



YourSay Community Panel Cat Containment Survey

May 2021





Background: Research via the YourSay Community Panel provides an efficient, robust and timely platform to capture data on the views and experiences of Canberrans regarding life in the ACT. This Mixed Topic Survey (March 2021) – replacing previous telephone ‘Omnibus’ surveys – explored Canberrans’ perceptions on a range of issues, including cat containment

Purpose: The findings from the survey will support multiple Directorates along with whole-of-government approaches in relation to policy, program and communications development.

Timeframe: The survey took place between **10 – 15 March 2021**.

Sample: **1,617** YourSay Community Panel members completed the survey.

Weighting: The results have been weighted to reflect relative population proportions based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census figures.

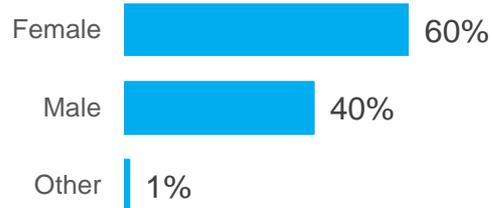
Rounding: In single choice questions, results may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Limitations: The methodology is biased towards those with internet and computer literacy.

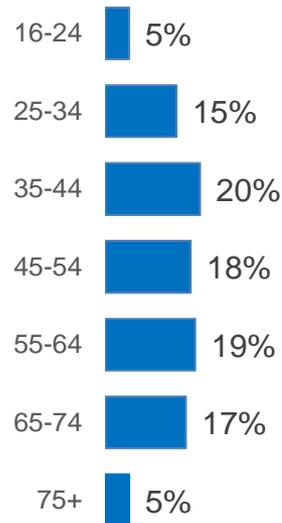


Sample profile (unweighted)

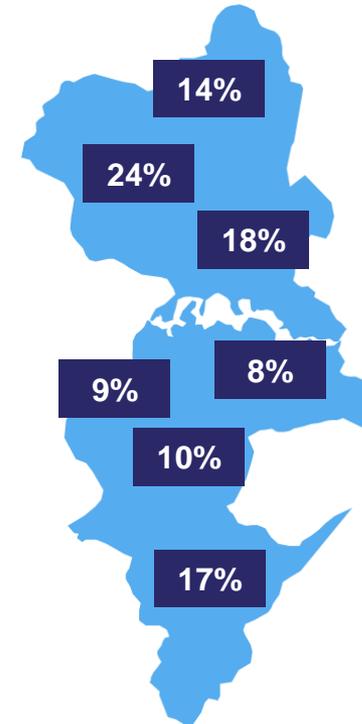
Gender



Age



Region





ACT
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Cat containment





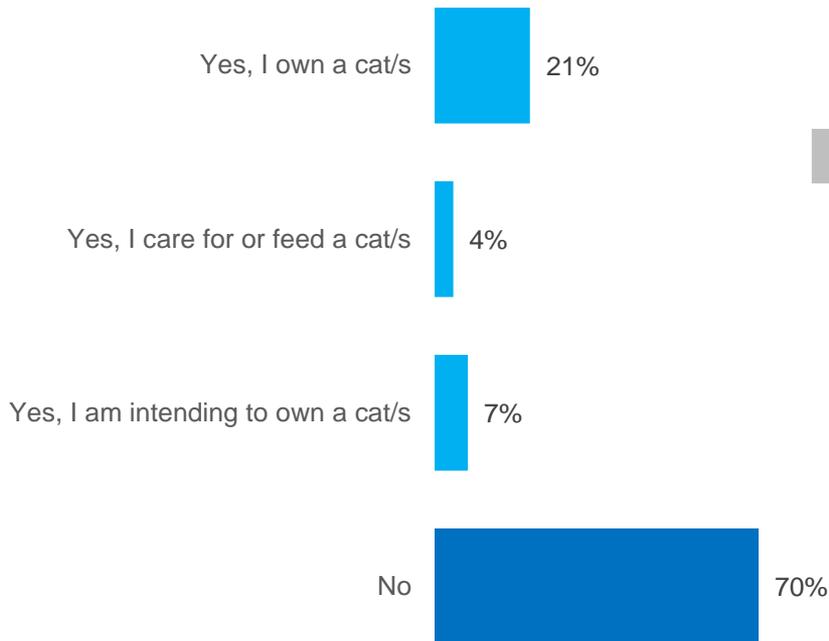
Key findings

- ▶ About one in eight cat owners do not currently contain their cat at all, though this is lower (3%) in current cat containment suburbs
- ▶ There is some uncertainty about whether residents live in a cat containment suburb, with around one quarter unsure or incorrectly asserting they do not
- ▶ While most Canberrans appear to get the gist of what cat containment entails, there are some variations in how it is defined, from keeping a cat indoors at all times through to restrictions on cat ownership
- ▶ Overall, around three-quarters of Canberrans support expanding cat containment to all suburbs, with one in ten opposing this proposition
- ▶ There is also majority support among cat owners (59%), though a larger proportion of this cohort oppose (17%) or strongly oppose (14%) this
- ▶ The main rationale for support is in order to protect native wildlife
- ▶ Among other things, opposition to containment stems from concerns about applying it retrospectively, considering it inhumane / unnatural, and a belief that it is only a small number of cats that cause damage to wildlife

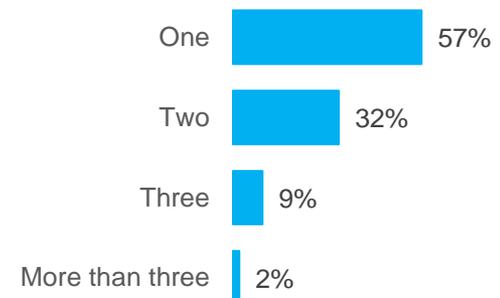


Around one in five Canberrans are cat owners, with almost half having more than one

Q. Do you own or care for a cat (or are intending to own a cat)?



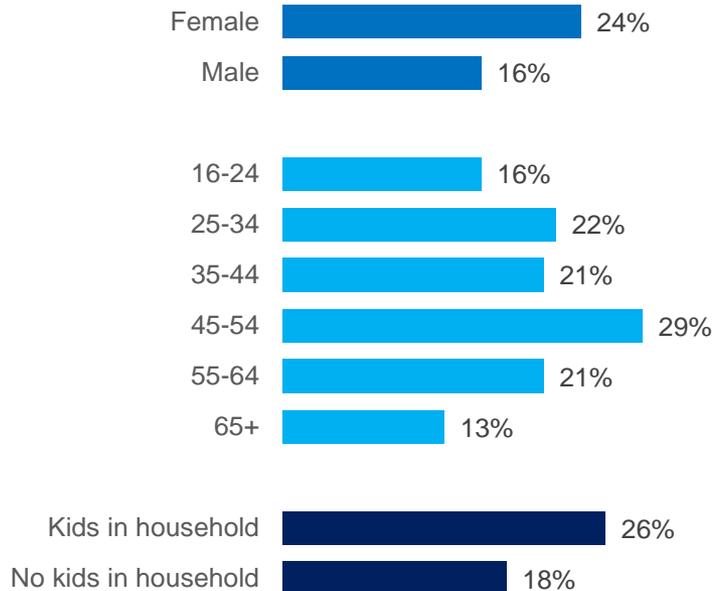
Q. How many cats do you own or care for?



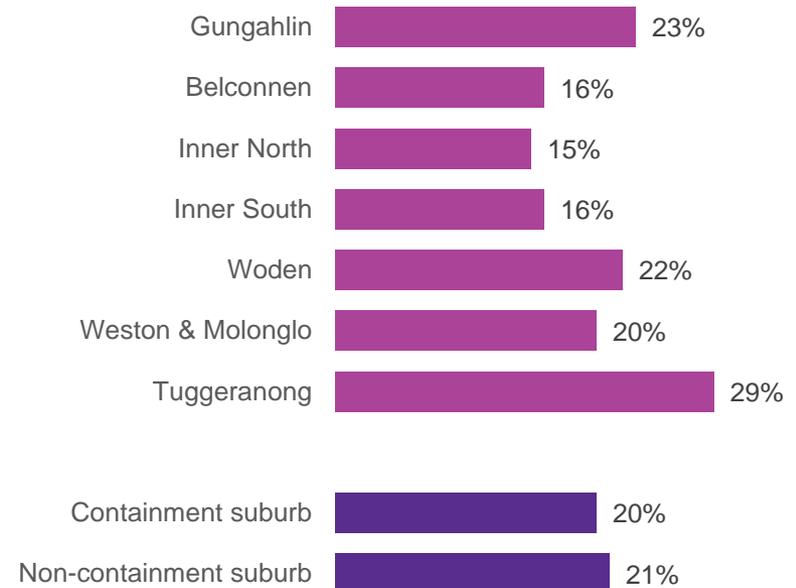


Variations in cat ownership

Highest ownership exists among middle age females and in households with children present



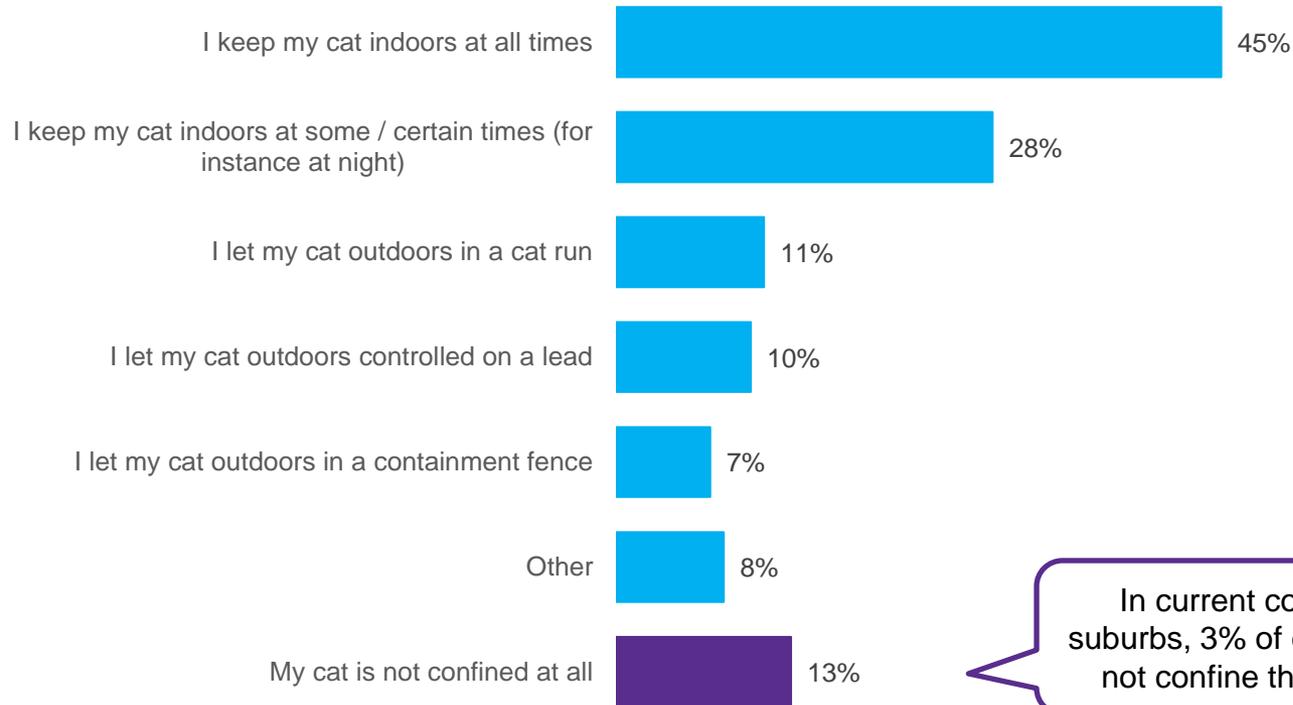
Ownership highest in the south, though no difference according to whether already in a containment suburb





Around one in eight cat owners do not confine their cat at all

Q. Which of the following applies?



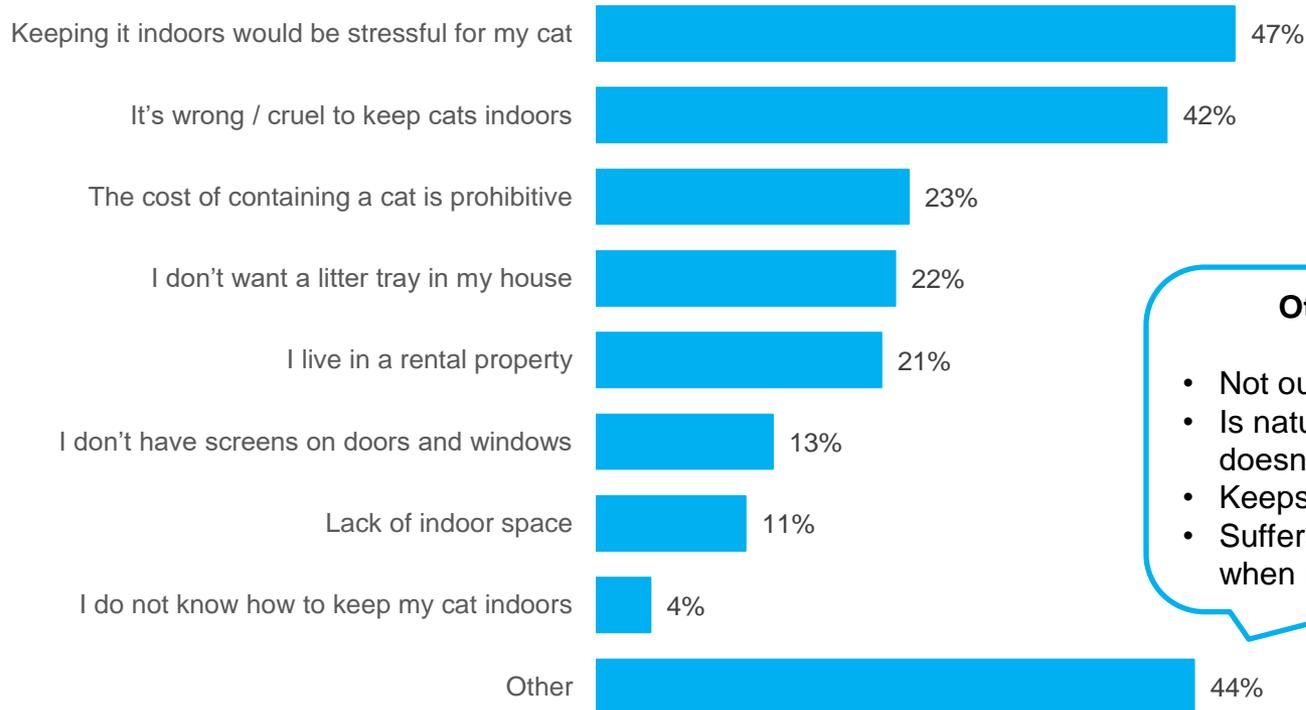
This rises to 66% in current cat containment suburbs

In current confinement suburbs, 3% of cat owners do not confine their cat at all



Concern about impact on cats' wellbeing tends to be biggest factor driving non-containment

Q. You said that you don't confine your cat at all. Why is that?



Others include:

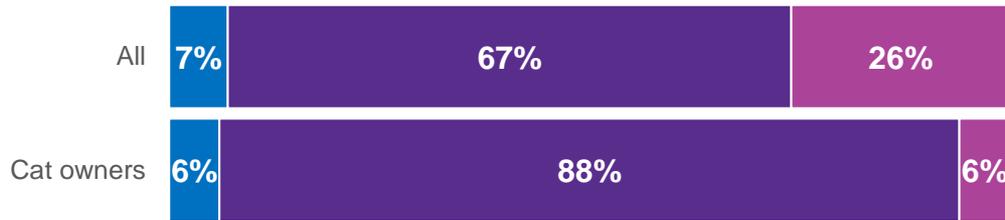
- Not our cat / responsibility
- Is naturally contained / old / doesn't go out much
- Keeps down vermin
- Suffers / causes problems when inside



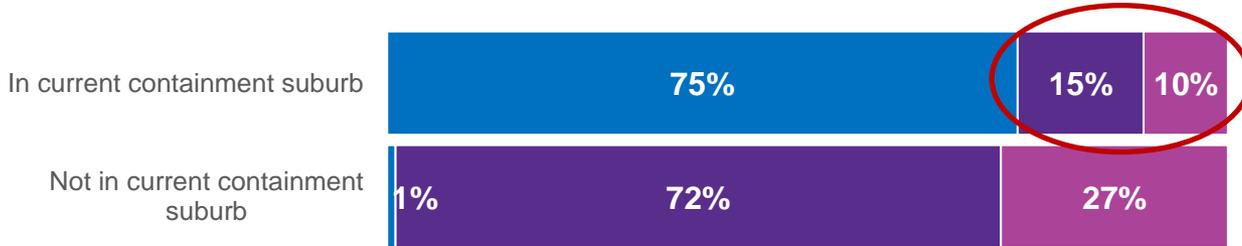
A quarter of Canberrans are uncertain as to whether they live in a cat containment area, though this drops among cat owners

Q. Do you live in a declared cat containment suburb or area?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



Uncertainty higher in Inner South (41%) and Inner North (35%)



A quarter of people in current containment suburbs think they are not in such an area or are unsure about it



Most people appear to get the gist of cat containment, but variations in definition surface

Cats are not able to roam beyond your premises

Cats should be indoors at all times

It's about protecting native wildlife

Cats not allowed outside past certain hours / at night

Cats enclosed / kept on a lead

Cats not able to damage gardens / leave mess

Means fewer feral cats

Restrictions on cat ownership

Cats must stick to their suburb

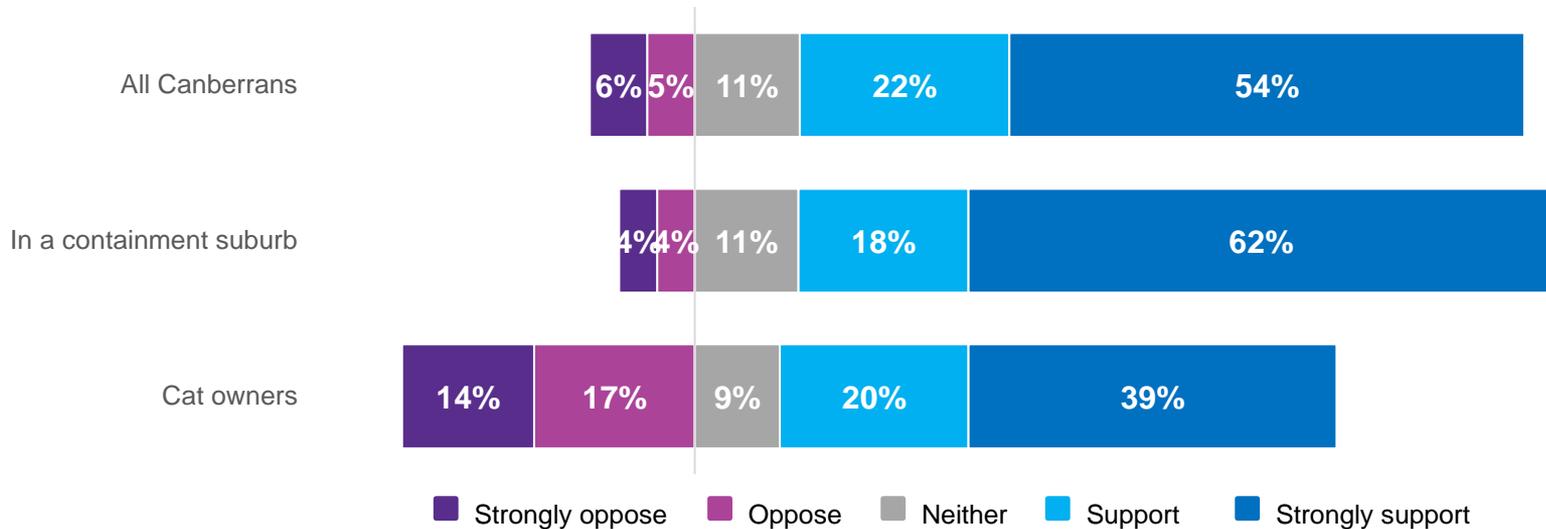
Cats need to be de-sexed

Applies to suburbs close to reserves / on urban fringe



Support for expanding cat containment is high among all Canberrans, with a majority of cat owners (59%) also in favour

Q. To what extent would you support or oppose declaring all suburbs across Canberra as cat containment areas?



63% of those who don't currently confine their cat at all oppose expanding cat containment



Why support / oppose – main themes

Why support?

To protect wildlife

To tackle extinction of native fauna

Cats are less likely to breed / turn feral

So there is less damage / mess in local area, garden etc

Cats are less likely to get run over, go missing etc

Dog owners have to, so cat owners should control their pet too

Why oppose?

Hard to apply retrospectively to cats who already roam

It's inhumane, cruel, not natural

Seems like a disproportionate response

Only a small number of cats that hunt / my cat doesn't do this

Difficulty containing cat – space, cost

More regulation / 'nanny state' – hard to enforce and monitor

Dogs are more of a problem



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