



**Engaging with semi-owners**  
**AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY CAT PROGRAM**  
**(Science-based cat management)**  
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### Semi-owners

Provide care for one or more cats they do not perceive are their property or they own

= Describe themselves as carers or guardians

### HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?



### Semi-owners

9% of adult population – internet study, 90% females (Zito 2015)

3% adults Brisbane – paper survey in doctors and dentists, 78% female, balanced for SOE (Rand 2019)

7% adults, 64% female, low SOE suburb with cat intake of 20 cats/1000 residents

= more frequent in low SOE suburbs where lower desexing rates and more free living cats

### Australian Community Cat Program

AIM:

To investigate effects of a Community Cat Program based on desexing

For owned, semi-owned and unowned (where legal) urban cats in specified target areas



**METHODS: COMMUNITY CAT PROGRAM**

Flyers offering free desexing "if own a cat or feeding a cat that needs desexing"  
Door knocking & social media



**FREE CAT DEXSEXING FOR YOUR SUBURB!**

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation have launched the Community Cat Program with support from our partners. This project aims to reduce the number of healthy cats and kittens.

**If you own a cat or are feeding a cat that needs desexing, contact us now!**

The Community Cat Program will cover the costs of:

- Desexing
- Microchipping
- Vaccination
- Worming
- Flea & Tick Prevention

To check eligibility and enrol a cat into the Community Cat Program please contact Australian Pet Welfare Foundation.  
E: info@petwelfare.org.au P: 08 9377 1474  
For more information go to: [www.petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-program](http://www.petwelfare.org.au/community-cat-program)

**Banyule**  
CITY COUNCIL

**Free Cat De sexing**

Banyule Council is once again offering residents free cat de sexing, microchipping and registration as part of its successful campaign to reduce the number of unowned cats in our area.

**If you have a stray cat or kitten you have been feeding for quite some time or have acquired a new cat or kitten that is not de sexed, please give us a call and book your cat kitten in. This is not limited to one cat per household and this is a free service (provided to Council) for Banyule residents and cats/kittens only.**

Our aim is to reduce overpopulation of cats in your area.

**When:** September/ October 2019

**How to book:** Just call council's customer service and leave your details along with you cat/ cat's details for us to add you too the list.

**What is included:** De sexing, Microchipping and Registration with council for free.

**Phone Council:** 9490 4222 between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.



**AIM: OUTCOME MEASURES**

**Survey of participants enrolling cat/s in program**

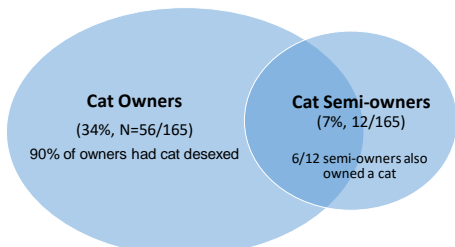
- Vic, Qld, NSW
- 46 questions (plus 20 qualifying qs.)
- Cat caring behaviours, bond with cat, reasons for not desexing etc

**Community survey**

- Qld
- 48 questions (plus 26 qualifying qs.)
- Attitudes to urban stray cats, and priorities for cat management



**RESULTS: Community survey n=165**



**How important are the following to you when your council is deciding the best type of management program to manage unowned stray cats in your suburb?**  
Please rank on a 5-point scale from not important at all to very important.

1.□ Stop stray kittens being born□	96%□ c
2.□ Decrease killing of birds and small native animals by cats□	93%□ c
3.□ Reduce the risk of disease spread to pets□	90%□ c
4.□ Reduce the risk of disease spread to humans□	88%□ c
5.□ Reduce the risk of disease spread to wildlife□	88%□ c
6.□ Find homes for stray cats□	86%□ c
7.□ Decrease stray cat numbers in my suburb□	83%□ c
8.□ Stop nuisance behaviours such as defecating (pooping) and urinating (peeing) in my yard or public places□	77%□ c
9.□ Remove the cats causing concern to me□	75%□ c
10.□ Stop cats fighting with my cat(s)□	65%□ c
11.□ Stop cats coming on my property□	65%□ c
12.□ Be cost effective to councils and rate payers□	64%□ c
13.□ Healthy cats and kittens are not euthanased or killed□	58%□ c

Results : Participants' survey

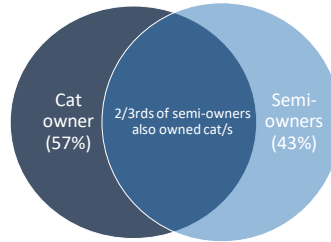
49 participants - 24 Vic, 22 Qld, 3 NSW

A. Would you say you were the owner or the carer of this cat?

B. Prior to when you heard about the free desexing program, did you consider that you were the owner of this cat and that it was your property, or did you consider yourself a carer for this cat and not regard it as your property?



Participants survey – cat desexed in program, n=49



RESULTS - Demographics

Gender of participant enrolling in cat desexing program:

- Owners – 84% female
- Semi-owners – 100% female



RESULTS - Demographics

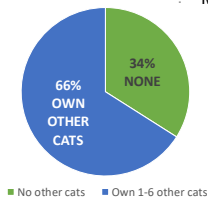
- Highest level of education:
- Most (65%) owners and semi-owners – high school or less



Participants survey: Ownership

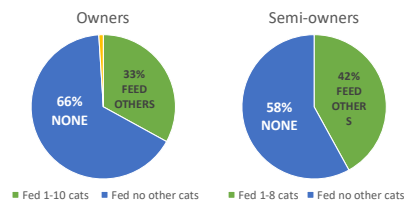
Not including this cat, how many other cats do you own?

Median – 2 other cats owned



Participants survey: Ownership

Not including this cat, how many cats do you regularly feed but do not own



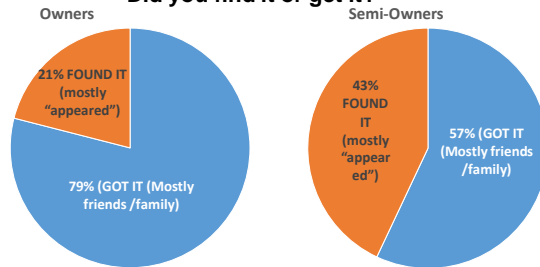
### RESULTS – Time caring for cat

How long have you been associated with this cat?

- Owners median 9 mths (range 0.5 mths -6 years)
- Semi-owners 8 mths (range 2 mths -2 years)

January	February	March
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
April	May	June
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July	August	September
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
October	November	December
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

### RESULTS - How did this cat come into your life? Did you find it or get it?

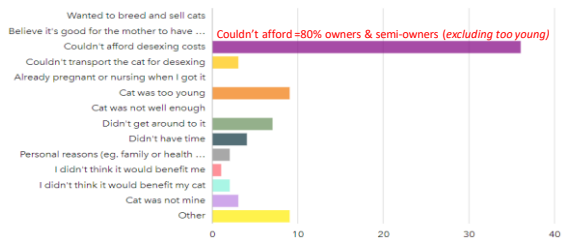


### RESULTS - Sex of cat

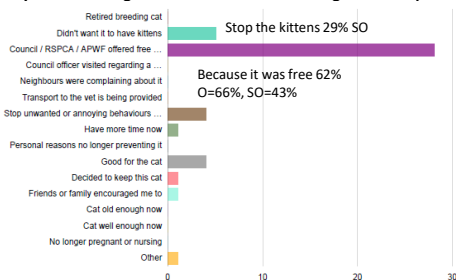
- 66% females
- Has this cat had kittens? 32% yes
- Owners 25% yes
- Semi-owners 67% yes
- Most common reason had kittens: **Desexing was too costly**



### What was the single most important factor you have not already had this cat desexed?



### Why did you decide to get this cat desexed now? Single most important factor:

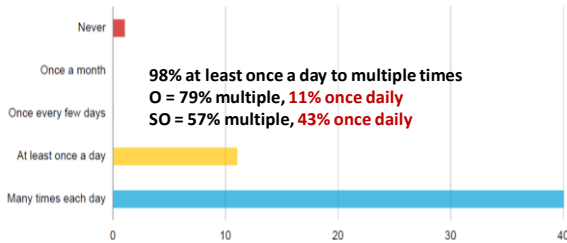


### RESULTS -

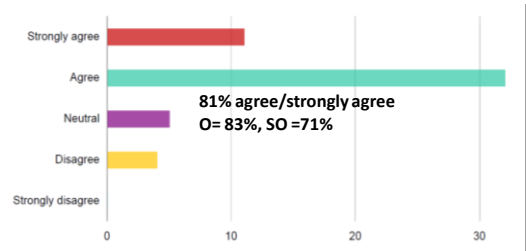
### Bond with cat?



How often do you talk to this cat?

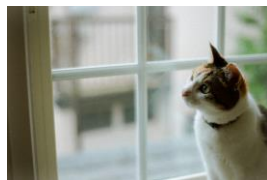


This cat helps me get through tough times

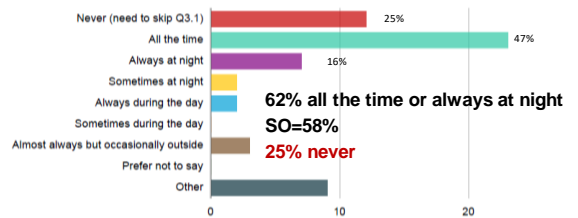


RESULTS -

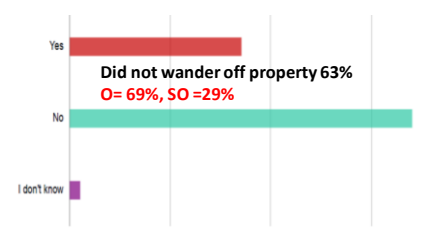
“Responsible” cat caring behaviours?



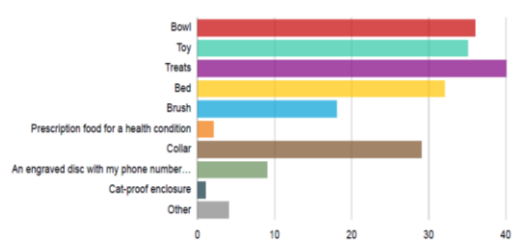
Do you keep this cat contained so it cannot wander off your property?



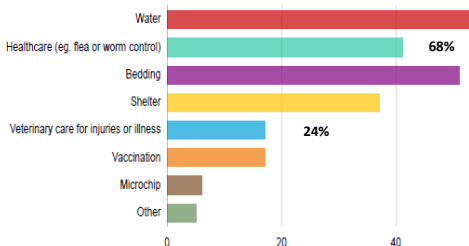
In the last two weeks, did this cat wander off your property?



In the last six months, have you bought any of the following products for this cat?



**Do you provide any of the following to this cat?**



**Do you organise care for this cat while you are away for more than two nights?**



**Semi-ownership depends on location & circumstance**

- AMO – “not my cat”
- Shelter – “not my cat”
- Offered free desexing for cat → ownership **Free Cat De sexing**
- BUT if optional to be legal owner (Qld trial), some colony cats remain semi-owned



**CONCLUSIONS:**

- 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of enrolled cats have had a litter
- Cost overwhelming barrier to desexing for owned and semi-owned (80%)
- Owners and carers trying to do the best they can to care for cat with resources they have – “responsibility” caring for these cats



**Paradigm? -**

It is irresponsible cat owners and cat feeders who are causing the major problem in cities & towns, and cat desexing will be increased by having penalties or mandating it?

OR

Cost is the major barrier to desexing, and registration costs are a further barrier to desexing & identification? If the cost barrier is removed, cats will be desexed & identified?



**CONCLUSIONS:**

If goal is to:

1. Reduce costs: complaint calls, impoundments, shelter costs (\$500-\$1500/cat) or contract costs (\$100-\$500/cat)
2. Reduce impact on staff from killing preweaned kittens & healthy fearful/timid adults
3. Improve social amenity – less fighting, soiling
4. Benefit environment – less predation
5. Benefit pet and human health



## CONCLUSIONS: To achieve those goals:

1. Identify suburbs with highest complaints and cat impoundments or admissions
2. Engage with community to facilitate desexing and microchipping (whatever way is legal) – aim for desexing 30-50 cats/1000 residents in first year
3. Couple with messages on how to keep cats on your property (strategic feeding), and off your property impoundments



## THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS!!!!!!

### 3 local governments

(Melbourne, Banyule, Greater Shepparton)

### 11 Australian welfare and rescue groups

(RSPCA Qld, RSPCA NSW, RSPCA SA, AWL Australia, AWL Queensland, Maneki Neko, Cheltenham Cat Rescue, PetRescue, Sydney Dogs' and Cats' Home, Cat Protection Society NSW, Australian Pet Welfare Foundation)

### 5 pet care, pharmaceutical companies and pet insurance

(Greencross, MSD Animal Health, PetStock, Woolworths Insurance, Rosewood Veterinary Services)

### 2 international partners

Neighborhood Cats (Bryan Kortis, Suzi Richmond), Dr John Boone (Great Basin Bird Observatory, Nevada).

**Funding** from Brigitte Bardot Foundation, Pets Regardless Foundation, Waltham Foundation, veterinary clinics and cat lovers