave their cat medication meant for humans (9% vs 2%).
- Similarly for dog owners who required financial assistance with their vet bills, they were much more likely to have taken extreme health related measures such as skipping vaccinations or regular check-ups (18% vs 7%), reduced or stopped giving their dog medication (16% vs. 2%) or given their dog medication meant for humans (14% vs 3%). They were also far more likely to have gone without food themselves (14% vs 6%) or fed their dogs less often (10% vs. 3%).

Actions taken to save money (last 12 months) (%)



C32B/D35B. In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following things to save money or reduce spending on your cat/s/dog/s? (Base: Cats n=779, Dogs n=1,188)

Human medication can seriously harm pets!

Medicines, including both prescription-only and over-the-counter products, are readily available in the home and are a common source of poisoning in companion animals. Recent studies have shown that analgesics intended for human use are frequently involved in the accidental poisoning of animals.

Pets should never be given human medicines that have not been prescribed for the pet by a veterinarian.

1. **Toxicity Risks –** Many human medications are toxic to animals, even in small doses. For example, **paracetamol** is highly toxic to cats, and **ibuprofen** can cause serious kidney damage in dogs, and even death.
2. **Incorrect Dosages –** Animals metabolise drugs differently than humans. The dosage for a person is often far too high for a pet, leading to overdose or severe side effects.
3. **Different Metabolism –** Pets have different liver and kidney functions, which affect how drugs are processed. Some medications that are safe for humans may build up to toxic levels in animals.
4. **Unintended Side Effects –** Human medications can cause side effects that don't occur in people. For example, some antidepressants may cause agitation or seizures in pets.
5. **Species Variability –** Different species react differently to medications. A drug that is safe for a dog may be deadly for a cat, bird, or rabbit.
6. **Lack of Veterinary Approval –** Veterinarians prescribe medications specifically tested and approved for animals, ensuring both safety and effectiveness.

There may be some circumstances where your veterinarian prescribes human medication for your pet. Only a veterinarian should make treatment decisions as they are aware of which drugs are suitable for animals and which are not.

Never give any human medications to your pet unless directed to by your veterinarian. If your pet does accidentally ingest any human medication, please call your veterinarian immediately and they will advise if further treatment is necessary.

6.

Shopping for our pets

Dogs are dominating the Australian pet economy. Not only are there more dogs in Australia, but pet owners are paying a lot more for them - both in terms of the initial outlay and the ongoing costs.

The average purchase price for dogs is $1,419 and the ongoing expenses generally cost households an estimated $2,520 per year – the largest portion comprising their food ($1,090).

Cats tend to be more economical to keep. Almost half of cat owners got them for free (47%) and among those who paid, the average price was around $419 – nearly a quarter of what dog owners paid for their dogs. Cats are also more likely to come desexed, further reducing the ongoing fees for cat owners.

In deciding what to feed their pets, owners continue to place a high importance on the nutritional value, ingredients and dietary benefits for their pets, more so than price and value for money.

When it comes to raw and home cooked foods, attitudes are mixed as to whether this is better for their pets and suggests that further public education is required on this topic.

Acquiring our cats and dogs

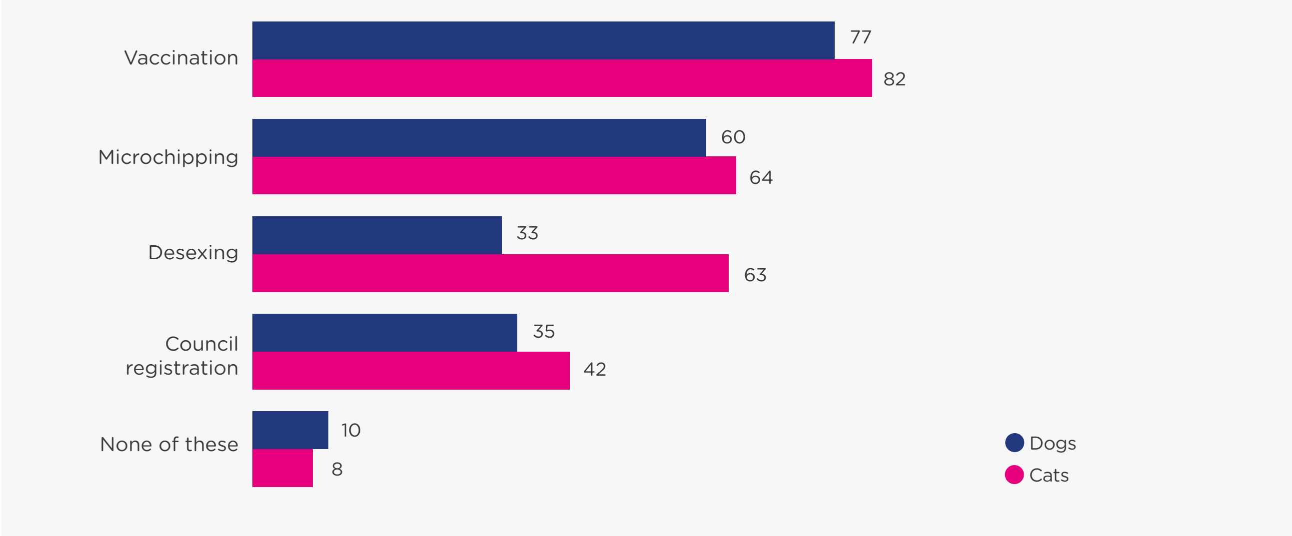
Nearly half the cats obtained in the last 2 years were for free (47%) compared to just 25% of dogs obtained over that same time period. This is perhaps not surprising given cats are more likely to be adopted than dogs. Further, not only are dog owners more likely to pay something for their dogs, they are also paying more than three times the amount for dogs ($1,419) than cat owners ($419).

The majority of cats and dogs purchased in the last two years had a vaccination included (77% of dogs, 82% of cats) and microchipping (60% of dogs, 64% of cats). Notably, cats were almost twice as likely to have had desexing included in their purchase price (63%) compared to dogs (33%). A third of dogs (35%) and two in five cats (42%) also came with council registration.

The cost of obtaining pets	Dogs	Cats
Obtained for free (%)	25% (n=403)	47% (n=306)
Average cost (excl. “nothing”)	$1,419 (n=307)	$419 (n=173)

D5B/C4B. How much did you purchase [name] for? Base: Cats / Dogs obtained in the past two years, Those who spent > $0 to obtain cat/dog

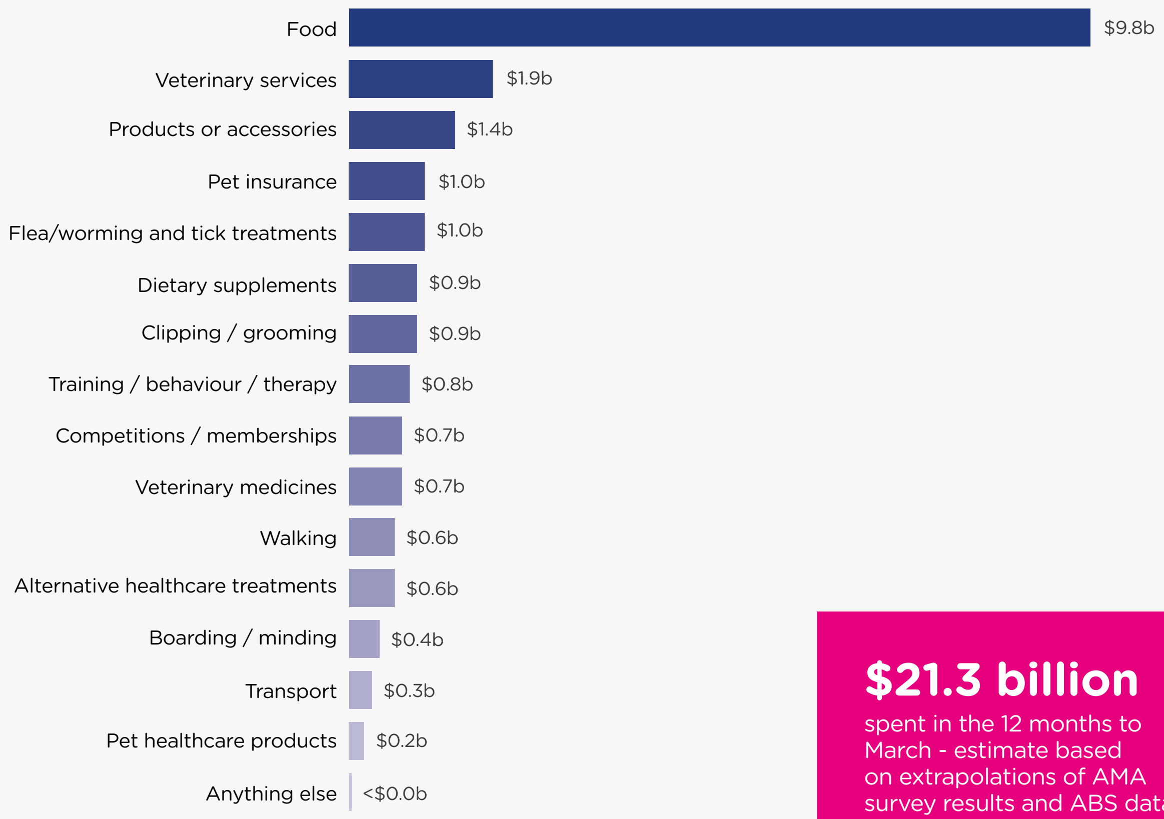
What was included in the purchase price of your dog or cat? (%)



C27/D28 Were any of the following things included in [name]'s purchase price? Base: Cats / Dogs obtained in the past two years who cost > $0 (Dogs: n=307, Cats: n=173)

On-going expenditure

Total expenditure by category, to March 2025 ($ billions)



$21.3 billion
spent in the 12 months to March - estimate based on extrapolations of AMA survey results and ABS data

Extrapolations based on survey data and ABS population and household estimates. See technical notes for further information and caveats.

Methodology note 1:

As mentioned in the technical notes of this report (page 3), a more rigorous and scientific approach to removing outliers was adopted for calculating the expenditure data in 2025. To enable comparability against the previous wave of the survey, the 2022 expenditure has been re-calculated for this report, using the same approach to removing outliers as in 2025, so the 2022 results in this year's edition differ from the 2022 report.

Self-reported expenditure on pet-related products and services is estimated at $21.3 billion for the 12 months to March 2025, across the six types of pets. Most of this spend is on dogs ($13.21bn) and cats ($5.91bn), accounting for 90% of the total. This represents a significant increase in spending compared to the revised 2022 expenditure total of $15.7bn, which included $8.84bn spent on dogs and $4.86bn spent on cats.

Food continued to make up a large portion of this spending (46% of total spend), followed by healthcare products (13% incl. medicines, supplements, or flea / worming / tick treatments), vet services (9%) and products or accessories (7%).

Dog-owning households spent the most out of all pet owners, at an estimated $2,520 in the preceding year on average. By comparison, cat-owning households spent around $1,656 on their cats. Fish and birds remain the cheapest pets to maintain, costing their owners $475 and $555 in the last year respectively.

Methodology note 2:

The averages presented in this table include pet owners who spent nothing in some categories, for ease of extrapolation to the broader population – appreciating that some owners did not spend in all categories. This is why the averages presented may appear lower than expected.

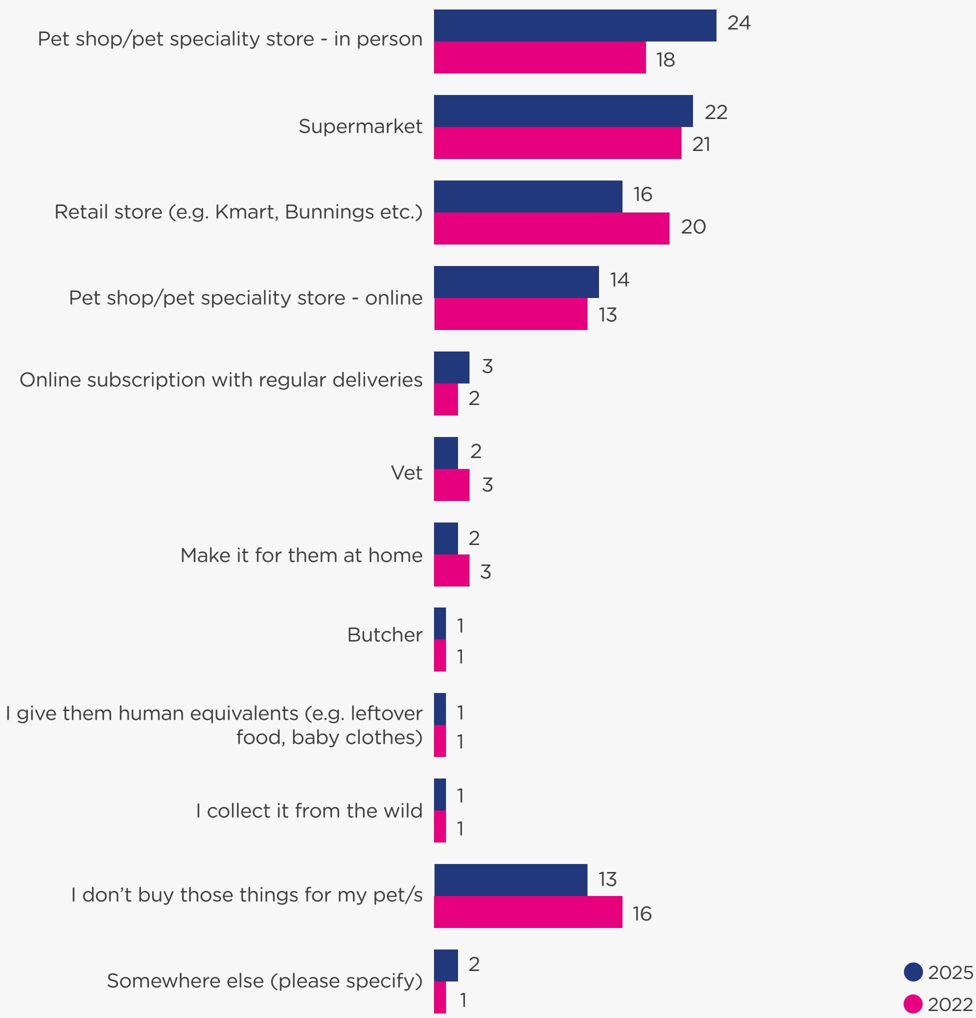
Average annual household spend, to March 2025	**Dogs** (n=1,188)	**Cats** (n=779)	**Fish** (n=275)	**Birds** (n=207)	**Small mammals** (n=69)	**Reptiles** (n=69)
Food	$1,090	$884	$172	$285	$947	$354
Veterinary services	$168	$154	$92	$82	$240	$692
Products or accessories	$117	$87	$123	$95	$539	$175
Pet insurance	$145	$70	-	-	-	-
Flea/worming and tick treatments	$122	$102	-	-	-	-
Dietary supplements	$124	$84	-	-	-	-
Clipping/grooming	$139	$58	-	-	-	-
Training/behaviour/therapy	$117	$61	-	-	-	-
Competitions/memberships	$97	$19	$49	$32	$77	$24
Veterinary medicines	$102	$45	-	-	-	-
Walking	$119	-	-	-	-	-
Alternative healthcare treatments	$84	$35	-	-	-	-
Boarding/minding	$46	$34	-	-	-	-
Transport	$50	$21	-	-	-	-
Pet healthcare products	-	-	$35	$61	$292	$73
Anything else	$1	$2	$5	$0	$0	$0
Total spend per household	**$2,520**	**$1,656**	**$475**	**$555**	**$2,095**	**$1,319**
Total spend ($bn)	**$13.21**	**$5.91**	**$0.580**	**$0.558**	**$0.660**	**$0.382**

B6X, C17X, D18X, E3X, H6X, I6X. In the last 12 months, have you spent money on any of the following for your [pet/s]?
B6B, C17B, D18B, E3B, H6B, I6B. In the last 12 months, how often did you typically spend money on [each selected item] for your [pet/s]?
B6C, C17C, D18C, E3C, H6C, I6C. How much did you typically spend in the time period you've indicated above?
Base: Pet owners (n=1,848). Averages presented include those who spent nothing in that category giving a more accurate estimate of yearly spend per pet type

Products and accessories

In line with the 2022 results, the majority of products and accessories for pets are obtained from pet shops – either in person (24%) or online (14%), at the supermarket (22%) or at retail stores (16%).

Where the majority of pet products and accessories are obtained, top mentions 3%+ (%)



F28. Where do you purchase or get the majority of each of the following categories for your pet/s? – Products and accessories.
Base: Pet owners (2022: n=1,723, 2025: n=1,848)

Sources and type of pet food

The majority of cat and dog owners buy their pet food at a supermarket, although we are seeing an increasing trend in the proportion buying food from a pet shop or retail store – this could be a reflection of stores like Bunnings entering the pet food market and helping to drive competition. Fish, bird and small mammal owners tend to buy their food from a mixture of supermarkets and pet shops. Reptile owners tend to mostly shop for food at pet shops.

Sources of pet food over the past 12 months (%)	Dogs n=1188	Cats n=779	Fish n=275	Birds n=207	Reptiles n=69	Small mammals n=65
Vet	**11** ↓	11	7	5	12	17
Pet shop / speciality store - in person	**37** ↑	**34** ↑	**46**	**39**	**50**	**41**
Supermarket	**62**	**70**	**39**	**47**	20	**53**
Butcher	18	8	0	9	4	21
I make food at home	18	8	4	9	15	16
I give them human food / leftovers	21	9	3	12	12	12
Pet shop / speciality store - online	**30** ↑	**27**	**32** ↑	**25**	**32**	**35**
Online subscription with regular deliveries	8	7	6	3	13	12
Retail store	**22** ↑	**19** ↑	16	20	22	14
I collect it from the wild e.g. bugs, seeds	0	0	6	11	15	16
Other (please specify)	1	1	1	4	0	0

B4, C15, D16, E1, H3, I4. From which of these places have you bought / obtained [pet] food in the past 12 months? Base: Pet owners (2022: n=1,724, 2025: n=1,848).

↑ Significantly higher/
↓ lower than 2022

Quality pet food: What to look for

What does Quality Pet Food look like?

There are many different types of pet food. Kibble, wet, gently cooked or raw feeding - so many options worth considering. There is no one ideal format. The best choice will come down to what suits your pet's individual needs, your lifestyle, and your values around nutrition.

Each format has its own unique attributes for feeding for your pet. Dry kibble offers convenience and economic viability (especially for large breed dogs). The moisture content in wet foods enable benefits in hydration, and satiety, and the minimal processing of gently cooked, chilled, fresh and raw foods appeals to those wanting to feed more instinctual, natural state and fresher feeding.

When choosing a diet for your pet, the main element to look for is ensuring the food is Complete and Balanced for their age, stage and activity level of your pet. To be Complete and Balanced, the food must meet the nutritional levels established by Internationally recognized Industry bodies, such as AAFCO (the Association of American Feed Control Officials) or FEDIAF (European Pet Food Industry Association). A complete and balanced diet ensures your pet receives all the essential nutrients - like protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals - in the correct ratios to support healthy growth, development, maintenance, and healthy aging.

In addition to Complete and Balanced, it is important to ensure the products you feed to your pet are manufactured SAFE and are of appropriate quality. In Australia, choosing foods that are designed and are compliant to the Australian Standard AS 5812 Manufacturing and marketing of pet food – Cats and dogs, means the company who has made the product is not only committed to transparency and safety in its design and manufacturing, it is also underpinned by strict third-party audits to certify the Standard is met. Examples of reputable brands and companies are those that are members of the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia (PFIAA).

Here are some factors to consider when choosing a pet food to ensure you are making the best choice for your pet.

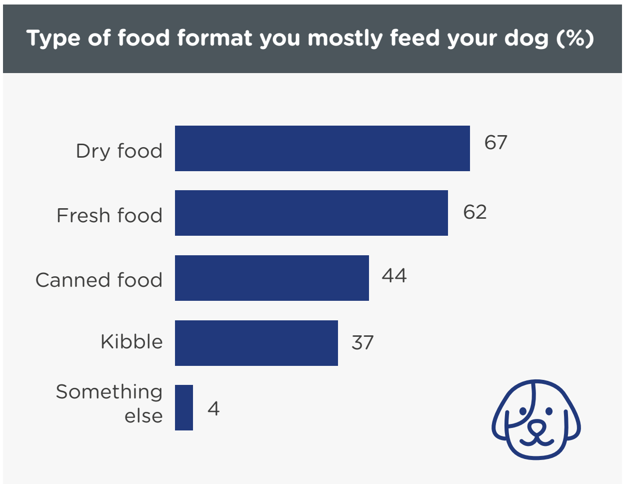
- Your pet's nutritional requirements. This is the most crucial role of any complete and balanced diet. Your pet's food must include the correct ratio of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals for their age and stage of life.
- Your pet's individual needs and their feeding habits. Do they have a health condition, are they fussy feeders and do they prefer a particular type of food? (e.g. canned, dry, chilled or any combinations of these options).
- Lifestyle, economic considerations and convenience.

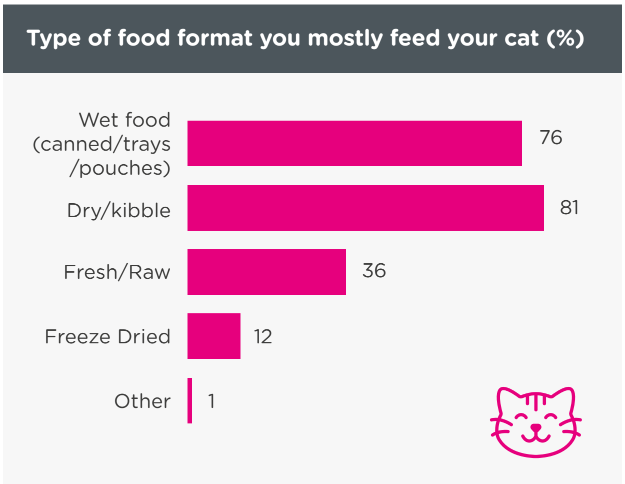
There is no one size fits all approach when it comes to deciding what to feed your pet. By focusing on complete and balanced nutrition and considering your pet's individual needs, you'll be supporting your pet for a healthy, happy life. Whether you choose kibble, wet, gently cooked or raw feeding, what matters most is that your pet is thriving - and that you feel confident in the choices you're making. And if you're ever unsure, don't hesitate to reach out to your vet.

Does Australia have pet food regulations?

Australia has a voluntary pet food standard – AS5812 Manufacturing and Marketing of Pet Food – Cats and dogs.

A list of pet food manufacturers third party audited and certified to the Australian Standard is available on the PFIAA website: www.pfiaa.com.au.





C31/D34. What type of food format do you mostly feed your cat/s / dog/s? Cat owners 2025 (n=779), Dog owners 2025 (n=1,188)

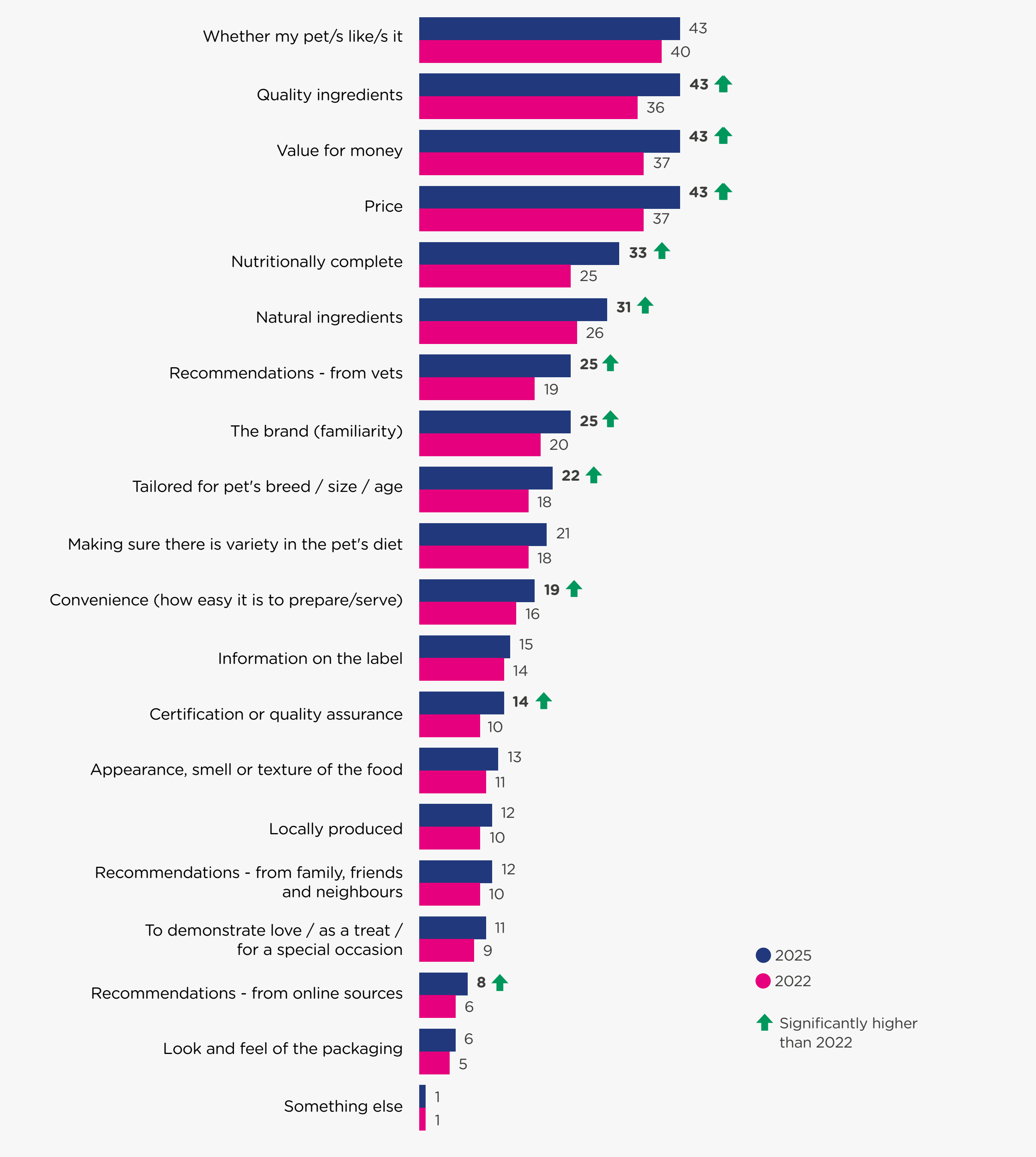
Cat owners tend to feed their cats predominantly dry food or kibble (81%) or wet food in the form of cans, trays or pouches (76%), with a third giving them fresh or raw food (36%). Meanwhile dog owners tend to feed their dogs more of a variety such as dry food (67%), fresh food (62%), canned food (44%) or kibble (37%).

Food choice considerations

In 2025 pet owners say they are equally likely to consider the following four things when deciding what to feed their pets: the pet's food preferences, the quality of the ingredients, the perceived value for money, and the price (all 43%). These results were consistent with the previous survey.

When considering the range of different factors, nutritional benefits and food quality somewhat outweigh cost factors such as value for money and price. For example, 76% selected factors relating to nutrition, ingredients, diet etc. whereas 60% selected price or value for money.

Factors considered when making decisions about what to feed pets (%)



F29. Which of the following factors do you consider when making decisions about what to feed your pet/s? Base: Pet owners (2022: n=1,724, 2025: n=1,848)

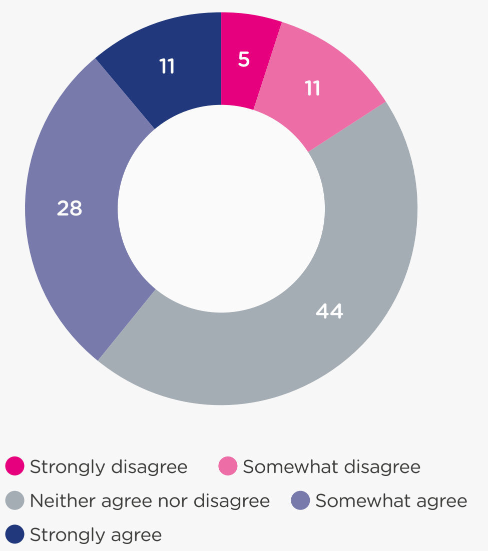
Attitudes toward raw or home-cooked food for pets

Four in ten pet owners (39%) agreed that giving pets raw or home-cooked food is better for them. Just one in six disagree (16%) and 44% were undecided.

Those more likely to agree with this statement included:

- less experienced pet owners (44%)
- those aged under 40 (45%)
- those with multiple types of pets (47%)
- families with kids under 18 (45%)

Raw or home-cooked food is better for pets (%)



F37_F. Do you personally agree or disagree with these things other people have said? Giving pets raw or home-cooked food is better for them. Base: Pet owners (2025: n=1,848)

7.

Managing pet health

More pets are visiting the vet compared to previous years (75% vs 69% in 2022 for cats, 89% vs. 84% for dogs), with check-ups and vaccinations remaining the main reasons for attendance.

However, among those who say they've taken their dog or cat to the vet less often than usual, cost is a major deterrent, especially for renters and financially vulnerable groups.

The vast majority of pet owners have high regard for the quality of care provided by their vets, with 87% providing a high rating of 7 or more out of 10 for their most recent visit. The caring and compassionate veterinary teams and their thorough and professional care were the main reasons given for high scores, while high costs and long waiting times were the main concerns among the 5% who provided lower scores.

The role of vets

Vets remain the top source of pet advice, but financially struggling and younger, less experienced owners are more likely than others to also turn to free or digital sources like social media, YouTube, and even AI tools.

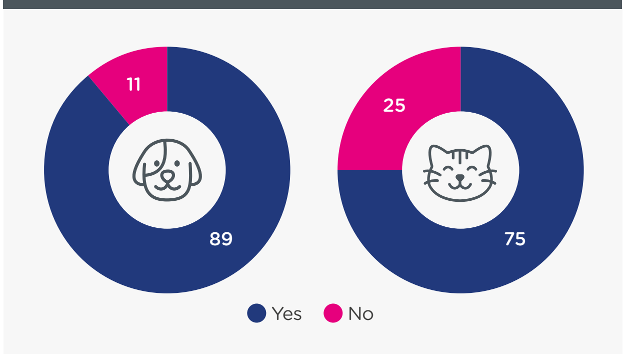
While de-sexing rates among dogs (74%) and cats (84%) remain stable at lower levels observed in 2022, microchipping rates have increased among both dogs (87%) and cats (78%) in 2025. Around two in three (67%) pet owners agree that 'Unless they are for breeding, all cats and dogs should be desexed' with only a minority (12%) disagreeing with the statement and 22% reporting they neither agree nor disagree.

New questions this year around vaccinations reveal the large majority of cat (90%) and dog (96%) owners have vaccinated their pets at least once. However fewer cats and dogs have been vaccinated in the last year (77% of dogs and 66% of cats), with cost and perceived lack of need being the most common reasons.

In line with these findings, a substantial 23% of pet owners believe that cats and dogs don't have to get vaccinated every year, so long as they've had all their kitten/puppy shots, and while lack of vaccine safety was a concern among some, this belief was not as common (12%). There is an opportunity here for the animal health sector to address these misconceptions.

More Australian cats and dogs saw a vet in the last year (75% and 89% respectively) compared to the 2022 wave of research (69% and 84%).

Saw a vet in the last 12 months (%)



C13/D14 How many times was cat/dog seen by a vet in the past 12 months? Base: Cats (2022: n=840, 2025: n= 779), Dogs (2022: n=1,215, 2025: n= 1,188).

In line with findings from previous waves of this survey, the most common reason for cat and dog owners to visit the vet was for general check-ups (53% for dogs and 54% for cats), closely followed by vaccinations (52% for dogs and 49% for cats). Other reasons for dog owners to take their pet to the vet most commonly included skin conditions (14%), dentistry (11%) and ear and eye conditions (11%) while other reasons for cats included dietary issues (10%), de-sexing (10%) and skin conditions (9%).

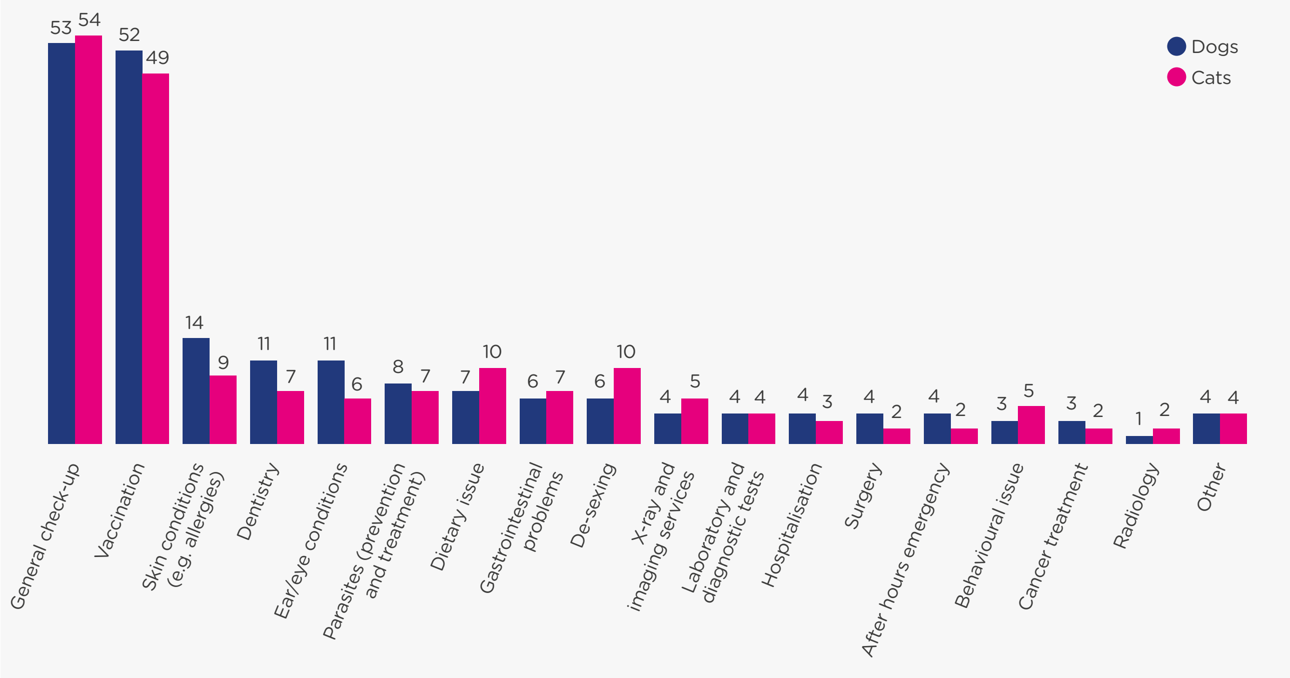
"We have seen the same vet for years. Their level of care with my dog is second to none. I wouldn't take my dog anywhere else."

Small mammal and Dog owner, Tasmania

"Our local vet is kind, and very good with our dog. Bailey likes her and we always ask to see her when we make an appointment. This has been our long-term vet for our two dogs we have had."

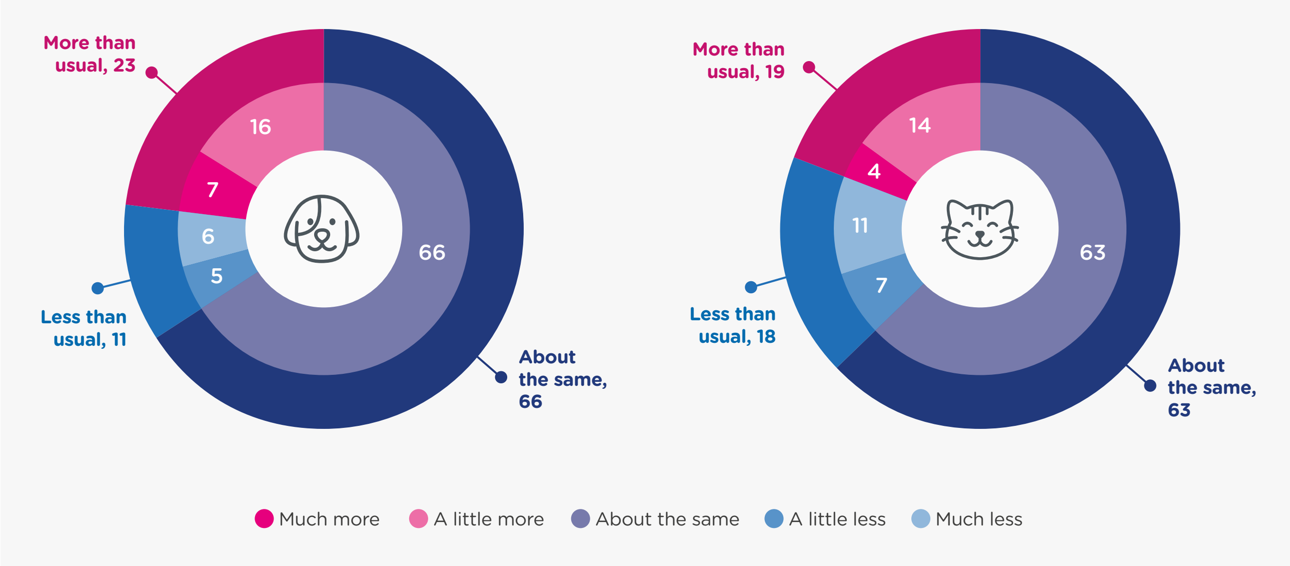
Cat and Dog owner, Queensland

Reasons for visiting the vet in the past 12 months - dogs and cats (%)



C14B, D15B. Think about the time/s [cat/dog name] visited the vet in the past 12 months... What was the reason for the visit/s?
Base: Dogs who have visited the vet in the past 12 months (2025, n=1,048), Cats who have visited the vet in the past 12 months (2025, n=779).

Frequency of vet visits in the past 12 months (%)



C29, D32. In the past 12 months, would you say you've taken [name] to the vet... Base: Dog owners (2025, n=1,188), Cat owners (2025, n=779).

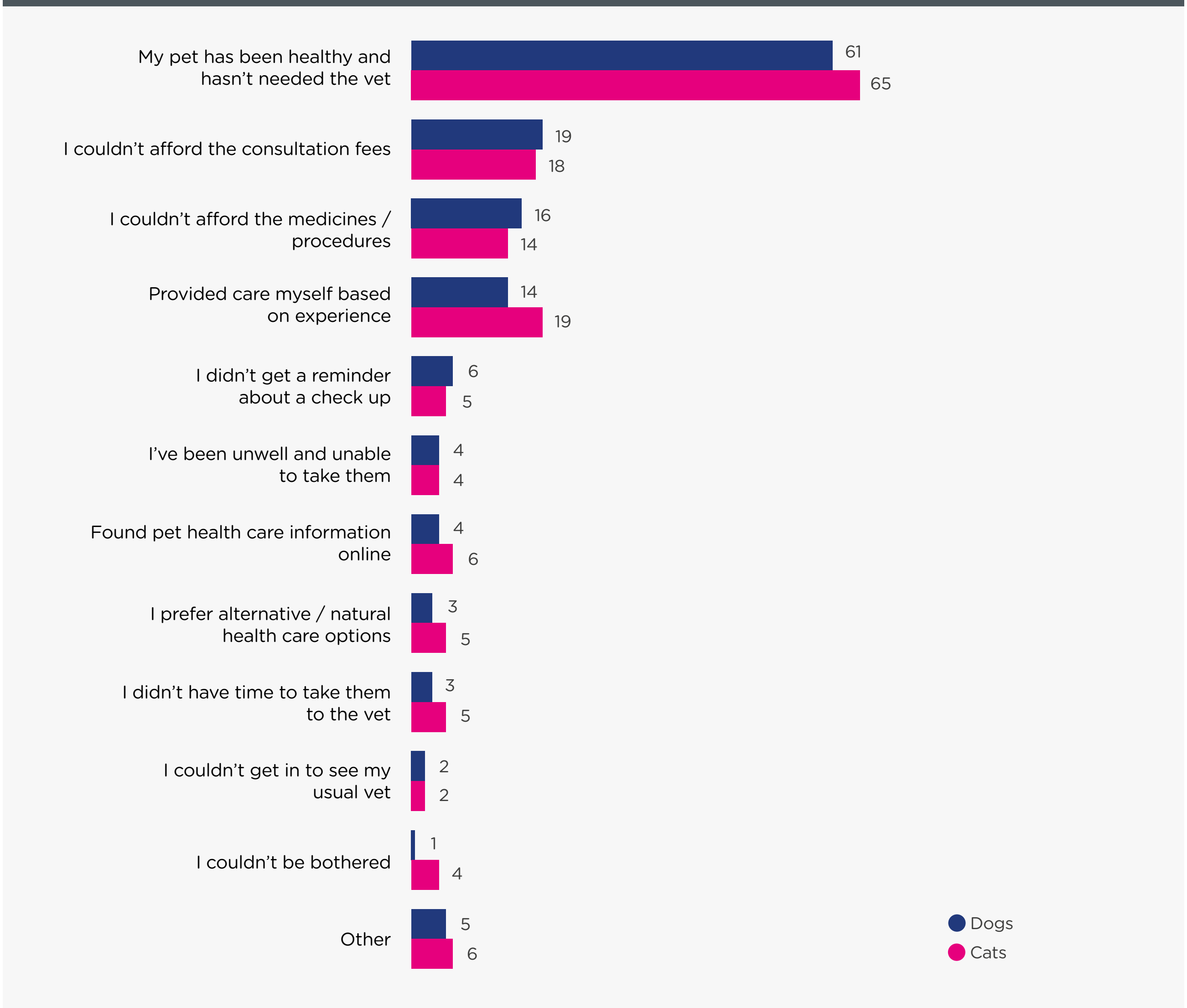
In 2025, dog and cat owners were asked a new question about whether they had taken their pet to the vet more or less than usual or about the same as usual in the last 12 months.

- Around two in three dog (66%) and cat (63%) owners reported they had taken their pet to the vet over the last 12 months about the same as they usually would.
- Nearly one in five dog owners said they had taken their dog to the vet more than usual (23%), with similar findings seen among cat owners (19%).
- Fewer than one in five cat owners had taken their cat less often than usual (18%), while only a minority of dog owners reported this (11%).

"The vet I go to is awesome. I have taken all my animals there over the years...the prices are good for worming and tick treatment."

Cat owner, Queensland

Reasons for visiting the vet less often than usual - dogs and cats (%)



C30, D33. For what reasons would you say you've taken [name] to the vet less often than usual? Base: Dog owners who have taken their dog to the vet less often than usual in the past 12 months (2025, n=145), Cat owners who have taken their dog to the vet less often than usual in the past 12 months (2025, n=144).

Factors influencing fewer vet visits

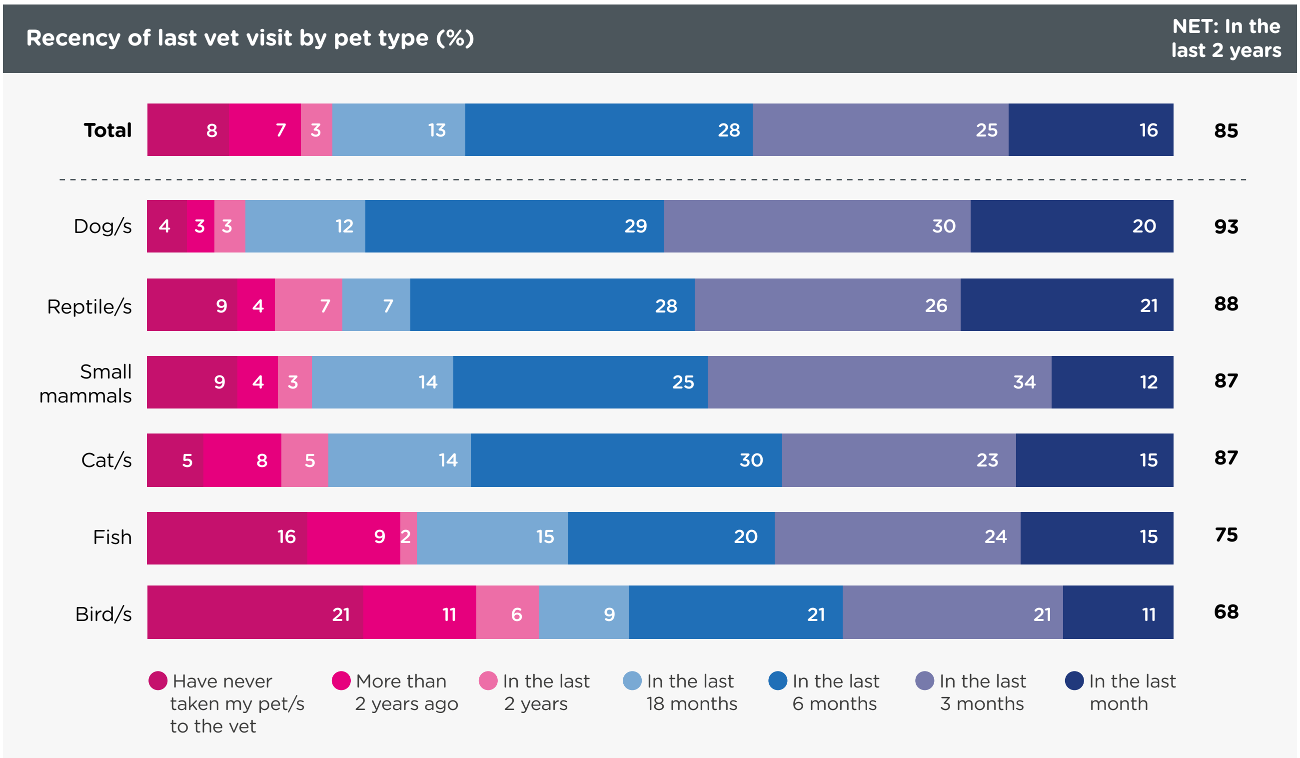
Pet owners who did not take their pet to the vet in the last twelve months cited a healthy pet as the main reason for less frequent vet visits (61% of dogs and 65% of cats), with cost a distant second - 30% of dog owners and 22% of cat owners say they could not afford either the consultation fees or the cost of medicines/procedures.

Nearly one in five (19%) cat owners mentioned that they provided care themselves based on experience (compared to 14% of dog owners).

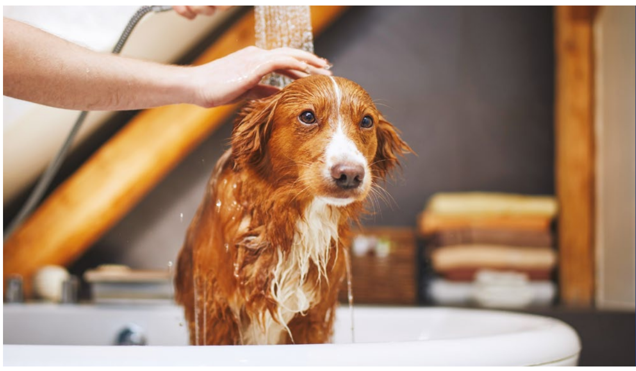
Specifically among dog owners, being unable to afford the general consultation fees or the cost of the medicines and/or procedures was more common among those with higher financial vulnerability (46%) and renters (43%).

"I was very thankful for the quick and attentive service but I was very dissatisfied with the price for the care received."

Cat and Fish owner, Queensland



F32. How long ago was your most recent visit to the vet? Base: Pet owners (2025, n=1,848), Dog owners (n=1011), Reptile owners (n=9), Small Mammal owners (n=20)*, Cat owners (n=482), Fish owners (n=21)*, bird owners (n=38). *Nb: Small sample size <30.*



"The service staff were particularly enthusiastic, carefully and thoroughly examined my dog's health condition, gave my dog a bath and groom, and left their contact information for me to bring my pet in for regular check-ups and consultations."

Cat, Dog and Fish owner, New South Wales

[7] Vet Voice, *Frequently asked questions about the cost of veterinary health care*, www.vetvoice.com.au/ec/pet-ownership/cost-of-veterinary-health-care

Satisfaction with vet visits

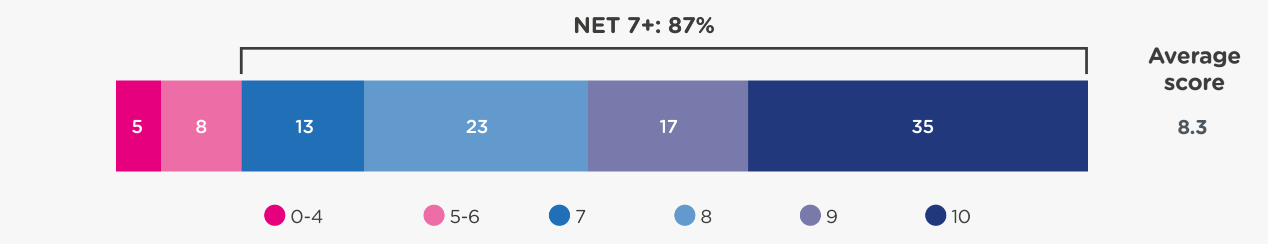
The vast majority (85%) of pet owners have taken their pet to the vet in the last 2 years, with 41% reporting their most recent visit was in the last 3 months. Of the minority of pet owners who have visited the vet less recently, 8% said they had *never* done so – this was more common among pet owners with lower incomes (16%), and those that have birds (21%) or fish (16%).

Dog owners have taken their dog to the vet most frequently, with the vast majority (93%) having visited in the last two years. Similar findings are seen among owners of reptiles (88%), small mammals (87%) and cats (87%), with most having taken their pet to the vet in the last two years. Fish (75%) and bird owners (68%) have visited the vet least often.

When asked how they would rate the overall quality of care their pet received at their most recent visit to the vet, pet owners had resoundingly positive responses, with 87% providing a high rating of 7 or more out of 10, and a very impressive more than one third (35%) providing a perfect score of 10 out of 10. Further validating these results, higher scores of 7 or more out of 10 were more common among experienced pet owners (91%) and those aged 60 years or over (95%).

A minority of just 5% of pet owners gave a low score of between 0 and 4 out of 10, while 8% provided a mid-range score of 5 or 6 out of 10. Lower scores between 0 and 4 out of 10 were more common among those who required financial assistance to cover their vet care (13%) and financially vulnerable pet owners (8%).

Overall quality of care pet received at most recent vet visit (%)



F34. Thinking about your most recent visit to the vet for your [pet-type], how would you rate the overall quality of care your pet received? Base: Pet owners who have taken their pet to the vet in the last two years (2025, n=1585).

The main reasons for lower scores between 0 and 6 out of 10 were high costs (e.g. feeling that fees had become more expensive or that they were "too expensive" for the services provided or length of appointment), long wait times (e.g. appointments running late, crowded waiting rooms), lack of thoroughness (e.g. misdiagnoses or missed symptoms), poor communication (e.g. not being informed about their pet's condition or treatment options) and inconsistent quality of care (e.g. quality of care varied between visits or between different vets at the same clinic).

Qualitative analysis of the reasons for higher scores of 7 or more out of 10 were: caring and compassionate veterinary teams (e.g. helping their pets feel comfortable and calm), their thorough and professional care (e.g. provided detailed examinations and answering all questions), good customer service (e.g. good listening skills and having their concerns addressed) and the effectiveness of their vet's treatment and care of their pet (e.g. providing treatment that resolved their pet's presenting issues).

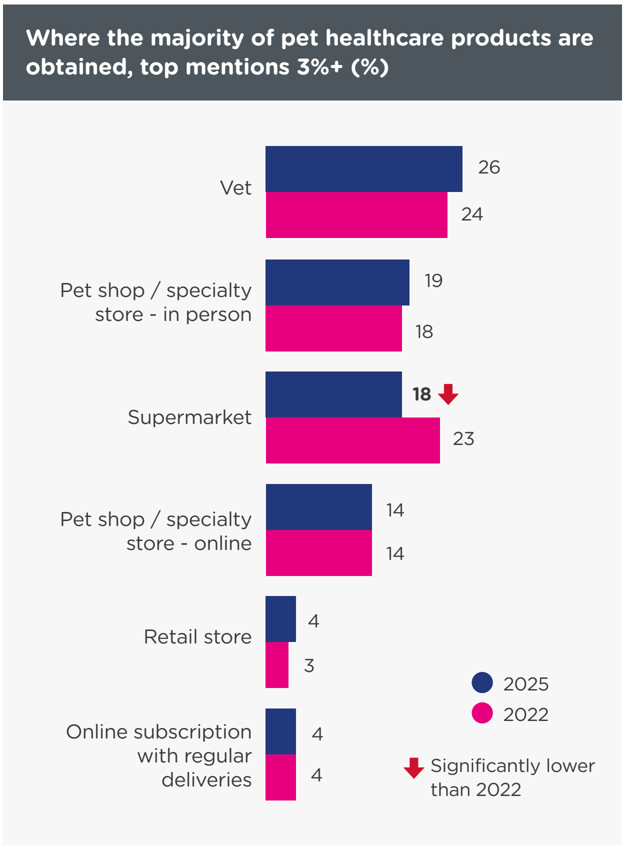
"We love our Vets! We spend A LOT of money there with a special needs dog, so they know us very well and always take such good care of us."

Cat and Dog owner, Australian Capital Territory

"The lady was unkind and she did not try to make my timid dog comfortable at all...I was charged 400 dollars for something that took five minutes and she also unnecessarily put a muzzle on Ruby."

Dog owner, Western Australia

Healthcare products



F28. Where do you purchase or get the majority of each of the following categories for your pets? Base: Pet owners (2022 n=1,724, 2025 n=1,848)

Vets continue to be the top source of pet healthcare products, with around one in four (26%) pet owners purchasing or getting the majority of their products from their vet. However, fewer pet owners in 2025 are sourcing their pet healthcare products from supermarkets (18%) compared to three years ago (23%). Visiting pet shops and pet specialty shops in person for healthcare products remains a popular choice (19%), while around one in seven (14%) choose to buy from online pet stores and pet speciality stores. While less common, a minority of pet owners shop via online subscriptions with regular deliveries (4%), or in other types of retail stores (4%).

In line with 2022 survey results, 18% of pet owners buy most of their pets' healthcare products online including 4% via online subscriptions that ship regular deliveries. Among those who purchase healthcare products online, flea and worming treatments remain the top healthcare products bought online (66% and 63% respectively). The rise in online purchases of dietary supplements for pets, observed in 2022, has continued with nearly one in three (32%) pet owners who buy healthcare products online reporting they have bought dietary supplements for their pets (compared to 25% in 2022 and 14% in 2019). As seen in 2022, this trend appears to be driven by pet owners aged 25-39 (44% vs 21% of those aged over 60), and those living in inner city or urban areas (55%).

Healthcare items purchased online (%)	2022 (n=309)	2025 (n=338)
Flea treatments	65	66
Worming treatments	65	63
Tick treatments	56	54
Dietary supplements	25	**32** ↑
Other	7	8

F5. What pet healthcare products do you buy online? Base: Pet owners who have purchased healthcare products online (2022: n=309, 2025: n=338).

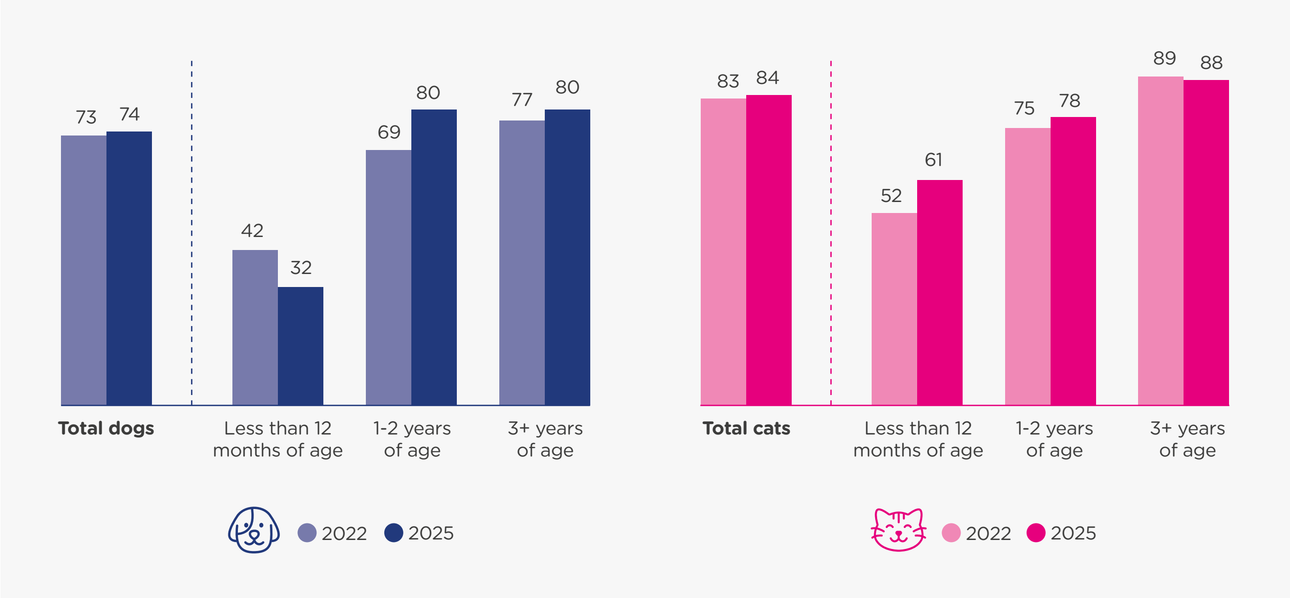
↑ Significantly higher than 2022

De-sexing

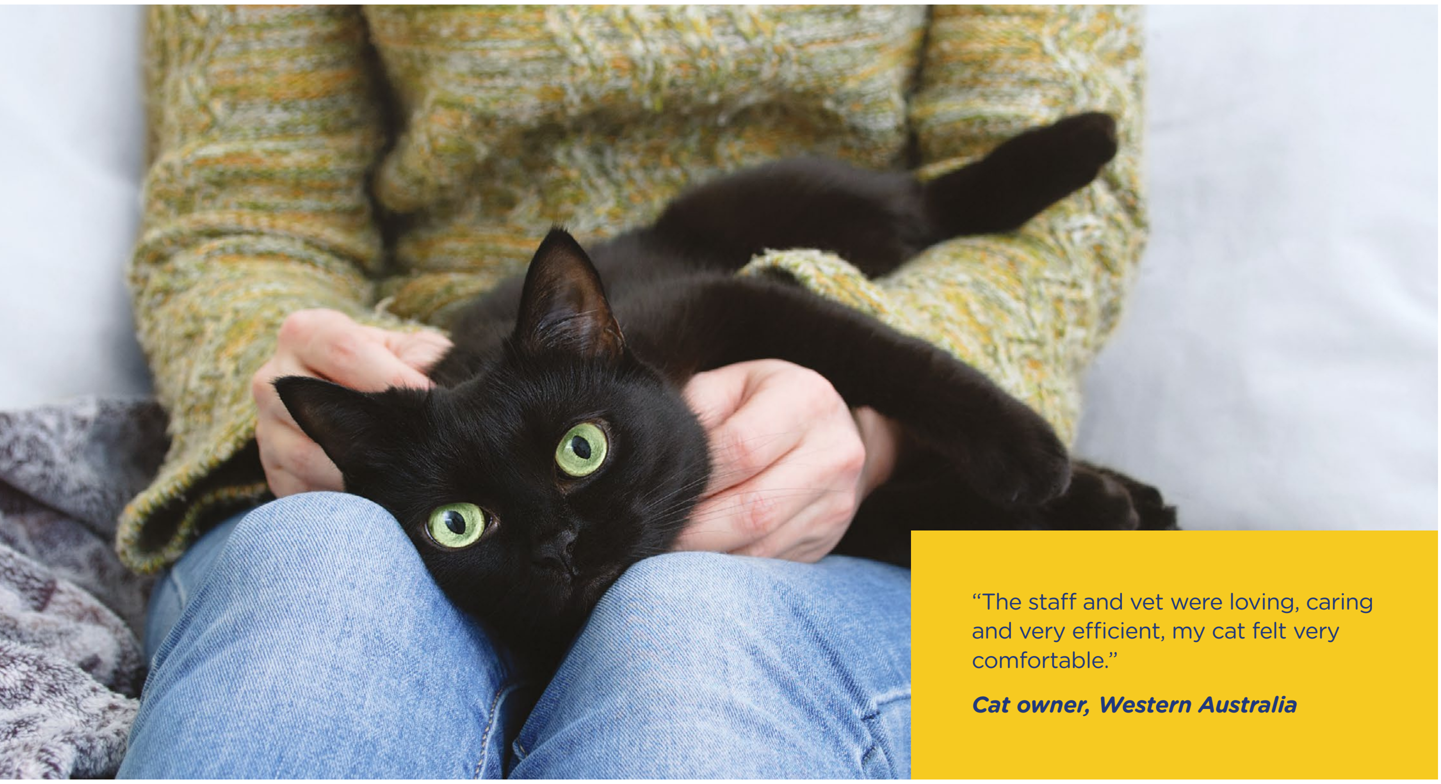
Proportions of de-sexed dogs and cats have remained stable in 2025, with rates sitting at around three in four dogs (74%) and more than four in five cats (84%).
For both cat and dog owners, de-sexing rates were higher among homeowners (88% of cats and 78% of dogs) and those aged 40 years and over (91% of cats and 79%).

Around two in three (67%) pet owners agree that *'Unless they are for breeding, all cats and dogs should be desexed'* with only a minority (12%) disagreeing with the statement and 22% reporting they neither agree nor disagree.

Rates of de-sexing of dogs and cats by age (%)

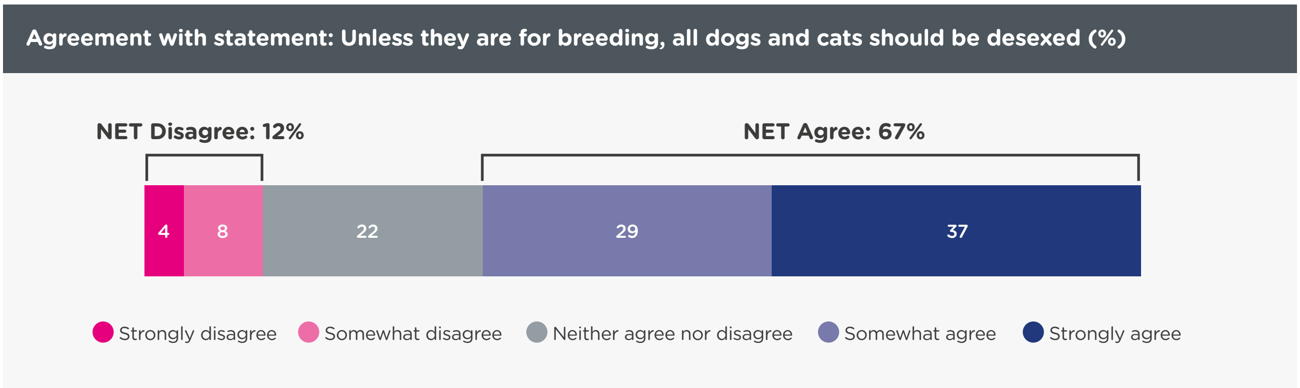


C5, D6. Has [cat/dog name] been de-sexed? Base: Cats (2022: n=840, 2025: n= 779), Dogs (2022: n=1,215, 2025: n= 1,188).



"The staff and vet were loving, caring and very efficient, my cat felt very comfortable."

Cat owner, Western Australia



F37_E. Do you personally agree or disagree with these things other people have said? Unless they are for breeding, all cats and dogs should be desexed. Base: Pet owners (2025, n=1,848)

More experienced pet owners (73%, compared to 58% of less experienced pet owners) and those living in suburban, regional or rural areas (69%, compared to 59% of those living in urban or inner city areas) were more likely to agree with this statement, as were those aged 40 years or older (76%) compared to younger pet owners aged under 40 (55%). Notably, among those who *agreed* with this statement, only 90% of cat owners had de-sexed their cat and 83% of dog owners had desexed their dogs. These results reveal that attitudes do not always translate to actions and there are other factors at play.

In some states, de-sexing pets before sale or transfer is mandatory, such as for cats and dogs in South Australia[6] and the Australian Capital Territory[7], and in Western Australia[8,9] before the animal is two years old. In contrast, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria encourage but do not require pet owners to de-sex their pets. (We note this does not bear out in the survey data, where dog and cat owners in different jurisdictions were just as likely to de-sex their pets.) Some jurisdictions offer discounted registration if a pet has been de-sexed.

The Australian Veterinary Association encourages the de-sexing of companion animals, however notes that veterinary advice is needed on the type of sterilisation procedure and age of sterilisation on a case-by-case basis.

While owners of un-desexed dogs and cats should consult their veterinarian on when to have their pet desexed, dogs and cats rehomed from animal shelters are generally desexed prior to adoption to manage the risk of the animal remaining entire.

Education programs about the benefits of de-sexing aimed at pet owners (for example those run by animal shelters and local councils) appear to be having a positive impact in reducing the number of abandoned animals.

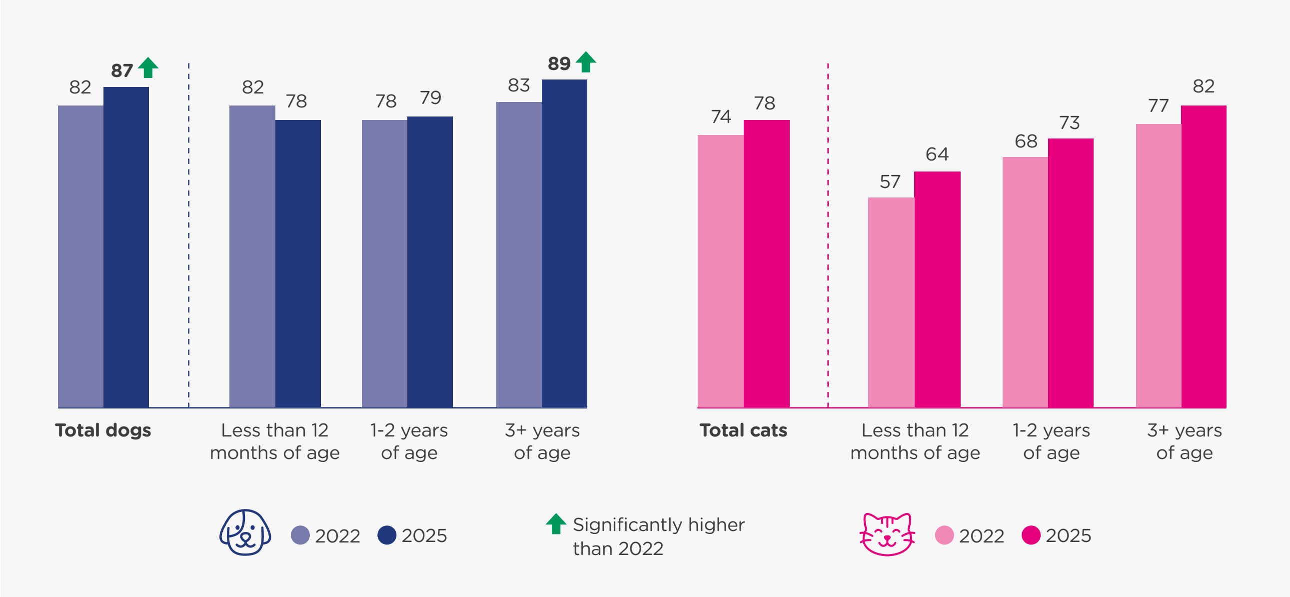
Over the three years to 2023-24, the number of dogs received by the RSPCA across Australia has decreased marginally from 22,311 in 2020-21 to 17,468; nearly eight in ten (down from nine in ten three years ago) are typically reclaimed, rehomed or placed into care, while those euthanised are primarily due to behavioural or medical issues.

A large decline is apparent in the number of cats received, with numbers nearly halved from 42,572 in 2020-21 to 26,704 in 2023-24; however similarly to findings from 2020-21, around eight in ten continue to be rehomed, reclaimed or placed in care[10]. Recent research from the University of Queensland[11,12] showed that cats are more likely to be euthanised because they are strays than to die of any single disease in Australia. A local government program found that, over 8 years, free desexing, microchipping and registration programs reduced cat impoundments by 66% and euthanasia by 82%.

[6] South Australian Department for Environment & Water, Your guide to South Australia's new dog and cat desexing laws, www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2018/02/desexing-pets
[7] Transport Canberra & City Services, Animal management within the Act, www.tccs.act.gov.au/city-living/pets/dogs/your-responsibilities#desexing
[8] Western Australian Department of Local Government, Sport & Cultural Industries, Cats and dogs, www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/community/cats-and-dogs
[9] Government of Western Australia Department for Justice Parliamentary Counsel's Office, Dog Amendment (Stop puppy farming) Act 2021, www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/law_a147325.html
[10] RSPCA Australia, Annual Statistics 2023-24, https://rspca.org.au/what-we-do/our-role-caring-animals/annual-statistics
[11] University of Queensland, Turning off the kitten tap with education and assistance, www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2025/04/turning-kitten-tap-education-and-assistance
[12] Cotterell J, Rand J, Scotney R. Urban Cat Management in Australia—Evidence-Based Strategies for Success. Animals. 2025; 15(8):1083. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani15081083

Microchipping

Rates of microchipping of dogs and cats by age (%)



C6, D7. Has [cat/dog name] been microchipped? Base: Cats (2022: n=840, 2025: n= 779), Dogs (2022: n=1,215, 2025: n= 1,188).

Microchipping rates have increased since 2022, with 87% of dogs (compared to 82% in 2022) and 78% of cats (compared to 74%) being currently microchipped. Similar trends to those observed among pet owners more likely to de-sex their pets are noted here, with microchipping more common among experienced pet owners (82% of experienced cat owners and 90% of experienced dog owners) and middle aged to older pet owners (91% of cat owners aged 40+).

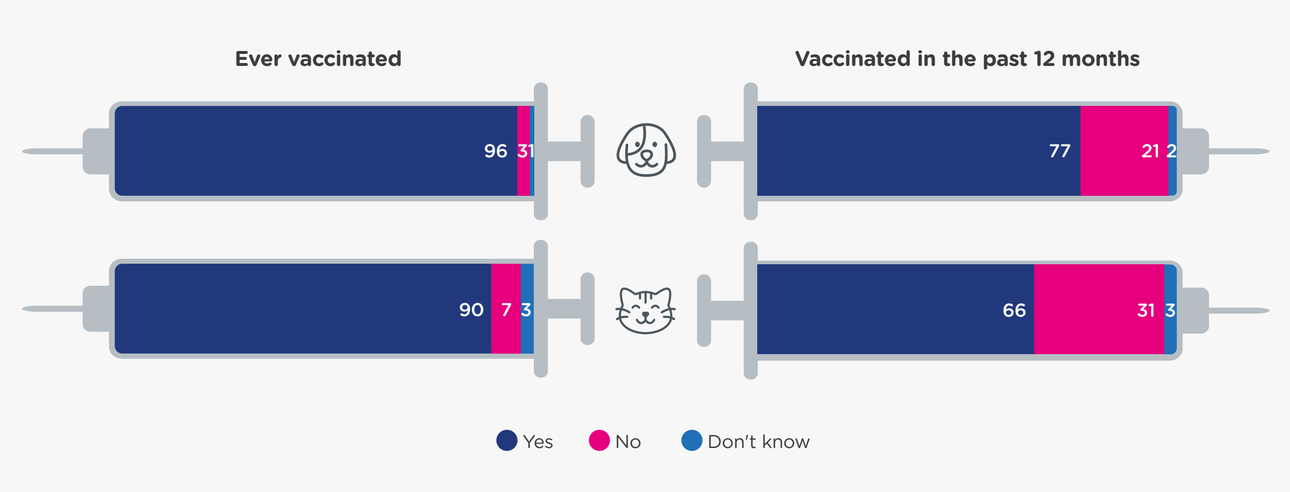
Microchipping ensures that pets are identified for life and can be reunited with their owners if they are lost, and it can be invaluable following a natural disaster such as a flood or cyclone, where a large number of pets can be displaced. It is also useful in identifying the breeder of a particular pet, especially when some breeders have a lifetime guarantee to re-house a pet if their owner is no longer able to care for it.

It is important to ensure your contact details are up to date in the microchipping database so that you are contactable if your pet goes missing – if you are unsure which company your pet's microchip is registered with, you can search for it online at www.petaddress.com.au or ask your vet.

Microchipping is mandated in most states and territories and across local government areas, and is usually a requirement for registration of pets.

Vaccinations

Rates of vaccination in dogs and cats (%)

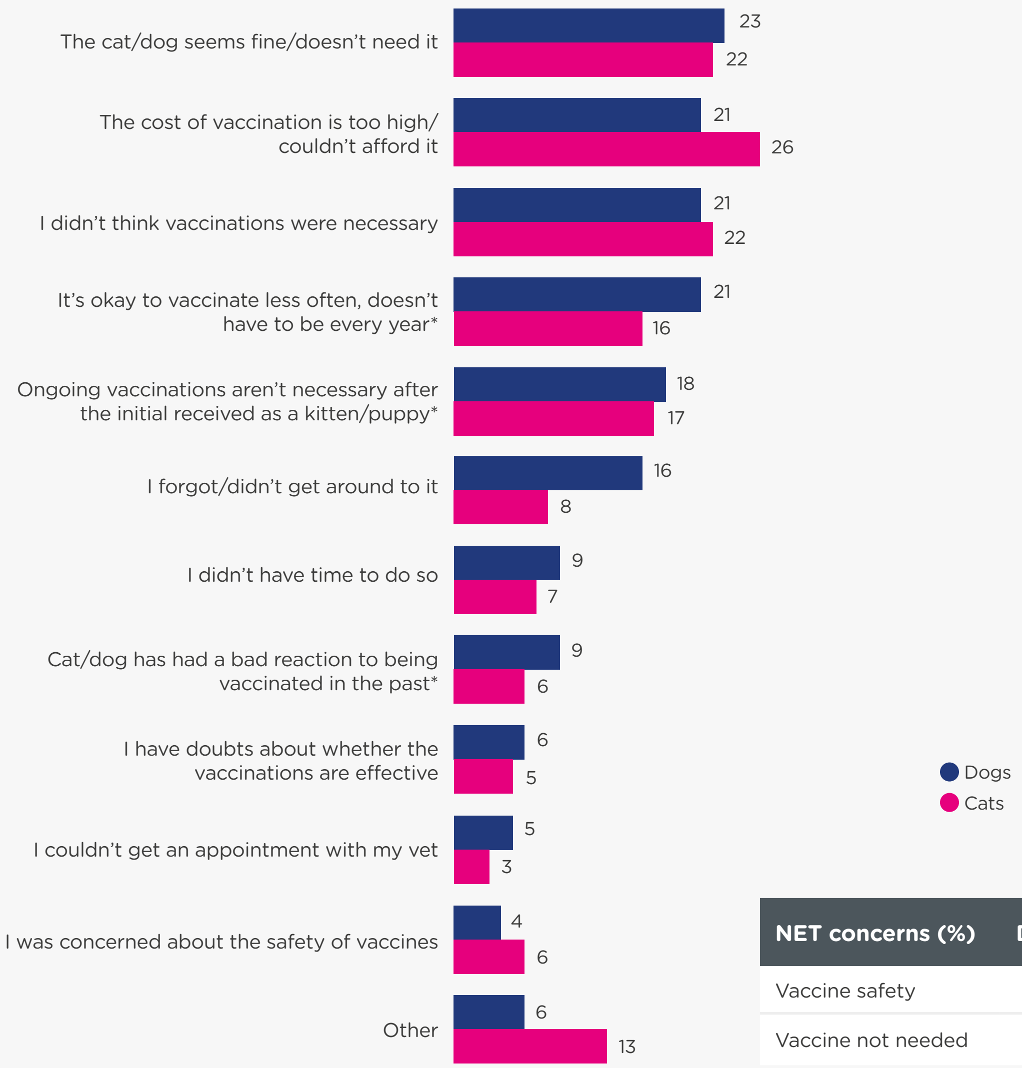


C28A/D29A. Has cat/dog [name] ever been vaccinated? C28B/D29B. Has cat/dog [name] been vaccinated in the past 12 months?
Base: Cat owners (n=779), dog owners (n=1,188)

Most cats (90%) and dogs (96%) have received at least one vaccine. However, owners reported that just 66% of their cats and 77% of their dogs have had a vaccination in the last 12 months.

The survey explored barriers towards getting their pet vaccinated in the last 12 months, and while cost of vaccination was the main stated reason (26% cats and 21% dogs) there is more to a lack of regular vaccinations than cost. There is a strong belief amongst cat and dog owners who've either never vaccinated or not vaccinated their pet in the last 12 months that vaccinations are generally not needed for one reason or another (62% cat and 65% of dog owners). Concern as to the effectiveness and safety of vaccines is another reason for not vaccinating regularly, including concerns their pet may have a bad reaction (12% of cat and 15% of dog owners). This suggests that there is an opportunity to further educate pet owners on the benefits and safety of regular vaccines and why they are necessary.

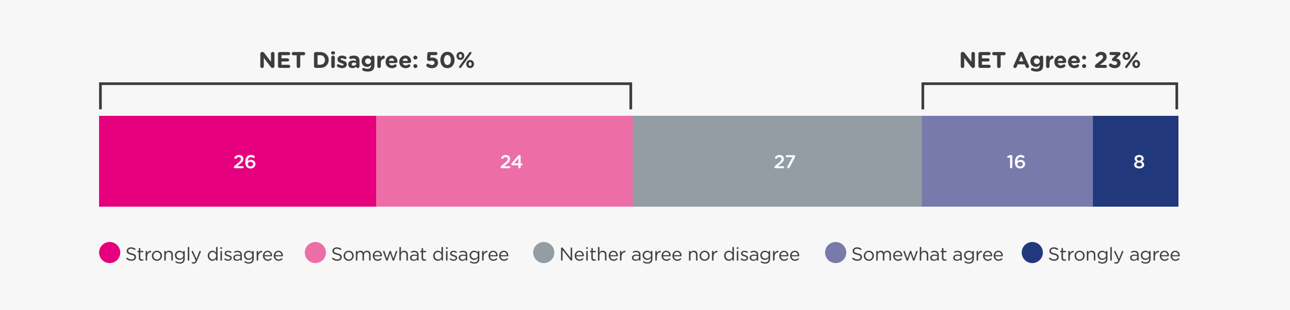
Reasons for non-vaccination in dogs and cats (%)



NET concerns (%)	Dogs	Cats
Vaccine safety	9	6
Vaccine not needed	65	62

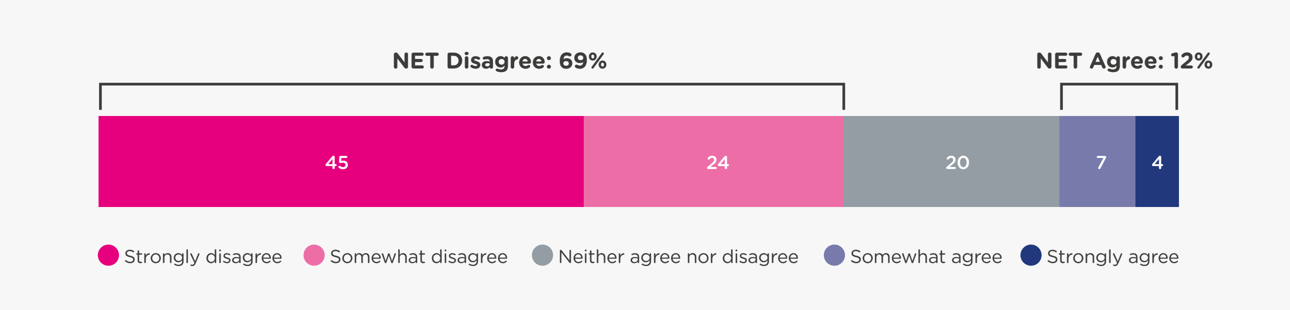
*C28C/D30. Are there any particular reasons why cat/dog has not been vaccinated in the last year? Base: Owners who have never vaccinated their cat/dog or have vaccinated them, just not in the last 12 months cat owners (n=250), dog owners (n=263) *Only shown if ever vaccinated their pet but not in the past 12 months - cat owners (n=198), dog owners (n=226)*

Agreement with statement: Cats and dogs don't have to get vaccinated every year, so long as they've had all their puppy/kitten shots (%)



F37_C. Cats and dogs don't have to get vaccinated every year, so long as they've had all their kitten/puppy shots. Base: Pet owners (2025, n=1,848)

Agreement with statement: Vaccination is not safe for dogs and cats (%)



F37_D. Vaccination is not safe for cats and dogs. Base: Pet owners (2025, n=1,848)

Concerningly, just under one in four (23%) pet owners agreed that *Cats and dogs don't have to get vaccinated every year, so long as they've had all their kitten / puppy shots* and 27% were undecided. Positively, half of pet owners (50%) disagreed with this statement. Agreement with this statement was more common among those with multiple types of pets (31%), those aged between 18 - 59 years (26%) and male pet owners (26%), while disagreement was more common among more experienced pet owners (58% v 41% of less experienced pet owners).

One in ten pet owners (12%) agreed with the statement that *Vaccination is not safe for cats and dogs*, with a further 20% undecided. Positively, more than two thirds disagreed with this statement (69%). In line with demographic trends noted for attitudes towards frequency of vaccination, agreement with this statement was more common among pet owners with multiple types of pets (16%), those aged between 18- 59 years (15%), male pet owners (15%), as well as those living in inner city or urban areas (19%). Notably, university educated pet owners (15%) were also more likely than others to agree. In line with other attitudinal results, disagreement was common among experienced pet owners (79%).

Interestingly, among those who agreed that vaccination is not safe, the majority had still vaccinated them at least once (cats 86%, dogs 93%).

Vaccination – Prevention is better than cure

Vaccination is a key component of responsible pet ownership – helping to protect them from serious diseases. Just like us, animals are susceptible to a wide range of diseases caused by viruses, bacteria and parasites. Vaccines can help prevent animals from getting these diseases or can lessen the severity of the symptoms and reduce the risk of long-term consequences of disease. This is particularly important for diseases that have limited or no treatment options available, or where treatment is complex or expensive.

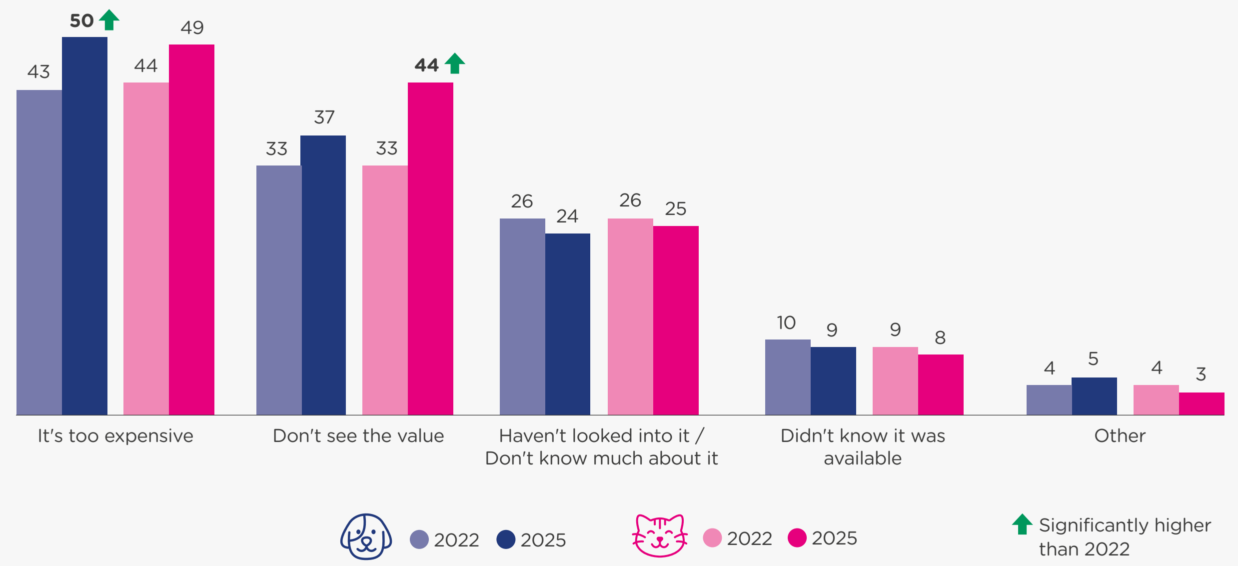
Vaccination can also help prevent the spread of diseases to other animals, as well as to humans. The old adage 'prevention is better than cure' highlights the importance of prioritising disease prevention where possible. Effective vaccines are available for many important and potentially life-threatening diseases in animals.

All veterinary vaccines must undergo a rigorous regulatory approval process by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) before they can be sold in Australia. This assessment ensures that all animal vaccines meet the required high standards of safety, efficacy and quality.

Talk to your vet to develop an appropriate vaccination program for your pet – animals are exposed to a range of different risk factors related to their species and breed, age, lifestyle, existing health conditions etc., so any vaccine protocol should be tailored to their individual needs.

Pet Insurance

Reasons for not taking out insurance (%)



C19, D20. For what reason have you NOT bought pet insurance for your cat/s / dog/s in the last 12 months? Base: Cat owners who haven't taken out pet insurance (2022: n=735, 2025: n=667), Dog owners who haven't taken out pet insurance (2022: n=1,013, 2025: n=903).

For those without pet insurance (86% of cat owners and 76% of dog owners), the expense is increasingly a top reason for not having it for both dog owners (50%, a significant shift from 43% in 2022) and cat owners (49% compared to 44% in 2022).

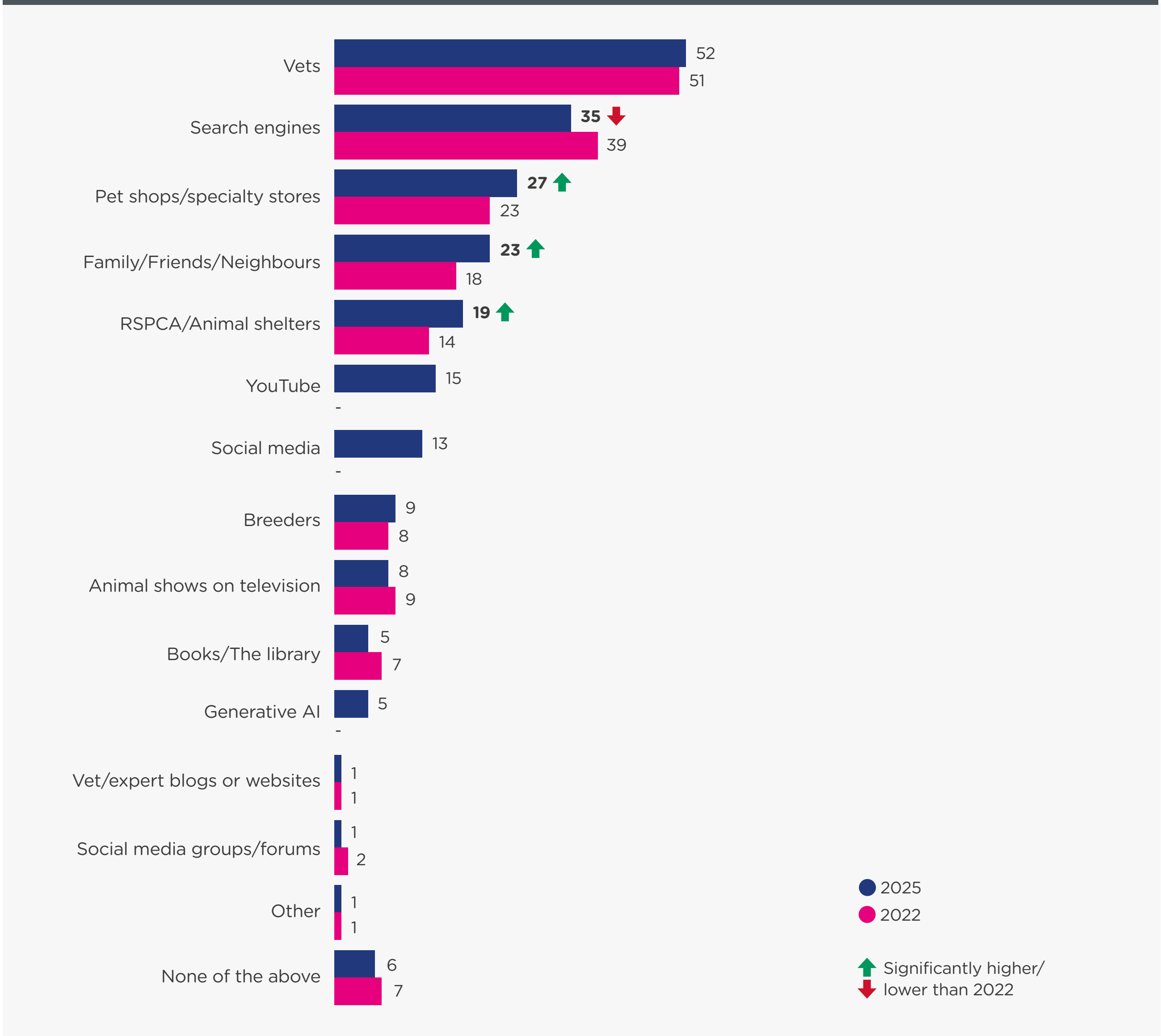
This year's survey also saw a significant increase in cat owners questioning the value of pet insurance, rising to 44% in 2025 (compared to 33% in 2022). Questioning the value of insurance was more common among cat owners who may be able to more easily cover any unexpected expenses or had not had a recent experience of being out of pocket for veterinary bills, such as those with lower financial vulnerability (50%), and those who had not required financial assistance to cover veterinary costs in the last 12 months (47%). Notably, more experienced cat owners were also more likely to question its value (48%), with around half (52%) of more experienced cat owners also feeling that it is too expensive.

Lack of knowledge of, or interest in, pet insurance has remained stable since 2022, mentioned by around one in four cat and dog owners, while lack of awareness of the availability of pet insurance was just mentioned by around one in ten, with no shifts noted this year.

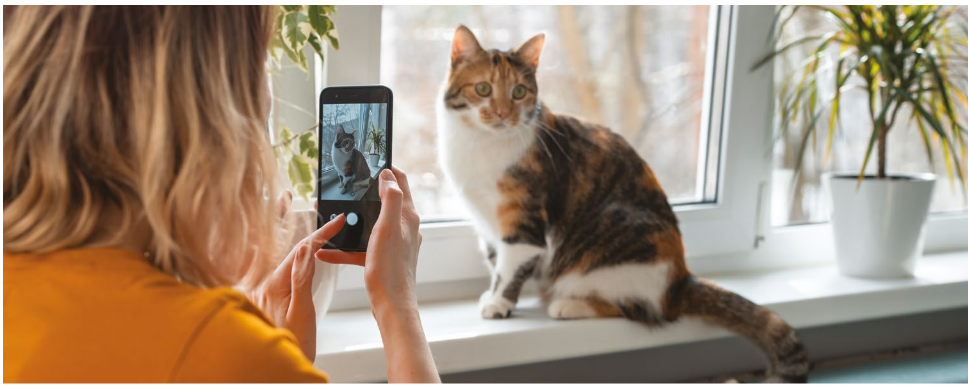
Other reasons for not buying pet insurance, mentioned by a small proportion of pet owners, include being ineligible due to the pet's old age, existing health conditions or pre-existing conditions when their pet was adopted, inability to find insurance that covers dental care or their breed of pet, or poor perceptions of the reputation of pet insurance companies.

Information sources

Sources of information used for pet-related issues (%)



F14. Which of the following sources of information do you mainly use for pet related issues? Base: Pet owners (2022: n=1,724, 2025: n=1,848)



"The vet is very informative and really cares for our pets like she would her own."

Cat and Dog owner, Queensland

Vets continue to be pet owners' number one source of information for pet related issues, with 52% reporting this in 2025 (in line with 51% of pet owners in 2022). Search engines remain the second most popular source of information (35%), however their popularity has declined since 2022 (39%), continuing a downward trend first noted in 2022.

Compared to three years ago, pet owners are more likely to name pet shops and pet speciality stores (27% v 23% in 2022) and RSPCA animal shelters (19% v 14%) as a source of information. Nearly one in four pet owners (23% v 18% in 2022) regard friends, family or neighbours as a key source of pet related information in 2025; a significant increase since 2022.

Examining the impact of pet ownership experience on preferences, those who are more experienced are more likely to consult a vet (62%) for pet-related information compared to those who are less experienced (40%).

While less experienced pet owners are more likely to consult friends, family or neighbours (27%), YouTube (20%), social media sites such as TikTok, Facebook and Instagram (17%) and Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT (7%). In addition to more experienced pet owners, females are also more likely to consult their vet (60%) than males (44%), who in turn are more likely to turn to YouTube (20%) or Generative AI such as Chat GPT (6%).

Notably, those who have had to take out financial assistance to cover veterinary care are less likely to turn to their vet with pet-related questions (33% vs. 55% among those who did not require financial assistance), being more likely to consult alternatives such as social media sites (24%), YouTube (22%) and Generative AI (12%), in addition to animal-related TV shows (14%) and books or libraries (11%).

8.

Policy reform

This report confirms significant growth in companion animal ownership recorded through 2022-2025. Australia's pet population has increased to 31.6 million pets across 73 per cent of households.

As Australia continues to navigate rising living costs, housing pressures and ongoing economic uncertainty, the need for a nationally consistent and strategic approach to companion animal policy has never been clearer. The 2025 *Pets in Australia* report confirms sustained growth in pet ownership, with 31.6 million pets now calling 73 per cent of Australian households home. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, pets remain a constant source of comfort and wellbeing for Australians—86 per cent of owners say their pet has positively impacted their lives.

However, pet owners continue to face barriers when it comes to responsible pet ownership. Challenges such as securing pet-friendly accommodation, accessing veterinary care—particularly in regional and remote areas—navigating complex and inconsistent regulations, and meeting ongoing care costs all contribute to uncertainty for current and prospective owners. For many, the cost of care plays a significant role in deciding whether to bring a pet into the household.

Develop a nationally consistent companion animal policy

Animal Medicines Australia is calling for a nationally consistent approach to companion animal policy as a key government priority.

Currently, companion animal policy is managed across a fragmented landscape of portfolios, agencies, and jurisdictions. Depending on the issue, responsibility may rest with departments of agriculture, primary industries, environment, health, consumer affairs, or even planning and infrastructure. This disjointed approach leads to inconsistent regulations and outcomes across the country.

These inconsistencies create avoidable challenges for pet owners, breeders, veterinarians, and companion animal industries - impacting animal welfare, responsible ownership, and even access to pets for Australians.

Animal Medicines Australia is advocating for a coordinated, national framework that brings together governments, industry, and key stakeholders. A unified approach would deliver better welfare outcomes for animals, support responsible pet ownership, and reflect the important role pets play in Australian households and communities. By elevating companion animal policy as a national priority, we can ensure all Australians benefit from clear, consistent standards that support the health and wellbeing of pets and people alike.

Greater support for pet owners and vets

The veterinary profession remains highly trusted, with 87 per cent of owners rating their satisfaction with their most recent veterinary visit 7 out of 10 or higher. Yet access to veterinary services, especially in rural and remote regions, is under increasing strain. Workforce shortages are contributing to burnout and limited availability of care in areas where it's needed most.

Compounding these challenges, many veterinary practices and charities provide support and assistance to people in crisis situations, often in the form of "in-kind" labour. Pets can provide significant emotional and social support and can even provide short-term health benefits – but, due to a lack of available support, pets can also act as a barrier to seeking assistance.

Veterinary social workers are trained in engaging with vulnerable people in highly stressful or emotional scenarios and can take responsibility for the human health aspects of veterinary care, thereby enhancing patient outcomes, improving mental health and social connection and providing critical support for veterinarians and other animal health providers.

Policy reform is needed to address the growing pressures on Australia's veterinary workforce. Veterinarians play a critical role in safeguarding animal health and welfare, public health, and biosecurity. However, the sector is facing significant workforce shortages, particularly in regional and remote areas, where access to veterinary services is becoming increasingly limited. Without targeted action, these shortages risk undermining animal care, agricultural productivity, and emergency response capability in the face of emerging diseases or natural disasters.

To ensure sustainable access to veterinary care across the country, the development of coordinated strategies that attract, support, and retain veterinary professionals, especially in underserved areas, are required. This includes expanding rural placement programs, providing targeted financial incentives such as HECS-HELP relief, improving workplace conditions, recognising veterinary professionals in government workforce planning and migration settings, and providing support for vulnerable people and their pets. A national approach to veterinary workforce planning will help secure the future of Australia's animal health system and ensure regional communities and their pets are not left behind.

Australian Polling Council methodology disclosure statement

This research was conducted by SEC Newgate Research on behalf of Animal Medicines Australia between 25 February - 10 March 2025.

The target population for the research was Australian adults aged 18 or older.

The research comprised an online survey with a total sample size of n=2,450. For additional details, please refer to the Technical Notes on page 3.

The research was undertaken in compliance with the Australian Polling Council Code of Conduct, which can be viewed here: www.australianpollingcouncil.com/code-of-conduct.

The Long Methodology Disclosure Statement for this research can be viewed here: www.newgatecomms.com.au/disclosure-statements.

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