

Cat Welfare Survey

Quantitative Research Report

9 June 2017

Prepared For
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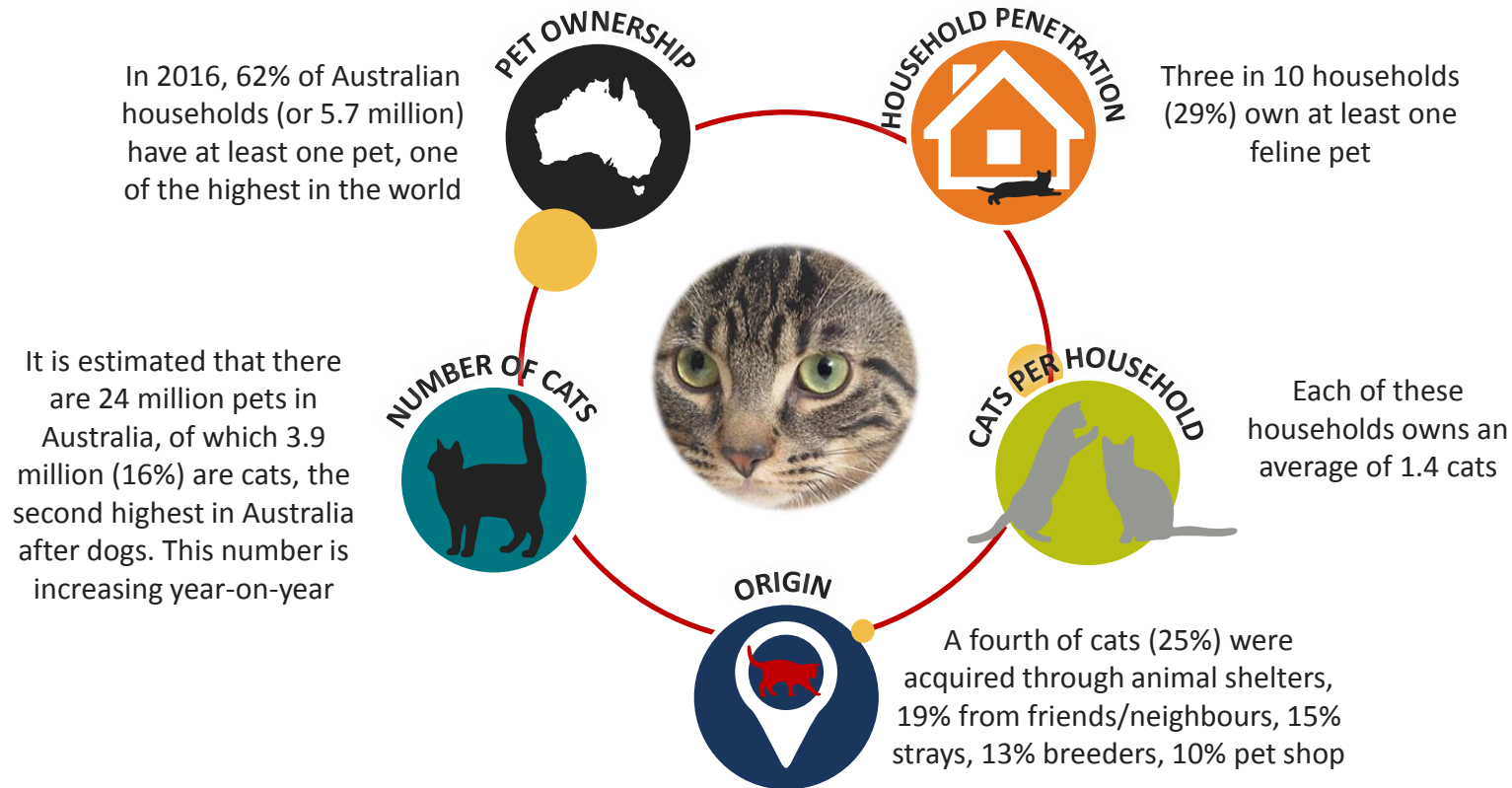
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Ipsos

Ipsos Ref: 17-036616-01



Background to the research

What we know so far...

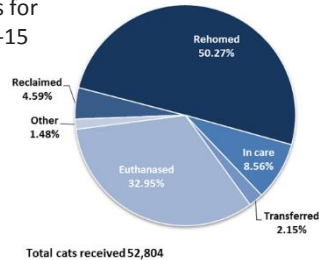


Background to the research

Two in five cats were acquired from animal shelters or were strays. Sadly, not all cats were fortunate enough to find a home

In 2015-16, RSPCA in Australia received around 53,000 cats. While 55% found new homes or reunited with their owners, **33% (or more than 17,000 cats and kittens)** had to humanely euthanased*

Outcomes for cats 2014-15



The Cat Protection Society in NSW has the 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 cat welfare.

One of its strategies is to encourage cat owners to de-sex their cats at an early age. Before this can be implemented, better information is required to formulate plans and strategies to target communities in NSW with its communications.



Lotus, 8 months old. Image from the Cat Protection Society website, 5 June 17



Business questions

Who are the owners who have and who have not de-sexed their cat?

Are certain type of cats more likely to be de-sexed than others?

What are the barriers to early-age de-sexing?

Will health messaging improve the rate of cat de-sexing?



Research objectives

- 🐾 Identify the profile of owners who have de-sexed their cats
- 🐾 Identify the profile of owners who have not de-sexed their cats

- 🐾 Identify the profile of cats which have been de-sexed
- 🐾 Identify the profile of cats which have not been de-sexed
- 🐾 Determining if the origin of cats highly correlates with owners not knowing if their cats have been de-sexed

- 🐾 Investigate the barriers to de-sexing
- 🐾 Verify if cost is a barrier for not de-sexing their cats

- 🐾 Awareness of the health benefits of de-sexing cats by each group
- 🐾 Examine if health benefits have an impact on owner/future owner's decision to de-sex their cats

Background to the research

Study design



Design

- Quantitative online survey
- Survey length: 10 mins
- Fieldwork dates: 16th – 19th May



Who we interviewed

- Aged 18+ years
- Quota on cat ownership:
 - Cat owners: 70%;
 - Non-cat owners: 30%;
- Live in NSW
- Spread across age, gender, and region (metro versus rural)

Total respondents n=519 (n=363 cat owners | n=156 non-cat owners)

Total cats n=554 (amongst owners)



Analysis

- Analysis is conducted by the following groups:
 - Cat owners
 - Who have de-sexed all their cats
 - Who have not de-sexed all their cats (including 'don't know')
 - Non-cat owners
 - Cats which have been de-sexed
 - Cats which have not been de-sexed
- Total sample analysis is not possible due to quota sampling

Cats and their owners

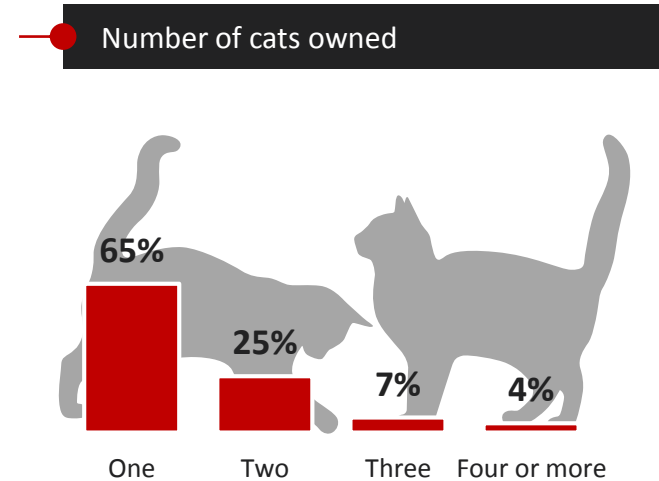
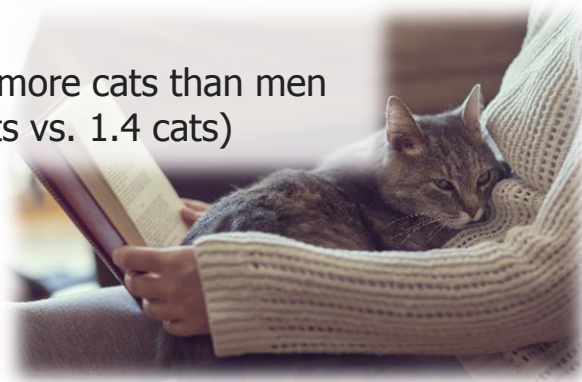


Cat ownership

Cat owners in NSW
on average have

1.5 cats

Women own more cats than men
(1.6 cats vs. 1.4 cats)



Other pets

Cat owners also have
on average **one**
other pet, mainly
a dog

Other pets cat owners have



Dog
47%

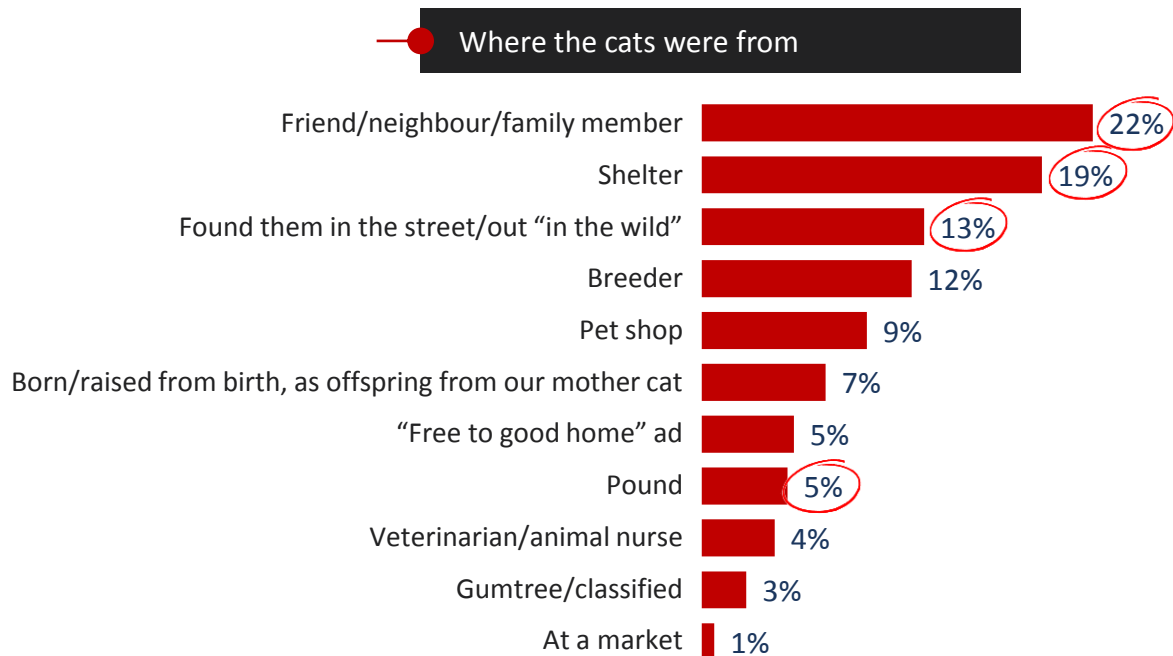


Fish
18%



Bird
17%

Many of the cats were adopted from shelters or pounds and rescued from the streets or given to them by friends and relatives

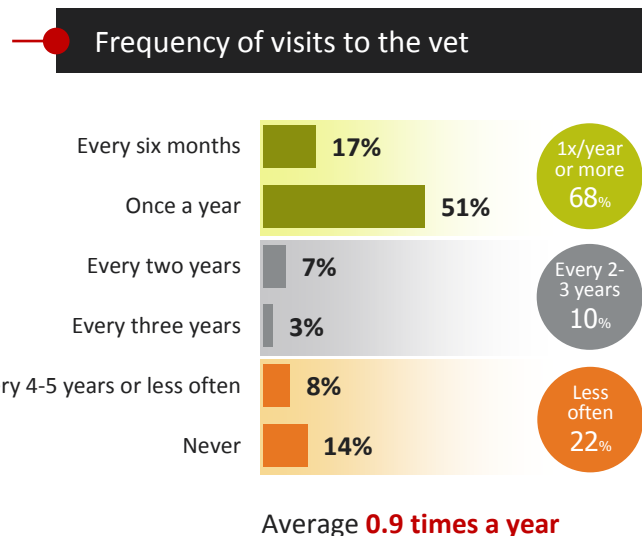
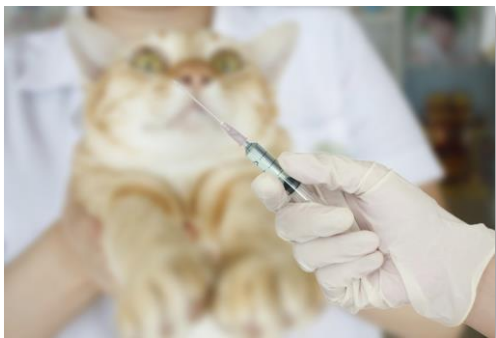


Visit to the vet

Most cats visit the vet yearly

Kittens visit the vet more frequently (twice a year) but the annual visit is quite consistent across cats of all ages

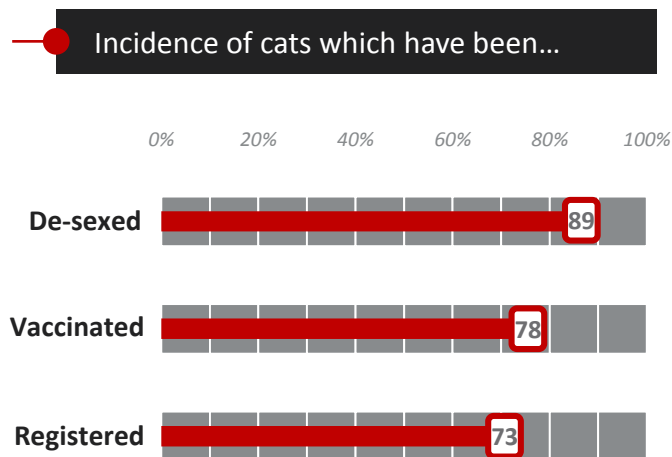
An average cat visits the vet **once a year**



Incidences of de-sexing, vaccination and registration

Majority of these cats have responsible owners who have them de-sexed, vaccinated and registered

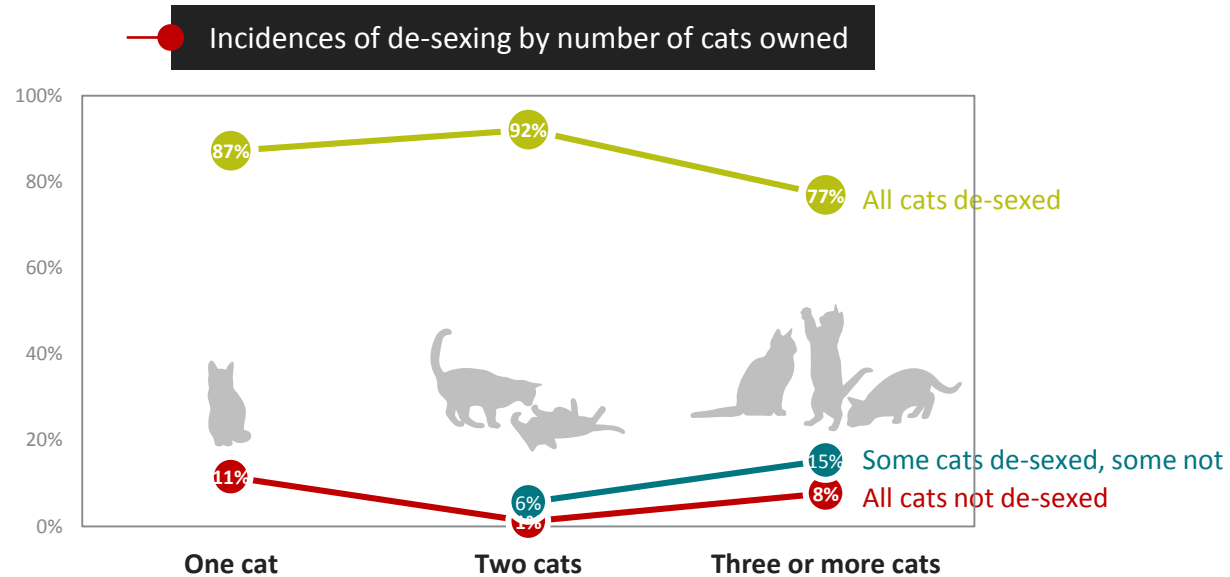
Only around one in ten cats have not been de-sexed. This is lower than the number of cats which have not been vaccinated or registered



How number of cats owned affect incidence of de-sexing

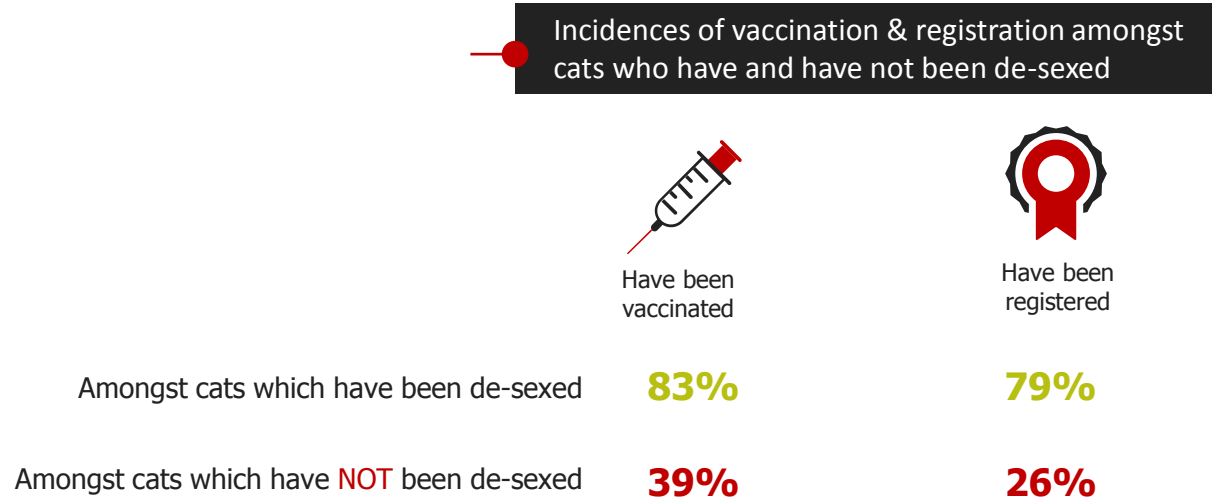
Owners of up to two cats are the most responsible. Owners with 3 cats or more are less likely to de-sex their cats

11% of owners have 3 or more cats accounting for 25% of cats



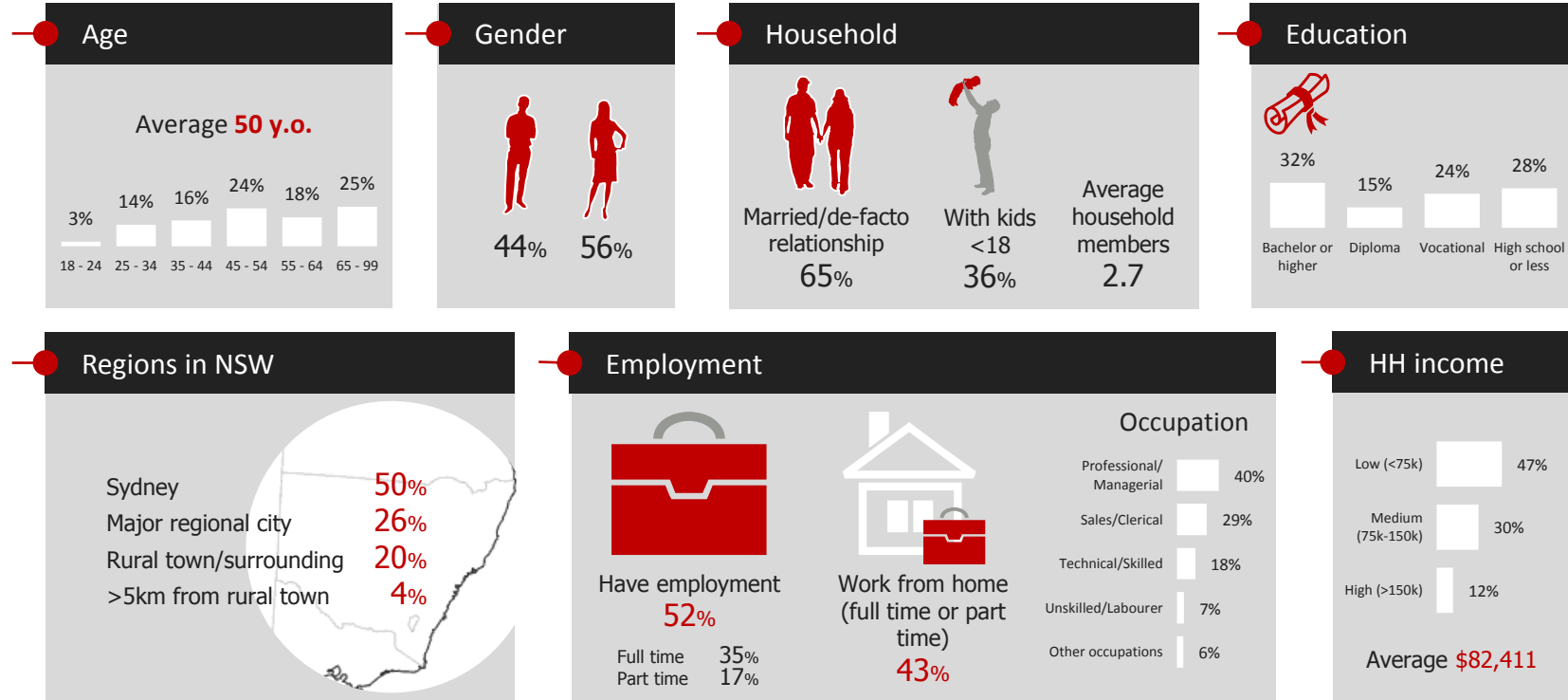
Relationship between de-sexing and vaccination/registration

Owners who have not de-sexed their cats also have a more laissez-faire attitude to vaccination and registration of their cats



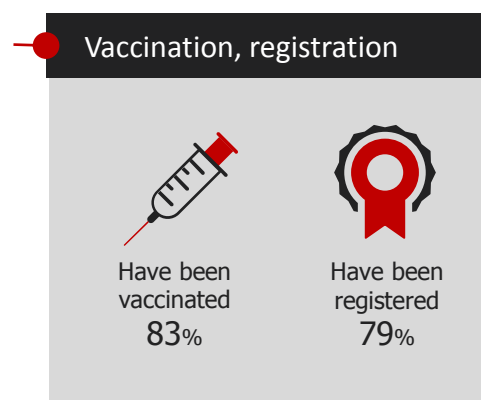
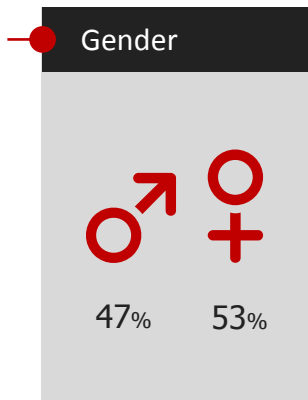
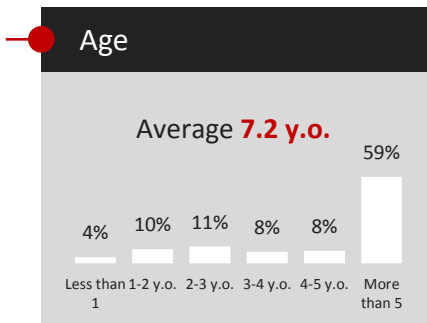


Who are the cat owners who have de-sexed their cats?





Profile of cats who have been de-sexed



While owners who don't de-sex their cats are pet lovers, coming from lower income and larger households means cost of de-sexing can be a hindrance. Ignorance is also an issue



Cat owners who have not de-sexed all their cats have on average

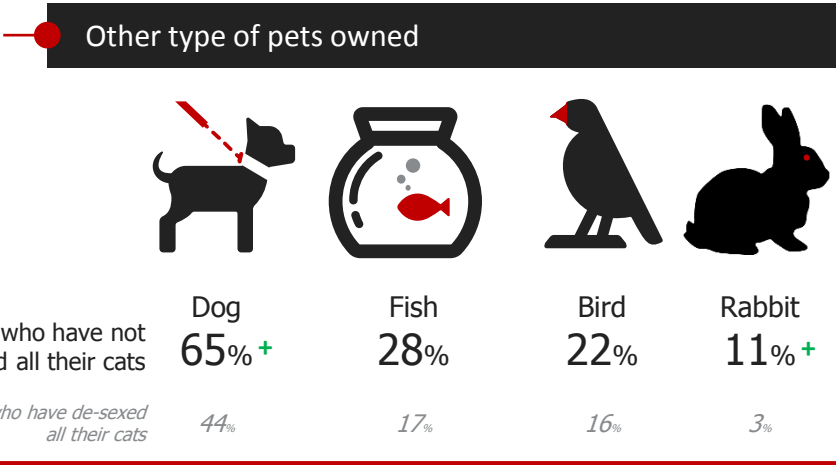
1.8⁺ cats

which is higher than owners who have de-sexed all their cats (1.5 cats)

They also own more of other pets – an average of

1.5⁺

(compared to 1 among owners who have de-sexed all their cats)



+/- Significantly higher than cat owners who have de-sexed all their cats @ 95% confidence level, unless stated otherwise

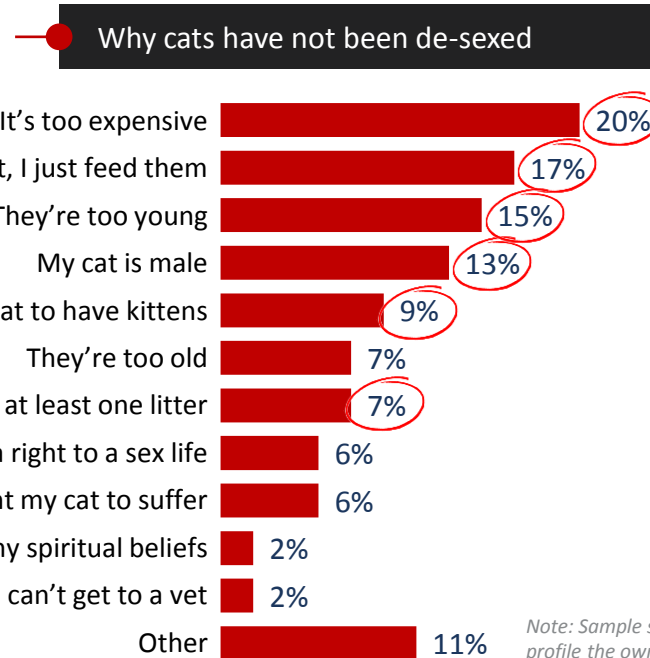
Base: Owners who have not de-sexed all their cats n=46; owners who have de-sexed all their cats n=317

Q2. How many cats do you own?

Q1. Can you please tell us which of the following type of pets, if any, do you own?

Reasons for not de-sexing their cats

While cost is the main reason for not de-sexing cats (which they think is higher then it actually is), there's also a need to help them understand their responsibilities as owners (male cats do not need de-sexing, strays – not mine, want my cats to have kittens), and educating them on early-age de-sexing



Those who have not de-sexed all their cats thought the procedure costs to be higher than those who have

Owners who have de-sexed all their cats	\$149
Owners who have not de-sexed all their cats	\$185

% who feed stray cats higher amongst those who have not de-sexed all their cats

Owners who have de-sexed all -their cats	14%
Owners who have not de-sexed all their cats	30%

Note: Sample sizes (between n=1 to n=9) are too low to profile the owners who gave each of these responses

Of all the cats that have not been de-sexed (or owners don't know if they had been),
40% will be de-sexed in future

(About a third of these cats will never get de-sexed and for around a fourth the owners are not sure)

Reasons for not de-sexing them yet, although there's an intention to do so in future

Base: 25 cats

6 mentions relate to cost

Too expensive

Saving up money to get it done

Haven't enough money for this yet

I cannot afford it yet, feeding my family and paying bills has to come first

5 mentions relate to the cat's age

I feel they are only just now old enough and will be done in the next couple of weeks

Cat is too young

The kitten is nine weeks old, and as her brother, same age, died two weeks ago, I will wait until she is a little older

My cat is not old enough nor weighs enough yet

3 of the cats' owners want them to have a litter

Let her have a litter

2 of the cats' owners just got them

I have only recently obtained them

9 of the cats' owners will get it done

Don't want any surprises

Have got to do it

I am too old to look after them

No time to go to the vet



Cats where history of de-sexing is unknown

Many of the cats were adopted from shelters and rescued from the streets or pounds. Some were given to them by friends or relatives

For **8 cats** out of a total of 554, owners are unsure if they have been de-sexed or not

Where they were from

count

- 3 Found them in the street/out in the 'wild'
- 3 Friend/neighbour/family member
- 2 'Free to good home' ad

Reasons why they don't know

Not sure if they have been done (two cats).

Haven't bothered to do it.

I have never checked before with the vet.

I will have to ask the vet.

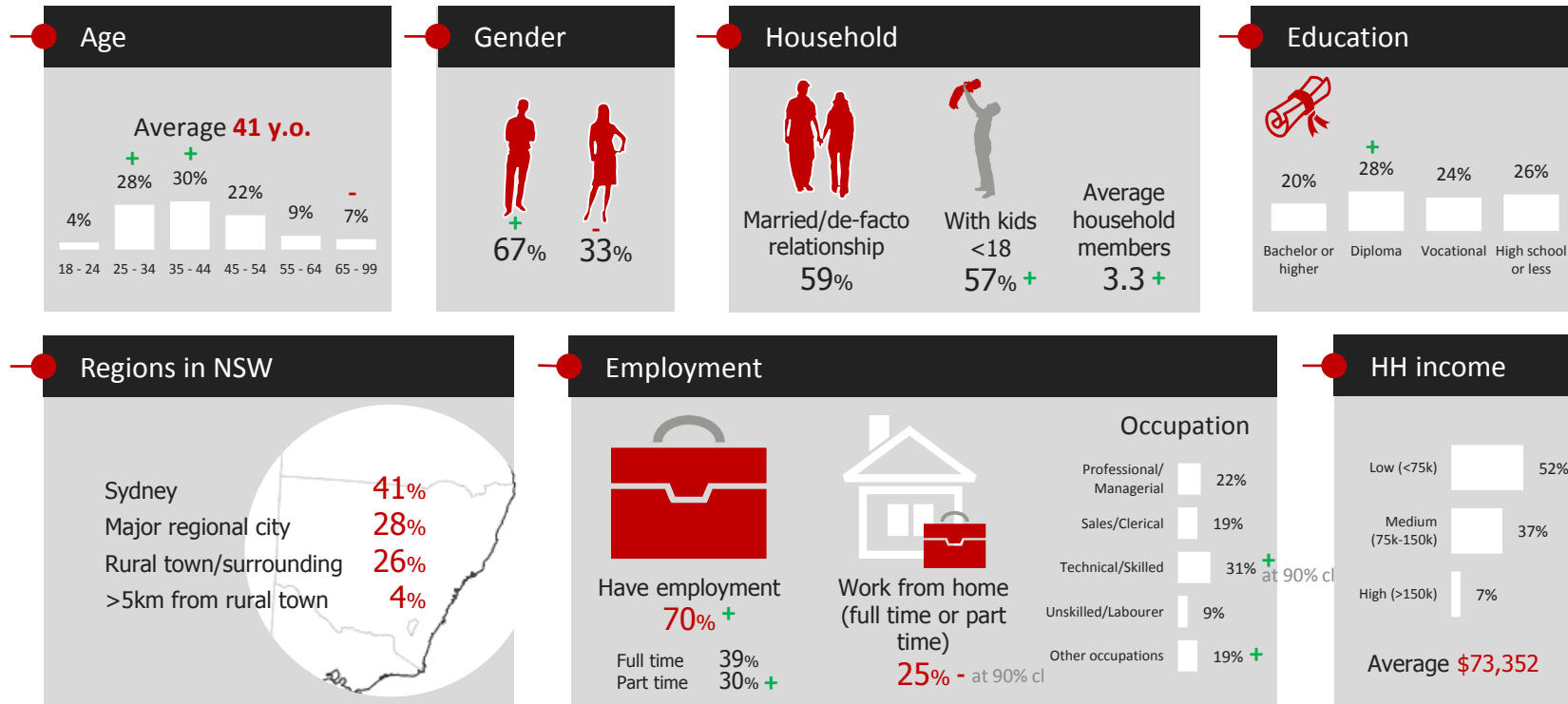
Only just recently rescued from person threatening to hand into the pound. Have yet to have them checked by the vet (two cats).

Because she just turned up in my backyard 4 months ago I don't know where she came from.

Note: Further analysis not possible due to low sample size

Who are the cat owners who have not de-sexed all their cats?

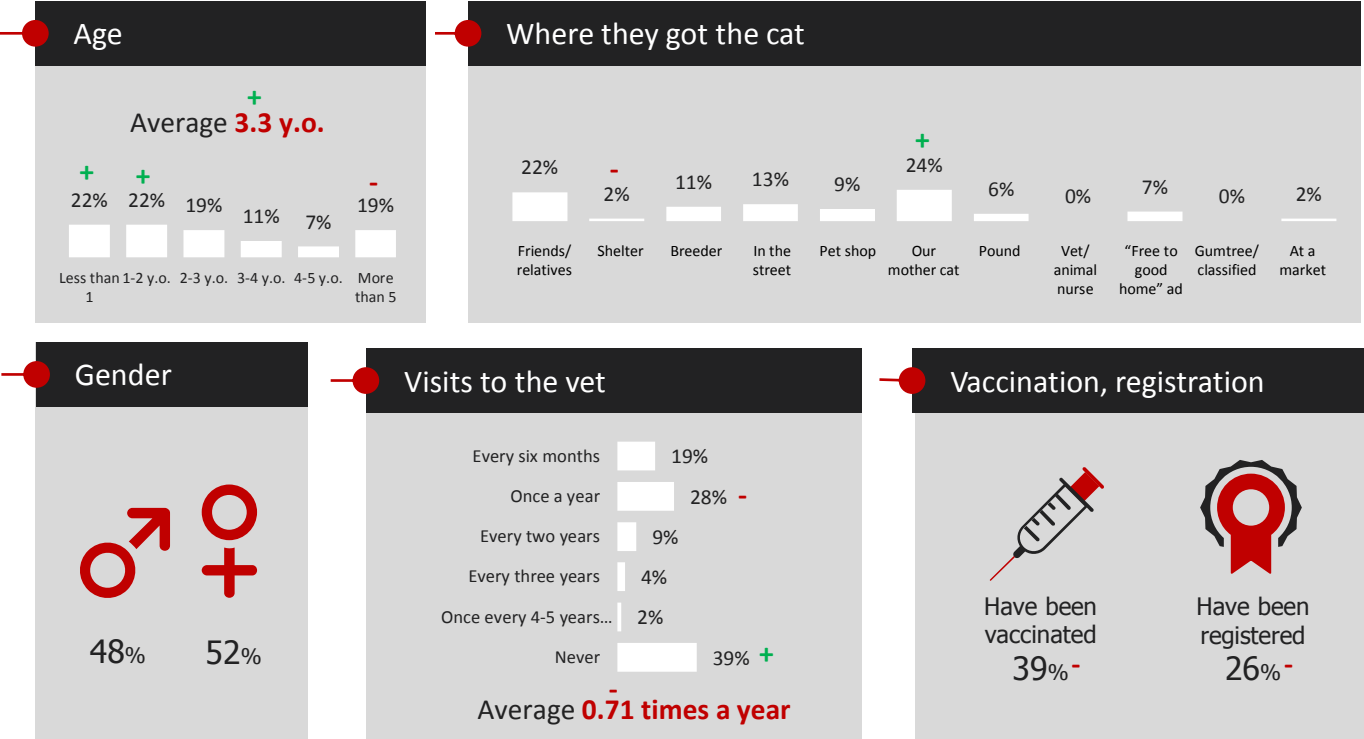
They are skewed towards younger males, with kids. While many are employed, mainly in technical/skilled positions, they are skewed towards part-time positions (therefore lower HHI) with lower opportunity to work from home



+/- Significantly higher/lower than cat owners who have de-sexed all their cats @ 95% confidence level, unless stated otherwise



Tend to be younger – less than 2 years old. They also see the vet less often or never.



+/- Significantly higher/lower than cats which have been de-sexed @ 95% confidence level, unless stated otherwise

**De-sexing awareness
needed for future cat
owners – only eight in ten
would de-sex their cats,
which is lower than
current owners**



Intention to get a cat among non-owners

37%

Of non-cat owners
would consider getting
a cat



Of these,

81%

intend to have the cat de-sexed

How much future owners think is the
cost to de-sex a cat:

Future owners who would de-sex
their cats (n=27*) **\$139**

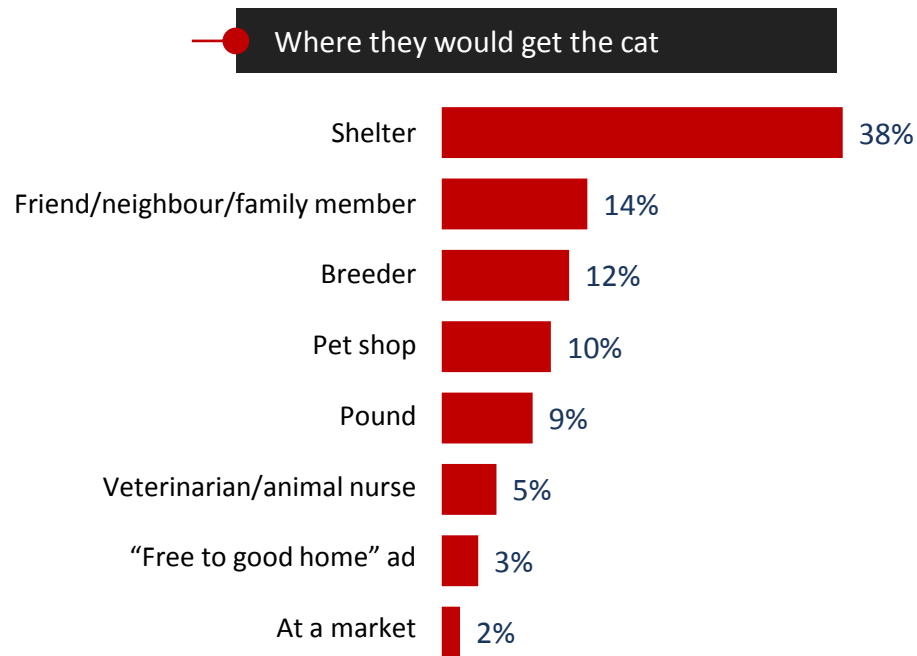
Future owners who would not de-
sex their cats, or don't know
(n=4*) **\$221**

** caution, low base*

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Where they would get their cat

Most future owners intend to get their cats from the shelter



If all cats owners were aware of the benefits of de-sexing cats, over 90% would de-sex all their cats



Awareness of facts around de-sexing

All current and future cat owners would benefit from campaigns to promote the awareness of these cat facts

While owners who have de-sexed their cats are more aware of these facts than those who have not, overall around a third are still ignorant

Awareness of facts

<i>% aware</i>	Cat owners (n=363)	Cat owners who have de- sexed all cats (n=317)	Cat owners who have not de-sexed all cats (n=46)	Future cat owners (n=58)
Cats can be safely de-sexed from about 8-10 weeks of age	67%	71%	43% -	52%
Female kitten can get pregnant from as young as 4-5 months old	65%	68%	48% -	38%
Early age de-sexing 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)	64%	67%	46% -	47%

- Significantly lower than cat owners who have de-sexed all their cats @ 95% confidence level

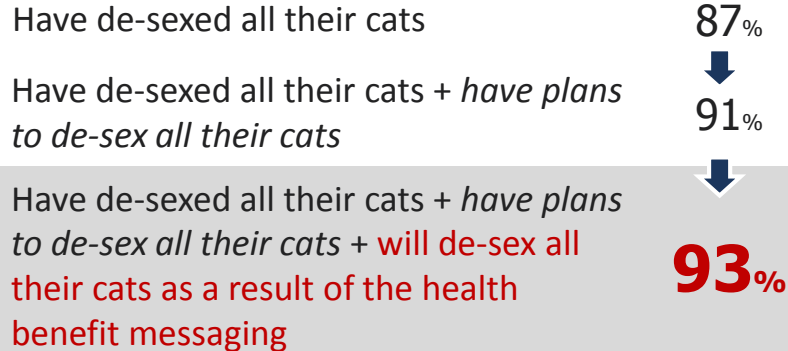
Effects of exposure to benefits of de-sexing

Messaging is likely to increase the rate of cat de-sexing by 2% - 11% (2% among current cat owners and 11% among future cat owners)

“Early age de-sexing 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)”

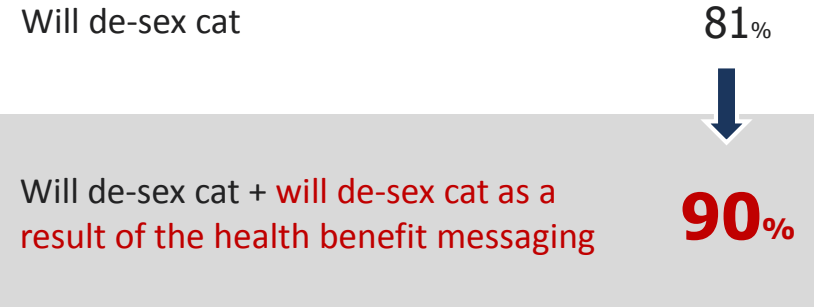
Amongst current cat owners

(n=363)



Amongst future cat owners

(n=58)



Note: Profiling of people who would de-sex their cats post-health messaging not possible due to low sample size

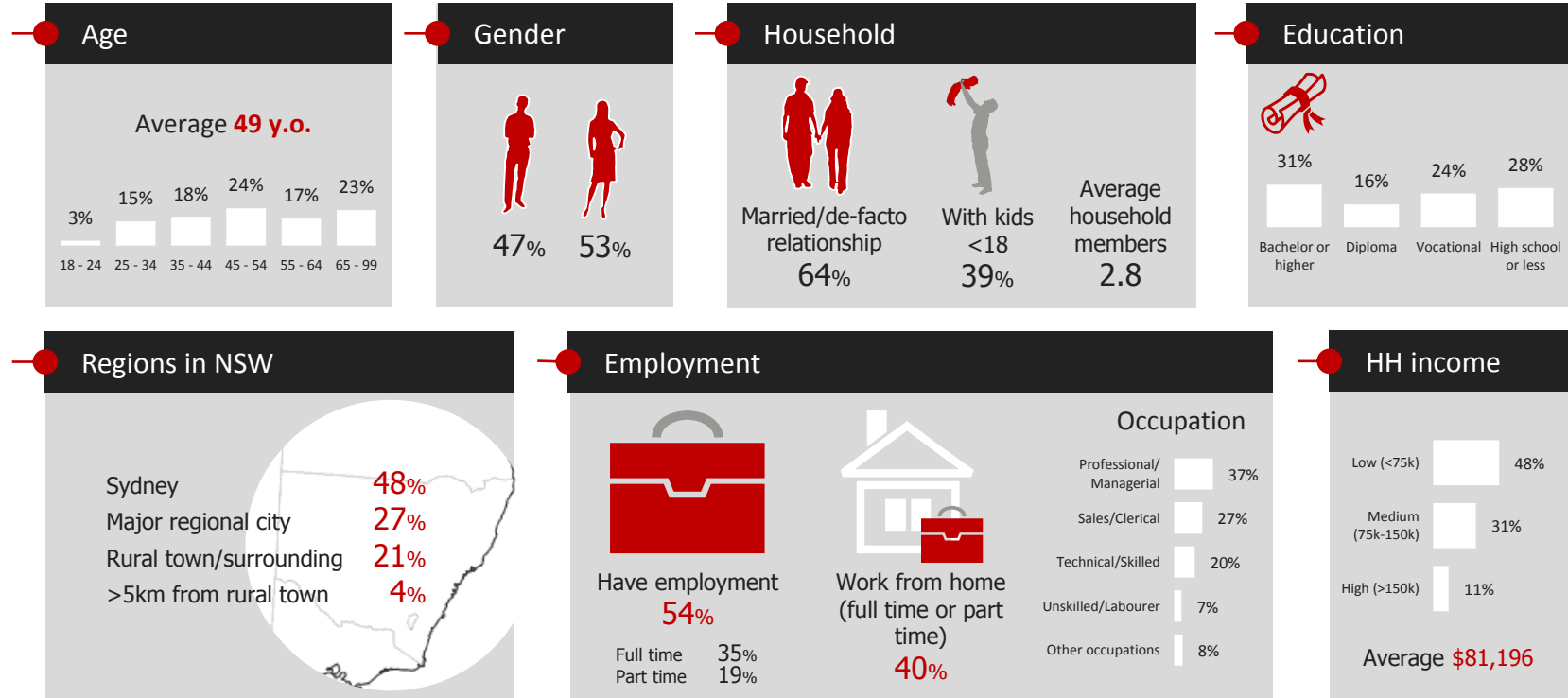
Q19_Post. Now that you've had the opportunity to learn about some of the health benefits described above: if you decide to get a cat, would you have them de-sexed?

Q19_PostB. Now that you've had the opportunity to learn about some of the health benefits described above: for your cat(s) that is not de-sexed, would you now make the decision to have them de-sexed?

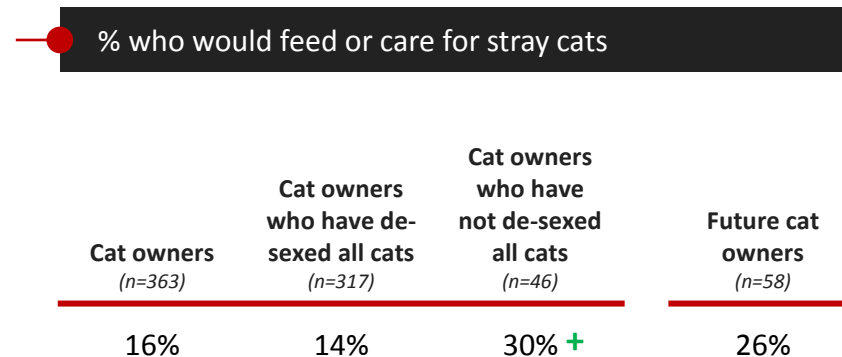
Appendix



Who are the cat owners



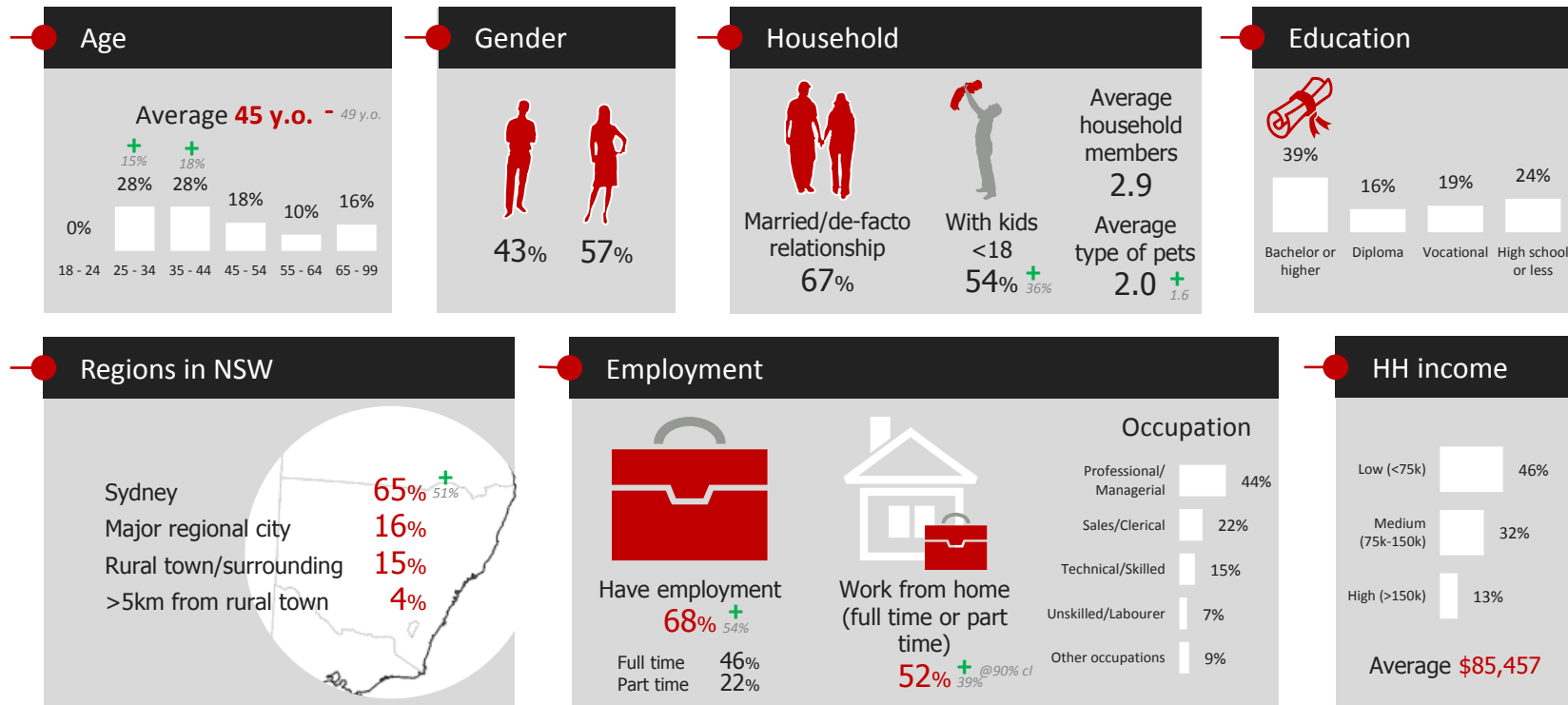
Incidence of feeding or caring for stray cats



+ Significantly higher than cat owners who have de-sexed all their cats @ 95% confidence level



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



+/- Significantly higher/lower than all respondents (70% cat owners, 30% non-cat owners) @ 95% confidence level, unless stated otherwise

Number in italics – total respondents

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“Thank you!”

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