

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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EVERY PET COUNTS: DELIVERING THE FIRST PET CENSUS

With more Victorians welcoming a pet into their family than ever, the Andrews Labor Government is backing the state's first ever Pet Census to ensure pet owners have the support and services they need.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas announced \$613,000 from the *Victorian Budget 2022/23* for the Pet Census, which will gather crucial information on pet ownership and attitudes of pet owners.

Currently, most data regarding pet ownership and registration is held by local governments and there is a lack of reliable and up-to-date state-wide information. The Pet Census will collect data across Victoria on a range of areas relevant to pet ownership and pet welfare, including:

- the demographics of Victoria's pet owners and their pets,
- general matters relevant to pet health (e.g. diet, exercise etc),
- the costs and services associated with purchasing and caring for pets,
- the social and well-being impacts of pet ownership.

This will allow the Labor Government to better prioritise and develop reforms and policies that will benefit Victoria's pets, their owners and the animal welfare sector.

According to Animal Medicines Australia, pet ownership rates in Australian households have grown from 61 per cent to 69 per cent in the past two years. The Census will help the Government better understand the impact of this ownership growth across Victoria, and how it can best support pets, their owners, and the industries that care for them.

It is anticipated that the Victorian Pet Census will be conducted next year using an online survey.

Funding for the census forms part of a record \$18.6 million package to support animal care and protection in this year's Budget.

As part of our ongoing commitment to animal welfare the Government is also delivering Victoria's first comprehensive cat management strategy, reforming the pet rehoming sector and modernising Victoria's animal care and protection legislation with an Act to replace the current Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA Act).

Modern legislation will help safeguard animal welfare and support Victoria's reputation for high standards of animal welfare. An exposure draft of the Bill will be released next year, ensuring that all Victorians have the opportunity to have their say before it is introduced into Parliament.

The information gathered as part of the Victorian Pet Census will be used to inform Government's next generation of pet and animal welfare reforms, ensuring the priorities of Government are keeping with the current needs and expectations of the Victorian community.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Victorians love their pets and consider them part of their families. We are delivering the state's first ever Pet Census to better understand the important role pets play in the lives of Victorians."

"The Pet Census will help us ensure we're best supporting our furry friends and their owners with the services they need."

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