

NATIONAL PEOPLE AND PETS SURVEY

**Pets are good for your health.
Owners, typically, are responsible and caring.**

a Report to:

**Dr Robert Kibble
Chairman
Urban Animal Management Coalition**

From:

**Mr Malcolm McHarg
Dr Chris Baldock
Associate Professor Bruce Headey
Mr Alec Robinson**

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NATIONAL PEOPLE AND PETS SURVEY

Foreword

The URBAN ANIMAL MANAGEMENT COALITION met for the first time in September 1993.

The Coalition draws its representatives from the major institutional interests concerned with the well-being, health and safety of People & Pets—the scientific community, animal welfare agencies, and the pet industry.

The objectives of the Urban Animal Management Coalition are:

1. To evaluate comprehensively the roles and position of companion animals in Australian society, and
2. To develop and promote People & Pet policies and practices that will:
 - advance the well-being of the carer and the pet,
 - facilitate responsible pet ownership, and
 - satisfy the requirements of urban society for healthy, orderly and safe living.

This NATIONAL PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY is the group's first major project. The research builds on findings from the seminal Australian study, PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON, conducted 20 years ago.

This innovative work, summarised in this report, was made possible by the financial contributions of the many and varied interested groups listed in the Annex. The Coalition gratefully acknowledges their welcome support.

The next phase in the Coalition's strategic planning process for People & Pets is already in progress. A preliminary report on this phase will be released shortly.

Robert Kibble
Chairman
Urban Animal Management Coalition



THE PROJECT TEAM FOR THE PEOPLE AND PETS SURVEY

Malcolm McHarg, BAppSc, MBA, DipPubPol, AFAIM.

Manager – consulting, Preferred Care Networks Pty. Limited.
Project manager for this survey.

Malcolm is a management consultant and authoritative writer on health policy and practice. He has a particular interest in the scope for more well-being, and the better containment of ill-being, in relation to persons (particularly individuals over 65 years of age), families and communities. His interest in the contribution of companion animals to better health derives from the seminal Australian study, PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON, conducted 20 years ago. Malcolm was project manager for the 1974 study. This 1994 national study confirms previous findings that companion animals are good for your health.

Malcolm McHarg, in 1994, was health consultant to THE COMMITTEE ON DARWIN and author of the Committee's HEALTH VISION REPORT on Territory Health and the potential of Darwin as a hub for health export.

Chris Baldock, BVSc (Hons), MPVM, PhD, FACVSc.

Senior principal epidemiologist, Animal Research Institute, Department of Primary Industries.

Chris is an acknowledged Australian authority on qualitative and quantitative veterinary epidemiology. He is experienced in the application of epidemiology to a wide range of animal health issues. These include population-based research and collation, interpretation of computerised laboratory data, data summarisation, epidemiological modelling and statistical analysis.

Dr. Baldock is a former President and current Vice-President of the Queensland Division of the Australian Veterinary Association; Assistant Chief Examiner Membership and former Principal Examiner in Epidemiology for the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.

Bruce Headey, BA, MA, PhD.

Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Melbourne.

Bruce is the author of several books: UNDERSTANDING HAPPINESS; HOUSING POLICY IN THE DEVELOPED ECONOMY; BRITISH CABINET MINISTERS-THE ROLES OF POLITICIANS IN EXECUTIVE OFFICE. He has written chapters in books on topics such as: 'The subjective well-being and ill-being of families', 'The life satisfactions and priorities of Australians', and 'Subjective well-being: a stocks and flows framework'.

Dr. Headey's recent research includes: THE VICTORIAN QUALITY OF LIFE PANEL STUDY, one of two panel studies in the world which, for a large public sample, monitors and explains changes in their subjective well-being/perceived quality of life; SETTING THE POLITICAL AGENDA: A TWICE-YEARLY SURVEY OF VICTORIAN OPINION LEADERS.

Alec Robinson, BA, AAIB, ASA, ACIS, ACIM, AACS.

Managing director, Multi-Task Commercial Pty Limited.

Alec is a computing contractor. He has worked on a wide variety of platforms and in a range of languages. Applications include financial, marketing, technical, and manufacturing in areas such as analysis, design, programming, training and systems evaluation. With Preferred Care Networks Pty Limited, Mr. Robinson has been developing computer and communications software for better care of the aged.

PEOPLE AND PETS

Pets are good for your health.

Owners, typically, are responsible and caring.

The highlights of this nationwide PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY, and what pets mean to both pet and non-pet owners, are fourfold.

► **Caring for a pet is the norm**

Pet ownership is an everyday part of the Australian lifestyle.

Pets are the norm for most people, more so in their developmental years. During childhood, for example, pets were part of the family for more than four out of five Australians.

Households with pet membership are still the norm. Sixty (60) % of today's 6.2 million Oz households have a pet. Of these:

- 68% care for one or more dogs
- 45% care for one or more cats
- 25% own birds.

The extent to which we make companion animals part of our everyday experience largely reflects our current lifestyle including domestic accommodation. Our involvement with pets, in particular dogs, expands and contracts as we move through phases of the family lifecycle.

Fifty-three (53) % of those who do not at present own a pet would, in the future, like one. Most want a dog. The mitigating factors are mainly:

- Living in accommodation not suited to a pet, e.g.,
 - rental accommodation with no provision for pets
 - no yard for the pet's mental stimulation, play and leisure;
- The absence of someone at home to care for the pet.

The total number of companion animals in Australia has remained fairly stable over the last five years. Looking to the near future, however, dogs may become even more significant as the preferred pet species.

► **Those who care for a dog have better health**

To own and care for a pet, particularly a dog, is to enjoy better physical and mental health. This is true for all sections of the population.

Dog owners, compared to non-pet owners, are more physically active and report greater satisfaction with their physical fitness. They visit the doctor less often. Fewer take medication for high blood pressure, sleeping difficulties, high cholesterol or a heart problem.

They also experience social benefits—carers are less likely to report feeling lonely.

The degree of person-pet bonding is significant. For the single person closely bonded with their dog, the benefits are even more marked.

► **Owners, typically, are responsible & caring**

The great majority of pet owners are responsible and considerate carers. They treat their dog or cat with affection and as a member of the family. They care for its well-being, health and safety.

- In relation to dogs:
 - most are said to be 'obedient'
 - the majority of owners, during exercise periods, keep their pet on a lead (women do most of the exercising and are more responsible than men)
 - destructive behaviour is uncommon
 - barking can be a nuisance, but in most neighbourhoods, this seldom occurs;
- There is wide support among pet owners for the desexing of cats and dogs—90% of cats and 61% of dogs;

Therefore, the finding that 'complaints from neighbours about pets are rare' does not come as a surprise.

► **Dog faeces can foul public places**

Public places—streets, parks, beaches and river banks—are important places for the recreational exercise of dogs. The use of parks as a canine toilet facility, however, is considerably less than universal. As expected, it is more common in urban areas.

Among carers, there are those that pick up their dog's faeces in public places and there are those that don't. Again, women are more responsible than men. Sydney leads the way in the removal of faeces from public places.

► **The Urban Animal Management Coalition has a distinctive contribution to make to better People-Pet policies and practices**

The contribution of companion animals such as dogs and cats to healthy, orderly and safe living in Australian neighbourhoods will be facilitated by informed understanding and analysis of the issues. This NATIONAL PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY discloses the need for better public policy and reporting on Australians and their pets.

For example, the fouling of streets and parks, by dog faeces, is a genuine issue of public policy. But to the extent that there is fouling in urban areas, it is not, as stated by some, a genuine threat to the health of children and the environment. Dogs and cats, in themselves, are not significant as zoonotic health hazards. And dogs and cats do not constitute a risk to the integrity of the urban environment. More people are cleaning up after their dogs than 20 years ago.

The Urban Animal Management (UAM) Coalition comprises most of the peak bodies dedicated to People-Pet well-being. The Coalition therefore provides a national vehicle for harnessing the well developed knowledge, experience and understanding of its members on People & Pets. The Coalition has the capacity to supply strategic and operational insights to all who have an interest in strengthening the People-Pet partnership and advancing the life-style aspirations of Australian neighbourhoods. This report is an example.

PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

This survey builds on a study, conducted 20 years ago in Melbourne, on people-pet interactions in urban communities. The research examined the roles that pets, specifically dogs and cats, play in Australian society.

More than 400 pet and non-pet owning families were interviewed in the first phase of the 1974 study on Pets as a Social Phenomenon. Of these, 286 were selected for detailed quantitative evaluation. The second stage consisted of interviews and discussions on aspects of pet ownership and urban change with a range of informed contributors. The major constituencies comprised social workers & family guidance counsellors, veterinary practitioners, local government agencies, housing authorities, medical practitioners, teachers, educational authorities, and animal welfare organisations.

The report PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON documents the findings. The report is available from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service, (03) 827 5344.

1.1 Pets – high level good, little bad

PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON revealed a widely held belief that responsible pet ownership is a good thing. A significant proportion of society perceived pet ownership to be of real and lasting value to the individual, the family unit and therefore the community.

Dogs and cats were found to be a normal part of life in Australia. As companion animals, the dog or cat enhances well-being and security, and protects the carer against a sense of isolation or a lack of intimacy in close personal relations.

Companionship was the most valued attribute of a dog or cat. Seventeen out of 20 dog owners, and four out of five cat owners, gave 'companionship' as the main function of their pet. For dog owners, secondary functions were 'protection' (one out of three) and 'productive work' (one out of 20). Only 6% of dog owners gave 'protection' as the major function of the pet.

Overall, 84% of pet owners exercised the types of controls needed to ensure that their pets were not a problem to others.

1.2 People & Pets—an update

Although there have been a number of contributing studies over the last 20 years on pets as companion animals, this NATIONAL PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY creates a comprehensive, up-to-date understanding of what people think are the good things, and the bad things, about having pets in Australia today.

2

NATIONAL PEOPLE AND PETS SURVEY

Specifically, the NATIONAL PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY sought to develop hard data and meaningful insights into:

1. The nature of pet ownership,
2. Personal benefits accruing from companion animals,
3. Community inconvenience attributed to dogs and cats, and
4. Future intentions on pet ownership.

The content and conduct of the survey was the responsibility of the independent consultants who assumed this role for PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON. Mr Malcolm McHarg, a health policy analyst and management consultant, was project manager. Major contributions to the 1994 survey came from a foremost veterinary epidemiologist, Dr Chris Baldock, and a leading social science researcher from the University of Melbourne, Associate Professor Bruce Headey.

The PEOPLE & PETS study was a national stratified probability survey with a sample of 1011 people aged 16 and over.

Telephone interviewing was by the Roy Morgan Research Centre during the first week of November 1994.

The project was funded by the UAM Coalition.

Ultimate responsibility for every aspect of the PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY, including this report, rests with the consultants.

► The questionnaire

The PEOPLE & PETS questionnaire comprised 121 questions. An overview of question topics, by class of respondent, is given in the table below:

Pet owners			Non-pet owners	All respondents
All pet owners	Dog owners	Cat owners		
Persons in household			Want a pet?	Dogs in parks
No. of pets by type	Details of first dog	Details of first cat	What change in your life required?	Dogs barking
Do neighbours complain?	Details of second dog	Details of second cat	What pet would you get?	Cats in yards
Vaccination?	Walking the dog		Why no pet now?	Home & setting
Desexing?			Pet 5 years ago?	Closeness to people
Do dogs deter burglars	History as pet owner	History as pet owner	Pet when a child?	Personal health, age
Aggressive dogs	Care & play	Care & play		Life satisfaction
Closeness to pets & people				Fitness & health
Satisfaction with pets				Demographics breadwinner respondent
				Panel component

3

PATTERNS OF PET OWNERSHIP

All Australian communities have a stake or interest in the future of pet ownership. Nearly every Australian household either has a pet, has had a pet, or intends to have a pet.

Four out of five current pet owners had a pet five years ago.

The main reasons for not having a wanted pet, at this time, are lack of:

- Suitable accommodation,
- Time at home and therefore time spent with the pet.

Only one out of 20 does not have a pet because they do not like pets!

3.1 Who Owns Pets?

Who owns pets? Or, in the case of cats, who is owned by the pet?

About 60% of the 6.2 million households in Australia have one or more pets. Typically, the major carer of the pet is female, married with children, living in the suburbs and most likely employed.

The size of the yard associated with the dwelling is important in determining pet ownership. Larger yards are most conducive to having a pet. Conversely, 'no yard' pre-empts scope for a companion animal such as a dog or cat.

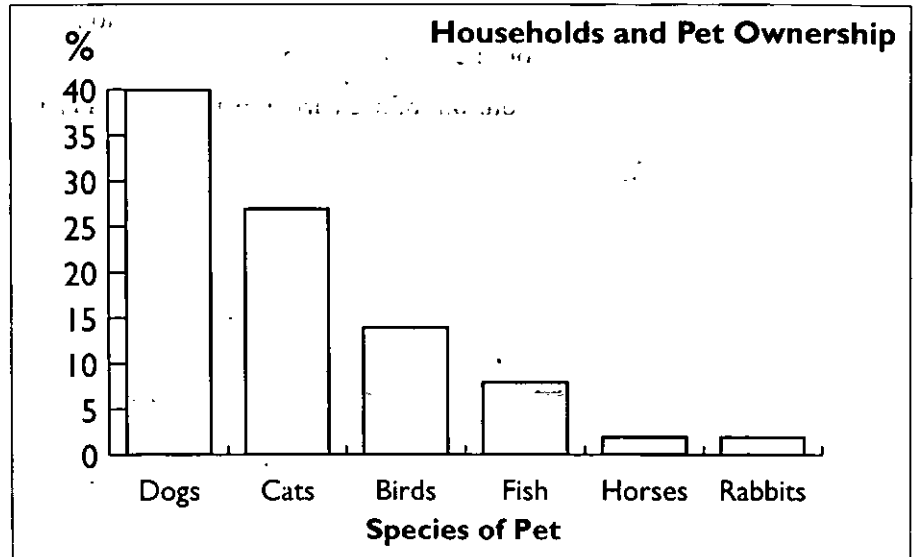
Fourteen (14) % of pets have been owned for less than one year.

Eighty-one (81) % of owners and 48% of non-owners had pets five years ago.

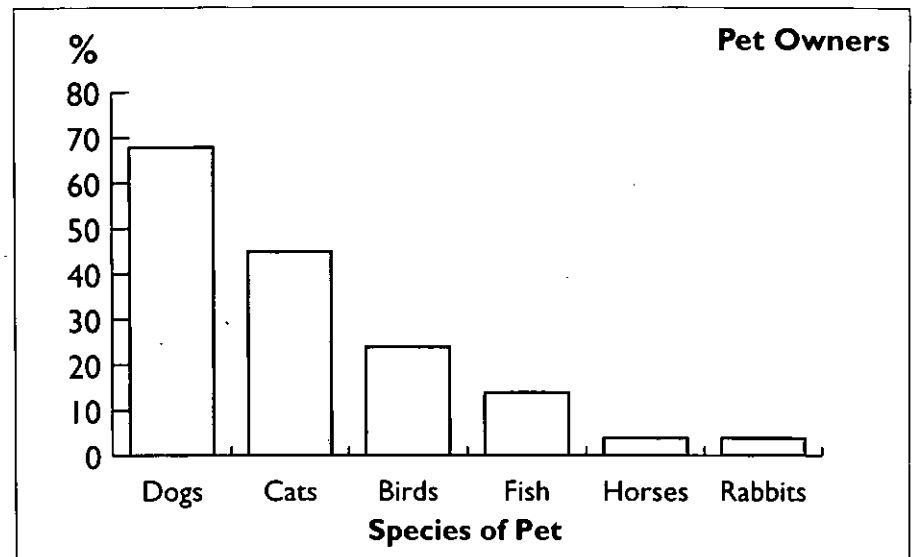
Eighty-nine (89) % of present pet owners, and 83% of non-pet owners, had pets in the family during their childhood.

3.2 What type of Pet?

The proportion of households with a pet, and the types of pet species, are:



Dogs and cats are the dominant species of companion animal:



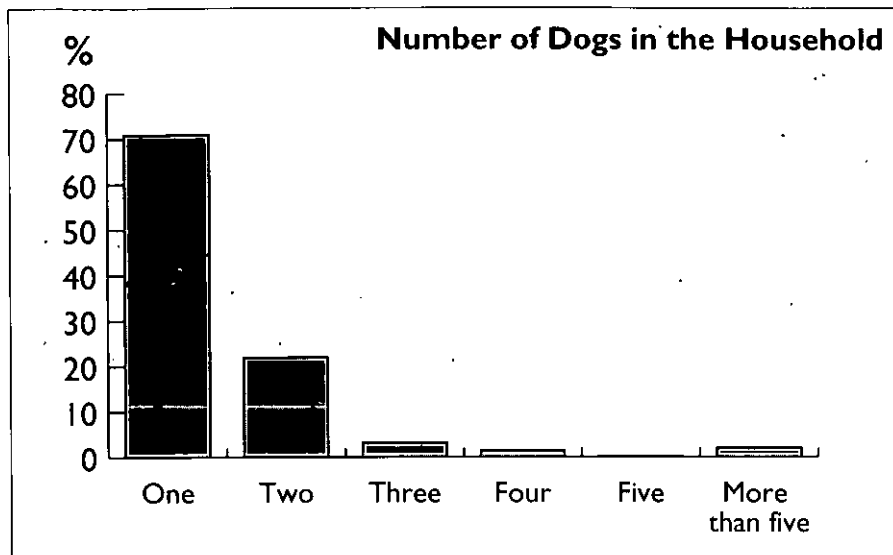
Less common pet species include ducks (1.3% of the pet population), chickens (1.3%), guinea pigs (1.1%), sheep (1.1%) and snakes (.5%).

3.3 Dogs as companion animals

The larger the household, the greater the likelihood of having a dog.

► Numbers per household

The number of dogs per household is as follows:



► Features of dogs as companion animals

Features of dogs as companion animals include the following:

- Nearly four out of five (77%) were acquired as puppies
- About half are pedigreed
- The male:female sex ratio is 50:50
- 61% are desexed (lower in very low income families)
- Nearly four out of five (77%) belong to the toy-medium size range (if the age of the carer is in the range middle to old age, then there is less likelihood of the dog being large)
- Most (88%) are said to obey basic commands such as “sit”, “stay” and “come”
- About half are aged less than 5 years
- About four out of five pet dogs are described as “energetic”
- More families than unpartnered individuals own dogs.

About one in three dog owners also have a cat.

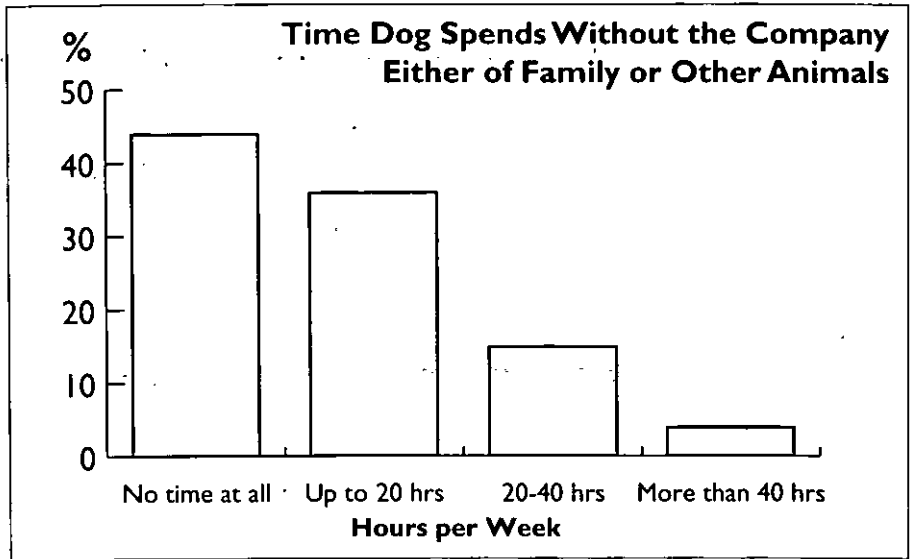
► Popular breeds

The more popular dog breeds are:

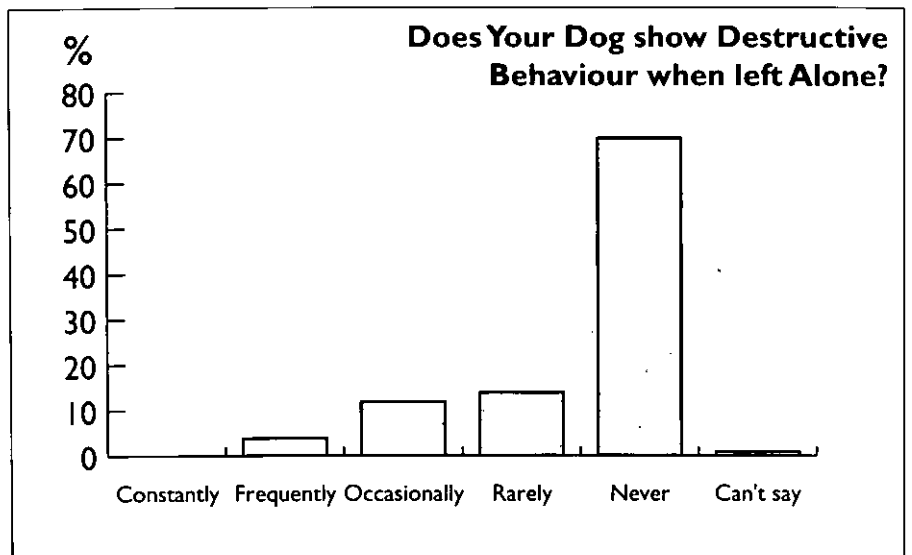
Breed:	Per cent
German Shepherd	11
Kelpie	8
Cattle dog	7
Chihuahua	6
Border Collie	4
Corgi	4
Labrador	4
Cocker Spaniel	3
Jack Russell	3

► **Company**

Only one in five dogs is without the company of family members or other animals for more than 20 hours a week:



Destructive behaviour when the dog is left alone does occur but is not common.

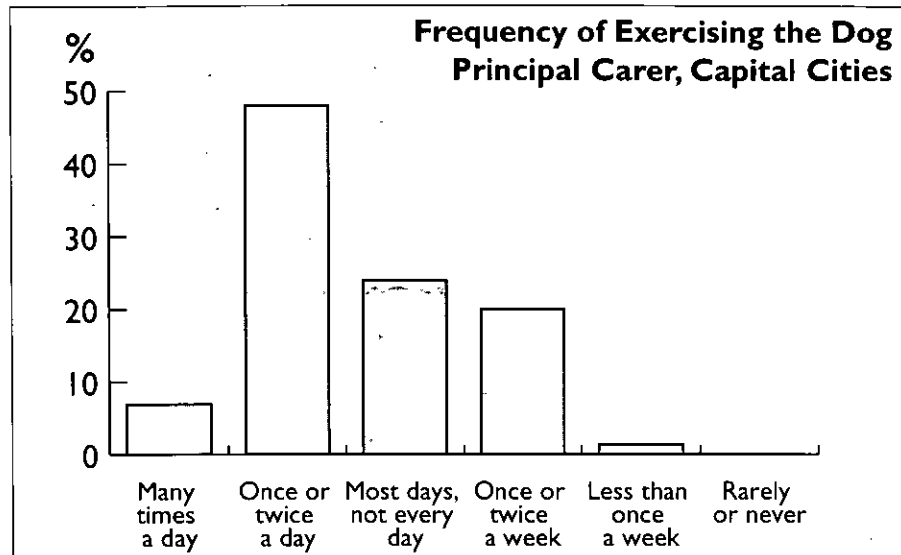


► **Exercise**

Three out of four of the principal carers, in the capital cities, personally exercise or walk the dog. The most common places for exercise and walking are local streets (54%), and parks or other public places (58% excluding beaches and the banks of rivers or creeks). Sixty (60) % always keep their dog on a lead when exercising it in public places.

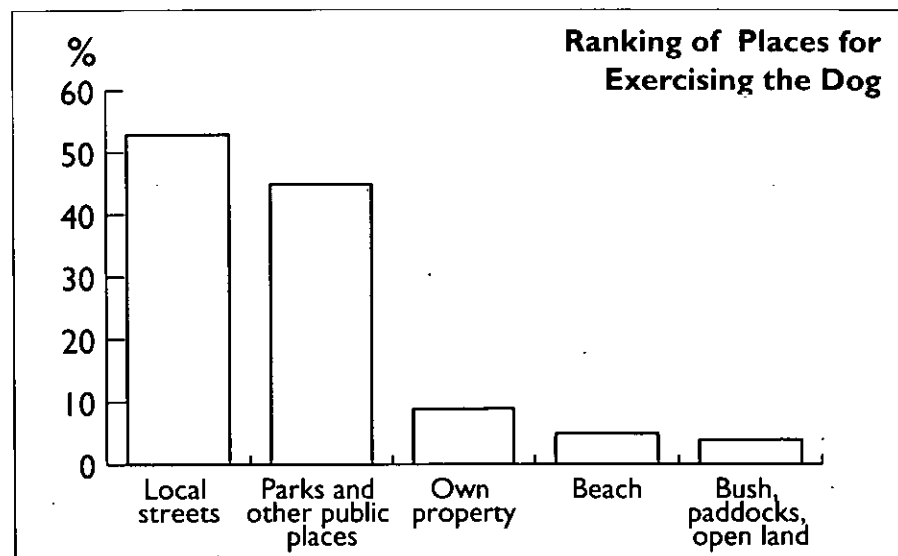
The ratio of women to men exercising the dog is about 2:1.

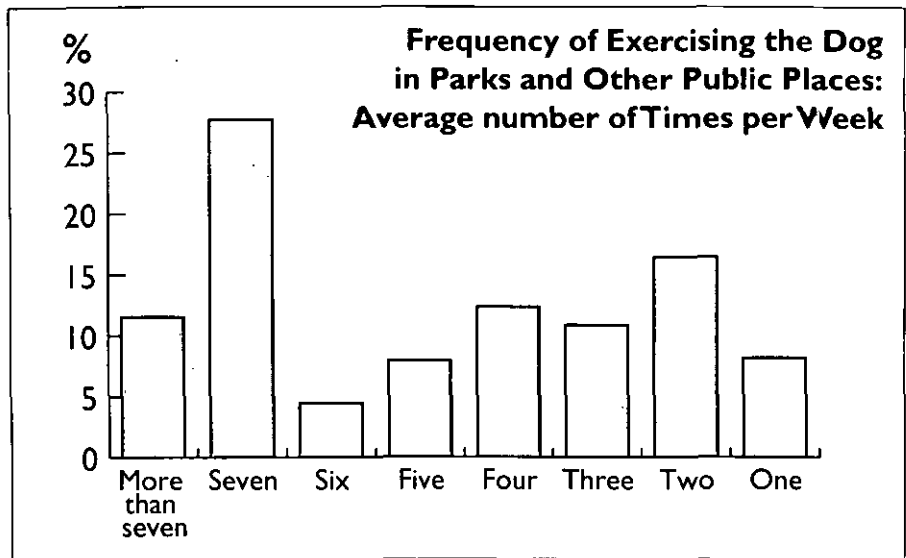
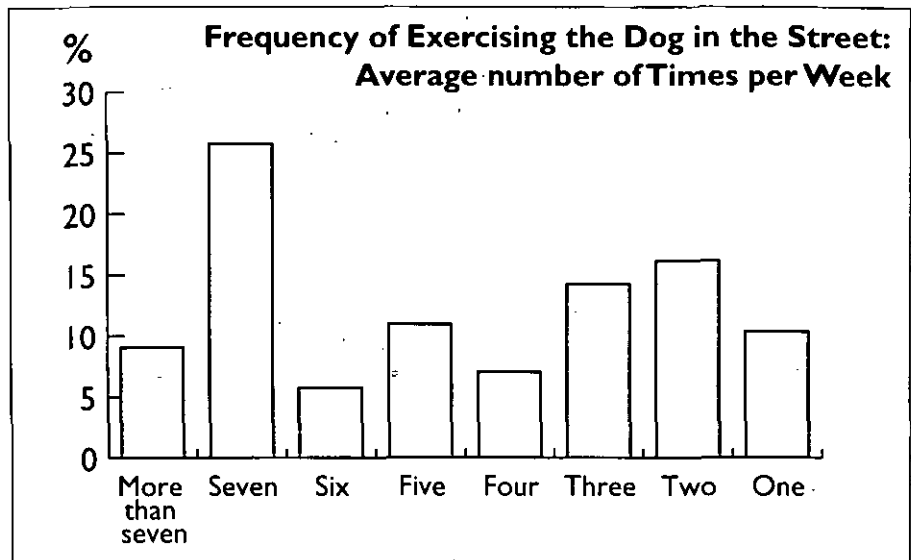
The frequency of exercise, by the principal carer, is as follows:



When the dog is exercised many times a day, then it is more likely to be under the supervision of a man. In this case, the men to women ratio among carers is 1.6:1.

Predominantly public places—especially streets and parks—have the highest ranking as preferred places for exercise and walking





► **Fouling of public places**

To what extent can the prevalence of fouling resulting from dogs exercising and walking in public places be labelled an inconvenience to others?

There would seem to be two classes of carers—those that pick up their dog’s faeces for reasons of hygiene and consideration to others, and those who are less responsible.

One in three carers say they always pick up after the dog but two out of five say ‘never’.

Do you pick up your dog’s faeces (droppings or soil) in public places?

Would that be:	All	Capitals	Other	Sydney
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Always	33.0	36.5	28.1	48.6
Sometimes	10.9	12.7	8.3	9.3
Never	42.8	40.4	45.0	35.1
Can’t say	13.6	10.1	18.6	6.8

This PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY did not explore the extent to which such differences in behaviour are a function of how easy it is for the carer:

1. To dispose of the droppings, either on the spot or nearby, and
2. Whether a special bin for this purpose is provided and regularly emptied.

Given the above findings, this is an obvious line of inquiry for a future survey.

3.4 Cats as companion animals

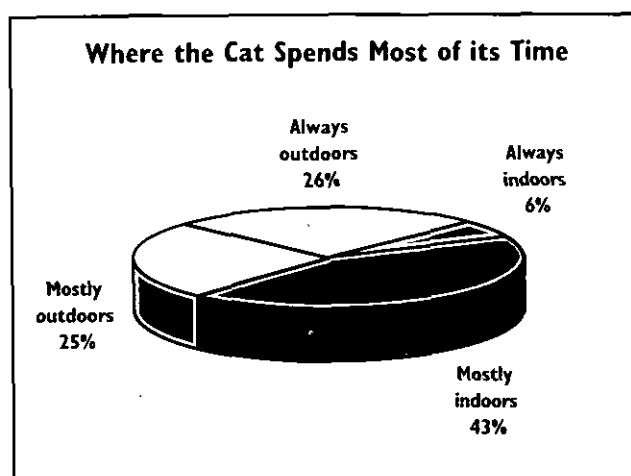
► Some features of cats

Some features of cats as companion animals are:

- 57% are female
- 90% are desexed
- 55% are described as 'energetic'
- 50% are mostly indoors but 61% are said to be inside at night
- While domestic or 'moggie' is by far and away the most common type of cat—83%—Persian is a popular pedigree
- Ownership of (or by) cats is spread evenly across families and non-partnered individuals
- Reflecting this different mix of owners (to dog ownership), 31% leave their cats without company for more than 40 hours a week (dogs, only 4%).

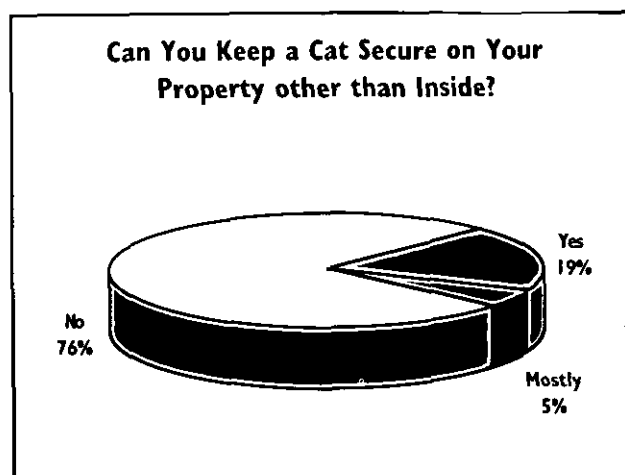
► Indoors versus outdoors

Whereas many cats are mostly indoor pets, there are also many that spend most of their time outdoors:



► Preventing the cat from roaming

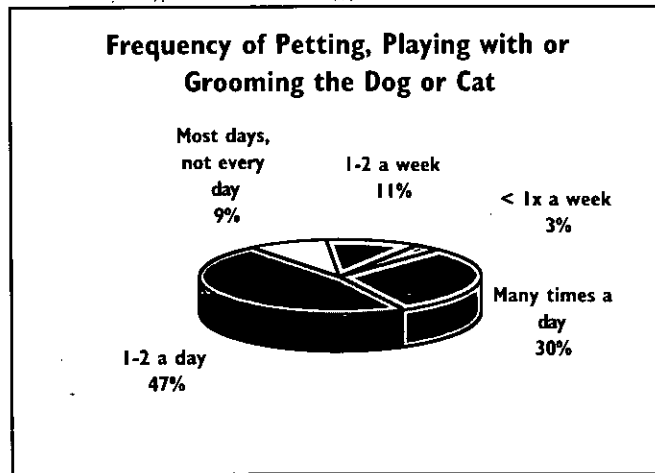
This national survey showed that only about one in four carers is able to keep a cat secure on their property other than inside. (The Victorian Government recently made it an offence to let a cat roam).



3.5

Care and Play

PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON showed that carers readily find the time required for grooming and other attention. Ninety-six (96) % of dog and cat owners in this 1994 survey spend some time petting, playing with or grooming their pet:



4

HEALTH BENEFITS

► **Pets, especially dogs, are good for your fitness, health and mental health**

This PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY confirms the health benefits of pet ownership.

Previous research by Dr Warwick Anderson, of the Baker Institute in Melbourne, led the way. Dr Anderson, in a health screening survey, showed that pet owners had lower blood pressure and were less at risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Our nationwide sample of Australian households reveals that those who own pets, especially dogs, have BETTER PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH than non-owners. Pet owners go to the doctor less often. Fewer of them take medication for high blood pressure, sleeping difficulties, high cholesterol or a heart problem.

One reason for these health advantages is that pet owners, in particular dog owners, are more physically active than the rest of the population. They take more recreational walks. They report greater satisfaction with their physical fitness.

These health benefits from dogs as companion animals are reported by all sections of the community regardless of age, sex, income, educational background or occupational status.

► **Social benefits also, i.e., personal support from pets**

Given that pet owners value the friendly and sometimes intimate companionship of their dog or cat, it is not surprising to find that those who have pets are LESS LIKELY TO REPORT FEELING LONELY compared to non-pet owners.

Fifty-eight (58) % of pet owners say they got to know people and made friends through having pets.

In a similar vein, 62% of pet owners say that having a pet around when people visit makes it easier "to get into conversation and create a friendly atmosphere".

Seventy-nine (79) % of owners find it comforting to be with their pet "when things go wrong".

And 91% feel "very close" to their pet—almost as many as feel very close to their family. This reinforces that pets are integral members of the family however constituted.

► **Special benefits for non-partnered people**

The non-partnered persons in our society comprise singles, those who are separated or divorced, widows and widowers.

Non-partnered individuals may tend to have less effective social networks than the partnered. Does a companion animal, by complementing or substituting for elements of the human network, contribute to the health and well-being of the non-partnered person?

The PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY revealed SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR DOG OWNERS WHO ARE NON-PARTNERED over and above those they share generally with people who are dog owners.

A 'closeness-to-pet' attribute—e.g., "I feel close to the dog", "I find the dog comforting when things go wrong", "I make better social contacts through having a dog"—is associated with:

- Fewer doctor visits, and
- Less likelihood of taking medication for high blood pressure, sleeping difficulties, high cholesterol or a heart problem.

THEREFORE, FOR NON-PARTNERED PERSONS, IT IS NOT ONLY GOOD TO HAVE A DOG, IT IS EVEN BETTER WHEN THEY FEEL CLOSELY-BONDED WITH THEIR DOG. Again, this characteristic is independent of attributes such as age, sex and income.

5

INCONVENIENCE ATTRIBUTED TO PETS

The NATIONAL PEOPLE & PETS SURVEY sought to answer questions on the extent to which other people's pets cause inconvenience.

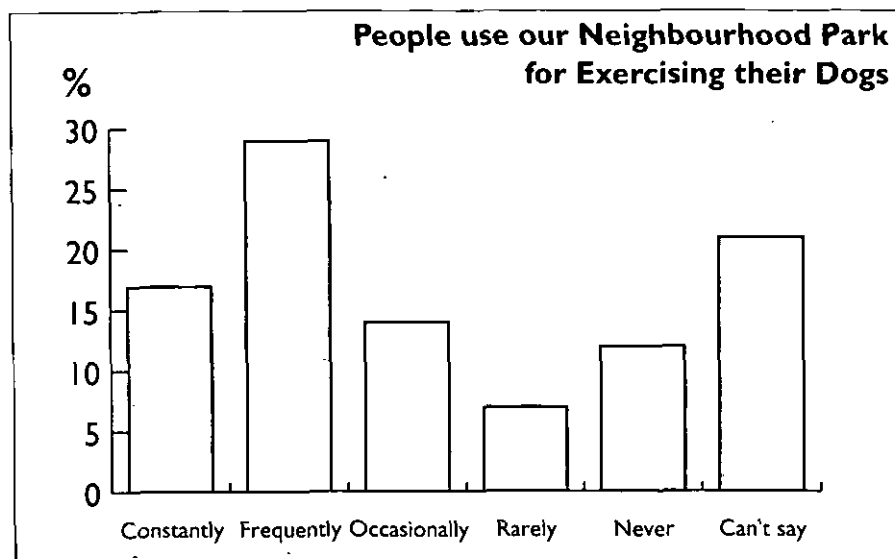
There has always been a vocal minority of opinion in Australia opposed to widespread pet ownership. There is nothing unusual about this. There is always the likelihood of a widely held and deeply valued social phenomenon initiating a symbolic counter-culture.

Generally, the arguments against dogs and cats centre around various forms of potential or actual harm such as:

- Nuisance (threats to persons, intrusive behaviours, destructive behaviours, a hazard to traffic, a source of infection, threats to wildlife), or
- Pollution (fouling, smell from urine or faeces, noise, garbage).

PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON covered all of these issues.

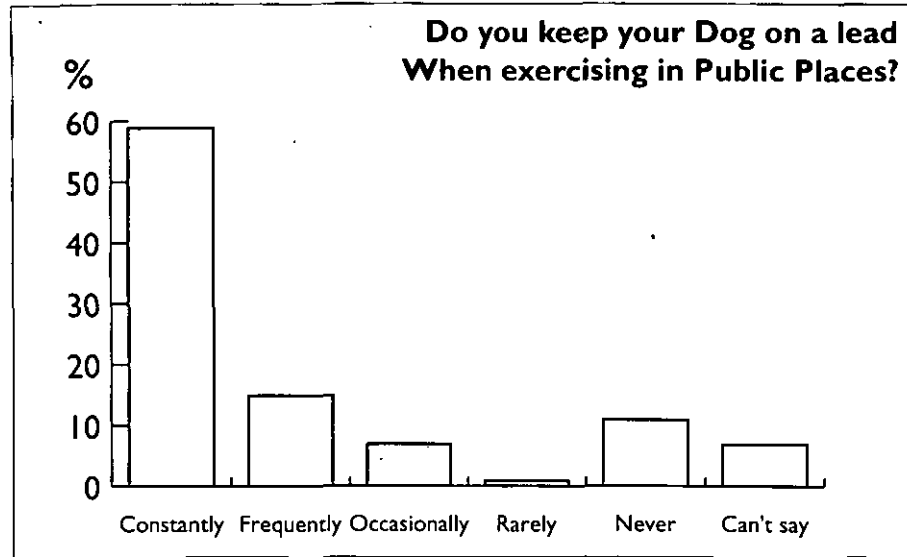
Findings from the 1994 survey on aspects of inconvenience are summarised below.



Walking and exercise is both a physical requirement and mental stimulation for the dog. Dogs that get insufficient exercise can become difficult to manage.

The question, therefore, is not whether dogs are exercised in public places such as parks but whether, to prevent inconvenience, they are kept on a lead as appropriate.

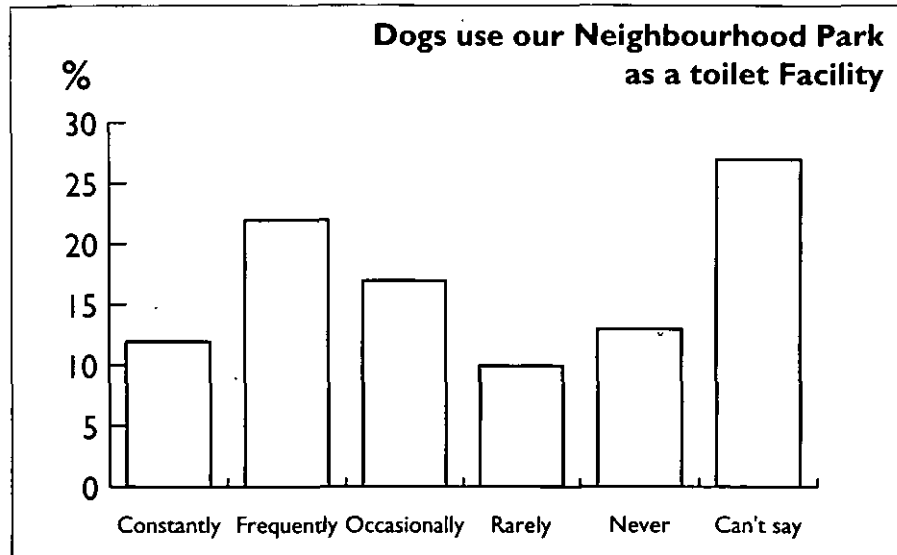
Most dogs are kept on a lead to minimise inconvenience to others.



And, of course, we know that the park is used by the dog for 'toilet' purposes.

But PETS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON revealed that, for the most part, this is 'not a problem'. Moreover, the very few people who 20 years ago perceived 'animal wastes' to be a 'persistent problem' were all pet owners.

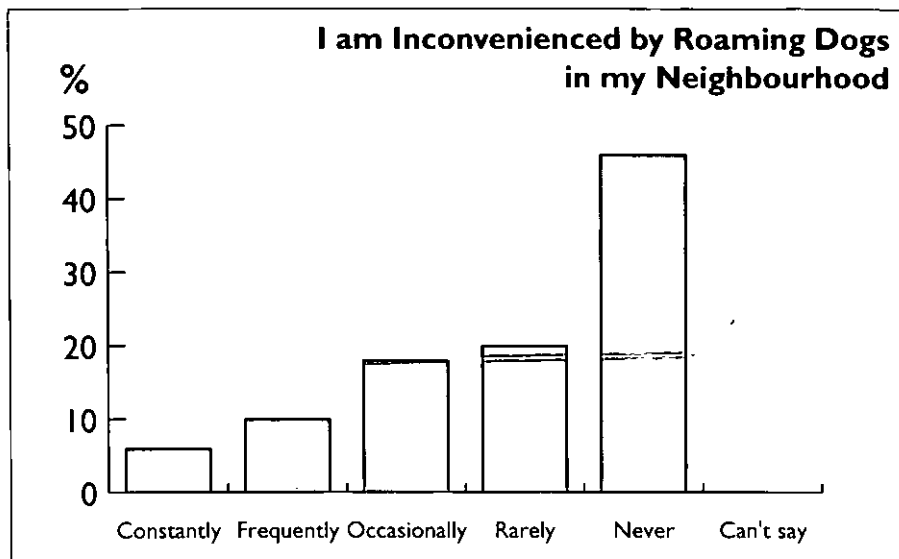
Again, the question therefore is not whether dogs use the park as a 'toilet' but whether their faeces are appropriately removed. As documented on page 16, there are those who dispose of their dog's droppings and there are those who are less responsible.



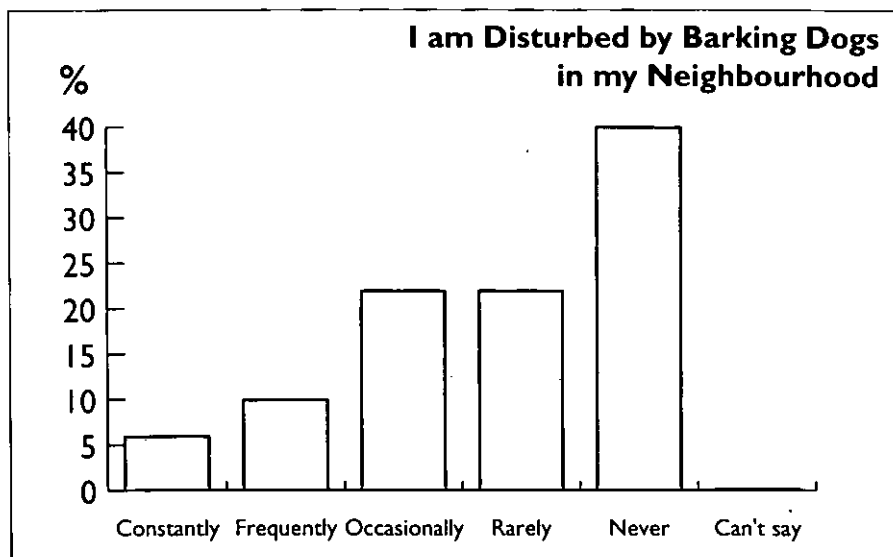
Roaming dogs, where and when they occur, can be a problem in relation to:

- Intrusions into rubbish bins and gardens,
- Destructive and/or aggressive behaviours, as well as
- A hazard to traffic.

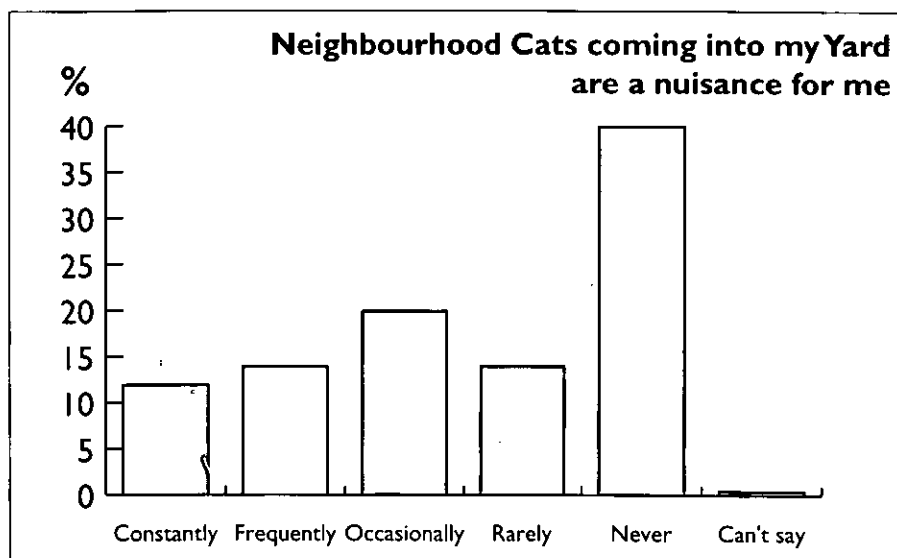
To the extent that roaming occurs, it warrants containment. There are those who are inconvenienced by roaming dogs.



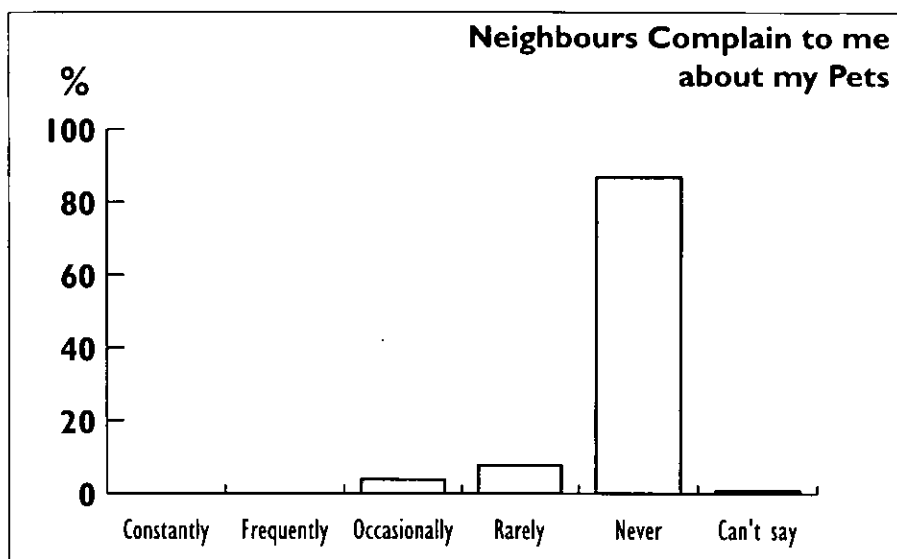
And there are those who are inconvenienced by barking dogs. This is much the same as it was 20 years ago.



There are those who are inconvenienced by cat intrusions.



But to the extent that my dogs barking or my cats intruding are a source of inconvenience to others, the level of complaint is low.



There is always the possibility, however, that a complaint may be directed somewhere other than to the carer, eg, the municipal council.

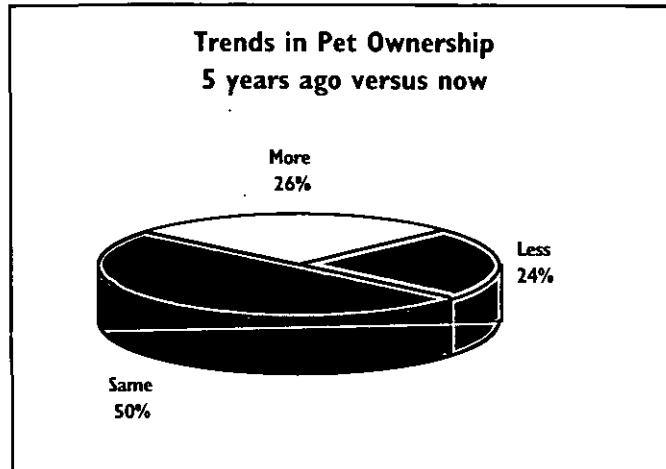
6

DOG AND CAT TRENDS

Dog ownership is static or might be increasing slightly. Cat ownership is declining but not because of the wildlife issue.

6.1 Five years ago

The following table identifies the extent to which the present pet owning population had more or fewer pets five years ago:



6.2 Population estimates for dogs & cats

The following table presents overall population estimates from the survey and compares them to estimates made in 1991:

Dogs & cats as pets		1991	1994
Dogs:	Households with a dog	37%	40%
	Total number of dogs	3.0mn	3.8mn
	Number per household	-	1.54
Cats:	Households with a cat	30%	27%
	Total number of cats	2.7mn	2.5mn
	Number per household	-	1.51
Households with either dog or cat		53%	53%

Source for 1991 data:

ROY MORGAN RESEARCH CENTRE SURVEY OF PET OWNERSHIP, 1992.

6.3 Replacement intentions

► Dog owners

Of those people presently owning a dog, 76% intend to replace it when it dies. And of those intending to replace, 25% want to change to a different species of pet—cat 38%, bird 24%, fish 11%.

For those who do not intend to replace their present dog, the main reasons are “I expect to be too upset” or “I do not want the responsibility”.

► Cat owners

Of those people presently owning a cat, 60% intend to replace it when it dies. Of these, 33% intend to change to a different species of pet—dog 56%, bird 26%, fish 9%.

For those who do not intend to replace their present cat, the main reason was “I do not want the responsibility”. Very few mentioned the killing of wildlife as a reason.

► Non-pet owners

Fifty-three (53) % of respondents who did not at present own a pet said that they would like to have one at some time in the future. Of these, their preferences are—dog 80%, cat 23%, bird 5%, fish 2%, horse 1%.

A wide variety of reasons were given for not presently owing a pet. As expected, they reflect type of accommodation and lifestyle. Many were waiting until they had a home of their own and/or someone who would be at home to care for the pet.

► More dogs ... fewer cats?

Comparing current population estimates with 1991 figures, and taking the future ownership intentions of both pet and non-pet owners into account, it would appear that the overall domestic dog population in Oz over the next few years, relative to the human population, will either remain static or grow slightly.

The companion animal cat population, however, may be decreasing.

These trend estimates are consistent with the desexing rates in each of the species—a far higher percentage of cats are desexed than are dogs.

7

HEALTHY, ORDERLY AND SAFE NEIGHBOURHOOD LIFESTYLES

Pets are an everyday aspect and a positive feature of Australian urban lifestyles.

Most households (60%) have a pet. Most of those who do not have a pet would like one in the future (53%).

Dogs are the preferred species of companion animal (68% of pet owners, 80% non-pet owners). Dog owners enjoy better physical and mental health and are less likely to report feeling lonely.

Pet owners, typically, are responsible and caring. To say that many tend to 'love' their pet almost as much as they love their family is only a slight exaggeration. They care for the well-being, health and safety of their pet.

Typically, pet owners also care for the effect of their pet on the well-being, health and safety of the neighbourhood. Inconvenience to neighbours, due to the presence of pets, is low.

The contributions of dogs and cats to healthier, orderly and safe living need to be acknowledged by reporters and policy makers alike.

Regulators must guard against inconveniencing, or worse disadvantaging, the responsible majority of pet owners in searching for solutions to the behaviours of a non-compliant minority. The UAM Coalition is a resource for achieving these goals.

ANNEX I

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE NATIONAL PEOPLE AND PETS SURVEY

Major Contributors

Animal Welfare League of NSW
Australian Animal Health Agencies
Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association and
Australian Veterinary Association
Bayer
Cyanamid Websters
Exelpet
Friskies Pet Care
Petcare Information and Advisory Service
Royal NSW Canine Council
Smith Kline Beecham
Uncle Ben's of Australia
Wondalli

Associated Contributors

Exhibition and Marketing Service
Hills Pet Products
Pet Food Industry Association of Australia
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Australia
Supercoat Pet Care