

# Member Panel Survey Brief

## Pet Insurance & Road Safety Issues

### Overview

The Pet Insurance survey was sent to the Member Panel in order to gain insights into a potential tailored service for our members and the broader community. The questionnaire also included questions regarding safety issues so that we can continue advocating for safer roads.

The survey received over 750 responses from our Member Panel who kindly dedicated their time.

### The Data

Below are the main findings on this Member Panel survey.

#### - Pet ownership

From the responses received, almost 6 out of 10 respondents (or 446 persons) have a pet. Just over half of them have only one pet, 22% have two, and 25% three or more pets.

In relation to the types of pets that people own, dogs are the big winners with 7 out of 10 respondents having them as a pet. The next most popular pets are cats and birds accounting for 41% and 16% of responses respectively. The list of pets owned also includes other animals like fish, reptiles, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs and kangaroos.

From respondents not owning a pet, 20% are considering to having one in the future. In this case, dogs are again the uncontested winners: 89% of those considering to having a pet would choose a dog. This is followed by cats where 24% of respondents are considering them.

#### - Pet insurance, claims & willingness to pay

When asked about insurance covering their pets, a significant number of respondents stated they do not have a pet insurance. The main reasons given for not having a pet in order of importance were:

1. Cost
2. Traditional pet insurance is limited in what it does cover
3. Don't believe in insuring pets' health
4. Other

Those who have pet insurance were asked if they have ever made a claim and how satisfied they were with it. Approximately 7 out of 10 respondents have made a claim on their pet insurance, and 3 out of 4 of them were happy with their claims including how much it was paid.

Members were also asked how much they would be willing to pay for the pet insurance they want. Almost half per cent of the respondents who own a pet would pay up to \$20 per month for their pet insurance while 28 per cent would pay more than \$31 per month. For those who do not own a pet, 8 out of 10 respondents are willing to pay up to \$20 a month for their pet insurance, a significant higher proportion of respondents compared to pet owners willing to pay up to \$20.

### - Vet visits, pets' health and costs

When people were asked if they would be financially challenged to meet veterinarian costs should their pet suffered a serious injury or illness, responses were relatively evenly spread. About one in three people stated they would be financially challenged to meet some vet costs, around 30% stated they would not be financially challenged and about the same percentage that they may be financially challenged (33%, 29%, 31% respectively), depending on the cost of treatment.

Eight out of ten respondents vaccinate their pet in accordance with veterinary recommendations. For the vast majority of respondents (85%) vaccination cost up to \$200 annually.

While 71% of respondents believe that vet costs are increasing, 63% of those are concerned or very concerned with the medical costs associated with their pets.

### - Travelling with pets and safety issues

Respondents were also asked about safety issues when travelling with their pets.

More than 6 in 10 respondents stated that they travel with their pets. While most of them do it locally, to the vet and day care (38%), some do it only within SA (34%) and others in SA and interstate (28%). While most of the respondents mentioned they were aware of laws around securing a pet when travelling, 4 in 10 respondents are not aware or need more information.

Members were also asked how their pets were secured in vehicles. More than half of respondents (54%) stated that they clip their pets into seat-belt with a harness and about 1 in 10 respondents' pets travel in a crate. Alarming, for 20% of respondents, pets are not secured at all.

### - Verbatim Analysis

At the end of the survey, respondents were able to provide with any other comments on pet care and pet insurance should they had. This was a non-compulsory open question which received more than 340 responses.

While the comments were spread over a number of broad topics around pet insurance. Most of the commentary was focused on the five following issues:

**Cost/too expensive.** Respondents' comments referred regularly to this issue, making it the subject most often mentioned. People were worried about insurance prices stating comments such as:

- *For two dogs, I pay nearly as much per month as I do for my own health cover, and this is with the best premiums I can find. For the cover I have on the dogs, some quotes have been \$60-75 a month.*
- *It would be too expensive for me. I am already thinking of stopping my health insurance and/or contents insurance.*
- *It is simply too expensive for most. We used to have RSPCA insurance but we had to drop it because of the expense. If my dog needed an expensive medical treatment we would have to have her put down.*
- *I only have accident insurance on the youngest dog because I am on a pension and can't afford the cost.*

**Would consider it/it is important.** This topic was the second most often one brought up. The following points illustrate some of the comments received:

- *It's important to have access to pet health insurance. In my younger days when I did have pets, we didn't have any option of purchasing pet insurance.*
- *We had a pet dog for some 15 years - died recently - very sad. We should have had insurance to help with illness costs.*
- *My daughter is a vet and I hear stories of owners unable to pay for the necessary procedures that their pets require. I would think pet insurance would be a part of pet ownership.*
- *As veterinary costs can be very high I think that it is imperative to insure an animal in your care. Not having the funds to visit a vet when needed would be a terrible situation to find yourself in.*

**No need.** Opposed to the previous topic, the third most often mentioned issue received comments on the line of not needing a pet insurance. Comments that illustrate this view include:

- *We have found that by putting away the amount we would pay every month on pet insurance that we can easily pay vet bills.*
- *When getting this dog I checked out many pet insurance policies and found them all restrictive and costly. We decided to create a bank account for our dog to cover medical issues.*
- *I grew up as a farm boy, I look after my animals (cat and chooks), take them to the vet once a year, get the family to feed them when I am away, and Mother Nature does the rest.*
- *I love my dog and look after her but she is an animal and won't live forever. When there is no quality of life then I will have her put down.*

**Too many restrictions** also received a number of comments. These are illustrated in the following ones:

- *Due to exclusions on insurance, it is not viable to insure*
- *Great idea as long as it is not too restrictive as to qualifications of benefits*
- *Generally a rip-off. Daughter had 'cover', one of her dogs got to her Easter eggs one year, became violently ill, and he wasn't covered as it wasn't an emergency*
- *Pet care is becoming increasingly expensive and when visiting a vet the expectation is that you pay there and then. Most visits to the vet are unclaimable so I think there should be more options available within the insurance plans on offer.*

**Vet high costs.** Comments on this topic are illustrated with the following points:

- *Having already been caught with very costly emergency vet bills, it is essential to have pet insurance. There should not be an age limit (of the pet) when taking out the insurance.*
- *If vets are so concerned about animals and their welfare then they should lower their fees. Vet costs are ridiculously high and they know that owners who love their pets will pay anything to keep them alive and well. Vets take advantage of pet owners' heartache.*
- *Unfortunately, veterinarians have become increasingly entrepreneurial, to the point they encourage you to have your pet on an ongoing care plan. Very expensive and a great little earner for the vets for very little risk or outlay.*
- *Vet fees are expensive but I have had pet insurance in the past and it wasn't worth the money.*

**In summary:**

Approximately 6 out of 10 respondents have a pet. From those, 70% own dogs, 41% cats and 16% birds. For non-pet owners willing to have a pet, 89% would choose a dog and 24% a cat.

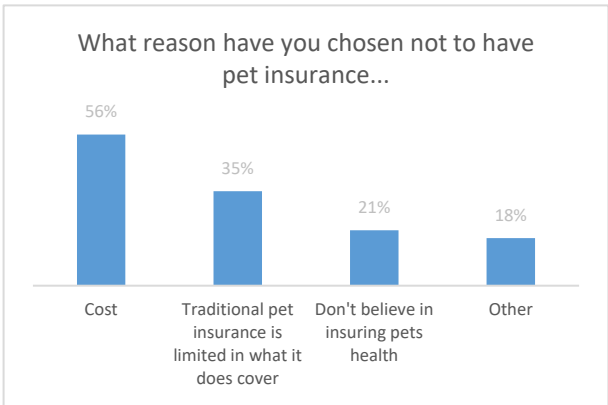
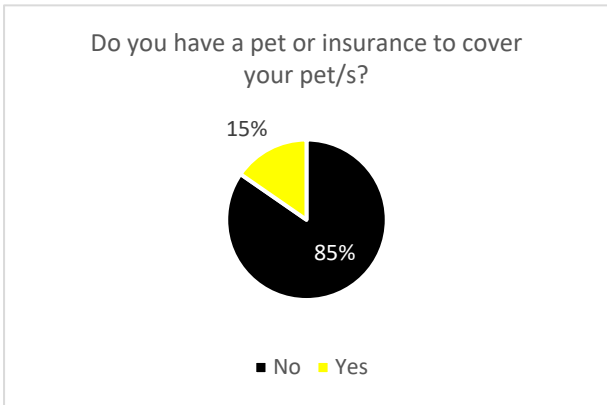
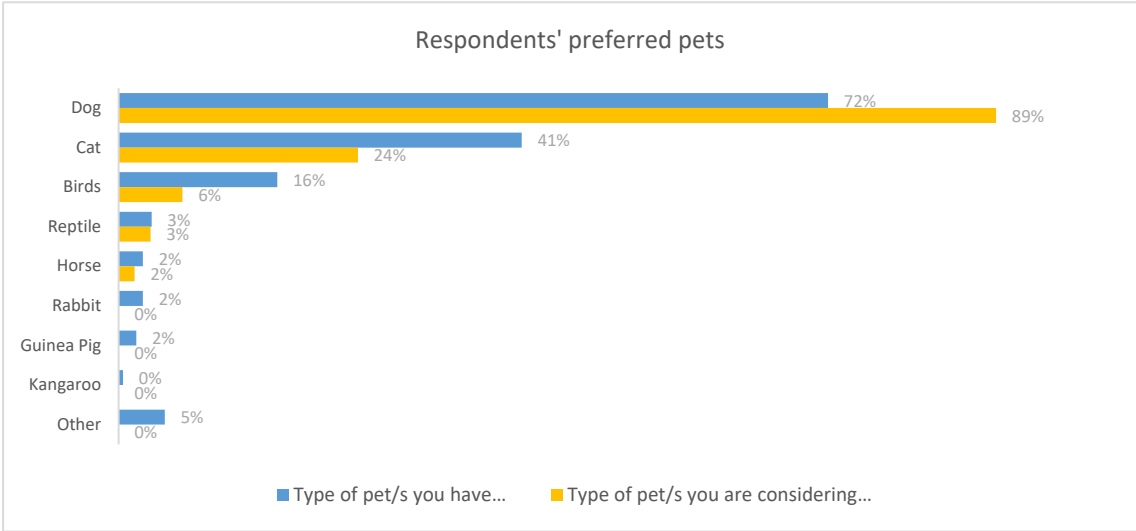
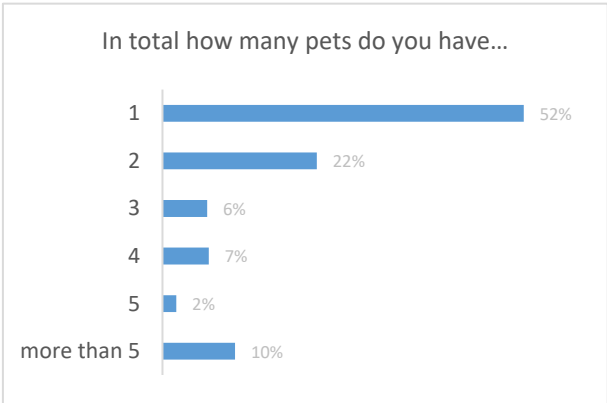
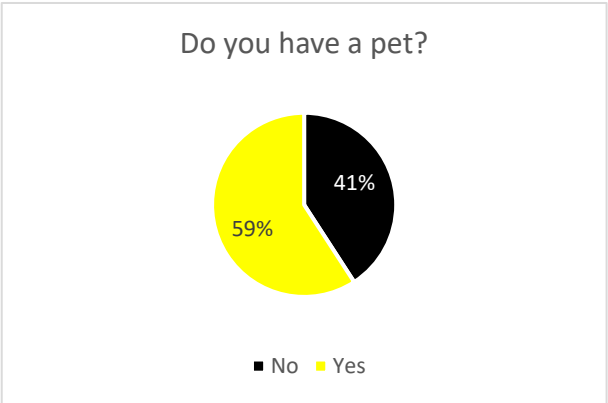
Most of respondents stated vet costs are increasing and are concerned with the medical costs associated with their pets.

Most pet-owners travel with their pets. They do it locally, within South Australia and interstate. While most of them are aware of laws around securing a pet when travelling and secure their pets, an alarmingly 20% of respondents' pets are not secure at all.

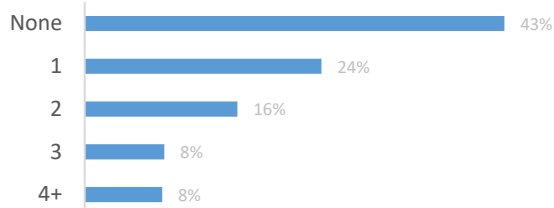
When analysing the verbatim comments provided in the open question the topics that most often were mentioned in decreasing order are cost/too expensive, would consider it, no need, too many restrictions, and vet high costs.

With the insights received we will continue to research on pet ownership and what this means for our products and services in the future.

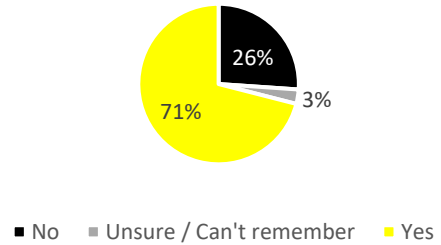
### Appendix – Pet Insurance Charts



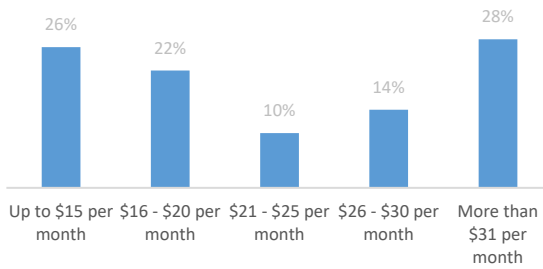
In the past 12 months how many times have you taken your pet/s for a non-routine visit to the Vet? (routine would include vaccinations or ongoing medical care)



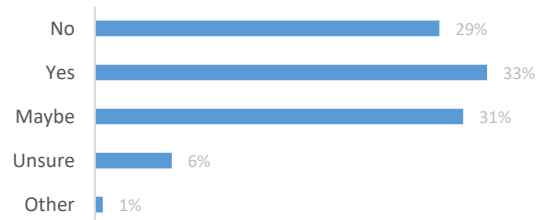
Have you ever claimed on your pet insurance...



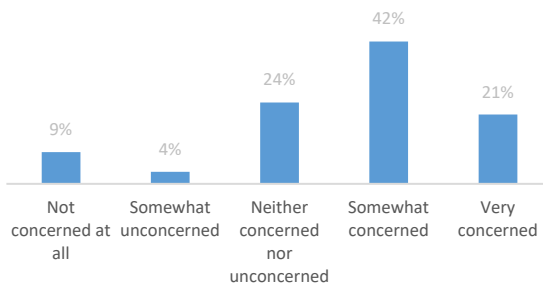
How much would you pay per month for the pet insurance cover you want? (tailored to your needs)...



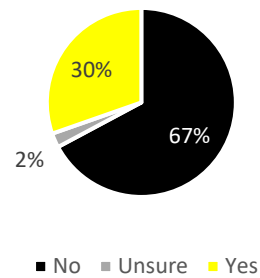
If your pet suffered a serious injury or illness would you be financially challenged to meet the Veterinarian costs?



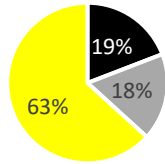
Are you concerned with the medical costs associated with your pet/s?



Do you take your pet on holidays?



Are you aware of laws around securing your pet...



■ No ■ Unsure / need more info ■ Yes

How is your pet secured in your vehicle?

