

# CAT WELFARE SURVEY 2019

cat  
protection  
society OF NSW

## Report of Findings

August 2019

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Ipsos Ref: 19-059961-01

GAME CHANGERS



# BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH



**Cat Protection Society in NSW** has a vision of finding every cat in need, a loving and responsible home. In addition to that, they also work with the government and the community to promote socially and environmentally responsible cat ownership.

One of its strategies is to encourage cat owners to desex their cats at an early age. Research studies conducted by Ipsos in 2017 and 2018 shows that around 90% of cat owners desex their cats.



A repeat of the 2017 and 2018 studies was recently conducted to track whether more cat owners are now desexing their cats.

Inputs from this study are sought to formulate plans and strategies to target communities in NSW with cat welfare communications.



## BUSINESS QUESTIONS

Who are the owners who have and who have not desexed their cat?

Are certain type of cats more likely to be desexed than others?

What are the barriers to early-age desexing?

Will health messaging improve the rate of cat desexing?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Identify the profile of owners who have desexed their cats
- Identify the profile of owners who have not desexed their cats

- Identify the profile of cats which have been desexed
- Identify the profile of cats which have not been desexed
- Determining whether the origin of cats highly correlates with owners not knowing if their cats have been desexed

- Investigate the barriers to desexing
- Verify whether cost is a barrier for not desexing their cats

- Awareness of health benefits of desexing cats by each group
- Examine whether health benefits have an impact on owner/future owner's decision to desex their cats

# STUDY DESIGN



## DESIGN

Quantitative online survey

Survey length: 10 mins

Fieldwork dates: 18-31 July 2019



## WHO WE INTERVIEWED

Aged 18+ years

Quota on cat ownership:

- Cat owners: 70%;
- Non-cat owners: 30%;
- Living in New South Wales (NSW)

Spread across age, gender, and region  
(metro versus rural)

Note: Results from 2019 are compared  
with 2018 and highlighted if different

Sample sizes	2017	2018	2019
Total respondents	519	524	516
• Cat owners	363	364	356
• Non-cat owners	156	160	160
• Total number of cats amongst owners	554	542	582



## ANALYSIS

Analysis is conducted by the following groups:

- Cat owners
  - Who have desexed all their cats
  - Who have not desexed all their cats (including 'don't know')
- Non-cat owners
- Cats which have been desexed
- Cats which have not been desexed

Data was weighted by age, gender and location at total level so that it is comparable to 2017 and 2018

Total sample analysis is not possible due to quota sampling

# CATS AND THEIR OWNERS

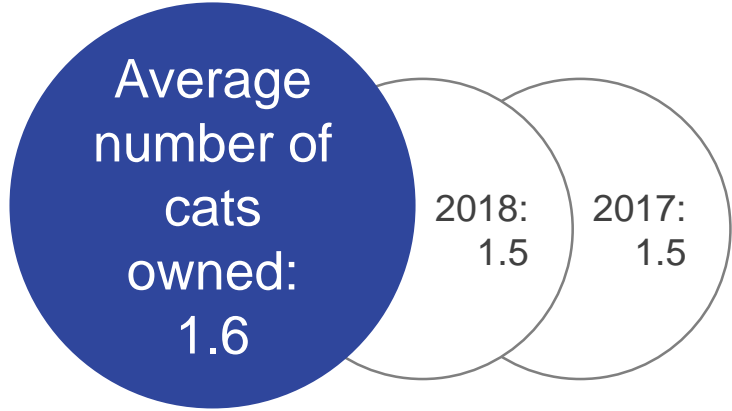
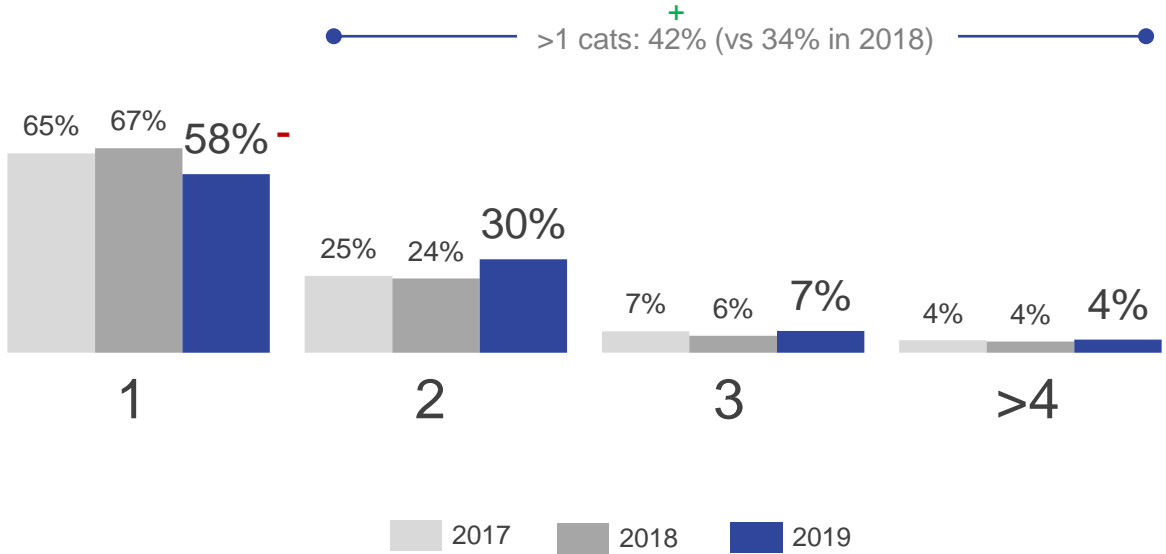
A typical cat household would consist of a cat and one other pet, most likely a dog. Although the majority (58%) of households own just one cat, more households have multiple cats compared to a year ago. Most of these cats are adopted from family and friends or from shelters. Over the last 3 years, we see a decreasing trend of people getting their cats through breeders and pet shops.

The proportion of cats in NSW that have been desexed remains high at 87%.

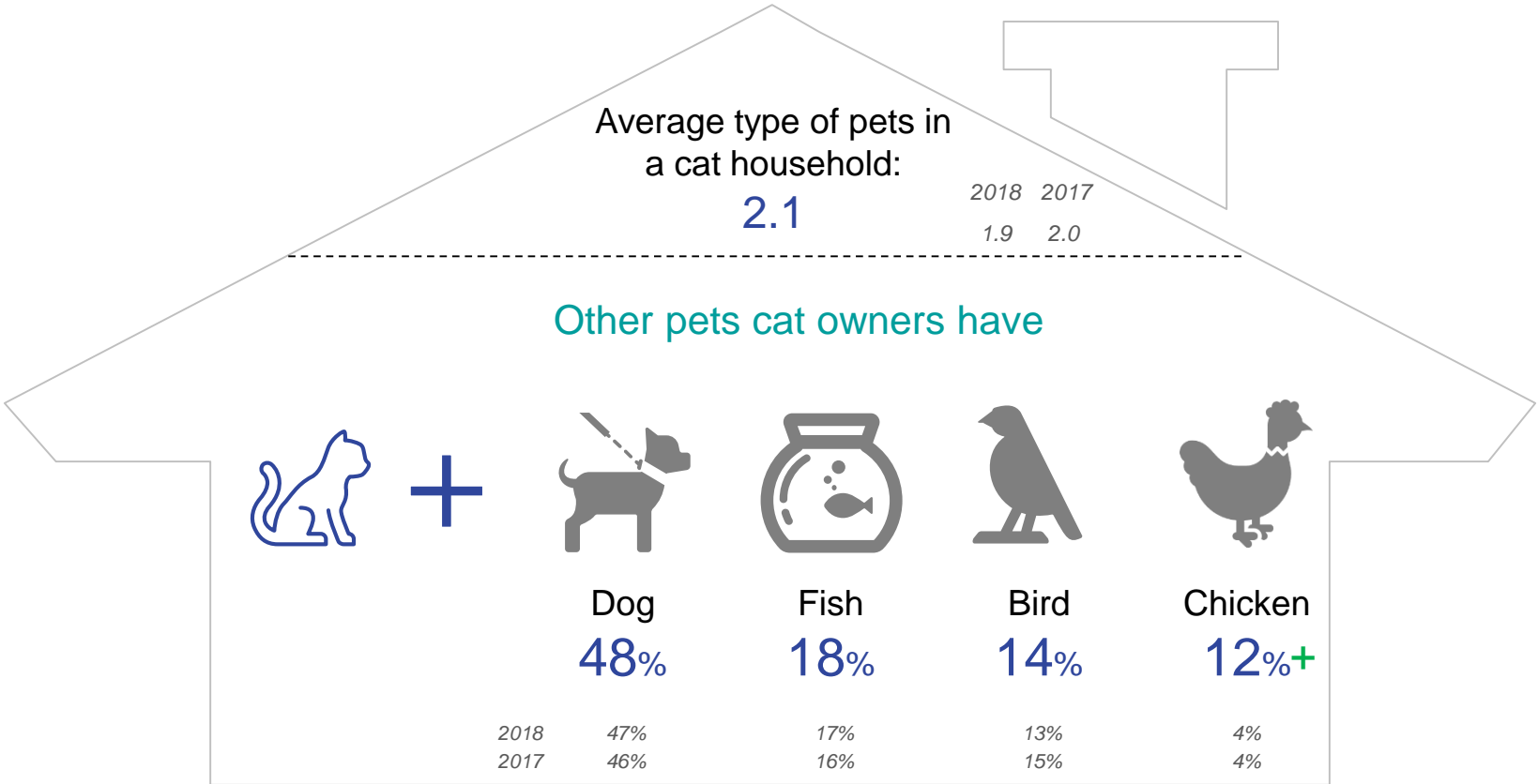
# 1

Although the majority of cat owners in NSW have only one cat, multi-cat owners are now more prevalent compared to a year ago.

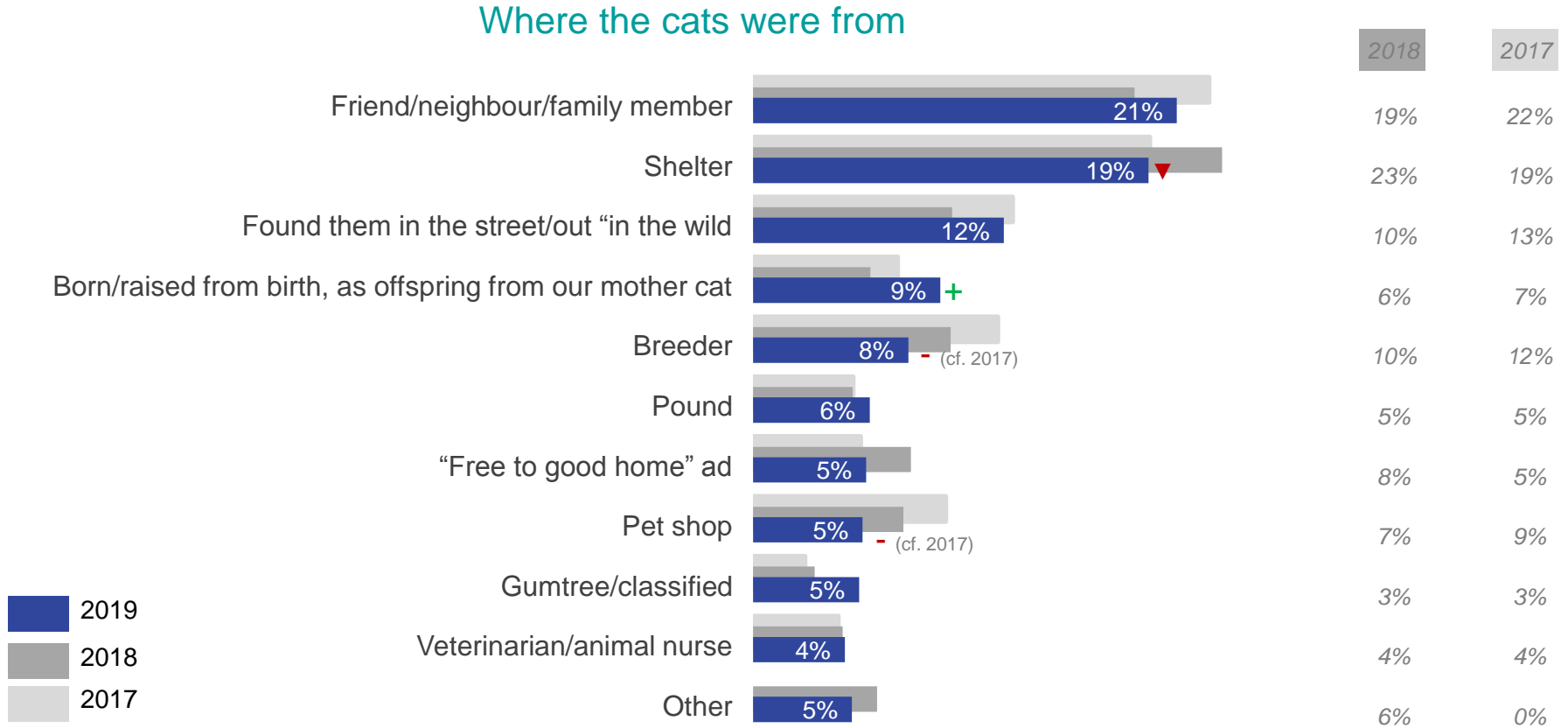
Number of cats owned



59% of cat owners also have other pets with dogs being the most common. Compared to 2018, more cat households also have chickens.



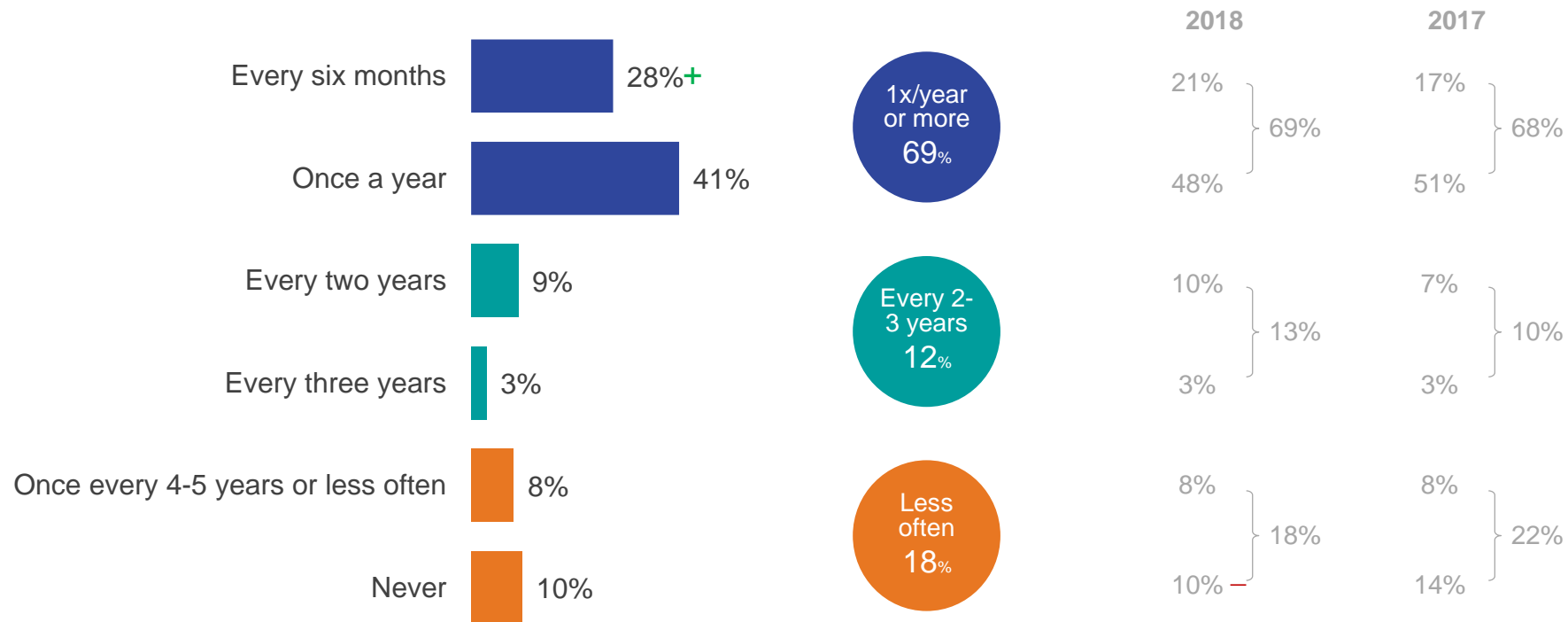
The two most common place to get cats are from family & friends and animal shelters. Compared to 2018, more kittens have been born from their mother cats. Fewer owners are getting their cats from breeders and pet shops compared to two years ago.





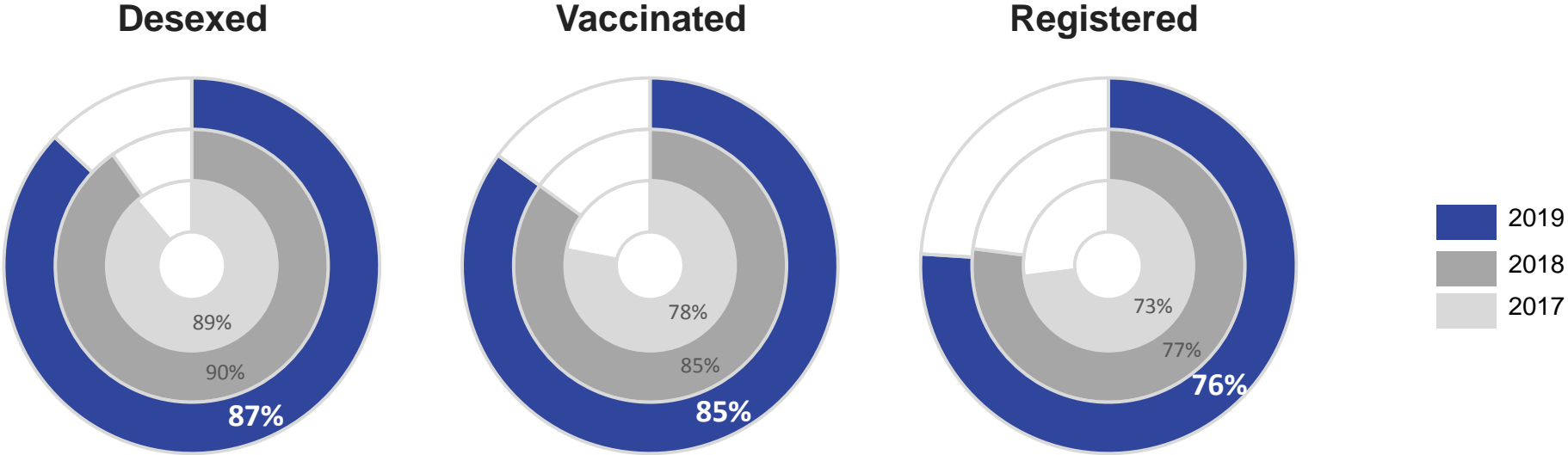
# More cats are now visiting a vet every six months compared to a year ago.

## Frequency of visits to the vet



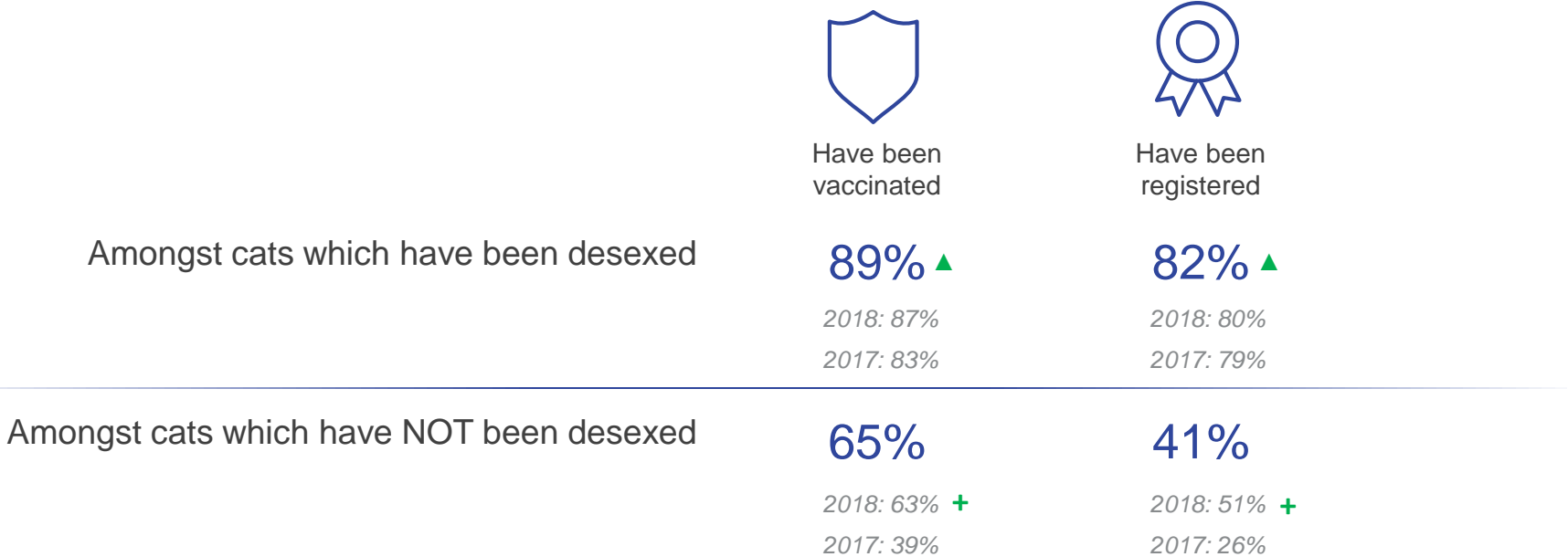
The incidences of desexing, vaccinating and registering cats remain high. No significant changes from previous years.

Incidences of cats which have been...



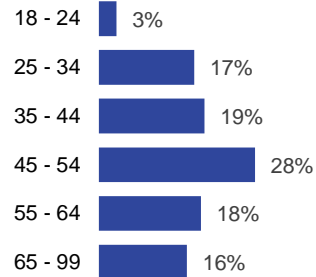
# Cats that have been desexed are also more likely to have been vaccinated and registered compared to cats which have not been desexed.

## Incidences of vaccination & registration amongst cats who have and have not been desexed



# Who are the cat owners who have desexed their cats?

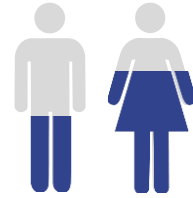
## AGE



Average: 50 y.o.

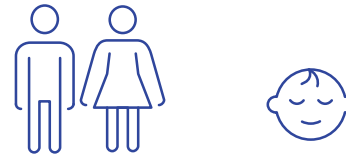
(2018: 49 y.o. | 2017: 50 y.o.)

## GENDER



38% 62%

## HOUSEHOLD

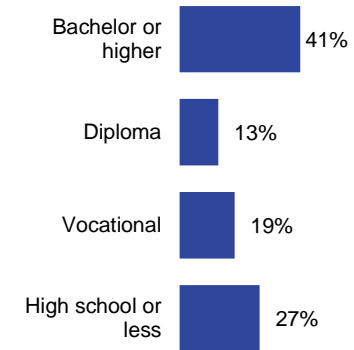


72%  
Married/de-facto  
relationship

43%  
With kids <18

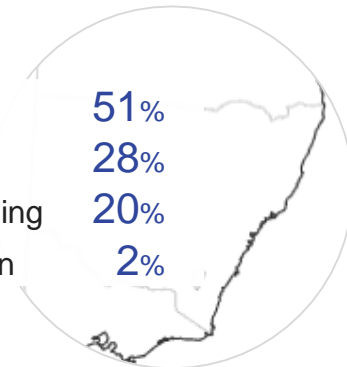
3.0  
Average  
household  
members

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW

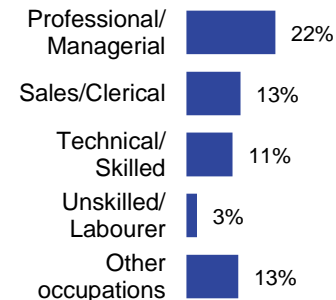
Sydney 51%  
Major regional city 28%  
Rural town/surrounding >5km from rural town 20%  
2%



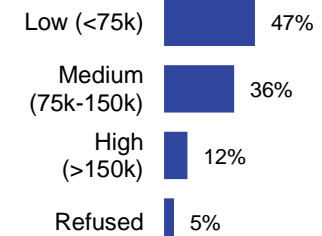
## EMPLOYMENT



62%  
Have employment



## HH INCOME



Average \$87,432

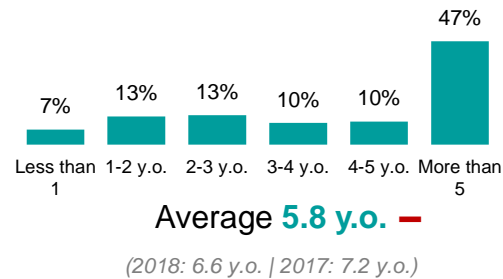
2018: \$81,921

Base: Cat owners who have desexed all their cats, n=307

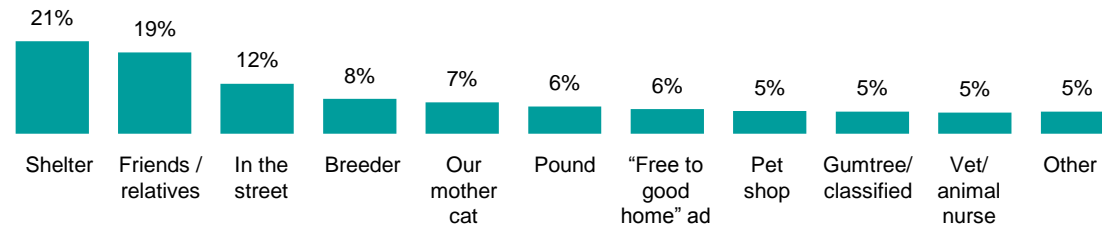
D2 (age), D3 (gender), Q5D (marital status), Q6D (number of people in HH), Q7D (with kids <18), Q4D (highest education level), Q11D (area), Q8D (working status), Q9D (occupation), Q10D (household income)

# Profile of cats that have been desexed

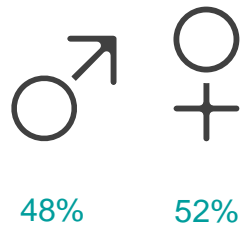
## AGE OF CAT



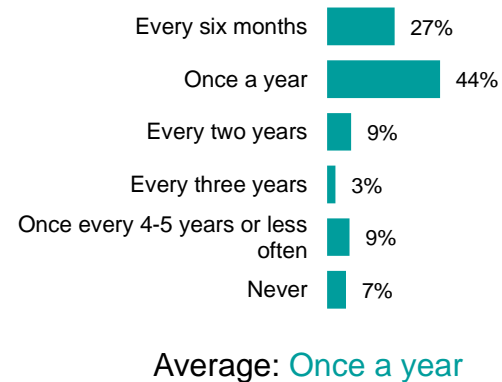
## WHERE THEY GOT THE CAT FROM



## GENDER OF CAT



## VISITS TO THE VET



## VACCINATION & REGISTRATION



**89%**  
Have been vaccinated



**82%**  
Have been registered

# CATS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN DESEXED AND THEIR OWNERS

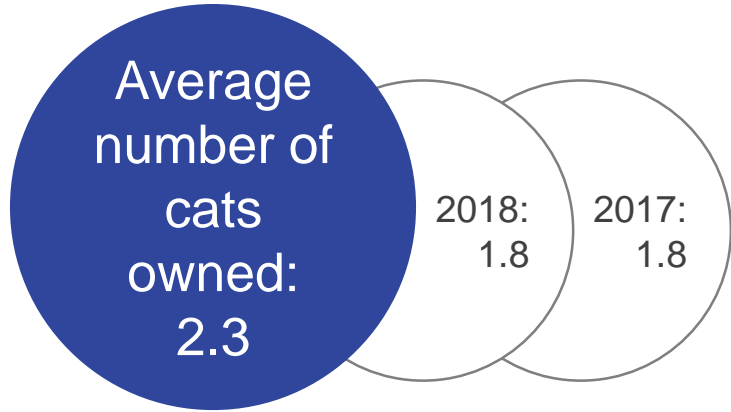
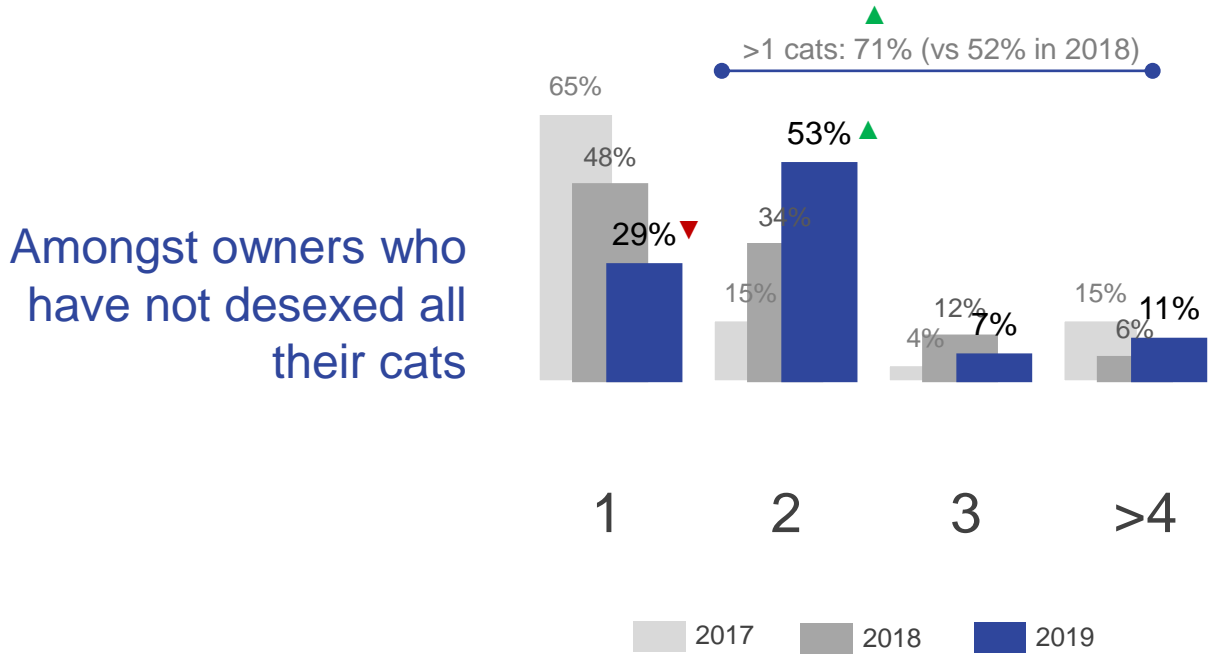
Households that have not desexed their feline pets own even more cats now than 2018. Costs, owning male cats and cat being too young are top reasons for not desexing. Sadly, some of their cats are the result of their female cats having a litter.

Education to raise awareness of the benefits of desexing need to continue, targeting multi-cat households, those with male cats and those with mid to low income. Offer discounts for desexing multiple cats at the same time, or point them to places that offer financial assistance to households that cannot afford to desex their cats.

# 2

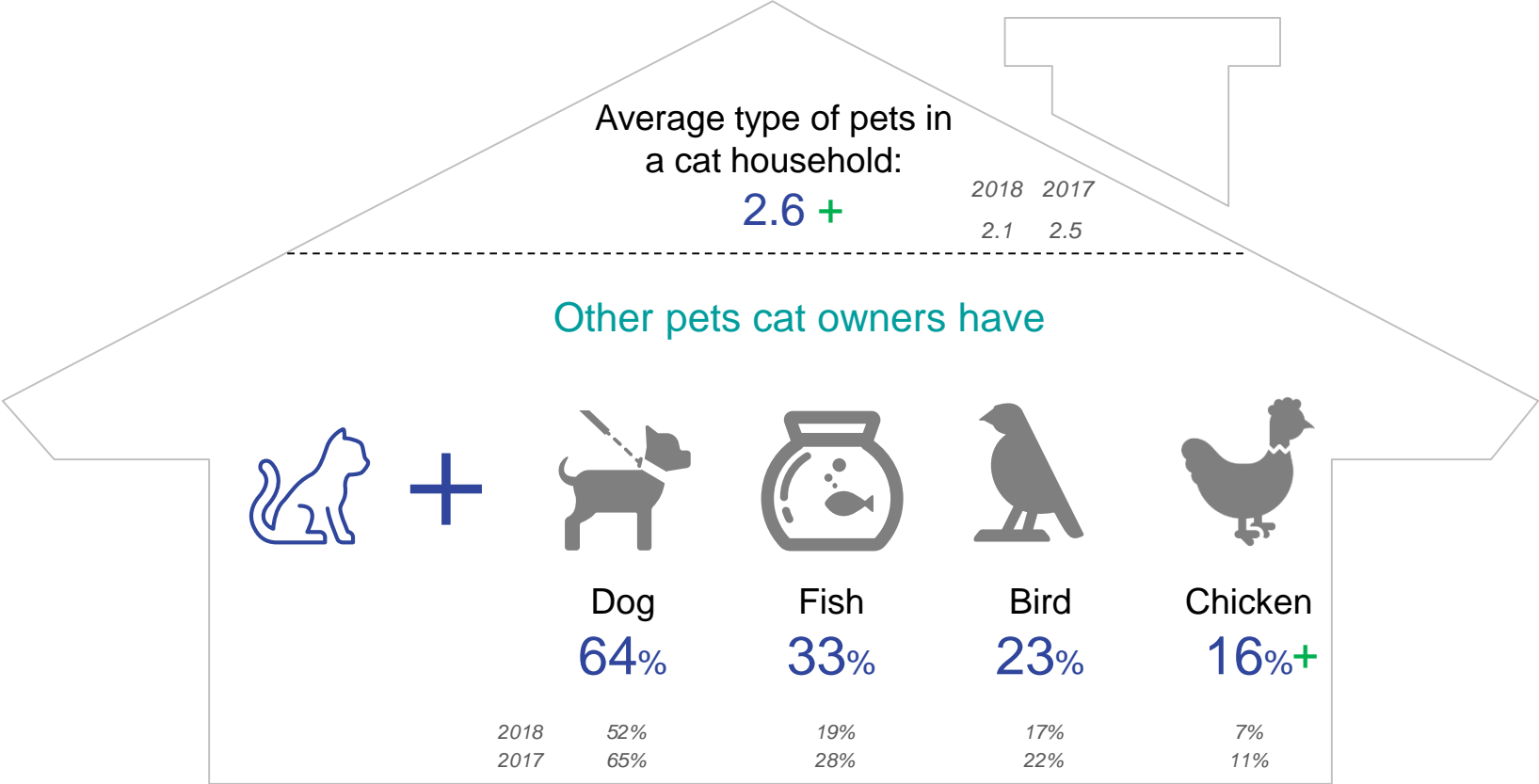
# Number of cats owned by those who have not desexed all their cats is higher now compared to a year ago.

Number of cats owned – amongst owners who have not desexed all their cats



▲/▼ significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 90% confidence level

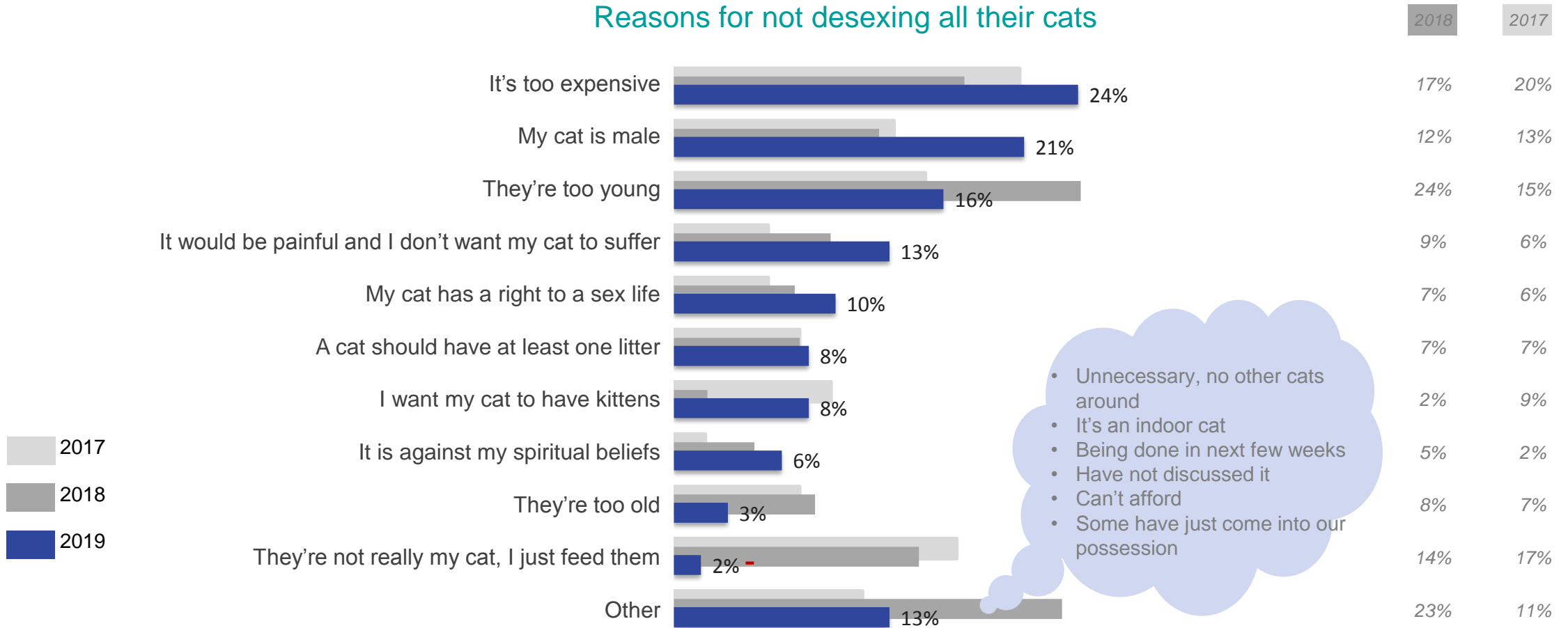
The households of cats that have not all been desexed own more pets than the average cat household in NSW, with two thirds of them owning dogs while one third have fish.





# Cost concerns and having a male cat are top reasons for not desexing cats. Cat's age (too young) is no longer the main reason, as it was in 2018.

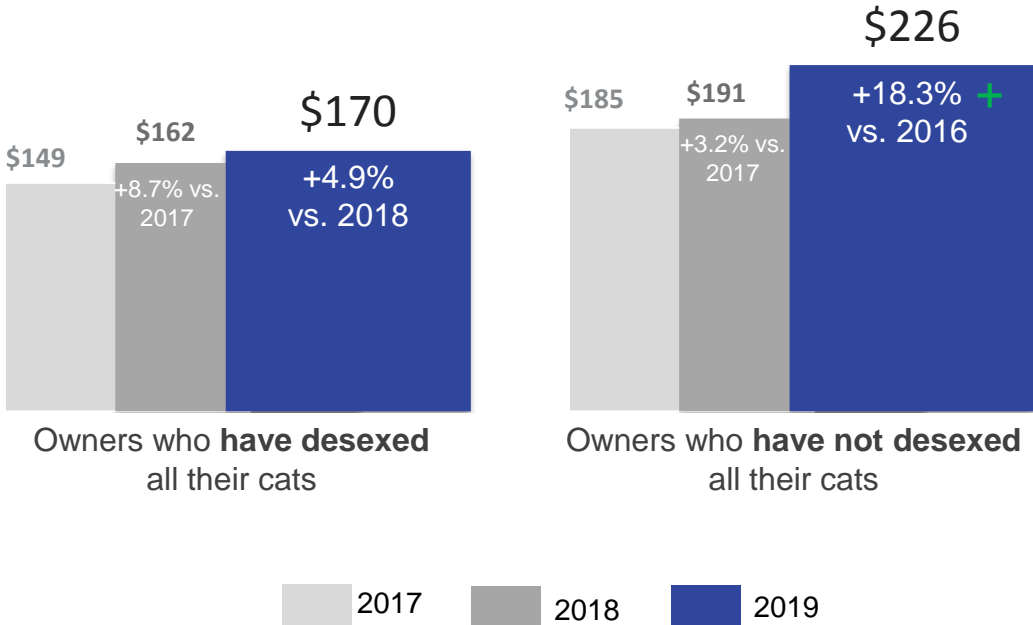
## Reasons for not desexing all their cats



- Unnecessary, no other cats around
- It's an indoor cat
- Being done in next few weeks
- Have not discussed it
- Can't afford
- Some have just come into our possession

Amongst owners who have not desexed their cats, their perceptions on the cost of desexing has increased by nearly 20% in a year. Whereas, amongst owners who have desexed their cats, cost perceptions increased by a smaller 5%.

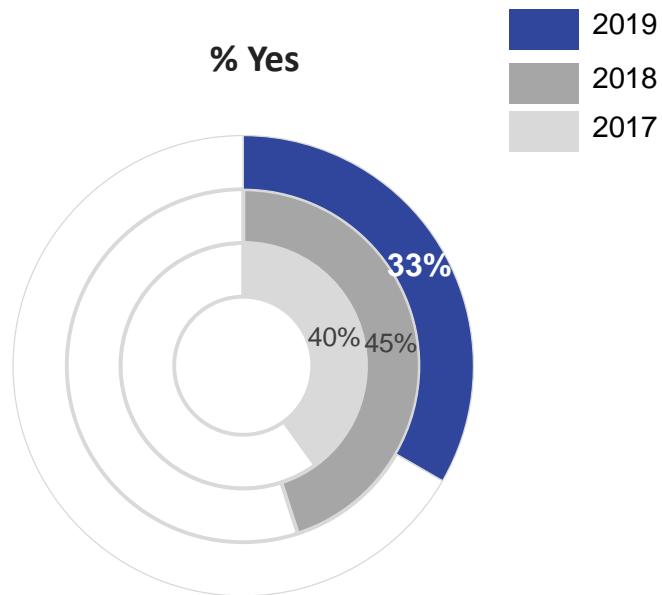
Cost to have a cat / kitten desexed



“It’s too expensive”  
**24%**  
 2018: 17%

# One in three of these cats will be desexed in the future, citing age and cost as main reasons for delaying the process.

## Do they plan to desex their cats? (among those who haven't)



(54% + of these cats will never get desexed and 13% the owners are not sure)  
Vs. 2018: 32% will never and 24% not sure

+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level

19 – © 2019 Ipsos Base: Cats which have not been desexed, 2017 n=54, 2018 n=50, 2019 n=63

Q11. Do you plan to desex your cat/cats?

Q12. Given that you plan to desex your cat/cats, what is the main reason you have delayed desexing them?

## Reasons for the delay in desexing their cats

Base: 21 cats



### 7 mentions relate to the cat's age

*Cat is too young (4 months)*

*Waiting till 6 months of age / Still only a kitten will be waiting till she is at least 6 months*

*Cost and age / His age*

### 7 mentions relate to cost

*Expensive*

*Cost and age*

*Money I've just had a baby so all the extra animals are just money I don't have at the moment*

### 4 of the cat owners want to have a litter first

*A litter first / Perhaps a litter*

*Perhaps have a litter haven't decided*

### 3 of the cats' owners are time challenged, or not a priority

*I just didn't have time to be honest*

*Have not had time to go to the vet*

*we have not made it a priority*

### 1 of the cats have health problems

*Not my cat, its my mothers. But she has had some recent health problems that has delayed her from getting the cat desexed.*

### 3 'other reasons' or not sure

*I don't want them to suffer but now have some other cats around in surroundings and its better to get them save being pregnant*

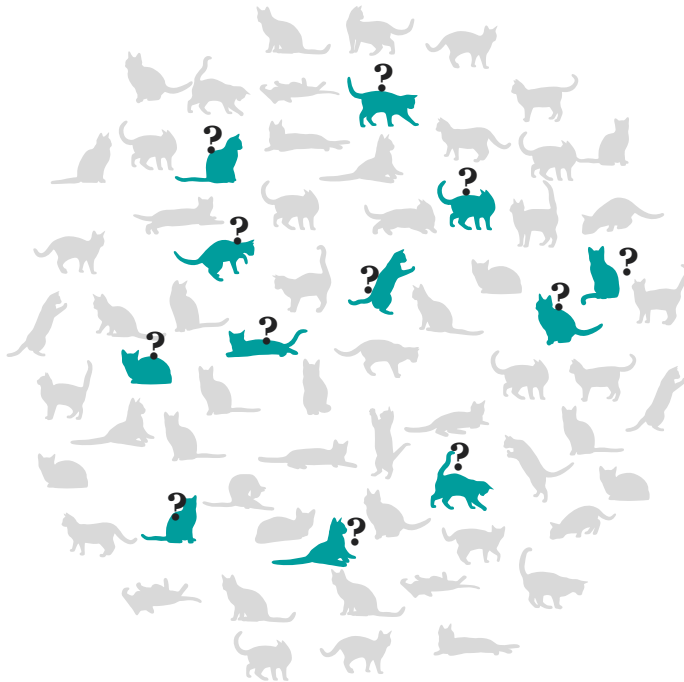
*Lazy*

*Not sure*



For a small proportion (~2%) of cats, their owners are not sure if the pet have been desexed. Mainly because these cats are either strays or from acquaintances.

For **12** cats out of a total of 582, owners are unsure if they have been desexed or not



### Where the cats were from

- 6 Friend/neighbour/family member
- 2 Found them in the street/out in the 'wild'
- 1 Gumtree
- 1 Not sure

### Reasons why they don't know if the cats have been desexed

*Some of them are strays that won't let me physically near them yet*

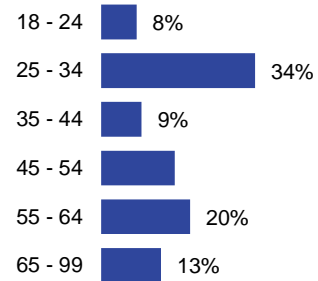
*I own her when she is 5*

*Not sure if done by previous owner*

*Stray cat has decided to make it's home with us. It is female but has not become pregnant even though we have an un-desexed male cat.*

# Who are the cat owners who have not desexed their cats?

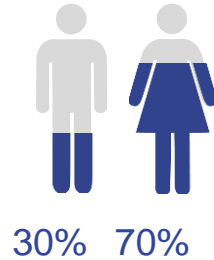
## AGE



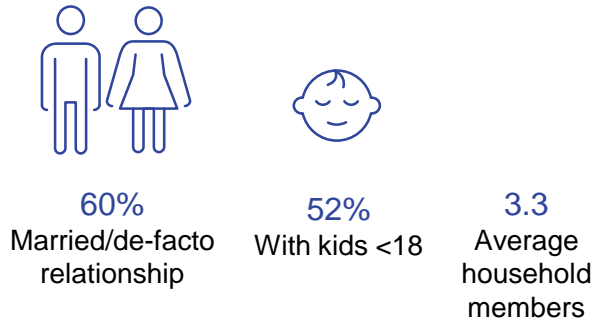
Average: 46 y.o.

(2018: 42 y.o. | 2017: 41 y.o.)

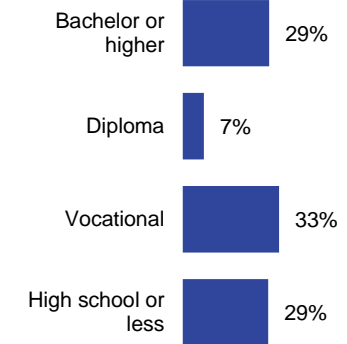
## GENDER



## HOUSEHOLD

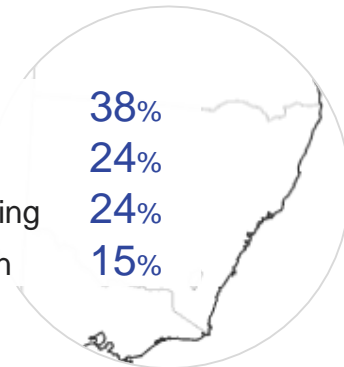


## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW

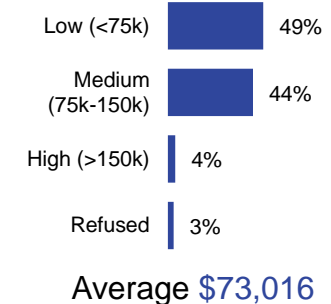
Sydney 38%  
Major regional city 24%  
Rural town/surrounding >5km from rural town 24%  
15%



## EMPLOYMENT



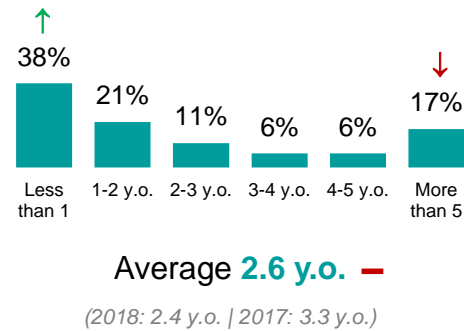
## HH INCOME



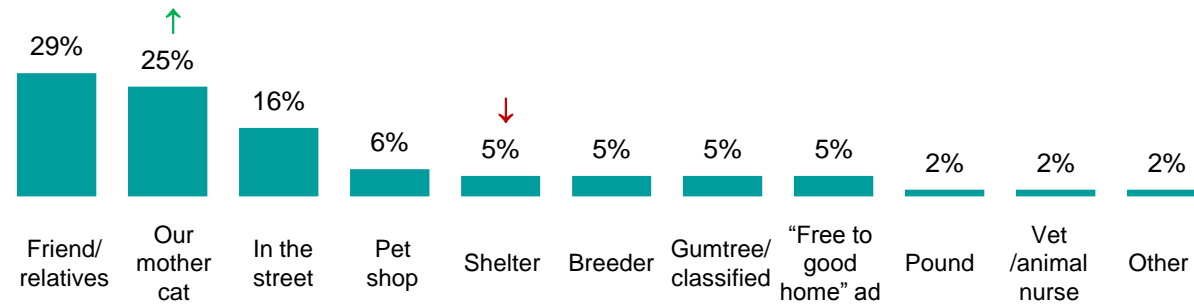
2018: \$ 81,532

# Profile of cats who have not been desexed

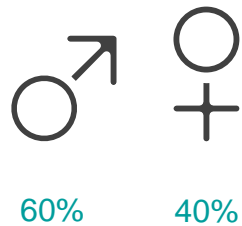
## AGE OF CAT



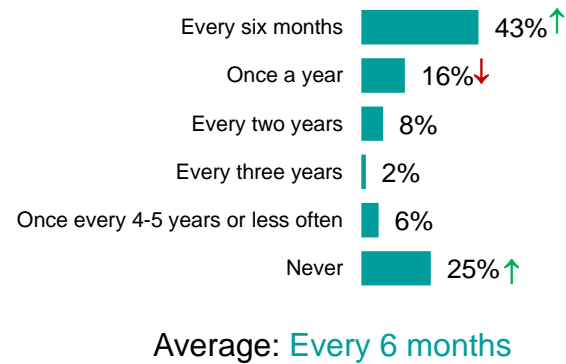
## WHERE THEY GOT THE CAT FROM



## GENDER OF CAT



## VISITS TO THE VET



## VACCINATION & REGISTRATION



65% ↓  
Have been vaccinated



41% ↓  
Have been registered

↑↓ significantly higher/lower than owners of desexed cats @ 95% CI  
+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level

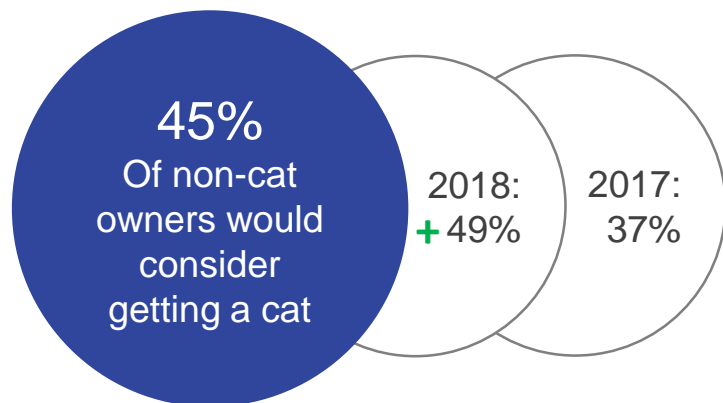
# FUTURE CAT OWNERS

There are still many cat lovers out there who have not adopted a fur baby, but have the intention to rescue them from animal shelters/pounds in the future. Almost three quarters of them have strong intention to desex their cats. It is important to reach out to the remaining one quarter and convince them of the benefits of desexing their cats.

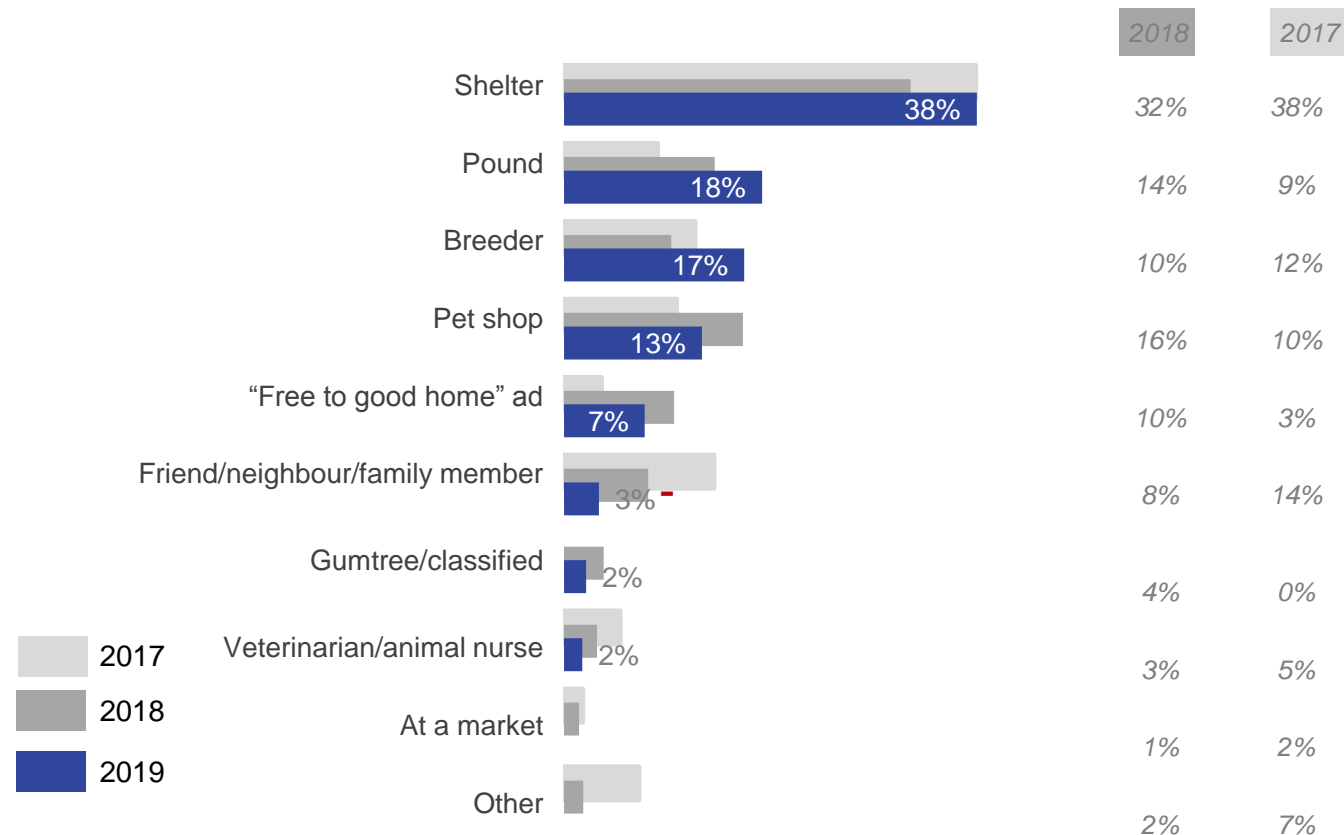
# 3

45% of non cat owners would consider getting a cat. Adoption from shelters/ pound continues to be most likely. 1 in 5 future owners will also get their cat(s) from breeders. Acquisition from friend/neighbour/family is significantly less likely.

### Will consider having a cat



### Where they would get their cat

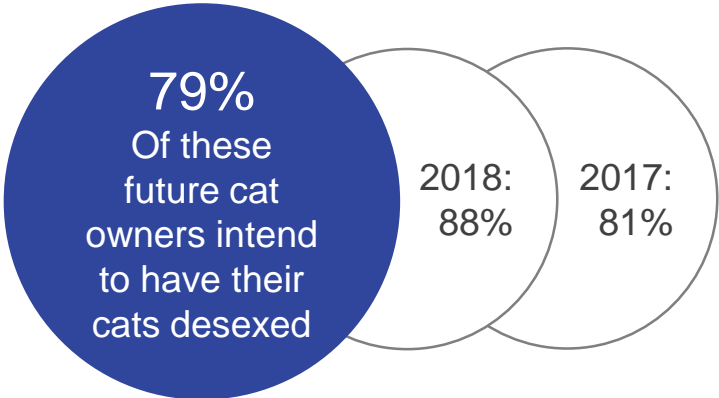


+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level

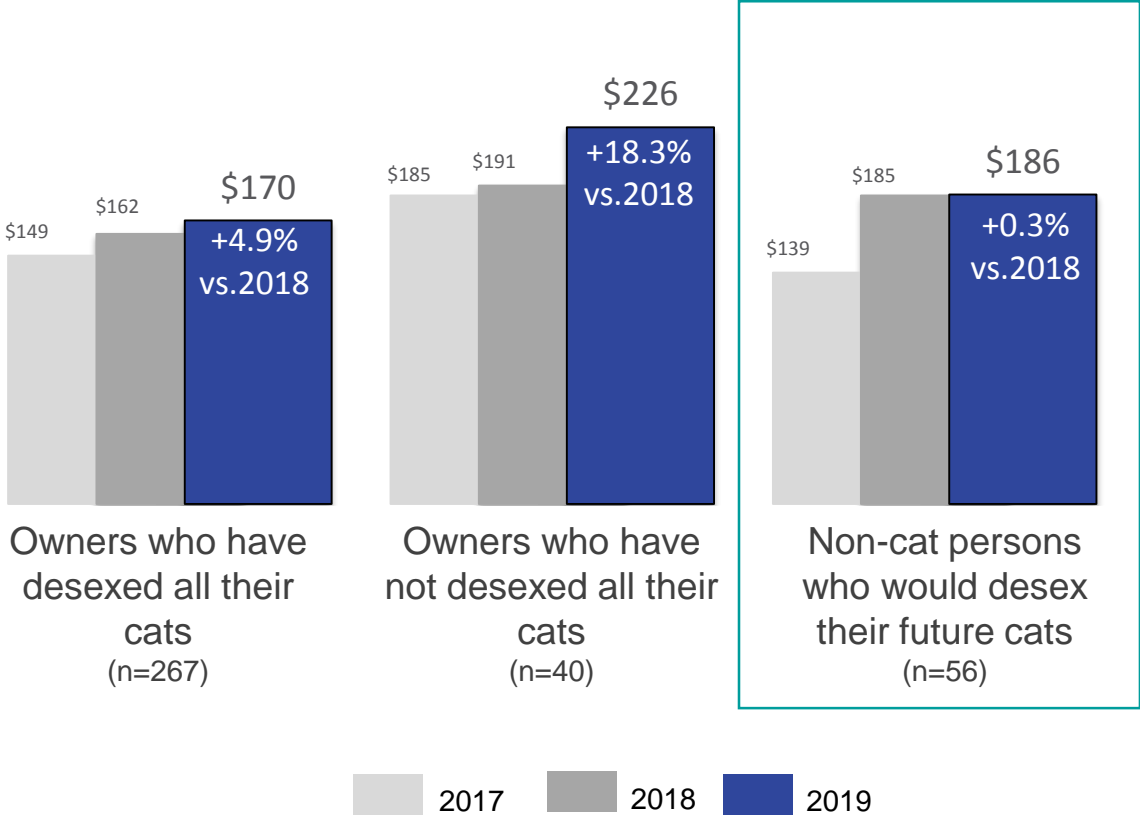


# Intention to desex their cats among future cat owners remains high. Their perception of cost has not changed much from 2018.

## Will desex their cat



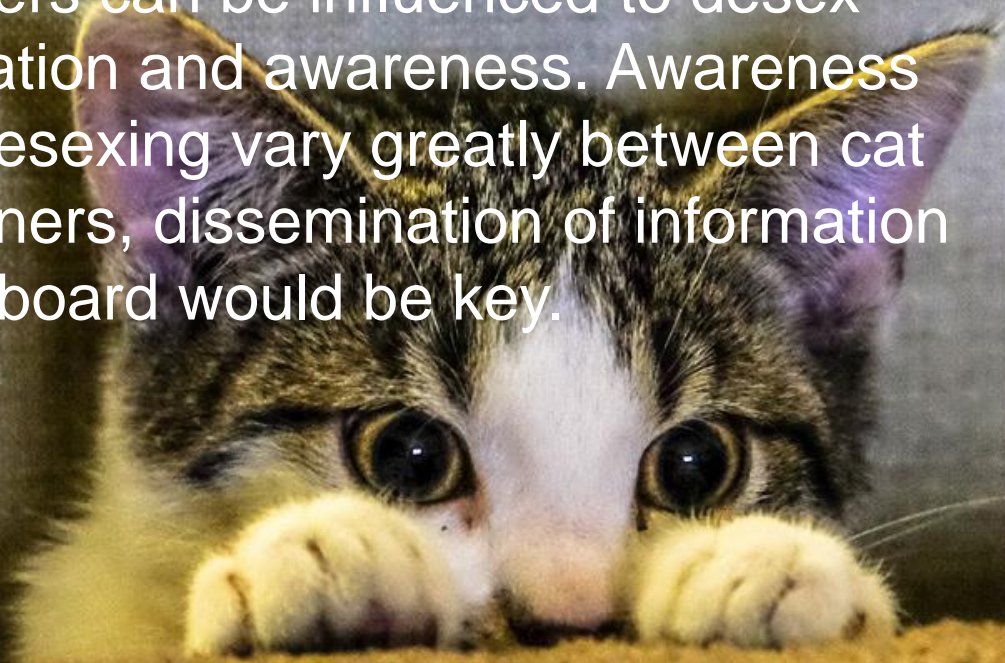
## Cost to have a cat / kitten desexed



# COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF DESEXING

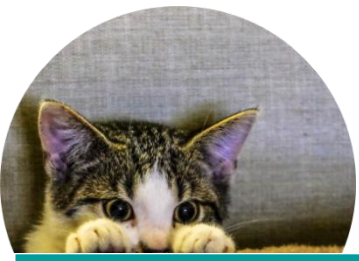
The majority of cat owners can be influenced to desex their cats through education and awareness. Awareness of various facts about desexing vary greatly between cat owners and non-cat owners, dissemination of information consistently across the board would be key.

# 4



Awareness of health benefits of early age desexing has gone up significantly among cat owners, especially those who have desexed all their cats. Amongst future cat owners, there is a significant increase in awareness that cats can be desexed from about 8-10 weeks of age.

Awareness of facts about desexing



<i>% aware</i>	<b>Cat owners (n=356)</b>	<b>Cat owners who have desexed all cats (n=307)</b>	<b>Cat owners who have not desexed all cats (n=49)</b>	<b>Future cat owners (n=81)</b>
Cats can be safely desexed from about 8-10 weeks of age	<b>69%</b> <small>67%   67%</small>	<b>72%</b> <small>70%   71%</small>	<b>44%</b> <small>43%   43%</small>	<b>66%</b> <small>49%   52%</small>
Female kitten can get pregnant from as young as 4-5 months old	<b>63%</b> <small>62%   65%</small>	<b>62%</b> <small>64%   68%</small>	<b>73%</b> <small>44%   48%</small>	<b>44%</b> <small>42%   38%</small>
Early age desexing provides health benefits such as reducing the risk of various feline cancers, and behavioural benefits such as less wandering, fewer cat fights and also cats are less likely to 'spray' (urine)	<b>68%</b> <small>60%   64%</small>	<b>69%</b> <small>61%   67%</small>	<b>63%</b> <small>48%   46%</small>	<b>55%</b> <small>44%   47%</small>

smaller font, light grey  
2018 | 2017

 Increase from 2018 significant @ 95% ci

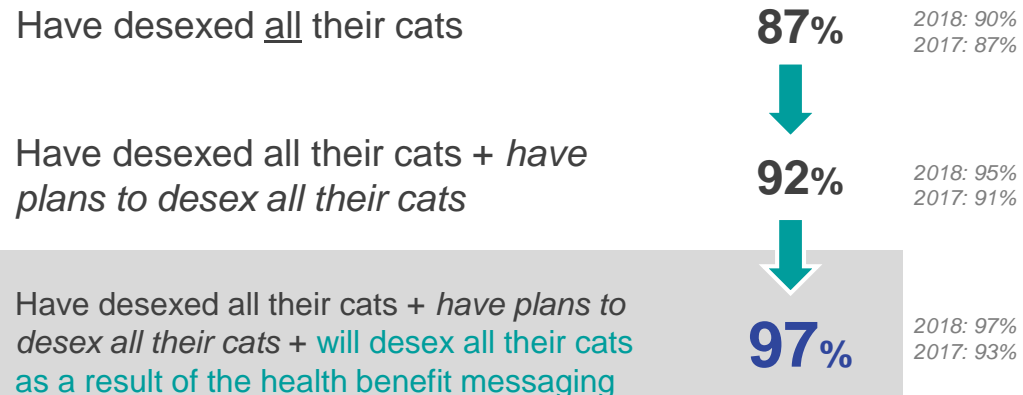


# Education/exposing owners to the benefits of desexing would increase the likelihood of cats being desexed.

## Effects of exposure to benefits of desexing

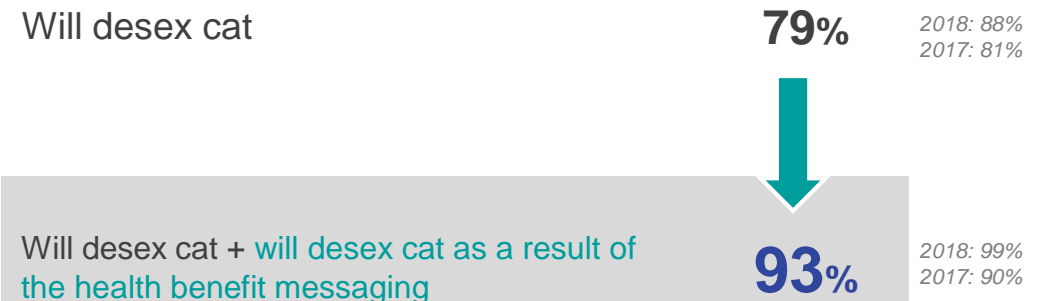
*“Early age desexing provides health benefits such as reducing the risk of various feline cancers, and behavioural benefits such as less wandering, fewer cat fights and also cats are less likely to ‘spray’ (urine)”*

### % of Owners



### Amongst future cat owners

(n=81)



# SOURCES OF INFORMATION

# 5

Vet clinic and internet search remain the more commonly used sources of information on cat care. Future cat owners are more reliant on cat breeders and less on vet clinics or internet for information, so breeders should be encouraged to educate themselves on cat care so that they can provide sound advice when their kittens are adopted.

No change in the usage of different information sources; vet clinic and internet search remain most prevalent. Cat breeder as an information source is significantly higher amongst *future* cat owners.

Top 6 sources of information/advice on cat care (ranked 1 to 3)



**88%**

Veterinary clinic

- 64% Future Owners

2018: 86%



**76%**

Internet search

- 61% Future Owners

2018: 73%



**44%**

Cat/animal welfare charity

2018: 43%



**29%**

Friends/ Family

2018: 29%



**26%**

Pet Shop

2018: 26%



**17%**

Cat Breeder

+ 35% Future Cat Owners

2018: 19%

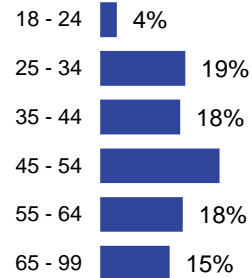
Base: Cat owners, n=356 | Future Cat Owners, n=160  
 Source: Q23 (If you were looking for information or advice on cat care, what would be the three most likely sources you would choose for that information? Please rank your top three choices where 1 = 'most likely', 2 = 'second most likely', 3 = 'third most likely')

# APPENDIX

# 6

# Who are the cat owners?

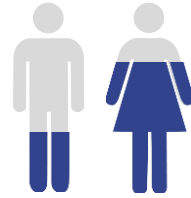
## AGE



Average: **50 y.o.**

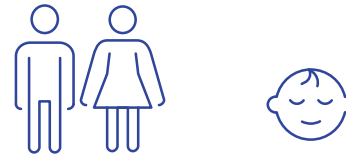
(2018: 48 y.o. | 2017: 49 y.o.)

## GENDER



37% 63%

## HOUSEHOLD

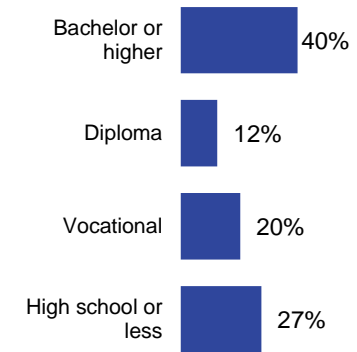


71%  
Married/de-facto  
relationship

44%  
With kids <18

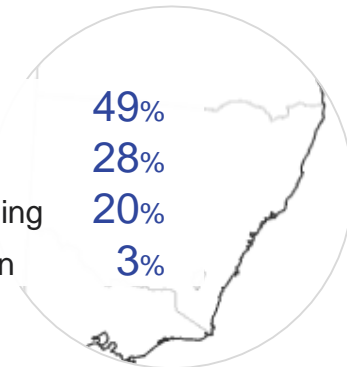
3.0  
Average  
household  
members

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW

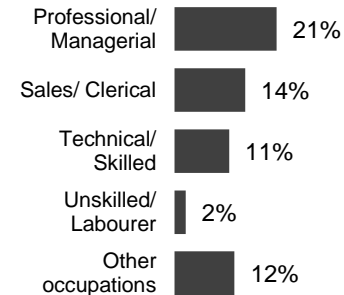
Sydney 49%  
Major regional city 28%  
Rural town/surrounding >5km from rural town 20%  
3%



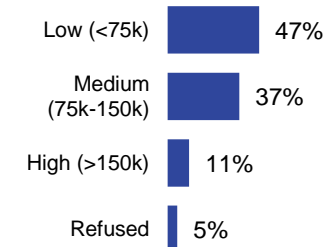
## EMPLOYMENT



62%  
Have employment



## HH INCOME



Average **\$85,814**

2018: \$81,878



# Cat owners who have not desexed their cats are significantly more likely to feed/care for stray cats.

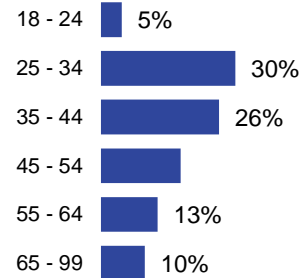


% who would feed or care for stray cats

	<b>Cat owners</b> <i>(n=356)</i>	<b>Cat owners who have desexed all cats</b> <i>(n=307)</i>	<b>Cat owners who have not desexed all cats</b> <i>(n=49)</i>	<b>Future cat owners</b> <i>(n=81)</i>
	<b>21%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>32%</b>
2018	15%	12%	39%	28%
2017	16%	14%	30%	26%

# Who are the people who would feed or care for stray cats?

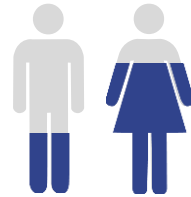
## AGE



Average: **44 y.o.**

(All: 55 y.o.)

## GENDER



37% 63%

## HOUSEHOLD

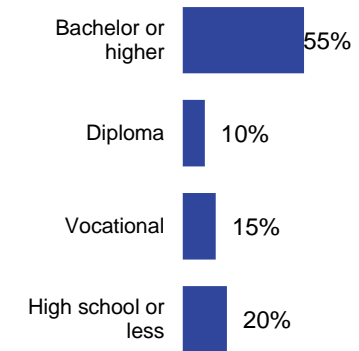


70%  
Married/de-facto  
relationship

53%  
With kids <18

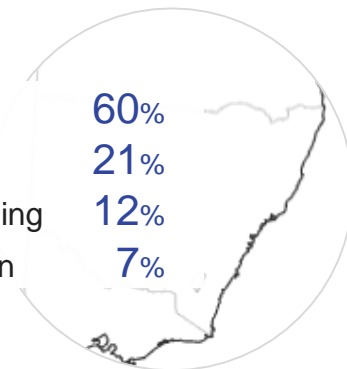
3.1  
Average  
household  
members

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW

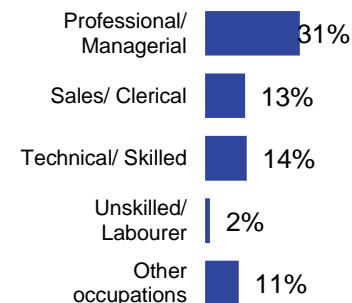
Sydney  
Major regional city  
Rural town/surrounding  
>5km from rural town



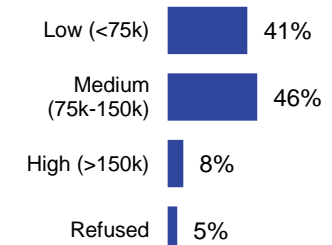
## EMPLOYMENT



71%  
Have employment



## HH INCOME



Average **\$85,030**

2018: \$79,707

# ABOUT IPSOS

Ipsos is the third largest market research company in the world, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarises our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

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# GAME CHANGERS

In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:  
**You act better when you are sure.**



**THANK  
YOU**

**GAME CHANGERS**

