

# CAT WELFARE SURVEY 2023

Report of Findings

August 2023

cat  
protection  
society  
OF NSW



Prepared for:  
**Cat Protection Society of NSW | Kristina Vesk**  
Prepared By: Ipsos | Bella Hwang, Steph Perry  
Ipsos Ref: 23-049231-01

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, 2018 and 2019 shows that around 90% of cat owners desex their cats.

A repeat of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 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.

# Addressing the business questions

## Business Questions

## Research Objectives

1

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

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

2

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

- 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

3

What are the barriers to early-age desexing?

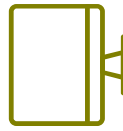
- Investigate the barriers to desexing
- Verify whether cost is a barrier for not desexing their cats

4

Will health messaging improve the rate of cat desexing?

- 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: 16/06/23 → 03/07/23



## WHO WE INTERVIEWED

Aged 18+ years, cat owners, living in New South Wales (NSW)

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

Note: Results from 2023 are compared with 2019 and highlighted if different

Sample sizes	2017	2018	2019	2023
Total respondents	519	524	516	513
• Cat owners	363	364	356	513
• Non-cat owners*	156	160	160	N/A
Total number of cats	554	542	582	803

\*Excluded in 2023



## 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')
- Cats which have been desexed
- Cats which have not been desexed

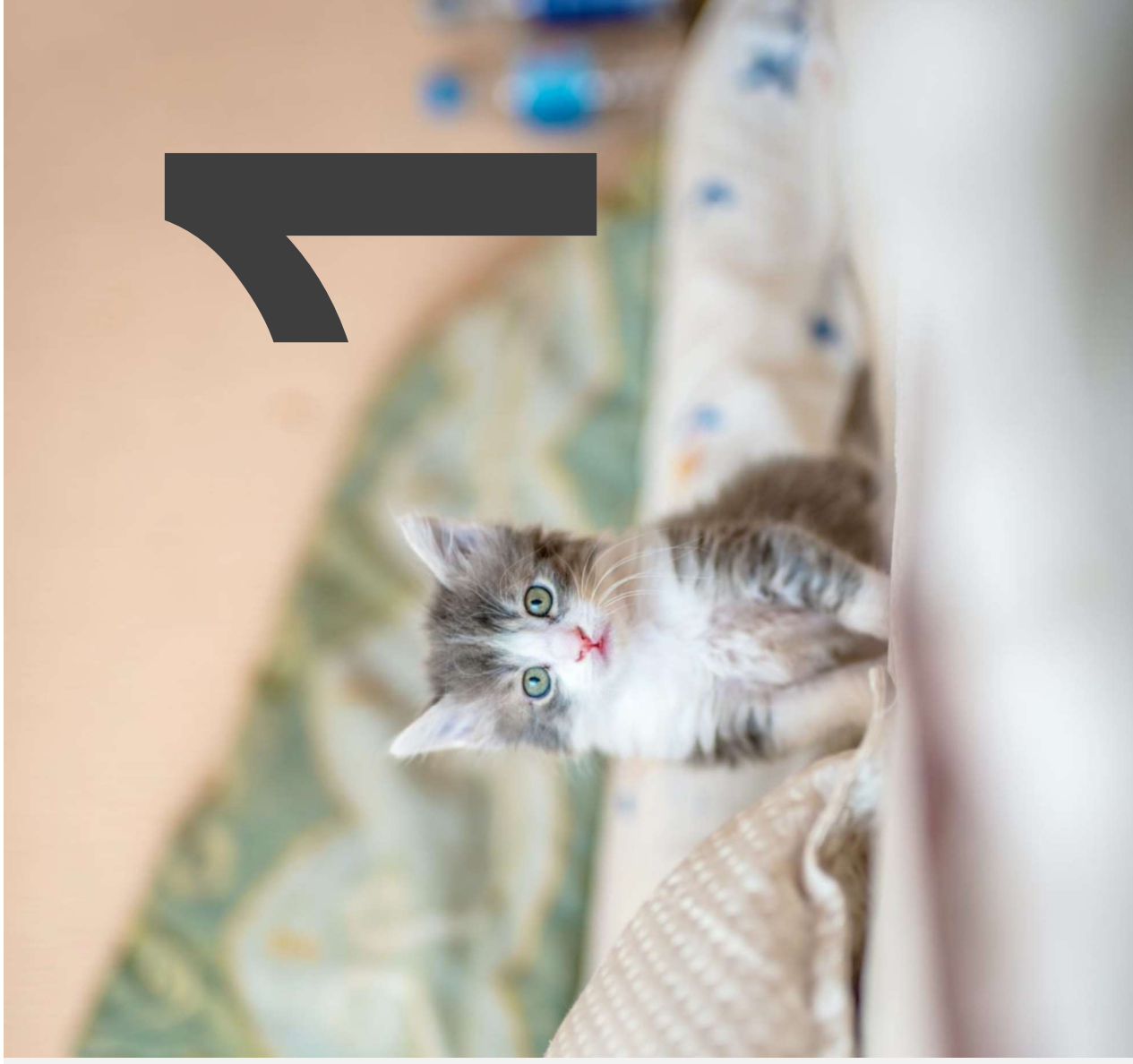
Data was weighted by age, gender and location at total level so that it is comparable to 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Total sample analysis is not possible due to quota sampling

# Cats and their Owners

There majority of cat-owning households continue to have a single-cat, although multi-cat ownership has remained higher than in 2018. However, there has been a decrease in the ownership of dogs and fish among cat owners.

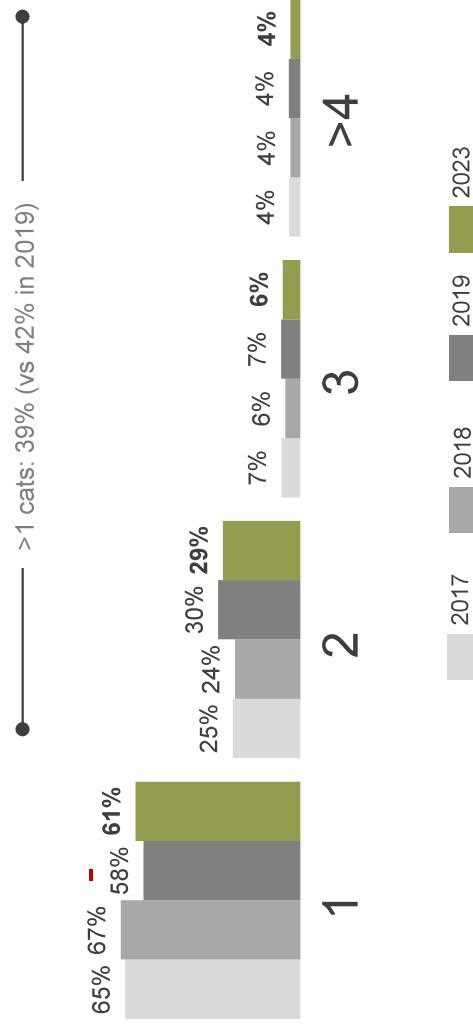
The primary sources for obtaining cats remain family/friends and animal shelters, although pet shop purchases have increased. Cat registration numbers have significantly risen since 2019, exclusively attributed to desexed cats who also exhibit greater vaccination rates than non-desexed cats.



## NUMBER OF CATS OWNED

**The majority of cat owners continue to have only one cat but multi-cat ownership is still greater than in 2018.**

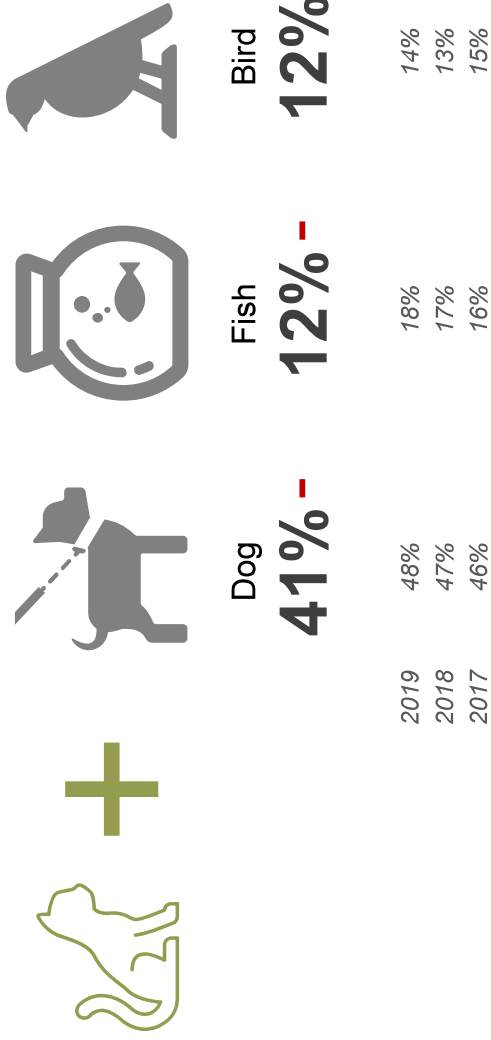
## NUMBER OF CATS OWNED PER HOUSEHOLD



OTHER PETS CAT OWNERS HAVE

**Cat owners are less likely to own dogs, as well as fish, than in 2019.**

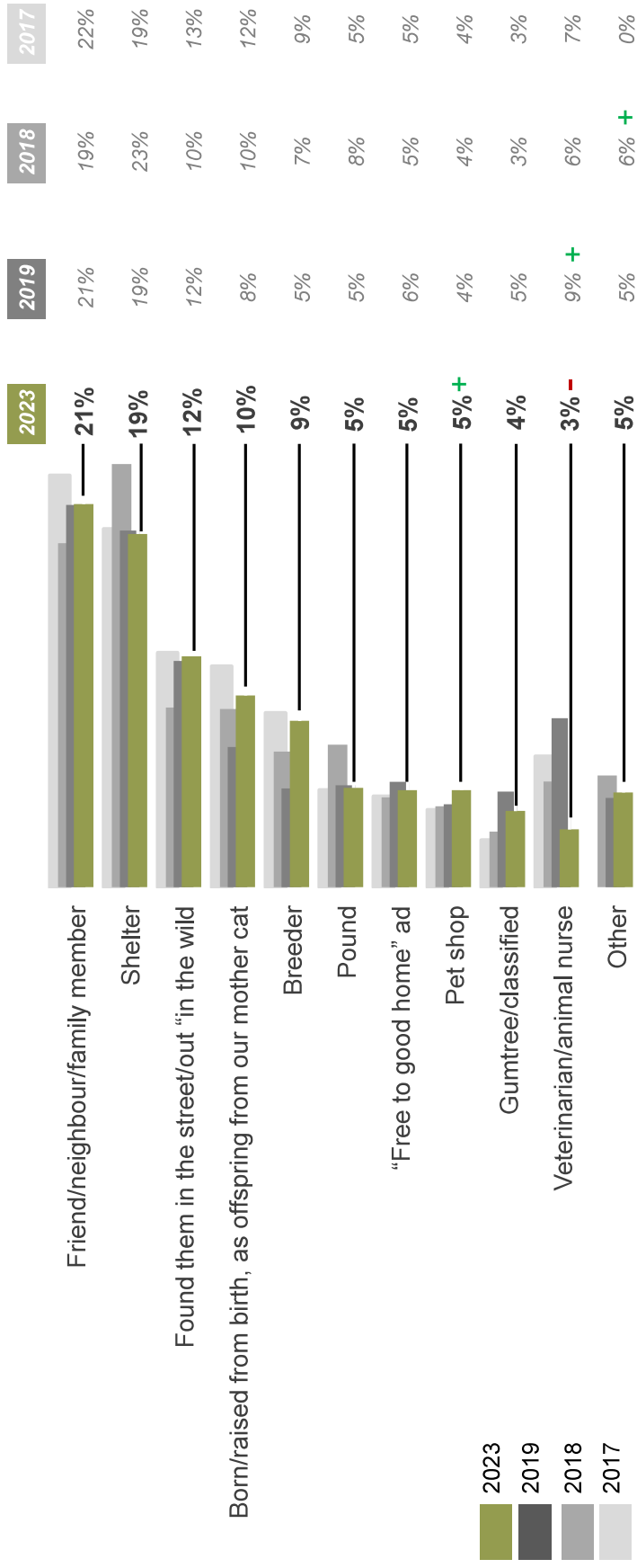
OTHER PETS OWNED BY CAT OWNERS



WHERE THE CATS WERE FROM

**As in 2019, the two most common place to get cats are from family & friends and animal shelters. While numbers are low, there has been a significant increase in purchasing cats from pet shops.**

CAT ADOPTION LOCATIONS



Base: All cats, 2017 n=554, 2018 n=542, 2019 n=582, 2023 n=803  
 Q5. Where did you get your cat/cats?

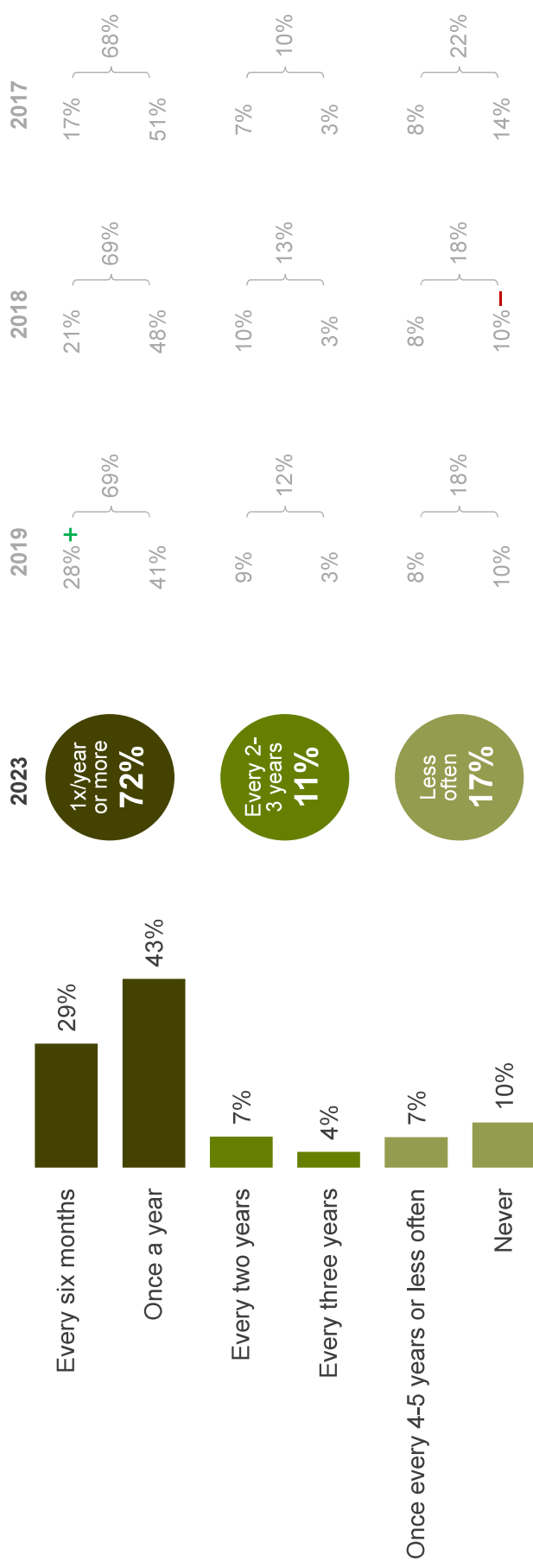
+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level



# FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO THE VET

**Visits to the vet have remained relatively unchanged from 2019.**

## FREQUENCY OF VET VISITS



9 — © 2023 Ipsos Base: All cats, 2017 n=554, 2018 n=542, 2019 n=582, 2023 n=803 Q6. On average, how often do you take your cat/cats to the vet?

<sup>+</sup> significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level

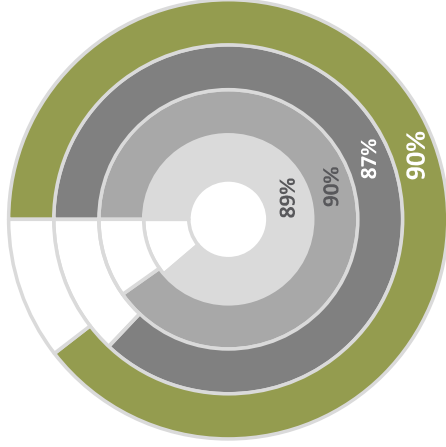


# DESEXING, VACCINATION AND REGISTRATION INCIDENCE

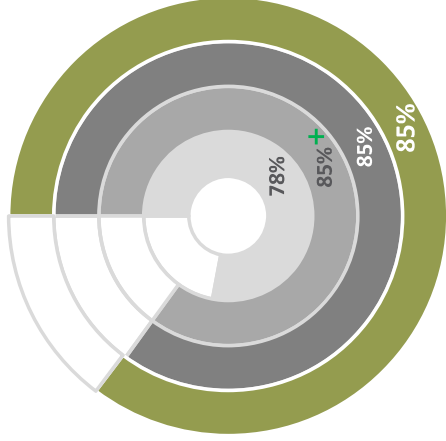
**There has been a significant increase in the number of cats registered since 2019 while desexing and vaccination rates remain the same.**

## INCIDENCE AMONG TOTAL CATS

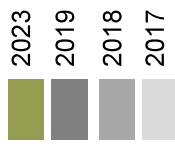
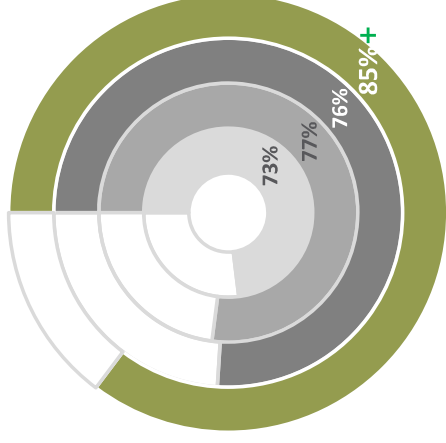
DESEXED  
**90%**



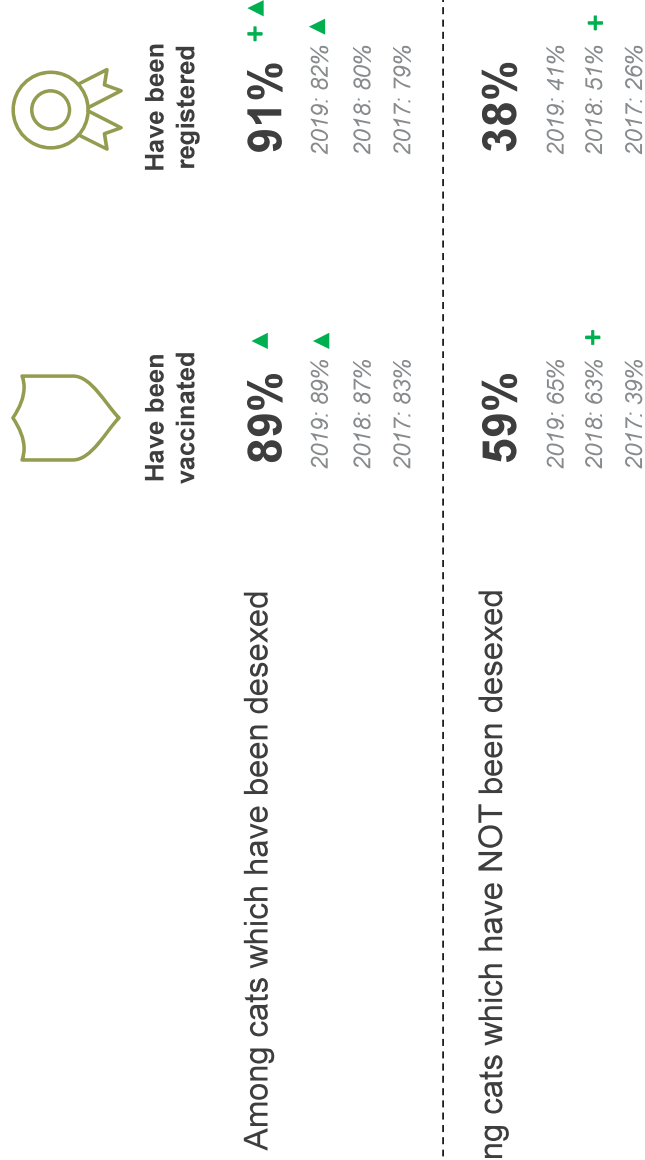
VACCINATED  
**85%+**



REGISTERED  
**85%+**



**Desexed cats continue to have higher vaccination and registration rates compared to non-desexed cats. The increase in registration is driven entirely by desexed cats.**

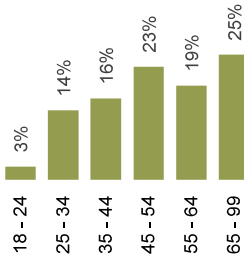


+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 95% confidence level  
 ▲ / ▼ significantly higher/lower than cats which have not been desexed @ 95% confidence level

Base: Cats which have been desexed n=489-719; cats which have not been desexed n=50-81  
 Q9 (desexed), Q7 (vaccinated), Q8 (registered)

# PROFILE: CAT OWNERS WHO HAVE DESEXED THEIR CATS

## AGE



**Average: 54.4 y.o.**

(2019: 50 y.o. | 2018: 49 y.o. | 2017: 50 y.o.)

## GENDER



**48% 51%**

(2019: 38% M, 62% F)

## HOUSEHOLD



**2.6**

**Average household members**

(2019: 3.0)

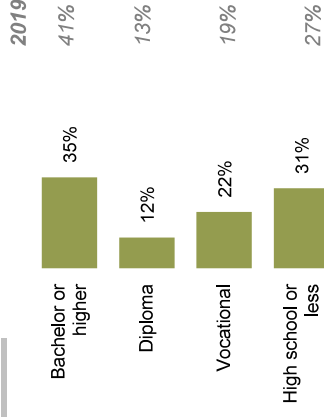


**32%**

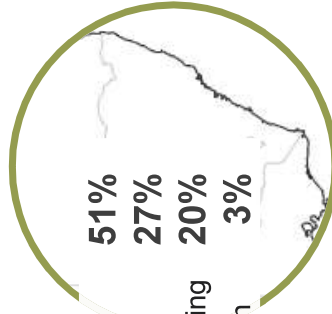
**With kids <18**

(2019: 43%)

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW



**Sydney 51%**

**Major regional city 27%**

**Rural town/surrounding 20%**

**>5km from rural town 3%**

## EMPLOYMENT



**60%**

**Have employment**

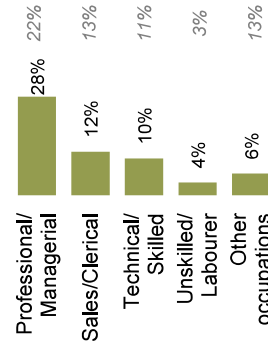
(2019: 62%)

**33%**

**Work from home**

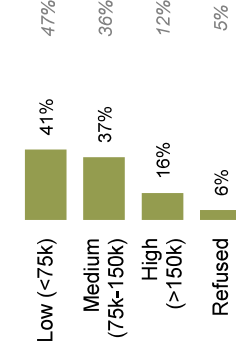
(2019: 18%)

2019



## HH INCOME

2019



**Average \$94,500**

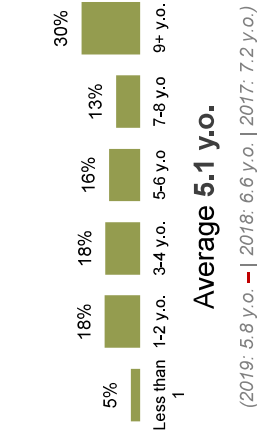
2019: \$87,432

Base: Cat owners who have desexed all their cats, 2019 n=307, 2023 n=447

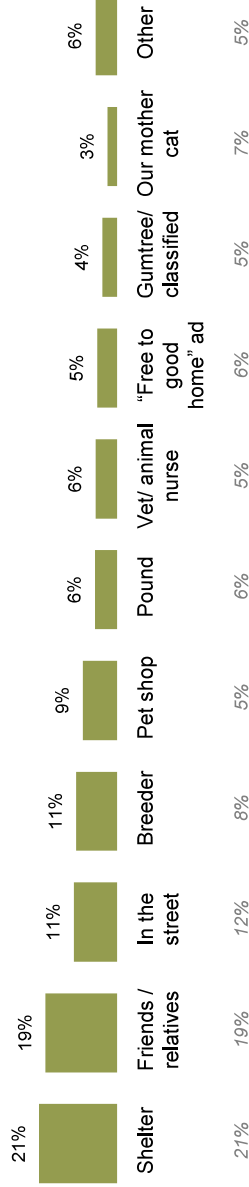
D2 (age), D3 (gender), Q6D (number of people in HH), Q7D (with kids <18), Q4D (highest education level), Q11D (area), Q8D (working status), Q8Da (Work from home status), Q9D (occupation), Q10D (household income)

# PROFILE: CATS THAT HAVE BEEN DESEXED

## AGE OF CAT



## WHERE THEY GOT THE CAT FROM

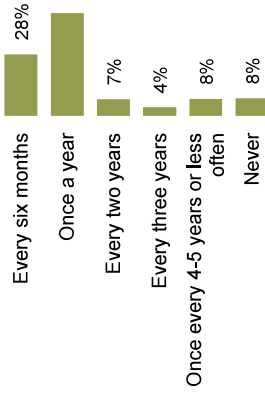


## CAT GENDER

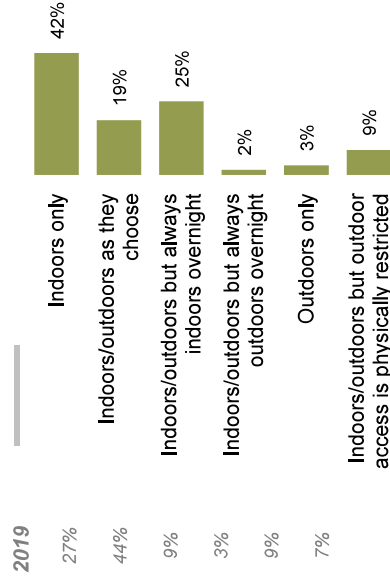


**44%**  
(2019: 48% M, 52% F)

## VISITS TO THE VET



## WHERE CAT LIVES



## VACCINATION & REGISTRATION



**89%**  
Have been vaccinated  
(2019: 89%)



**91%+**  
Have been registered  
(2019: 82%)

# Non-Desexed Cats and their Owners

The number of multi-cat households with non-desexed cats has decreased since 2019, returning to 2018 levels. Costs continue to be the primary obstacle for desexing, with those that haven't desexed their cats having a skewed perspective on the investment required.

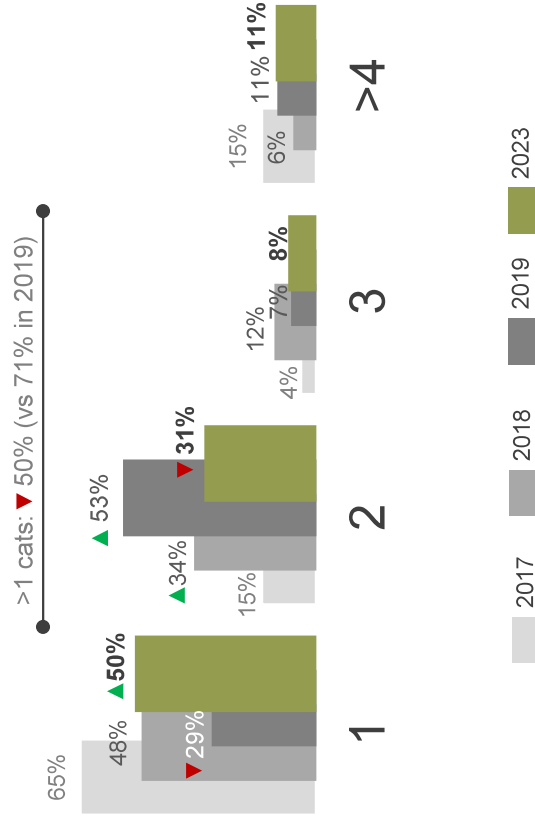
Plans for cat desexing have nearly doubled since 2019, yet many are delaying due to concerns about cost and time commitments.



# NUMBER OF CATS OWNED AMONG OWNERS NOT DESEXED ALL CATS

**There is a significant decrease in multi-cat households that have not desexed all their cats compared to 2019.**

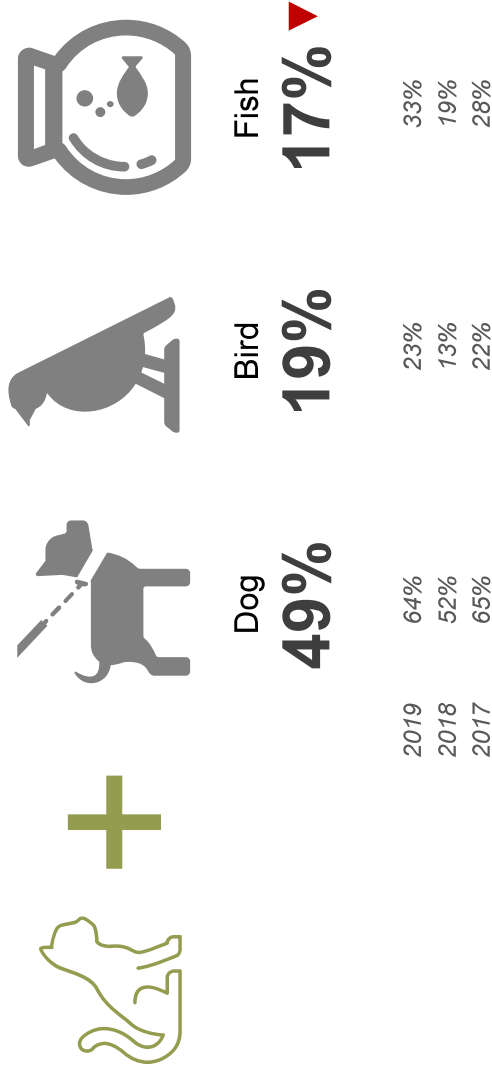
## NUMBER OF CATS OWNED PER HOUSEHOLD (AMONG OWNERS WHO HAVE NOT DESEXED ALL THEIR CATS)



OTHER PETS NON-DESEXED CAT OWNERS HAVE

**Similar to total cat owners, the number of owners of desexed cats who also own fish has decreased, along with a directional decrease in dog ownership.**

OTHER PETS OWNED  
(AMONG OWNERS WHO HAVE NOT DEXEDED ALL THEIR CATS)

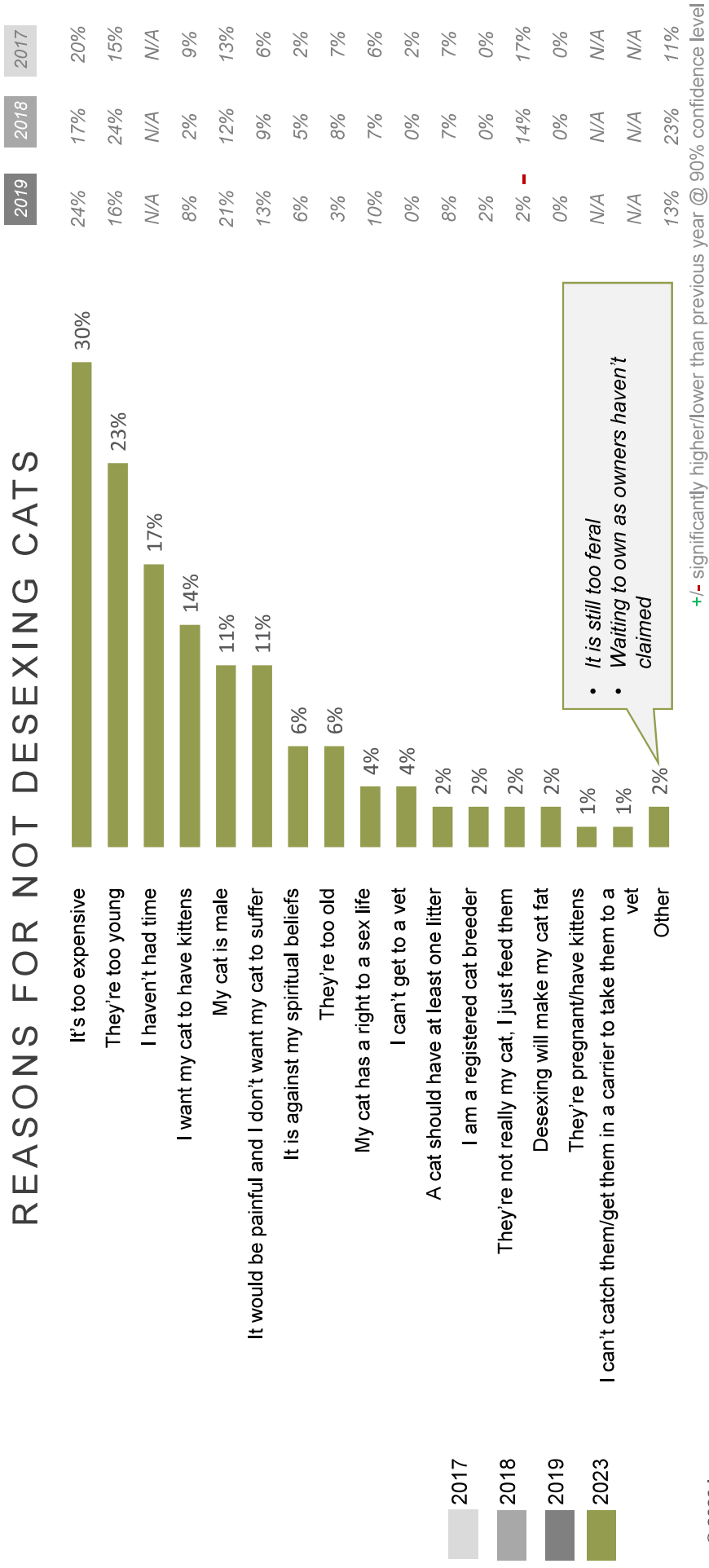




## REASONS FOR NOT DESEXING ALL THEIR CATS

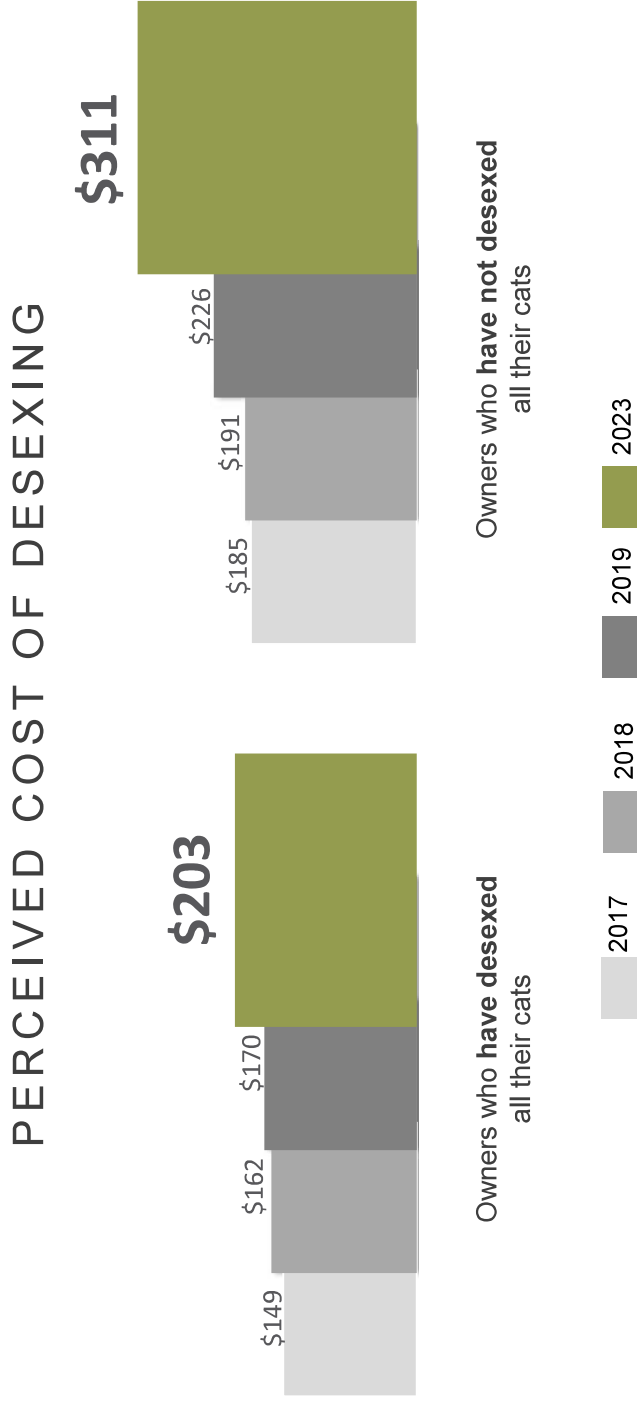
**The cost of desexing is the primary barrier for not desexing cats. The cat age and time requirement are also top barriers.**

### REASONS FOR NOT DESEXING CATS



## PERCEIVED COST TO HAVE A CAT / KITTEN DESEXED

**Those who have not desexed their cats perceive the cost to do so to be notably higher than those that have. The perceived cost has increased considerably since 2019.**



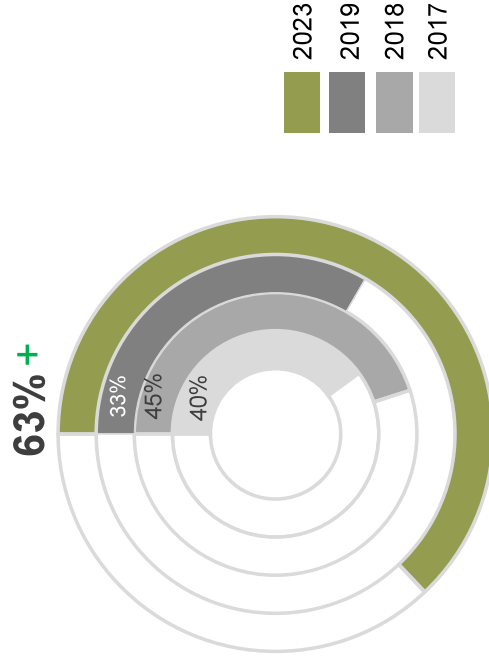
Base: Cat owners who have desexed all their cats (n=267-447); cat owners who have not desexed all their cats (n=39-66)  
Q20. What do you think it would cost to have a cat or kitten desexed?

## PLANS TO DESEX CATS

**Plans to desex cats have almost doubled since 2019. However many delay due to perceived cost and time implications.**

DO THEY PLAN TO DESEX THEIR CATS?  
(AMONG THOSE WHO HAVEN'T)

Percentage % Yes



(23% of these cats will never get desexed and 16% the owners are not sure)

Vs. 2019: 54% will never and 13% not sure

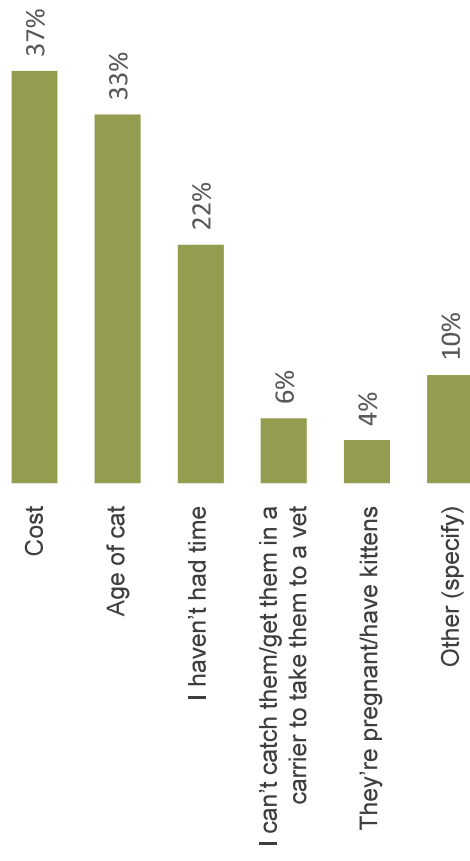
+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 90% confidence level

19 — © 2023 Ipsos Base: Cats which have not been desexed. 2017 n=54, 2018 n=63, 2023 n=81.

Q11. Do you plan to desex your cat/cats? | Q12. Given that you plan to desex your cat/cats, what is the main reason(s) you have delayed desexing them?

REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN DESEXING THEIR CATS  
(AMONG THOSE THAT PLAN TO DESEX)

Base: 51 cats



- Too feral to handle
- Don't yet officially own
- Own by my son

+/- significantly higher/lower than previous year @ 90% confidence level

DON'T KNOW IF DESEXED

**Nearly all owners know if their cats are desexed or not. The 3 cats that are unknown are largely adopted from the wild.**

HOW MANY ARE UNSURE

WHERE THE CATS WERE FROM

For **3** cats out of a total of 803, owners are unsure if they have been desexed or not  
(2019: 10 from 582)



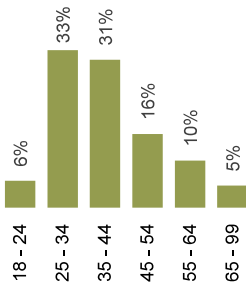
**2** Found them in the street/out "in the wild"

**1** Friend/neighbour/family member



# PROFILE: CAT OWNERS WHO HAVE NOT DESEXED THEIR CATS

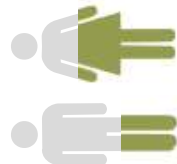
## AGE



**Average: 40.6 y.o.**

(2019: 46 y.o. | 2018: 42 y.o. | 2017: 41 y.o.)

## GENDER



**37% 63%**

(2019: 30% M, 70% F)

## HOUSEHOLD



**3.3**

Average household members

(2019: 3.3)

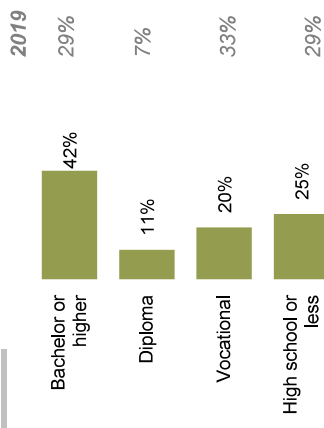


**59%**

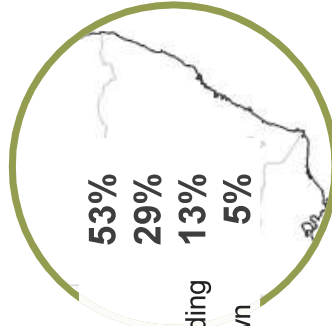
With kids <18

(2019: 52%)

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW



**53%**

Major regional city

**29%**

Rural town/surrounding

**13%**

>5km from rural town

**5%**

## EMPLOYMENT



**68%**

Have employment

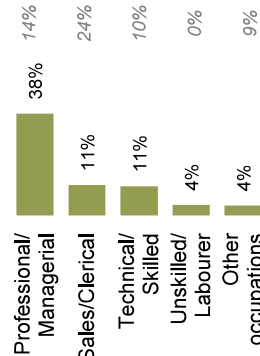
(2019: 62%)

**44%**

Work from home

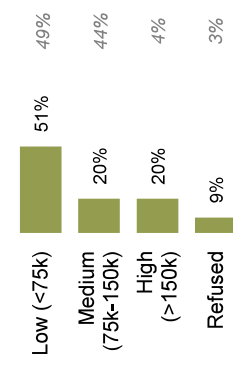
(2019: 36%)

2019



## HH INCOME

2019



**Average \$89,316**

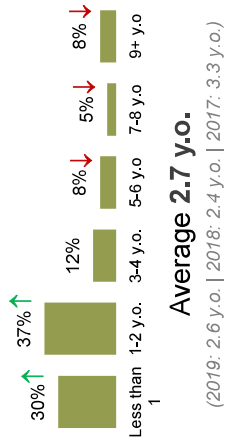
2019: \$73,016

Base: Cat owners who have not desexed all their cats, 2019 n=49, 2023 n=66.

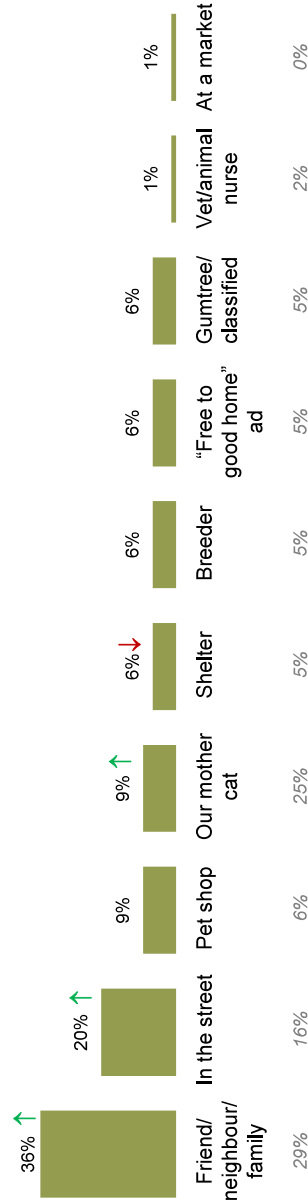
D2 (age), D3 (gender), Q5D (marital status), Q6D (number of people in HH), Q7D (with kids <18), Q4D (highest education level), Q11D (area), Q8D (working status), Q9D (occupation), Q10D (household income)

# PROFILE: CATS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN DESEXED

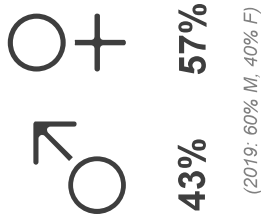
## AGE OF CAT



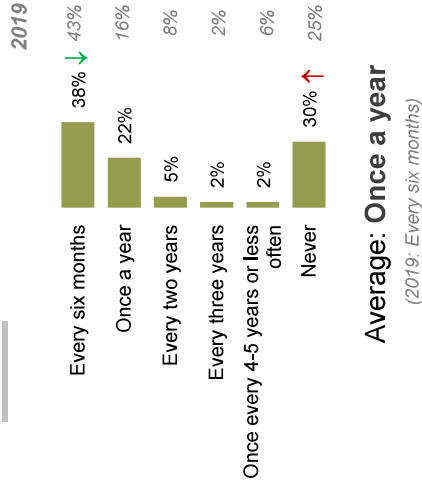
## WHERE THEY GOT THE CAT FROM



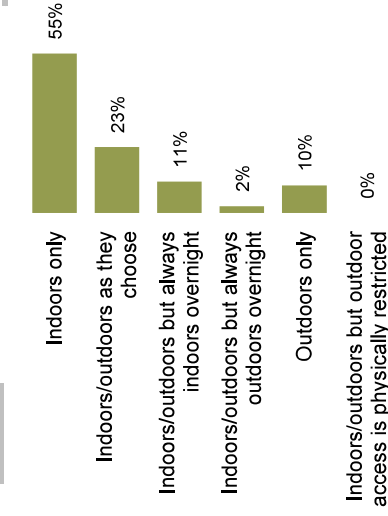
## CAT GENDER



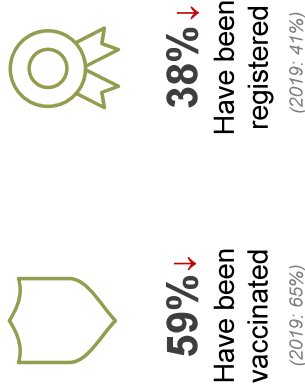
## VISITS TO THE VET



## WHERE CAT LIVES



## VACCINATION & REGISTRATION



# Communicating the Benefits of Desexing

The number of cat owners accurately recalling the age at which cats can undergo desexing has increased in the past few years. However, awareness of conception age has notably decreased among non-desexed cat owners.

Educating owners about desexing benefits could decrease non-desexed households by over 20%, or 1% of total cat owners.

# 3



**The number of cat owners who correctly recall the age that cats can be desexed has increased. However, there has been a significant decrease in the awareness of the age that cats can conceive among cat owners who have not desexed their cat.**



	Cat owners (n=356)	Cat owners who have desexed all cats (n=307)	Cat owners who have not desexed all cats (n=49)
<b>% aware</b>	<b>76% ↑</b>	<b>79% ↑</b>	<b>53%</b>
Cats can be safely desexed from about 8-10 weeks of age	69%   67%   67%	72%   70%   71%	44%   43%   43%
Female kitten can get pregnant from as young as 4-5 months old	<b>65%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>56% ↓</b>
	63%   62%   65%	62%   64%   68%	73%   44%   48%
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>69%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	68%   60%   64%	69%   61%   67%	63%   48%   46%

Base: All cats owners n=513, Cat owners who have desexed their all their cats n=447, Cat owners who have not desexed all their cats n=66  
 Q17 Desexed 8-10 weeks, Q18 Pregnant 4-5 months, Q19 Health benefits

smaller font, light grey  
 2019 | 2018 | 2017

↑ Increase from 2019 significant @ 90% cl  
 ↓



EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO BENEFITS OF DESEXING

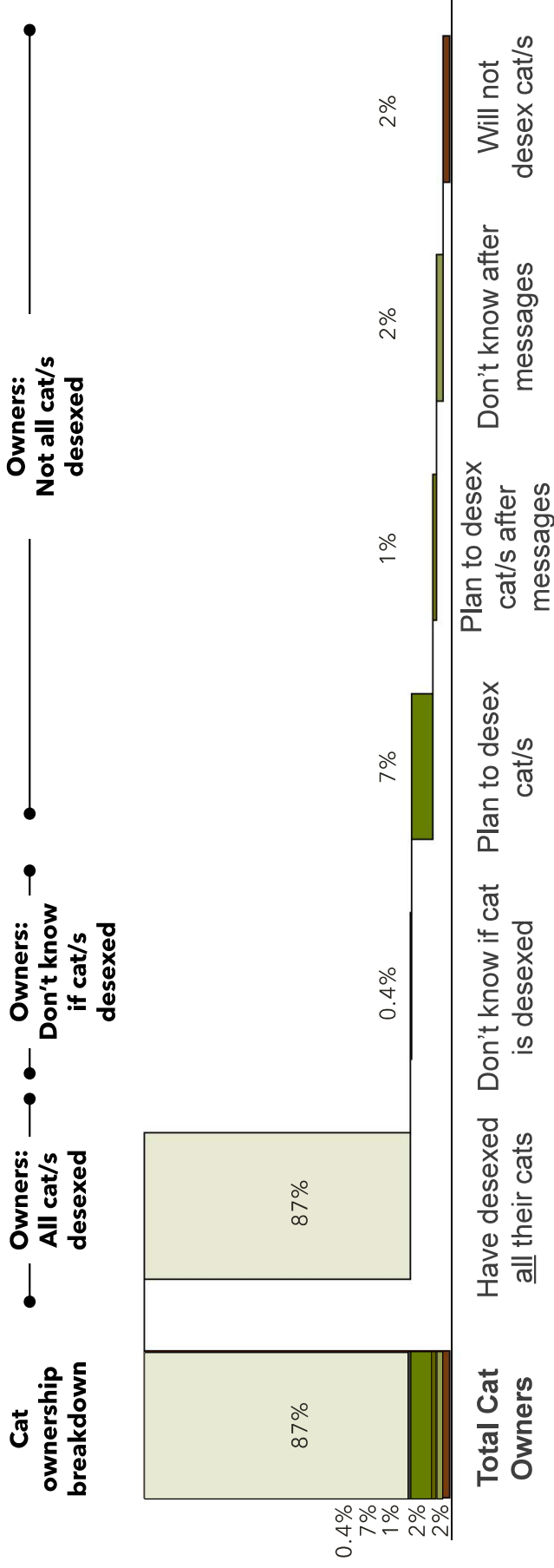
**Education/exposing owners to the benefits of desexing would decrease the number of non-desexed households by a fifth. However two in five are still unsure if they would.**

DECISION TO DESEX AFTER EDUCATION



## CAT OWNERSHIP BREAKDOWN

**Further education on desexing will influence an additional 1% of cat owners, overall. The vast majority already have or plan to desex their cats.**



# Sources of Information

The utilization of various information sources remains consistent, with vet clinics and internet searches being the most commonly used methods.

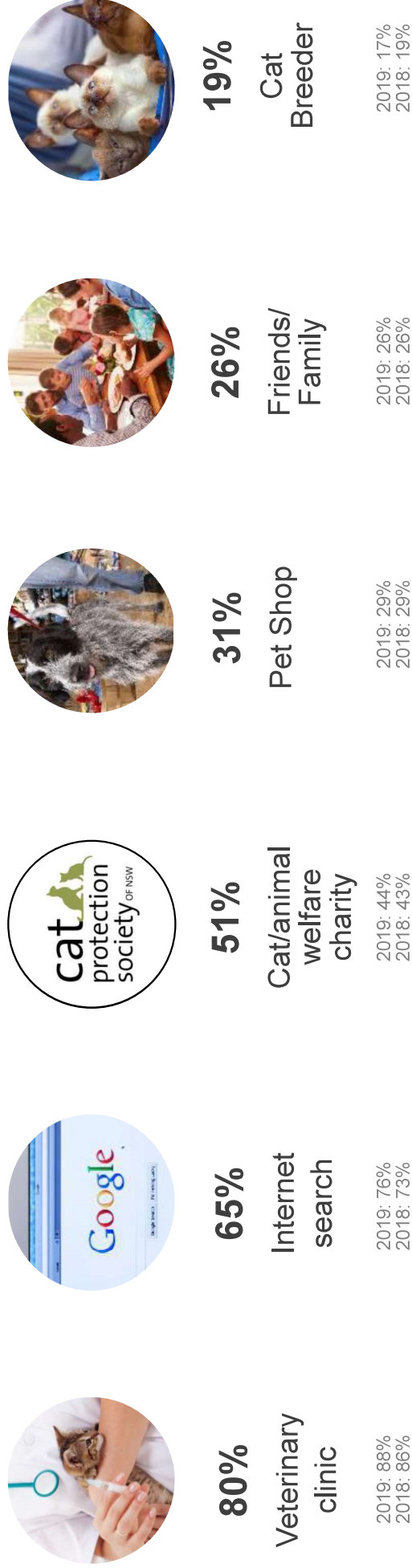
# 4



# TOP 6 SOURCES OF INFORMATION/ADVICE ON CAT CARE

**There is no change in the usage of different information sources with vet clinic and internet search remaining most prevalent.**

## TOP SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON CAT CARE



Base: Cat owners, n=513

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')

# Relationships with Stray Cats

In 2023, there is a notable decline in the number of cat owners tending to strays. About 70% are willing to have their local stray cat desexed if the cost is low or free.

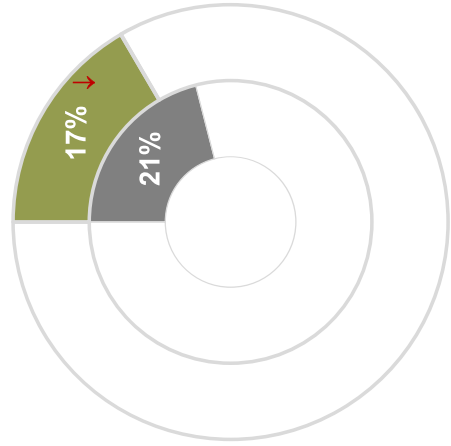


# CARE OF STRAY CATS

## There are significantly fewer cat owners who care for strays in 2023 with 7 in 10 happy to desex their local friend if it is cheap or free.

### FEED OR CARE FOR STRAY CATS

**Percentage % Yes**



*"I wish they could go to loving homes."*

*"They are well mannered and well fed."*

*"They are all beautiful wonderful animals. I am more than happy to feed and pat them on a regular basis."*

*"Just a local cat that comes past looks like he needs some food."*

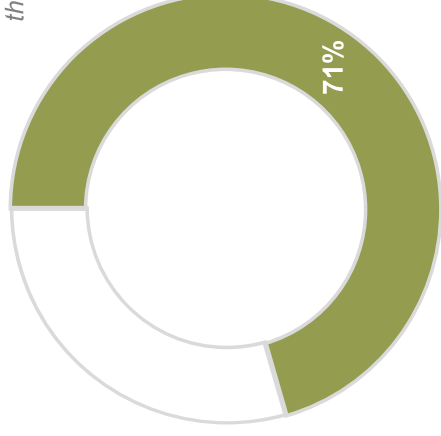
Average number of stray cats

**2.0**

### DESEX STRAY CATS IF FREE/CHEAP (AMONG CAT OWNERS WHO CARE FOR STRAYS)

**Base: N=101**

**Percentage % Yes**



*"They're great cats would love to get them desex them and keep them."*

*"Would be nice for some help."*

*"If I had desexing done for free I would take several cats in to find them a home."*

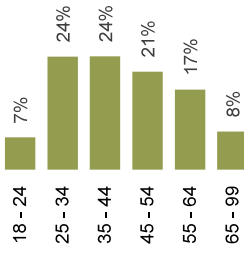
*"I feel sorry for them and annoyed that someone didn't spay their pet which led to these kittens being born."*

Base: All cat owners n=513. All cat owners who care for strays n=101

Source: Q16. Do you feed or care for a stray cat or cats? | Q16B. How many stray cats do you feed/care for? | Q16C. If it were provided free of charge or very cheaply, would you have [this stray cat / these stray cats] desexed? Q16D. Are there any comments you would like to make about the stray cat(s) that you feed?

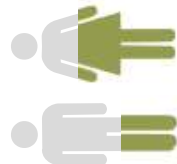
# PROFILE: CAT OWNERS WHO CARE/FEED STRAY CATS

## AGE



**Average: 44.7 y.o.**  
(2019: 44 y.o.)

## GENDER



**40% 60%**  
(2019: 37% M, 63% F)

## HOUSEHOLD

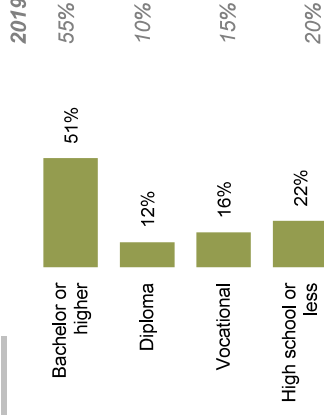


**2.8**  
Average household members  
(2019: 3.1)

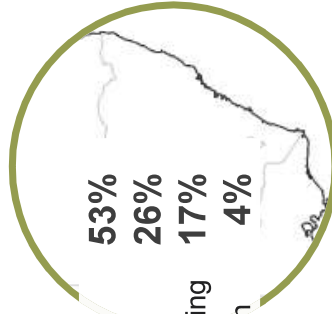


**45%**  
With kids <18  
(2019: 53%)

## EDUCATION



## REGIONS IN NSW



**53%**  
Major regional city

**26%**  
Rural town/surrounding

**17%**  
>5km from rural town

**4%**

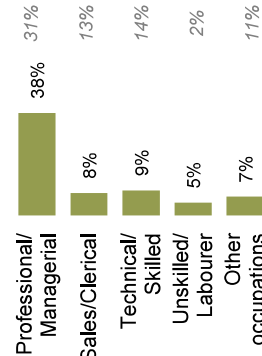
## EMPLOYMENT



**69%**  
Have employment  
(2019: 71%)

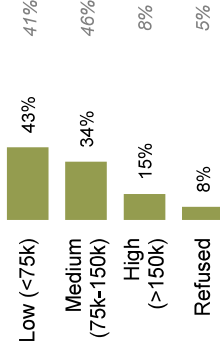
**47%**  
Work from home

2019



## HH INCOME

2019



**Average \$90,868**  
2019: \$85,030

Base: Cat owners who care / feed stray cats, 2019 n=122, 2023 n=101.  
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)

# 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.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg  
IPS:FP  
[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)

# 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**

