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www.animalwelfare.net.au

## In sickness and in health: Why do people keep or give up their pets?"


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## Overview


- ♦ How many dogs/cats are relinquished per year?
- ♦ How do people give up their pets?
- ♦ Why do people give up their pets?
- ♦ How can we protect the welfare of relinquished pets?



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## HOW MANY DOGS/CATS ARE RELINQUISHED PER YEAR?

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## Estimated Pet Populations (2013)

- ♦ 4.2 million pet dogs in Australia
- ♦ 19 dogs /100 people
- ♦ 3.3 million pet cats in Australia
- ♦ 15 cats /100 people





<https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Pet-Ownership-in-Australia-2013-Summary-Online-VRB.pdf>

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Article  
**Surrendered and Stray Dogs in Australia—Estimation of Numbers Entering Municipal Pounds, Shelters and Rescue Groups and Their Outcomes**

Diana Chua <sup>1,\*</sup>, Jacqui Rand <sup>1,2</sup> and John Morton <sup>1,3</sup>

- ♦ 2012-2013: 211,655 dog admissions
- ♦ =9.3 dog admissions per 1000 residents
- ♦ 2012-2013 dogs surrendered to RSPCA = 49,189 (=23% of total)
- ♦ 2012-2013 RSPCA cat surrenders = 49,236
- ♦ ?? >200,000 cats also surrendered per year

<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/7/7/260>  
<https://www.rspca.org.au/about-us/our-services/the-facts-statistics/rspca-surrender-and-animal-outcomes-2012-2013>



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## What proportion of pets are relinquished?

- ♦ 211,655 dog admissions = 5%/year
- ♦ >200,000 cats surrendered per year = 6%/year




<https://www.saskatoonjournal.com/story/2014/05/28/washington-56115>    <https://pethere.com/en/photo/27305>

<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/7/7/260>  
<https://www.rspca.org.au/about-us/our-services/the-facts-statistics/rspca-surrender-and-animal-outcomes-2012-2013>



# HOW DO PEOPLE GIVE UP THEIR PETS?

## Potential ways people relinquish pets

- Traditional shelters (RSPCA, AWL)
- Other rescue organisations
- Family/friends
- Newspaper
- Online



### Article Online Relinquishments of Dogs and Cats in Australia

Susan J. Hazel<sup>1,\*</sup>, Caitlin J. Jenvey<sup>1</sup> and Jonathan Tuke<sup>2</sup>

- Estimate of 31,726 dogs relinquished on Gumtree/yr
- ~64% of total RSPCA admissions
- Estimate of 24,250 cats relinquished on Gumtree/yr
- ~50% of total RSPCA admissions

<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>



### Article Surrendered and Stray Dogs in Australia—A Comparison of Numbers Entering Municipal Pounds and Rescue Groups and Their Outcomes

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<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>



## Total online relinquishments



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iceberg.jpg> <https://tradingpost.com.au/for-sale-email-news-e-mail-at-sion-10833/>



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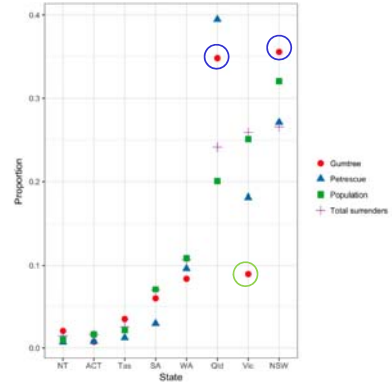


### Dogs and Cats Price and Breeds

- ◆ Dogs-
  - 49% cross bred (vs 76% PetRescue)
  - Staffies and Kelpies
  - 0-\$7000 (23% free)
- ◆ Cats
  - mostly moggies
  - Ragdoll and Bengal
  - 0-\$2500

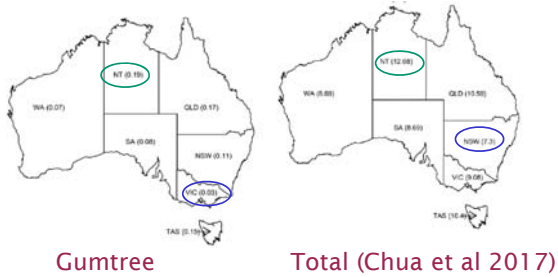


### Dogs



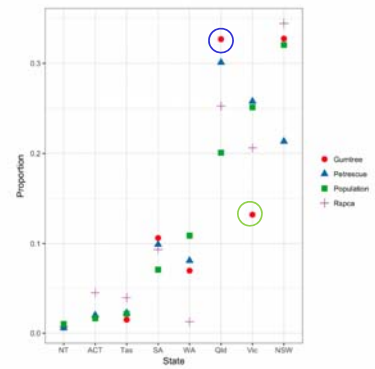
<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>

### Dog Admissions/1000 people



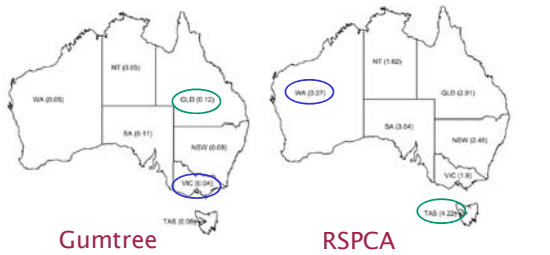
<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>

### Cats



<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>

### Cat Admissions/1000 people



<http://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/2/25>

### Complex Network of Pet Flows



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_protein\\_interaction\\_network\\_of\\_Treponema\\_pallidum.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_protein_interaction_network_of_Treponema_pallidum.png)

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## WHY DO PEOPLE GIVE UP THEIR PETS?

Surrendered Pets

Owned Pets

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Due to no fault of my own, my beautiful male rotti X staffy needs to be rehomed. It is with heavy heart that I need to do this. He is a wonderful dog with more training I believe he would be a great home dog, with work commitments I just don't have the time. He likes to jump up on people and dig if bored. Someone who has a high fence or acreage where he can run free would be more suited for turbo. He currently is on a cable run as we can't keep him in the yard. He is a good guard dog. He enjoys swimming and going to the beach, loves rides on the back of the ute. He is a lovely dog I just feel like he has no life having to live on a run. And would love for him to go to a lovely home where he will be happy. Will not let him go to just anyone.

health record

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Casper is roughly 3 years old. I regretful sale jhett is a male desexed kitten. he is 1 year old. Gorgeous male tonkinese kitten originally bought from a reputable breeder. Regretful sale due to him not getting along with our other 7yr old tonkinese.

Recent old. Sadly. Kitten day of \$50 layir lookin up. heard was a Husba who every wee.

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## Stuff Happens!



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Badumching\\_-\\_pie\\_in\\_the\\_face.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Badumching_-_pie_in_the_face.png)

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## HOW CAN WE PROTECT THE WELFARE OF RELINQUISHED PETS?

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Social Policy Research Paper No. 35

Dr BELINDA HEWITT  
School of Social Science  
The University of Queensland

### Marriage breakdown in Australia: social correlates, gender and initiator status

...the Australian Government allocated \$397.2 million Between 2005 and 2009 to implement changes to the family law system...expanding relationship support services and facilities to support families. The services directed towards preventing marriage breakdown are primarily focused on marriage education and relationship counselling. Research suggests that These types of services are effective in reducing marital conflict and marriage breakdown across a range of social and demographic groups but have some limitations.....The risk factors for separation and divorce are complex and extend far beyond the couple and individual dynamics on which these policy initiatives are focused. Halford et al. (2006) found that those couples who were most at risk of marriage breakdown were also the least likely to use marriage education or marriage Counselling services.

[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/sprp35.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/sprp35.pdf)

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## The future of pet ownership?

The Sydney Morning Herald

### The future of work: 17 jobs and five different careers

<https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/the-future-of-work-17-jobs-and-five-different-careers-20170728-gxko39.html>



## Focus Areas

- Online trade

As selling pets online becomes normal, we need to regulate it

<https://theconversation.com/as-selling-pets-online-becomes-normal-we-need-to-regulate-it-91478>

- Pre-purchase education of pet owners

Pets' welfare at risk as one-in-four pet owners do no pre-purchase research

17 November 2016

<https://www.pdsa.org.uk/press-office/latest-news/pets-welfare-at-risk-as-one-in-four-pet-owners-do-no-pre-purchase-research>



## Focus Areas

- Breeder regulations

The Queensland Government has introduced new laws to promote responsible dog breeding. The legislation came into effect on 26 May 2017 and applies only to dogs born on or after this date.

The laws require all persons giving away, supplying, selling or advertising dogs or puppies to have a Supply Number that identifies the registered Breeder of that dog.



The law requires breeders to register as a breeding domestic animal business if they have three or more fertile female dogs AND they sell dogs (whether a profit is made or not).



- If you are a breeder and seller and you intend to sell a dog or cat after 1 July 2018, you must register as a breeder with the Dog and Cat Management Board.



## Focus Areas

- Cat management

Identifying Best Practice Cat Management In Australia



<https://www.rspca.org.au/facts/science/cat-management-paper>



## Dog and Cat Management Board

<http://www.dogandcatboard.com.au/>

Dogs and Cats Online (DACO)



## Conclusions

- There is a complex network of movement of pets between being owned and traded/sold/surrendered.
- Online trade now represents a major pathway for trade/surrender of pets
- Do we need to review the idea of one pet one owner?



## Acknowledgements

- Dr Simon Tuke and Dr Caitlin Jenvey



## Questions

