

Turning research into reality: How councils can use findings from a survey to help manage pets in the community.

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Why do we need research in the field of urban animal management?¹

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, and it is generally acknowledged that owning dogs and cats has considerable benefits for both individuals and society as a whole. However, while the majority of pet owners act responsibly, the public and Governments are still finding it increasingly necessary to address a range of problems stemming from the presence of dogs and cats in the community.

Problems may be due to a number of factors: careless, apathetic or uninformed owners, people who obtain pets for the wrong reasons, the pressures of high density living, or being part of a society where people are more aware of their rights and are willing to complain. Local government bears the brunt of public demands to address domestic animal nuisance issues. Given this takes a huge amount of resources, it's not surprising that many council staff highlight the need for stricter animal control laws to help manage the situation.

On the other hand, some people are concerned about 'over regulating' pet ownership, arguing there have already been many improvements in companion animal ownership over the last decade, and the incidence of nuisance issues is decreasing as owners become more responsible. Media attention on issues such as dog attacks and zoonoses has been blamed for encouraging extreme community opinions and concerns out of proportion to the actual risks posed to individuals. Others believe that the inconvenience attributed to pets can be traced back to a vocal minority of opinion in Australia who are opposed to widespread pet ownership, and that such a group is always likely to exist.

There is obviously considerable disagreement amongst experts on the nature and extent of problems caused by irresponsible pet ownership and the amount of regulatory control that is required to manage such issues. Despite increasing pressure on Government authorities to manage the problems caused by dogs and cats in the community, there is little reliable information available regarding the causes and scope of these issues, or the real extent of public interest in them. Animal management issues can attract strongly divided public opinion, and it is important to determine the needs and expectations of the community as a whole rather than only responding to the more active or extreme lobby groups.

The development of well informed policy and legislative decisions, along with education programs, depends on accurately assessing community requirements and attitudes towards dog and cat management, and having a good understanding of pet owner behaviour in relation to compliance. In particular, local government needs to know that the laws they are responsible for implementing are based on objective research and therefore their reason or purpose can be demonstrated to the public.

With this in mind, the Bureau of Animal Welfare decided to undertake research into one of the main topics relating to irresponsible pet ownership; issues arising from dogs and cats wandering at large. As will be discussed shortly, the survey uncovered many important facts. The aim of this paper is to take these research findings and turn them into practical information and advice, to assist council officers with the day to day management of dogs and cats in the community.

Research objectives

The research involved conducting random phone surveys of 320 Melbourne households² to determine:

1. The attitudes of pet and non-pet owners in the community towards dogs and cats at large, the type of problems they may cause, and the relative importance of these problems. In other words, identification of priority issues for the community (particularly the 'middle band' of community members) in regard to domestic animal nuisance.
2. The level of support in the community for various existing and proposed legislative requirements. For instance, public 'off-leash' exercise areas for dogs, compulsory microchip identification of pets, and local laws requiring the confinement of cats to the property (currently an optional local law for Victorian councils to implement).
3. How well pet owners understand the current legislation in regard to confinement of pets, levels of compliance with legislation, and reasons for non-compliance.
4. Why people have particular attitudes towards pets at large and what influences pet owner behaviour in relation to legislative compliance.

Results and discussion³

1. Issues of concern about pets wandering at large

Table 1. Percentage of respondents "strongly concerned" about pets at large issues (where the response options were "strongly concerned", "moderately concerned", "slightly concerned" or "not at all concerned").

The top 3 issues of concern for respondents were dog aggression in public places, the number of abandoned pets and the breeding of unwanted dogs and cats. It is interesting to note that these safety and animal welfare concerns took priority over the environmental issue of cat predation on wildlife.

The exercising of dogs in off-leash parks was the issue that attracted least concern, which initially seems to contradict the finding that the number one issue of concern was dog aggression. However, this is clarified by research (Bureau of Animal Welfare, 1999; 2002), which has found that only an estimated 9% of dog aggression incidents actually do occur in parks or reserves. The vast majority of incidents in public places (over 80%) occur either on the footpath or road bordering the offending dog's property or in the wider residential area, due to dogs not being adequately confined to the property.

¹ This paper is based on a Masters thesis (University of Melbourne, 2003). Contact the Bureau of Animal Welfare for a full list of references in relation to the literature review.

² The sample was made up of 124 non pet owners, 110 dog owners, 50 cat owners, and 36 owners of both dogs and cats.

³ Only limited results are presented in this paper; for full details contact the Bureau of Animal Welfare. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, confidence intervals, 2 proportion tests and 2 sample t tests, univariate analyses of variance, multivariate analyses of variance and correlations.

Pets at large issue	% "Strongly concerned"
1. Dog aggression in public places	82%
2. The number of abandoned pets	73%
3. The breeding of unwanted dogs and cats	72%
4. Cat predation on wildlife	66%
5. Unowned cat colonies living in public places	66%
6. Wandering pets getting killed or injured	66%
7. Dog faeces in public places	60%
8. Dog predation on wildlife	58%
9. Wandering dogs and cats spreading diseases	57%
10. Wandering pets causing traffic hazards	55%
11. Wandering dogs spreading garbage	53%
12. Cat trespass on private property	50%
13. Wandering dogs barking or distracting confined pets	46%
14. Wandering cats yowling or distracting confined pets	43%
15. Dogs being exercised in off-leash area parks	27%

Table 1

Statistical analysis found that non pet owners were significantly more concerned about pets at large issues overall than were pet owners. In addition, pet owners tended to be less concerned about issues that involved their particular type of pet. For instance, more non-pet and dog owners were "strongly concerned" about cat trespass than were owners of cats or both cats and dogs.

Analysis also found that females, older respondents, those with less education and those with lower incomes tended to be more concerned about pets at large issues.

Overall there was significant concern about pets at large in general, with 50% or more of respondents stating they were 'strongly concerned' about twelve of the fifteen pets at large safety, animal welfare, environmental and nuisance issues raised. However, these findings could be related to the fact that questions were prompted and negatively worded, which may have elicited stronger reactions from respondents and/or have lead to over reporting.

This possibility is supported by the results of a later question that asked respondents to consider the importance of confining of pets in relation to a number of other community issues. Confining pets ranked roughly in the middle of eleven issues, preceded by major topics such as the prevention of crime and cruelty to animals, but also minor issues such as litter prevention.

This information puts the situation into perspective. On the scale of other community concerns the importance of confining pets is only moderate. Therefore it is perhaps more appropriate to place emphasis on the ranking of pets at large issues in relation to each other, more so than the extent of concern about particular issues.

⁴ Throughout this paper, the term 'significant' refers to statistically significant findings. For full analysis results, contact the Bureau of Animal Welfare.

2. Observations about pets wandering at large.

2.1. How often did respondents see dogs and cats wandering at large?

Chart 1: Number of times dogs sighted wandering at large during past 3 months

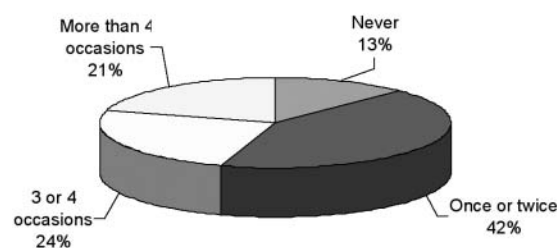
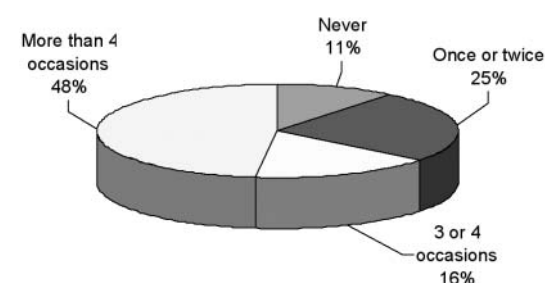


Chart 2: Number of times cats sighted wandering at large during past 3 months



During a three month period, 87% of respondents saw dogs wandering at large, and 89% saw cats wandering at large on at least one occasion. Where responses were scored 1 = never, 2 = once or twice, 3 = 3 or 4 times, 4= more than 4 times, respondents saw significantly⁴ more cats wandering at large than dogs wandering at large.

2.2. How often were respondents personally inconvenienced by pets wandering at large?

Chart 3: Number of times personally inconvenienced by wandering dogs over the past 3 months

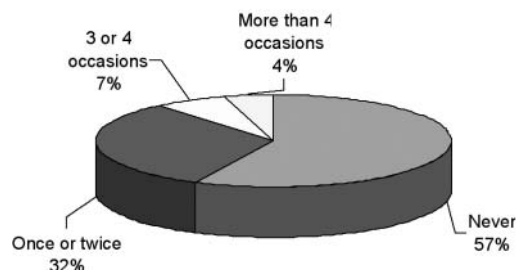
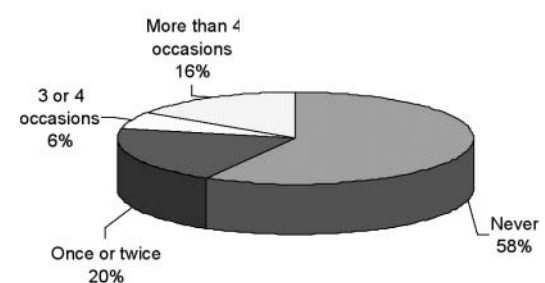


Chart 4: Number of times personally inconvenienced by wandering cats over the past 3 months



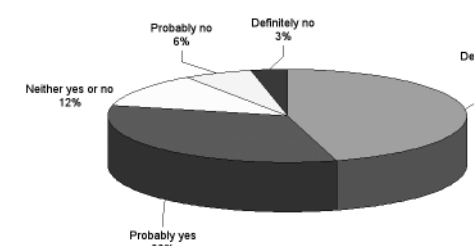
While the vast majority of respondents saw pets at large on at least one occasion during a three month period, most still stated they were not personally inconvenienced by dogs (57%) or cats (58%). It's just that when they were inconvenienced during the set period it tended to be by cats more frequently (eg on more than four occasions) than by dogs.

These results indicate that while the issue of dog aggression is perceived as a major concern by the community, in reality most day to day inconveniences relating to pets at large are caused by cats. This is probably because even if serious dog aggression incidents are rare, their potentially horrific outcomes are enough to cause safety concerns. On the other hand, while cat nuisance issues might be more common, they are simply a minor inconvenience.

Correlations revealed that the more respondents reported seeing and being inconvenienced by pets at large, the more their overall concern towards pets at large increased.

2.3. Did respondents see fewer dogs wandering at large in the streets nowadays compared to five years ago?

Chart 5: Are there fewer dogs wandering at large nowadays compared to five years ago?

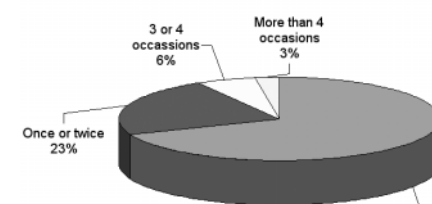


Seventy nine percent of respondents said they definitely or probably saw fewer dogs wandering at large in the streets nowadays than they did five years ago. This result supports anecdotal evidence that the number of roaming dogs in the streets has dramatically decreased since the Victorian government introduced the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (which came into effect in 1996).

3. Community attitudes towards council animal management services.

3.1. How often did respondents see rangers patrolling the streets in their area?

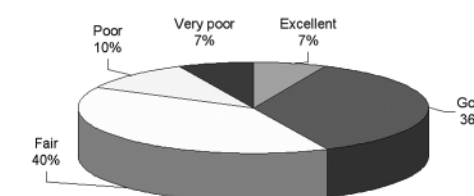
Chart 6: How often have you seen rangers/council animal management officers patrolling the streets in your area?



Sixty-eight percent of respondents said they never saw council rangers patrolling the streets in their area. Pet owners (particularly dog owners) saw significantly more ranger patrols than did non-pet owners. This could be because patrols have direct regulatory implications for pet owners (eg fines for unregistered or wandering pets) and therefore pet owners may be 'looking out' for them more.

3.2. What did respondents think of their local council's animal management services?

Chart 7: What do you think of your local Council's animal management services?



Seven percent of respondents rated their council's animal management services as "excellent", 76% as "good" or "fair", and 17% as "poor" or "very poor". Statistical analysis found that pet owners had a better opinion of their council's services than did non pet owners. This is probably related to the fact that non pet owners would have limited opportunities to experience animal management services such as pounds, the return of lost pets, education materials etc.

A strong correlation revealed that the more ranger patrols respondents saw, the more positively they rated their council's services. This is consistent with findings from a dog attack prevention project (Bureau of Animal Welfare, 2002) which found similar associations between ranger patrols in streets, and residents' opinions of council animal management services.

Correlations also revealed that the less respondents reported seeing and being inconvenienced by dogs and cats at large, the more positively they rated their council's services. In addition, a poor opinion of council services was correlated with a belief that pet owners did not control their pets properly.

4. Community attitudes towards pet owners and legislative control of pet ownership.

4.1. Did respondents think pet owners controlled their pets properly?

Chart 8: What do you think of the statement "Dog owners do not control their pets properly"?

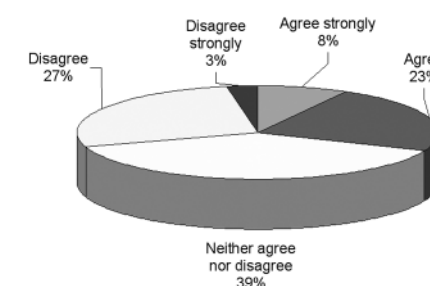
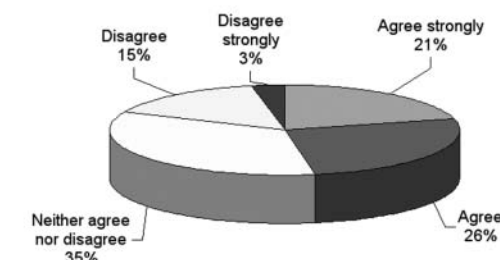


Chart 9: What do you think of the statement "Cat owners do not control their pets properly"?



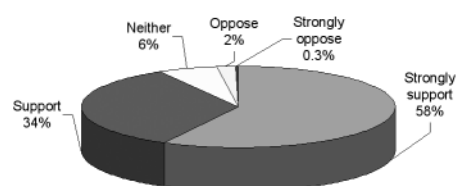
When asked to consider a statement that dog owners didn't control their pets properly, 31% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and in relation to the same statement about cats, 47% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly. These particular questions were included in the survey due to the fact that the same question (relating to dogs only) had been asked in a 1990 survey of Victorian residents (Lescun, 1990). At that time, 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that dog owners didn't control their pets properly. This provides useful comparative data, indicating that opinion towards dog owners at least may have improved over the past decade (unfortunately the same information about cats in 1990 is not available).

Compared to opinions towards dog owners, significantly more respondents thought cat owners did not control their pets properly. Non-pet owners agreed with these statements more than did pet owners. Correlations revealed that the more respondents saw and were inconvenienced by pets at large, the more they thought pet owners didn't control their animals properly, and the more they supported the confinement of pets to the property.

4.2. How strongly did respondents feel about confining pets to the property?

As can be seen from the following chart (over page), 92% of respondents (and 94% of dog owners) supported or strongly supported the idea of confining dogs to the property. Open-ended questions revealed the main reasons for supporting confinement were to prevent attacks on humans and other animals, to protect the dog itself from injury or loss, to prevent roaming dogs causing traffic accidents, and to prevent nuisance problems associated with dogs at large (eg dog faeces).

Chart 10: Do you support the confinement of dogs to the property?



As demonstrated by the following charts, 85% of respondents (including 74% of cat owners) supported or strongly supported the idea of confining cats to the property at night time. Open-ended questions revealed the main reasons for this were to prevent wildlife predation, to prevent cats causing neighbourhood nuisance and disturbance, and to protect the cat itself from injury or loss.

Only 35% of respondents (and 16% of cat owners) supported or strongly supported the 24-hour confinement of cats to the property. The main reasons given by respondents for supporting or not supporting this were that it was cruel or unnatural to confine cats 24-hours a day, that it is necessary to prevent wildlife predation, and that it is necessary to reduce neighbourhood nuisance and disturbance.

The finding that there is a lot of support for night confinement of cats but much less for 24-hour confinement is not surprising, as similar results have been uncovered from other Australian surveys. Previous research has also revealed that cat and non cat owners consider 24-hour

Chart 11: Do you support the confinement of cats to the property at night time?

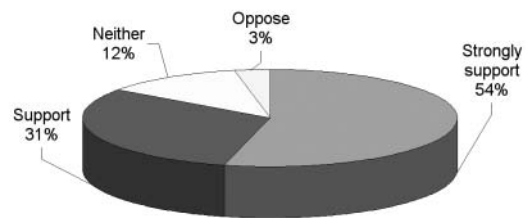
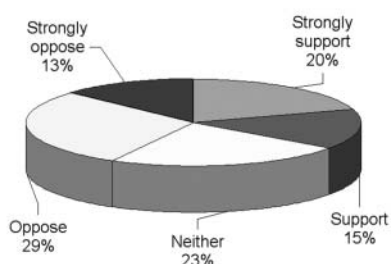


Chart 12: Do you support the confinement of cats to the property 24 hours a day?



confinement to be "unnatural" for the cat, or "too difficult" in terms of practicalities for the owner. Another common reason for respondents not supporting 24-hour confinement of cats in the current survey was that it was simply "not necessary".

Respondents' support for confinement of dogs and cats increased the more concerned they were about pets at large issues, the more they saw and were inconvenienced by pets at large, and the more they thought pet owners didn't control their pets properly. Correlations analysis showed that the more respondents supported confinement of dogs, the more they also supported night and 24-hour confinement of cats. This may indicate that residents are starting to expect cat owners to comply with similar requirements as dog owners. Certainly, this is supported by several comments from respondents in open-ended questions that the "same rules should apply to cats as do to dogs". Support for confinement of dogs and cats was also strongly correlated with support for the compulsory microchipping of pets.

4.3. Did respondents think it should be a requirement that all pets be microchipped?

Chart 13: Do you think it should be a requirement that all dogs in the community are microchipped?

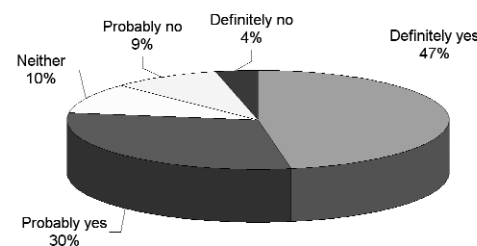
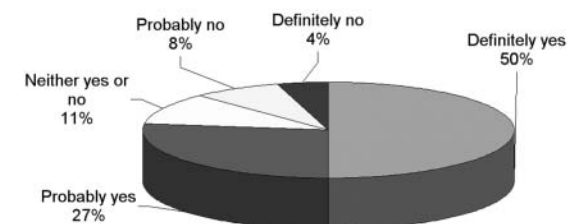


Chart 14: Do you think it should be a requirement that all cats in the community are microchipped?

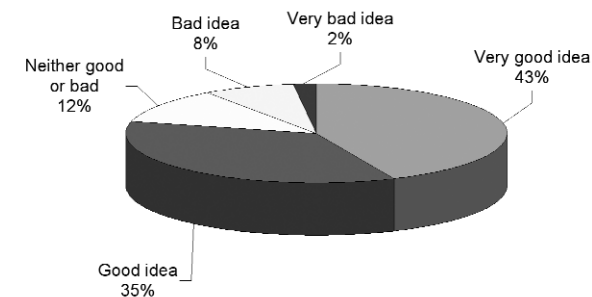


Seventy-seven percent of respondents thought it should "probably" or "definitely" be a requirement to microchip all dogs and cats. Compared to non pet owners, pet owners had less support for microchipping, perhaps because such requirements would have a direct regulatory (and financial) impact upon them in particular. Alternatively, non pet owners could support microchipping more due to their increased concern about pets at large in general.

Again, there were associations between respondents' observations about pets at large and their attitudes towards legislative control of pet owners. The more respondents reported seeing and being inconvenienced by pets at large, the more they supported the microchipping of pets.

4.4. What did respondents think about off-leash exercise areas for dogs?

Chart 15: What do you think of off leash exercise areas for dogs?



Seventy eight percent of respondents thought dog off-leash exercise areas were a good or a very good idea. Earlier, 27% of respondents expressed "strong" concern about dogs being exercised in off-leash areas, and a correlation showed that the more concerned respondents were about dogs being exercised off leash in the earlier question, the less support they had for these areas in the current question. However, still only 26% of respondents stated that they were "not at all concerned" about dogs being exercised off leash, despite 78% considering these areas to be a good or very good idea.

A possible explanation for these seemingly contradictory results can be found by examining responses to an open-ended question that asked respondents why they did or didn't support off-leash areas. Here, respondents tended to make multiple contradictory statements about off-leash areas. For instance, they thought such areas were important to give dogs "exercise" and "freedom", but they were also concerned about the potential for "attacks or aggression". Many comments related to the fact that off-leash areas were

a good idea, but this depended on where they were located, how well they were signposted, how well dogs were trained and supervised by owners, whether owners removed dog faeces, and whether rangers patrolled the areas. Obviously, while there is good support for the idea of off-leash parks, councils may need to address safety and amenity concerns of residents if this support is to be maintained in practice.

Consistent with earlier findings, non-pet respondents did not consider off-leash areas to be as good an idea as did dog owners or pet owners overall. This could be due to the fact that non-pet respondents are more concerned about dog aggression and pets at large issues, or perhaps they feel less confident in terms of appropriate behaviour around dogs when off leash. Alternatively, non-pet respondents may have less support for off-leash areas simply because these areas have no direct benefit for them personally.

Correlations revealed that the fewer respondents were inconvenienced by dogs at large and the more ranger patrols they saw in the streets, the more they supported the idea of dog off-leash exercise areas.

5. Attitudes and behaviour of dog owners in relation to confinement.⁵

5.1. How well did dog owners understand the legislation?

When asked a number of true or false questions, overall dog owners had a good understanding of the current legislation (answering 80% of all questions correctly)⁶. However, only 47% of dog owners knew that legally dogs were not allowed to remain unsupervised in unfenced front yards. Only 68% knew they would be liable if their dog attacked a stranger trying to access their front door. This is important given research has found that prior to 50% of dog attacks in public places, offending dogs were on their owner's property but not securely confined (Bureau of Animal Welfare, 1999, 2002).

5.2. Confinement of dogs to the property.

Respondents were asked how often their dogs were adequately confined, and whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about why dogs may not be confined (see Appendix for details).

The majority of dog owners ensured their dogs were adequately confined, barring the odd accidental escape⁷. Such accidental escapes, often due to gates or doors being left open, tended to be particularly common in larger households. An insight into why the latter may be the case is provided by open-ended comments by dog owners that state visitors or the kids "leave gates open". Quite simply, the larger the household, the more the potential for doors or gates to accidentally be left open.

Most dog owners agreed that their number one concern regarding confinement was their dog's happiness or welfare when confined, although this concern did not seem to be associated with confinement behaviour (ie result in dog owners breaching requirements). This suggests that pet owners may be seeing direct evidence to support animal behaviour theories about the modern day pet's inadequate adaptation to the urban environment.

Aside from accidental escapes, most dog owners had little agreement with other potential reasons for not confining dogs, including the cost of fencing or problems associated with renting.

⁵ Due to insufficient space, this section could only provide a basic summary of results.

⁶ These included questions on registration, leash, confinement and dog faeces removal requirements.

⁷ To encourage honest responses to such questions, researchers delivering surveys identified themselves with the university where the masters degree was being undertaken, rather than with any government agency.

A small proportion of dog owners, however, opposed or didn't care about confinement. These dog owners were less likely to confine dogs (often purposely letting their dogs out for exercise), were less concerned about pets at large issues, and had less support for legislative controls on pet ownership. They also held the belief that council didn't enforce dog confinement requirements. Interestingly, several analyses revealed this latter group of dog owners tended to have higher levels of household income.

It is this latter group that the Social Development Committee (1989) may have been referring to as an impetus for the introduction of Victorian domestic animal legislation, which aimed to target the estimated 20% of irresponsible dog owners who were the source of 90% of complaints to councils. It is worth noting that in the current survey, this group of dog owners only comprised about 10% of the total dog-owner respondents in the sample.

Of particular relevance for councils were correlations between the number of ranger patrols sighted, and dog owner attitudes to confinement. Fewer sighted ranger patrols were not only associated with negative opinions of council services, but also opinions that council wouldn't enforce confinement requirements anyway, and attitudes indicating opposition to and deliberate breaching of confinement requirements (although cause and effect cannot be proven).

6. Attitudes and behaviour of cat owners in relation to confinement.

6.1. How well did cat owners understand the legislation?

Compared to dog owners, cat owners had a poor understanding of current legislative requirements, with only 51% of all true or false questions answered correctly. Although cat owners were well aware of the need to register and identify cats, they were more confused about legal issues relating to confinement. This may be because, in Victoria, cat confinement local laws or orders are optional for councils to introduce and have not been uniformly adopted. Only 30% of cat owners knew it was illegal (under state legislation) for their cat to repeatedly trespass on someone else's property without permission.

6.2. Confinement of cats to the property.

A number of questions relating to confinement behaviour were asked of both cat owners who thought they weren't in areas subject to requirements and those who thought they were⁸.

Fifty six percent of cat owners who thought their cats had to be confined at night stated they "never" or "very rarely" breached requirements. Twenty four percent said their cats breached requirements "some of the time", 9% "most of the time", and 11% "always".

When cat owners who thought they weren't currently subject to requirements were asked if they anticipated being able to comply with night confinement if brought in, 80% said "definitely" or "probably" yes. Significantly fewer cat owners (42%) anticipated they would "definitely" or "probably" be able to comply with a 24-hour requirement.

When asked whether they agreed with a number of statements relating to why cats may not be confined (see Appendix), the statement most commonly agreed with was "I am/would be concerned about the welfare/happiness of my cat when confined". Most of these cat owners also

agreed with the statement "I do/would purposely let my cat out for exercise" (much more so than did dog owners). These two statements were strongly correlated, and it is possible that owners may be purposely letting cats out primarily due to welfare concerns about confinement. This idea is supported by Webb (2001) who argues there is a common misconception that confinement of cats is cruel because cats have an innate need to roam.

Reasons for non confinement such as opposing or not caring about the law, purposely letting cats out, and believing councils wouldn't enforce requirements anyway were all correlated with each other. They were also correlated with reasons for non confinement such as concern for the cat's welfare, needing advice on how to confine cats, and not being able to afford facilities for confinement (eg enclosures).

This indicates that while most cat owners are concerned for their pet's welfare when confined, and perhaps because of this they purposely let their cats out, other reasons for not confining cats are more complex than simply being due to deliberate non compliance by a minority of cat owners. Welfare concerns, concerns about the practicalities and costs of confinement, as well as attitudes ranging from ambivalence to opposition towards the necessity for such requirements, are all related factors.

Interestingly, compared to cat owners who thought they were currently subject to confinement requirements, those that thought they weren't, agreed more with statements relating to opposition to confinement, concern about their cat's welfare, needing advice on how to confine cats, and the belief that council wouldn't enforce requirements anyway. It is possible that once owners actually did put confinement into practice, their opposition to confinement, concerns about welfare and need for advice lessened.

Finally, the more respondents reported seeing council ranger patrols in the streets, the less they agreed with the statement "I do/would purposely let my cat out for exercise".

Conclusion and recommendations

1. Pets wandering at large are a source of concern for the general community. The particular issue that caused most concern to respondents was "dog aggression in public places". This was followed by "the number of abandoned pets", "the breeding of unwanted dogs and cats", and "cat predation on wildlife".
2. The majority of respondents saw pets, especially cats, wandering at large during a three-month period; however less than half of respondents reported being personally inconvenienced by them. Although the issue of dog aggression was perceived as the major concern relating to pets at large, in reality, cats were actually responsible for the greatest amount of personal inconvenience.
3. The majority of respondents rated their council's animal management services as good or fair. Strong correlations showed that the more ranger patrols respondents reported seeing in the streets, the less likely respondents were to hold attitudes indicating opposition to and deliberate breaching of confinement requirements, and the more positively they rated their council's services. This finding is of particular interest for councils wishing to improve resident satisfaction with animal management services and to increase

levels of legislative compliance. Previous studies have found that the placement of 'A' frame boards on major roads are a cost effective way to advertise to residents that rangers are patrolling the area (Bureau of Animal Welfare, 2002).

4. There was majority support from both pet and non-pet owners for all existing and proposed legislative provisions, except the 24-hour confinement of cats. The majority of respondents supported the idea of confining cats at night, and confining dogs to the property, for a range of safety, animal welfare, environmental and community amenity reasons. Most respondents also supported the idea of compulsory microchipping of pets and off-leash exercise areas for dogs; however, support for the latter was dependent on factors such as location, signage, and appropriate supervision and training of dogs⁹.
5. Although causation cannot be proven, strong associations between observations relating to pets at large and a range of attitudes towards pets suggest that far from discouraging pet ownership, certain legislative controls such as confinement, may improve the community's opinion of pet ownership, and reduce pressure for stricter controls. Eg. the less respondents reported seeing and being inconvenienced by pets at large: the less concerned they were about pets at large issues, the more they thought pet owners controlled their pets properly, the more they supported dog off leash areas, and the less they supported stricter legislative controls such as 24-hour confinement of cats.
6. Most dog owners had a good understanding of the legislation, and for the majority of owners, non compliance with confinement requirements was inadvertent (eg accidental escapes). Along with continued education to address the problem of inadequately confined dogs in front yards, the education issue that stands out as having maximum potential benefit for dog owners and their pets is the one of how to meet dogs' welfare needs when confined. As well as assisting dog owners in feeling more comfortable about meeting legal confinement requirements, addressing such an issue could have important flow-on effects for other common community problems such as barking dogs¹⁰.
7. Around 10% of dog owners opposed or didn't care about confinement, and this was reflected in their deliberate non compliance with confinement requirements, and associated attitudes towards pets at large and legislative issues. The behaviour of such a group seemingly unresponsive to social pressures may only be successfully managed through enforcement and prosecution.
8. Cat owners were well aware of the requirement to register and identify cats, but were more confused about legal issues relating to confinement. In Victoria, where confinement requirements are optional for councils to introduce, local education campaigns would best address this situation.
9. The main reasons given by cat owners for not confining cats were concerns for their welfare, along with wanting to let cats out for exercise. These two statements were strongly correlated with each other, possibly due to the belief that confinement of cats is cruel because cats have an innate need to roam. Even for cat owners whose non compliance was deliberate, this did not appear to be simply based on a belief that pet owners shouldn't be subject to any rules. Rather, this opposition tended to be tied up with genuine concerns relating to the welfare implications and practicalities of confinement. It seems that for the majority of cat owners, as was the case with dog owners, that education on how to go about confining their pets, along with meeting their welfare needs, would go a long way towards addressing such concerns¹¹.
10. For those councils considering introducing cat confinement requirements, it is encouraging to note the extent of support from cat owners for night confinement. There is evidence to suggest that because cats are nocturnal, night confinement requirements have the potential to prevent most nuisance issues, wildlife predation, and injuries to cats, as well as achieve significant improvements in cat longevity¹². On the other hand, the lack of support for 24 hour confinement of cats (from both pet and non pet owners) is an important consideration, particularly given that Jackson (1998) argues that individuals are most likely to resent and resist regulations that they believe to be unreasonable.
11. Regardless, change must continue to be gradual, as the property containment of cats does require a greater degree of effort and commitment than some cat owners would have originally anticipated when making their choice of pet. Requirements must be flexible enough to recognise unique problems during the 'adjustment' stage, and councils are strongly advised to ensure all cat owners receive adequate information and education relating to cat confinement before any legal requirements are introduced and enforced.

References¹³

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⁹ Research findings relate to metropolitan Melbourne only, so caution should be exercised when generalising results/recommendations to other areas of Australia.

¹⁰ Some recommendations require implementation at a state government level; however councils may also benefit from undertaking many of the education and policy activities on a local basis.

¹¹ Veterinarian and Director of the Cat Protection Society Victoria, Webb (2001) argues that statistics show cats are safer and live longer when confined to the property, and providing a few basic needs are met, are quite content to be confined certainly at night time, and even 24 hours a day.

¹² It is acknowledged there can be enforcement difficulties with cat confinement requirements. However night confinement laws are an important educative tool and a first step in changing community attitudes (perhaps to a point where there will eventually be similar expectations regarding the responsibilities of cat and dog owners). Confinement requirements also provide councils and residents with an effective means to resolve cat nuisance issues if they arise.

¹³ Contact the Bureau of Animal Welfare for a full list of references used in this research project.

⁸ It should be noted that 76% of cat owners who stated they were in areas requiring cat confinement were incorrect. In addition, all respondents who correctly stated they were in areas subject to requirements thought they applied at night only, whereas in 50% of cases they applied 24-hours a day.

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Appendix

Seventy seven percent of dog owners stated that their dogs were "always" adequately confined to the property, and 23% said they were confined "most of the time".

Table 1. Reasons for not confining dogs. Where response options were 1 = agree strongly, 2 = agree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = disagree, 5 = disagree strongly (with the statement about renting having an additional response option of 6 = Not Applicable).

Reasons for not confining dogs (from most common through to least)	Average score
1. I am concerned about the welfare/happiness of my dog when confined	2.62
2. My dog only escapes my property accidentally (eg gate or door left open)	2.75
3. I need advice on how to ensure my dog is happy when confined	3.61
4. My council doesn't enforce dog confinement requirements anyway	3.68
5. I oppose the idea of confining dogs to the property	4.16
6. I purposely let my dog out for exercise	4.30
7. I don't care about the law regarding confinement of dogs	4.33
8. I can't afford to fix fencing in order to confine my dog	4.38
9. I rent my property and the landlord wont fix the fencing	5.37

Table 2. Reasons for not confining cats. Where response options were 1 =agree strongly, 2 =agree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = disagree, 5 = disagree strongly (with the statement about renting having an additional response option 6 = Not Applicable).

Reasons for not confining cats (from most through to least common)	Average score
1. I am/would be concerned about the welfare/happiness of my cat when confined	2.14
2. I do/would purposely let my cat out for exercise	2.90
3. My cat does/would only escape my property accidentally (eg through open door)	3.01
4. My council doesn't/wouldn't enforce cat confinement requirements anyway	3.08
5. I do/would need advice on how to confine, or how to train my cat to accept confinement.	3.29
6. I can't/couldn't afford facilities to confine my cat (eg enclosures)	3.30
7. I oppose the idea of confining cats to the property	3.33
8. I don't/wouldn't care about the law regarding confinement of cats	4.00
9. I'm renting, so I don't/wouldn't have the facilities to confine my cat	5.35

Neva Van de Kuyt

Neva Van de Kuyt is employed with the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Victorian Department of Primary Industries. Neva's work involves coordinating the Responsible Pet Ownership Community Education Program. This Program aims to provide councils with resources and assistance to help them promote responsible pet ownership in their local communities. Resources currently available include a range of responsible pet ownership brochures/publications, pet event display equipment, a "Communication Resource Kit", an AMO Internet Resource Site, council training seminars, a "Cat Management Manual", a "Dog Attack Prevention Kit", and a dog faeces "Litter Kit". Neva has recently completed a Master of Animal Welfare at the University of Melbourne ("Attitudes of Melbourne residents towards the management of dogs and cats in the community").

Triple Bottom Line and UAM: Where do Compliance, Social Capital and the New UAM Fit in?

Virginia Jackson and Ian Henderson

Triple bottom line theory has been a dominant management buzzword for the last decade. But what is it and why is it relevant to UAM?

This paper will explore the links between triple bottom line theory, social capital, compliance and the new UAM. It will look at the latest research and discuss its application (both actual and potential) in the City of Port Phillip in Melbourne. The paper will be of interest to those with a general interest in TBL as well as those interested in where UAM fits into these new management approaches.

Introduction

The triple bottom line (TBL) concept emerged in the late 1990s. In a nutshell, TBL theory asks us to assess a corporation's performance according to 3 bottom lines: the financial bottom line, the environmental bottom line and the social bottom line.

Public and private sector corporations around the world have embraced TBL. It has been particularly popular with Australian local authorities and the TBL language now permeates all parts of the planning and decision making frameworks. TBL might be a passing fad but we believe its principles are here to stay.

In this paper we look at TBL as it relates to pet ownership. In particular, we explore the concept of one of these bottom lines (social capital) as it relates to pet ownership.

There are a number of reasons why we believe this paper is important to UAM:

1. Because if we talk in the current lexicon we are more likely to be seen as part of the mainstream of local government. This means being recognised and valued for the important work we do.
2. Because if we focus on the social benefits or capital arising from people's relationship with their pets, it might result in improved compliance with UAM laws and codes of behaviour. In this paper we show you clear links between social capital and responsible pet ownership.
3. Because we should. There are many benefits from owning pets. We've been talking about them since UAM began - but mostly with a view to passing these insights on to the relevant Council department to implement (whether that be town planning, social planning, open space planning etc).

However in Virginia's presentation to this conference last year, she argued that getting other disciplines or council departments to think seriously about the benefits of pet ownership is harder than drawing teeth. She argued that UAM needs to be broadened from a focus on compliance alone to one that actively fosters responsible pet ownership. She said UAM needs to become the champion of pet ownership.

In this paper we use the case study of the City of Port Phillip in Melbourne where Ian has worked for the last 20 years and where we believe social capital is alive and barking amongst its dog owning community. By doing this we hope to move beyond the theoretical to show you concrete examples of how social capital could become one of the cornerstones of the new UAM.

One point before we begin. It is not our intention to quantify the social capital we describe. Doing so is notoriously difficult and there are philosophical differences amongst researchers about different methodologies. We are not qualified accountants, nor are we experts on social capital. Whilst we may be criticised for not quantifying our findings, we believe that it is the principle behind TBL that is most important (ie that the economy, the environment and the social are assessed on an equal footing), not the actual numbers.

A Few Words About the Case Study

Port Phillip is an old inner suburban municipality of Melbourne. It comprises 20sqkm and is located just 3km from the CBD. It encompasses the suburbs of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, Albert Park, Middle Park, St Kilda, St Kilda Road, East St Kilda, Ripponlea and Elwood.

Port Phillip developed as a group of middle and working class suburbs. It declined in population and socio-economic status during the middle of the 20th century but was heavily gentrified (yuppies moving in) over the last 40 years. More recently, rising property values and changing housing choice has seen the construction of many apartment buildings throughout the municipality. Many of these apartment dwellers own pets and present council with new challenges especially given the combined impact of very limited availability of public open space.

Today Port Phillip is a densely developed, highly desirable place to live and visit. Its population in 2001 was 80,157, up from 70,557 in 1991. It has enormous cultural and socio-economic diversity and an array of social malaise common to the inner areas of most Australian cities including homelessness, unemployment, drug abuse and prostitution. It is the quintessential melting pot!

From the density of development and lack of open space, it is probably reasonable to say Port Phillip is not an ideal place for pet ownership. However this community has shown that it wants pet ownership and is willing to make it work in otherwise trying circumstances. It is our thesis that the social capital elements of pet ownership in Port Phillip are a significant reason for this success.

Triple Bottom Line Theory

The TBL concept first appeared in 1997 in John Elkington's work *Cannibals with Forks: The triple bottom line of 21st Century Business*. The sentiments expressed and many of the driving forces however date back to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 where the growing need for Corporations to account for their economic and social performance was publicly expressed.

Elkington defines the TBL as:

Sustainable: development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform not against a single financial bottom line but against a triple bottom line.

The TBL focuses corporations not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they add – and destroy.

In the typical worldview, the economy is the primary source of wealth and the key to the improved standard of living for