

Pets and the Pandemic

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A report from Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) has found that many Australians took the opportunity to introduce a pet into their household during the pandemic. Their survey indicated that there was a **significant increase** the percent of households taking in a new dog, fish or bird. Their research also indicated that pets had a number of positive influences on their lives such as:

- companionship
- better mental health
- joy and happiness.

Pet ownership in Australia, 2019 vs 2021								
Pet type	Household penetration (%)		Total owner households ('000)		Animals per household (average)		Total pets ('000)	
	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021	2019	2021
Dogs	40	47 ▲	3,848.2	4,644.6	1.3	1.4	5,104.7	6,344.3
Cats	27	30	2,602.4	3,030.7	1.4	1.6	3,766.6	4,903.3
Fish	11	13 ▲	1,056.8	1,314.5	10.7	8.5	11,331.7	11,186.5
Birds	9	14 ▲	867.9	1,384.0	6.4	3.9	5,569.4	5,448.4
Small mammals	3	5	257.8	498.9	2.4	3.0	614.5	1,502.0
Reptiles	2	4	194.5	426.4	1.9	1.6	364.2	663.4
Other pets	2	1	194.8	118.6	9.2	3.4	1,785.3	401.2
Pet Owners	61	69 ▲	5.9 m	6.8 m			28.5 m	30.4 m
Non-Owners	39	31 ▼	3.7 m	3.1 m				

Fig 1. Comparison of Pet Ownership in 2019 - 2021. Data Source: [Animal Medicines Australia Report](#)

With the increase in pet ownership the AMA are encouraging policy makers to consider the needs of companion animals and their owners when considering rental, strata and body corporate regulations are well as accepting animals in public places and transport.