



PETS AND OLDER PEOPLE:

# Bridging the Pet or No Pet Divide



University of  
South Australia

Prepared by UniSA for  
Office for Ageing Well  
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University of  
South Australia

## University of South Australia

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Cover photo courtesy of Glenn  
Bowyer, Through the Lens.

We acknowledge the traditional  
owners and custodians of the lands  
on which we work and live across  
Australia. We pay our respects to  
elders of the past, present and into  
the future.



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# Executive Summary

Bridging the divide between pets or no pets.

This report provides a summary of the Pets and Older People: Bridging the Pet or No Pet Divide project. It summarises what older people told us about how they engage with pets and how much this means to them, their concerns regarding pets as they age, and suggestions for how older South Australians can be supported in maintaining connections with companion animals. This project was supported by Office for Ageing Well, SA Health and conducted from March to December 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of this project was to work with older South Australians to unpack their experiences and ideas to co-design a spectrum (or continuum) of innovative pet engagement and support models. The aim was to enable older people to continue to experience the benefits of having companion animals in their lives, no matter their age or living circumstances. 'Petness' is the term coined for this project to describe a range of activities and types identified that extend from traditional pet ownership through to less intimate, more distanced but still meaningful →



Photo courtesy of Bryan Charlton.



interactions with animals. A key focus was to flesh out ‘mid-range’ supports and activities: bridging the divide between “Pets” and “No Pets”.

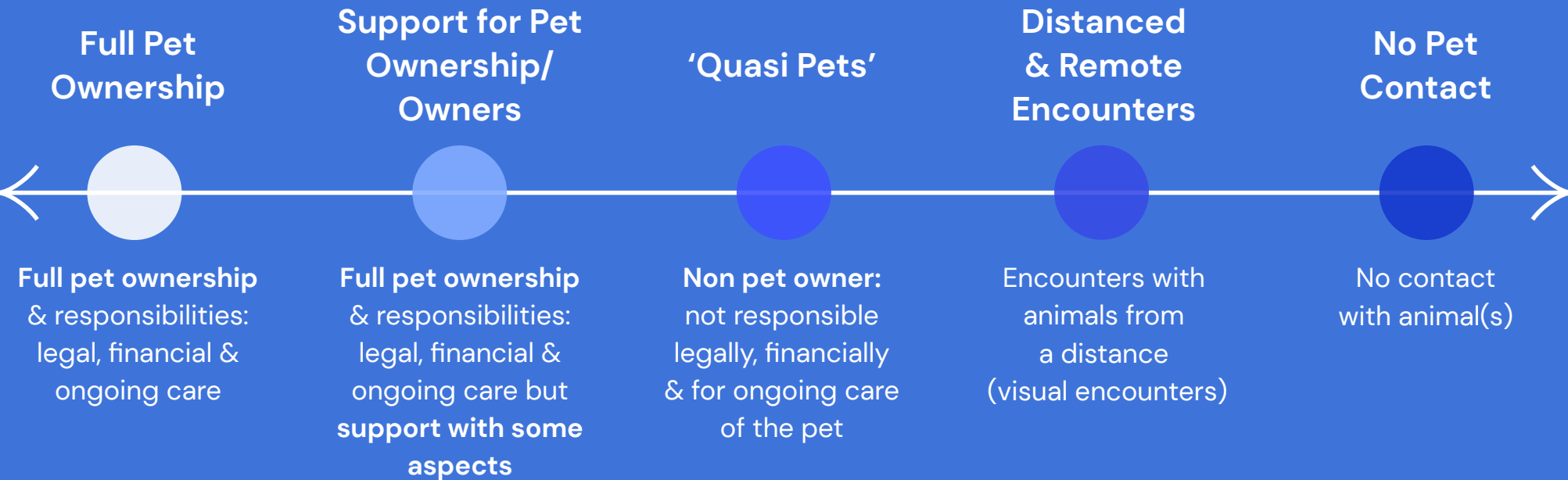
Pet engagement models were developed in collaboration with older people through a series of eight focus groups and an online survey.

Over 200 older people participated from metropolitan and regional South Australia. Through these conversations with older people, we created a ‘Petness’ continuum as visually summarised in Figure 1.

This report presents and draws upon the conversations held in the

focus groups and input from older South Australians via the survey. The report contains recommendations for policy, practice and partnerships that, according to the participants, would enable older people to maintain connections with animals enriching their extended years.

Figure 1: Brief Petness Continuum





## In summary our recommendations include:



### Policy

Embedding the valued role of pets and other animal connections in policy pertaining to older people's lives across levels of government, care systems, services and facilities. Recognising and removing barriers to pet relationships across ageing and ensuring physical design is pet friendly.



### Practice

Encouraging aged care services to be 'animal inclusive', development of information resources to enable older people to make informed choices regarding pet owning or alternatives, ensuring quality of care standards in pet support models through working with older South Australians.



### Partnerships

Exploring opportunities for new partnerships such as animal care services, religious entities and private enterprise.



# Introduction

## Bridging the divide between pets or no pets

The evidence is that many older people find comfort, company and meaningfulness in having companion animals or pets in their lives. Keeping companion animals (or pet ownership) is a worldwide phenomenon. According to the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, Australia has a high rate of pet ownership with 62% of households owning a pet, with dogs and cats being the most popular species (Wilkins et al. 2020). But often the realities of getting older make people decide to not continue having pets. This means that the multiple health benefits of having a

pet are cut-off for some older people. It may also mean that some animals miss out on the love and affection that older people could give a pet.

There is growing international evidence that relationships with pets are important in the lives of many older people. Pets have been shown to improve wellbeing, mood and relaxation capacity; increase social benefits including the sense of giving and receiving love, offering companionship, purposefulness, increased social interaction, and perception of being social and approachable (see for

example: Obradović, Lagueux, Michaud & Provencher 2019; Gee, Mueller & Curl 2017; Slatter, Lloyd & King 2012; Brooks et al. 2013).

Pets seem to support resilience during ageing. Pet owners are less likely to decline psychologically and more likely to overcome physical and emotional hurdles (Gee, Mueller, & Curl, 2017). Pet ownership seems to reduce loneliness in older people living alone, offering them comfort and a sense of safety (Cherniak & Cherniak, 2014).



The reciprocal nature of pet to human touch has been identified as core to providing comfort to people, perhaps especially in times of social isolation (Young et al., 2020). The positive impacts of pets extend beyond pet owners. Pets can be a catalyst for community connections (Wood et al. 2007). For some people, just seeing pets in public, even if they are not the pet owner themselves, improves their perceptions of community safety and wellbeing.

The data on pet ownership across age groups shows a steady decline with only 45% of people aged over 70, and 59% aged 50–69 having pets (Animal Medicines Australia (AMA) 2016). Chur-Hansen, Winefield, and Beckwith (2008) explored the reasons older people may choose not to have pets. Their findings included pragmatic factors such as convenience in not having a pet and competing demands on their time and energy. More recent

research has suggested that some older people may be relinquishing pets or deciding not to continue to be a pet owner (e.g. when a loved pet dies) quite early on in ageing (Bridgman, 2014). The whys and details of this possibility have yet to be focussed on in research; however, talking to older people suggests that some, perhaps many, choose not to continue having pets because they fear the implications for their pet's quality of life 'should something happen to me'.

Based on evidence of the importance of pets in the lives and wellbeing of older people this project sought to develop a 'Petness' continuum of engagements and connections with companion animals. The continuum extends from traditional pet ownership including support for this, to 'quasi pet' models, to an array of more distanced but meaningful encounters with animals. All are aimed at enabling

older South Australians who wish to maintain connections with animals to do so, for as long as they wish and are able.

## The Pets and Older People Project

In 2020, the University of South Australia (UniSA) received funding from Office for Ageing Well, SA Health to explore and co-design with older people a spectrum of innovative pet engagement models. We conducted a series of conversations with older people aged 60+ via focus groups and an online survey to hear their lived experiences with pets and their ideas on engaging with companion animals.



### The co-design process with older people was based on four guiding questions:

1. What activities in-between having your own pet, and not having any pet contact are you currently or have previously been engaged in?
2. What other possible forms of pet engagement can you imagine?
3. What are the factors needed to ensure you are able to engage in 1 and 2? (Enablers)
4. What may be barriers to engaging in realities and possibilities from 1 and 2? (Barriers)

Over 200 people from metropolitan and regional South Australia participated in the project.

Our initial focus was on companion animals but as the project developed, we broadened 'animals' to include wildlife as several participants engaged

in watching and/or caring for wildlife on their own property or at a rescue organisation.

This report provides a summary of the project and draws upon the findings from the focus groups and online survey, and contains recommendations for policy and practice to enable older people to connect with animals and to experience the benefits of having companion animals in their lives.

### Imagining what a pet inclusive South Australia might look like:

Throughout the text, examples imagining what a pet-friendly South Australia might look like are given.

Ethics approval was gained from the University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (protocol number 202109).



Photo courtesy of Jorge Royan (Wikimedia Commons)



## Links to South Australia's Plan for Ageing Well 2020–2025

This project contributes to realising the vision, set out in South Australia's Plan for Ageing Well 2020–2025, of South Australia as "...a healthy, connected, equitable and sustainable community, which takes a whole of life approach that fosters many years of living well..." (p.24).

Findings from this project could help shape future policy and programs of Office for Ageing Well, SA Health and other stakeholders to enable older people to stay connected to animals, and experience the benefits of having animals/pets in their lives.

### Home and community

Older South Australians told us that companion animals are important to them, particularly for those who live alone, and those with animals may need support services to help care for their pet as they age at home.

### Meaningful connections

Older South Australians told us that pets provide them companionship and act as a facilitator for making social connections with other people and the wider community.

### Navigating change

Older South Australians told us that pets can help with significant changes in their life. Pets can help older people cope with difficult situations (e.g. change in living situation and death of a partner).

### IMAGINE: Remembering the Animals We Have Loved

Cam was overwhelmed with grief when Zak his Doberman died but he finds comfort in lighting a candle and saying prayers for Zak when he attends his local church.

At the annual memorial service, he and others are encouraged to give thanks for their loved and lost pets as a vibrant message of a benevolent creation.



Photo courtesy of Fiona De Rosa



## Enabling factors

### Tackle ageism, grow diversity, increase accessibility

- Pet owners are part of the diversity of older lives in South Australia.
- Pet ownership can assist in bridging age groups.
- Pet inclusive public access (e.g. design of places, spaces, buildings including retirement and aged care facility communities) and ageing service system design (e.g. emergency pet fostering in aged care) will support older pet owners to age well.
- Developing a robust “pets and ageing” information hub will enable older South Australians to access options and supports that enable ageing well.

## Supporting conditions

### Outcomes driven, systems perspective, collaboration

- Older people’s lived experiences mean that they want to continue to have engagement with pets and other animals, and the “Petness continuum” provides a spectrum of ideas for enabling this.
- An ageing well lens that incorporates companion animals systemically can mean that an important element in many older people’s lives is not overlooked.
- Including animal care and religious organisations in the network of partnerships seen to have a role in South Australians ageing well looks outside of established relationships and offers novel possibilities.

Photo courtesy of Jenny Bennett,  
Through the Lens





# Methodology

## Co-design

This project comprised eight co-design focus groups and an online survey targeting South Australians aged 60+.

The co-design process enabled us to work directly with older people to develop a spectrum of pet engagement models. The process was designed to build upon each series of conversations to enable fine-tuning of the pet engagement models throughout the process. This process also included testing the survey with participants from the initial focus groups.

Over 200 people participated in the project including individuals, two men's

sheds, a community centre group, and residents from an aged care facility. Diversity of participants was encouraged by targeted recruiting from varying locations, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses to ensure inclusion of diverse voices and experiences of older South Australians.

## COVID-19 impact

Focus groups were mainly conducted via an online format using Zoom<sup>1</sup>. This posed both an opportunity and a disadvantage. The online nature of the focus groups meant participants were not restricted by the geographical

location should they wish to take part, along with the ease and convenience that comes from using technology. Disadvantages included that only people with access to technology, along with the ability to use it were able to participate.

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<sup>1</sup>Zoom Voice Communications, San Jose, California, United States.



## Focus groups

The focus groups allowed the project team to hear directly from older people and to collaborate with them to shape the direction of the pet engagement models. It also gave participants an opportunity to share their animal experiences and to discuss the changing nature of pet ownership with ageing. The focus groups were promoted through several targeted recruitment strategies including:

- Posts on the Office for Ageing Well Seniors Card Facebook page.
- Articles in WeekendPlus digital magazine produced by the Seniors Card Unit, Office for Ageing Well.
- A radio interview on Coast FM by UniSA (Monday 24 May 2020).
- Post on the Dog and Cat Management Board Facebook page.

- Distribution of information via the UniSA Project Team and Pets and Heath Research Network.

There were mainly two facilitators for each focus group: (i) one to chair and keep the discussions on track and (ii) the other to record the participants' feedback. The feedback was recorded and shared with the group via the Zoom screen. This method of note-taking allowed participants to see the information being typed on screen, allowing for additional comments and any corrections.

### Round One

The first round of focus groups (4 sessions in total) was conducted online throughout June 2020. The information from this round was used to inform a survey to gather wider responses from the public, and present the findings generated from the initial focus groups.

### Round Two

The second round of focus groups (4 sessions in total) was conducted to refine the survey and focus group data. This provided the project team an opportunity to target any missing groups of demographics from the first round, such as men, people living in rural areas, people living in aged care facilities and to extend the cultural diversity among participants.

The second round of workshops was conducted from October to December 2020 and included a combination of online and face-to-face sessions:

- Whyalla Men's Shed, Whyalla
- St Albans Men's Shed, Largs Bay
- Aldgate Community Hut, Aldgate
- Bene Italian Village, St Agnes



Online survey

An online survey was available from 5 to 29 October 2020 which aimed to gather wider feedback relating to the ‘Petness’ spectrum as identified in the focus groups (round one). The survey was piloted with several participants from round one focus groups and questions were refined based on their feedback. A total of 174 older people from South Australia completed the survey.

The survey was promoted through [WeekendPlus](#) (16 October 2020), Office for Ageing Well Seniors Card Facebook page, via the UniSA project team’s networks and by ‘word of mouth’.



WEEKENDPLUS.SA.GOV.AU  
**Pet ownership in South Australians aged 60 and over**  
Many people find comfort, company and meaning in having pets. But we know...

Our findings are a result of the following communications with older people

Total conversations	205
Focus group participants	31
Completed surveys	174

Other facts

- Age range of participants — 60–83 years.
- Living situation — Majority homeowners, & others living with family, renters, living in retirement village, aged care facility.
- Species of pets — Dogs, cats, fish, birds, chickens, tortoises, horses, snakes.



# What did they tell us?

## There is a “Petness continuum”

Through the conversations with older people, a spectrum of pet engagement models (‘Petness’) was developed.

The ‘Petness’ continuum moves from high to low in terms of:

- Legal, financial and moral responsibility for an animal.
- Where an animal resides and for how much of their time.
- Intimacy and reciprocity of human-animal relationship – being “known” by the other being; touching and being touched; emotional interdependence.

**The ‘Petness’ continuum (see Figure 2) consists of five interlinked and overlapping core categories based on the lived experience and ideas of our older South Australian participants:**

**Full pet ownership** refers to having a companion animal and the pet owner/guardian takes full responsibility for the legal<sup>2</sup> and financial requirements and ongoing care such as housing, medical care, and basic needs. The animal lives with the pet owner/guardian 24/7.

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<sup>2</sup> There are legal obligations under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and local laws for dog and cat ownership such as registration, desexing and microchipping.

## What is ‘petness’?

‘Petness’ is the term coined for this project to describe a range of pet engagements that could lie between having, or not having a companion animal or pet – The Pet or No Pet Divide.

The ‘petness’ spectrum is composed of five core overlapping categories of animal engagement considering:

- Legal, financial and moral responsibility for an animal.
- Where an animal resides.
- Intimacy and reciprocity of the human-animal relationship.



**Support to pet owners** refers to keeping a companion animal, but the pet owner/guardian needs support with the pet ownership responsibilities. The animal lives with the pet owner/guardian 24/7.

**'Quasi pets'** refers to having personal engagement with a pet but removes the pet ownership responsibilities. In this category, pet engagement may be regular and there is a sense of a personal relationship or being known by an animal. The animal may live with the older person for a specific period.

**'Distance & remote encounters'** refers to viewing animals from a distance or playing a role in supporting animal issues or organisations without having direct contact or a personal relationship with an animal.

**No pet contact** refers to no direct contact with a pet but sense of animal connection.

The pet engagement models covered a range of ideas such as adopting older pets (ageing together), fostering an animal, walking other people's dogs, volunteering at an animal shelter, viewing animals from a distance (e.g. dog parks, zoos) and praying for deceased animals.

The models also highlighted that animal interactions can occur across a range of settings such as public places (e.g. dog parks, zoos), in private spaces such as domestic spaces, and within organisational settings such as animal shelters, retirement villages and places of worship (e.g. prayers for deceased pets).

The pros and cons of the forms of pet engagement were also canvassed with participants. People identified the following broad positives and negatives across the diverse options.

Photo courtesy of Fiona De Rosa





## Pros

### Positives of animal engagements

- Providing company and companionship 24/7.
- Giving a purpose in life “a reason to get up in the morning”.
- Providing a sense of security and safety.
- Facilitate connections to other people and local neighbourhood.
- ‘Quasi pets’ – get to have animal contact without the responsibility.
- Distanced encounters – can get to “suss out” breeds/species; can make human-human connections.
- No pet contact – can feel like you are still giving to animals.

## Cons

### Cautions, negatives and barriers

- Expenses associated with animal care – especially food, veterinary care, medication. Care of older animals in particular is expensive.
- Need to have the physical capability to provide appropriate quality care to a pet.
- Having pets restricts lifestyle e.g. travel, overnight stays particularly if one lives alone.
- Emotional stress of losing an animal and concerns for the animal’s welfare if the owner dies before.
- ‘Quasi pets’ – can be very hard to return animals – emotionally challenging.
- Distanced encounters – people value the highly personal nature of pets.

## In summary

The following factors are important for individuals to keep in mind if using the ‘Petness’ continuum to facilitate pet-ownership decision-making:

- Personal finances – ability to fund the level of care considered (personally or societally) appropriate for an animal.
- Desirable levels of (human) responsibility including consequent impacts on animal caring capacity.
- Emotional factors.





Photo courtesy of CCO Public Domain

### **IMAGINE: “It’s a Match” – Pet-inder for Pets**

Sid spends the evening swiping left and right on his iPhone™. His grand-daughter is getting married interstate and he desperately wants to be able to be there on the day. But he is worried that his furry best friend Coco will pine and go off her food while he is away.

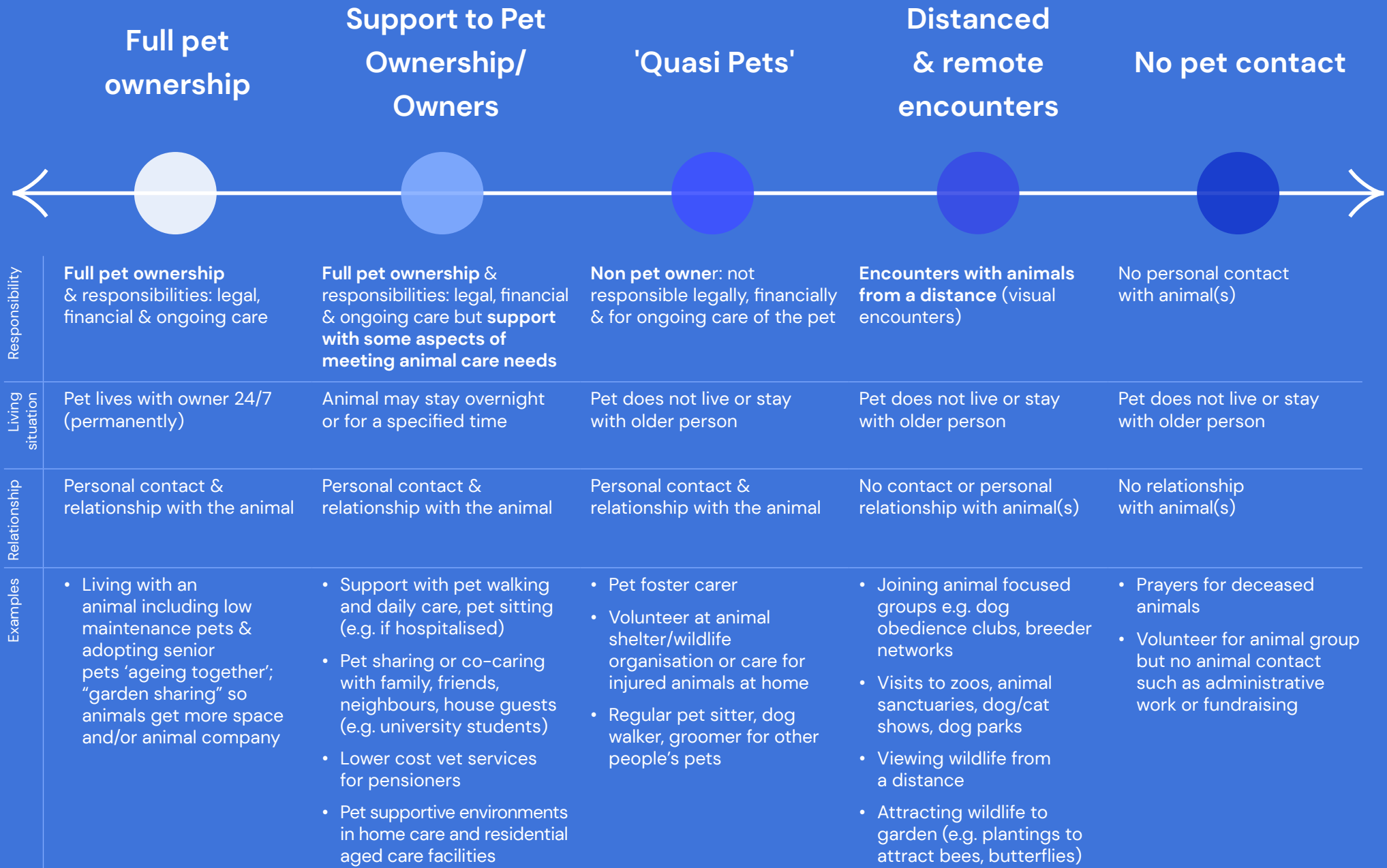
As he trawls through the pet sitters and dog walkers on Pet-inder to see who he might trust to care for his best friend. She needs to have someone who will talk to her, who knows how fussy she is about the quality of her water, who keeps her favourite window ledge clear of outside obstructions...he finds three possible contacts who have all had police clearances and been assessed by Pet-inder’s qualified animal care assessors. He reads their profiles and reviews and sends an email to each one with a list of Coco’s needs – Pet-inder recommends this and provides a secure online connection point.

One week later he makes the choice to engage Caleb who has great references, has been a pet carer for four years and has three fussy cats of his own.

Sid gets to be there on his grand-daughter’s special day, he hears from Caleb every day with photos of Coco’s latest antics, and Caleb discovers that Sid is an ex-mechanic keen to help him to get the “old beauty” he has in the shed running again.



Figure 2: Detailed Petness Continuum





# Key messages

A number of key messages emerged from the conversations with older South Australians.

**1. Pets are valued family members** in many older people's lives. Ageing policy, programs, projects and other responses need to recognise the importance that people place on these cross-species relationships.

***"They're just family"*** (participant)

**2. Pets' wellbeing and overall quality of life were core to people's concerns.** People wanted pets to have a 'good' life, and this was a deciding factor in whether to have another pet or not.

***"You need to make sure you can care for the animal and give them what they need"*** (participant)

**3. Older pet owners were very concerned about what would happen to their pet if something happened to them.** While this includes sudden hospitalisations, **most leapt to the possibility of being one of the small proportion of people who end up "in a home"**. Supporting people to remain pet owners needs to encompass this fear. (See: "Imagining what a pet inclusive Ageing Well South Australia might look like" ideas boxes.)

***"I want to have pets as long as I can."***

***"But what if something happens to me?"***

***"It wouldn't be fair to them (pet)."***

(multiple participants)

**4. Provision of support including services and programs was identified as an important element of growing old with a pet.** Supportive environments would allow older people to continue their relationship with their pet. Suggestions included cheaper vet services for pensioners, accommodation programs to assist with pet care (e.g. accommodation in return for pet care/ sharing), support with pet behavioural issues, and care for pets in (human) emergencies. Stakeholders such as local councils, community centres, and university students were suggested to assist with providing pet support.

**5. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' either across individuals OR across the life stages of ageing.** Participants identified that patterns of pet ownership →



can change with ageing. For example, moving from a large to a small property may lead to considering owning a less active dog, or a different species (e.g. from dog to cat). Often early retirement is very active, and people want to travel internationally meaning they can't give an animal the constancy of care they deserve.

*“Some don't want to spend the time to walk a dog (and) play with a pet”* (participant)

**6. Provision of public spaces and supporting community infrastructure** where older pet owners and their pets (mainly dogs) can visit is vital. Easily accessible open space; safe and well-maintained footpaths; clean pet water bowls. These needs of older people and their pets are particularly important given block sizes are getting smaller and apartment living is increasing, hence greater reliance on public open spaces.



Photo courtesy of Kay Jamieson, Through the Lens

*“I would get to the (public) gardens but what's the point of walking there and leaving my dog at home? Hence I never go.”* (participant)

**7. Pet inclusion in housing targeted at older people:** Older people we spoke to strongly supported pet inclusion, particularly pet ownership in residential aged care and retirement villages. They wanted the option to take their pet(s) with them into retirement villages and aged care

facilities. There was also mention of abolishing “no pets” rule in rental accommodation that target older people.

**8. Standards of care and support services:** Participants stressed that they are ‘choosy’ in who helps them care for their animal, and the standard of support services was an important consideration.

*“I wouldn't just let anyone walk or pet-sit my dog”* (participant)



### **IMAGINE: Pets and Animals in Aged Care and Retirement Housing**

The inclusion of pets in aged care and retirement housing was a common theme in the conversations with older people. Ideas included:

- Develop policies that enable older people to bring their personal pets with them into ageing specific housing including retirement villages and residential aged care facilities.
- Create pet-friendly spaces and provide supporting infrastructure in aged care housing for pets e.g. places for cats to look out, high spots for cats to perch, outdoor spaces for dogs to exercise safely off-leash and places to sniff.
- Plant appropriate vegetation in residential aged care housing sites to attract wildlife such as butterflies, and birds for residents to watch.
- Organise a day trip to an animal sanctuary or zoo for an encounter with animals.
- Support visiting animals – people's pets, animal visitation programs (e.g. Delta Dogs).
- Consider how the design of the building could take advantage of the natural environment to create visual encounters with animals. For example, residents at Bene Aged Care at St Agnes can watch visiting koalas from the second storey lounge room.





## Thank you

To all the wonderful people aged over 60, community services, community groups, Office for Ageing Well staff, and academics and students at UniSA who are a part of this project.



Photo courtesy of Pixabay

### **IMAGINE: A Pet Inclusive Emergency and Aged Care Response**

It's 3am, the ambulance officers are talking to Ms Jones who has had a fall about her need to go to hospital. But Ms Jones is desperately concerned "what about Charlie – my Cockatiel?"

There is no one to feed her and she's all I have. We've been family for 10 years...". The officer says, "I'll just ring the animal emergency care number". So she rings the number and the person on the other end of the phone says, "All fine, Mrs Smith who lives in the aged care village close by has been assessed by our service as being fabulous with companion birds facing an emergency such as this, we can pick up Charlie and take her to Mrs Smith". So they do.

And then when Ms Jones cannot return home, an animal inclusive aged care residence is found for her and she and Charlie happily live for five more mutually fulfilling years.



# Recommendations



Photo courtesy of Pam Bettison, Through the Lens





## Policy

- Human–animal relationships need to be embedded in ageing policy to reflect the value that older people place on these, and to recognise the role pets play in people’s lives, particularly those who live alone.
- Barriers to pet ownership across all forms of housing especially that target older populations (including retirement villages and residential aged care facilities) need to be reconsidered and pet inclusion needs to become the normal baseline.
- The development of a range of pet engagement models to cater for the diverse needs, lifestyles, and abilities of older people needs to be actively encouraged (no one–size–fits–all).
- Local councils and community centres need to be encouraged to develop sustainable initiatives that facilitate positive connections between older people and companion animals, including in ageing plans, strategies and programs.
- Age–friendly and pet–friendly design should be encouraged to cater for the needs of older pet owners and their companion animals. New developments such as retirement villages and residential aged care facilities need to incorporate pet friendly/inclusive spaces, and established entities need to consider retrofitting to cater for animal needs.





## Practice

- Encourage aged care service providers to be 'animal inclusive' and provide greater clarity about what species (e.g. dogs, cats, birds) are allowed and under what conditions/restrictions (e.g. Safe Animal Friendly Eldercare – pets in aged care risk management framework in development as of March 2021, see [Resources](#))
- Develop a package of information ('Pets as we Age') on the range of pet engagement models identified in this project, including the resources covered (see [Resources](#)). This is to help older people make informed decisions about pet ownership or alternative connections.
- Support the development, in partnership with older pet owners, of quality-of-care standards for design and delivery of pet support services for older people. This includes the development of "pet-carer-assessment" systems so that quality of animal-care concerns is central to the support offered to older pet owners.
- Encourage the development of acceptable, sustainable pet support services for older people and their pets (beyond one-off funding packages).





## Partnerships

### Animal care services

Inviting animal care services to be part of the network of partnerships convened by Office for Ageing Well could facilitate innovative pet inclusive approaches to ageing well. Many older people volunteer in this sector. These organisations struggle to meet peak demands for animal care. Extending foster care models into residential care and to emergency situations offers the opportunity to meet both human and animal needs. See example, “A Pet Inclusive Emergency and Aged Care Response”.

### Religious organisations

Many aged care services are linked to religious groups; however, connecting to religious organisations directly has the potential to facilitate the kind of responses reported in example “Remembering the Animals We Have Loved”. In addition, church leaders are concerned that average ages of church attendees is above the population average. There are clear synergies with South Australia’s Plan for Ageing Well 2020–2025 that warrant exploration.

### Private enterprise

Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the development of resources, tools, services, and other innovative approaches that facilitate pet-inclusive connections while safeguarding both humans and animals. For example, the development of “Tinder for Pets/Pet-inder” – a pets and people matching app.



# Resources

## Existing pet support initiatives

### [RSPCA Pet Legacy Program](https://www.rspca.org.au/support-us/pet-legacies)

<https://www.rspca.org.au/support-us/pet-legacies>

### [‘Pets of Older Persons’ \(WA\) and AWLQ](https://www.poopswa.org.au/)

<https://www.poopswa.org.au/>

### [Golden Hearts, Seniors’ Pet Support Program \(QLD\)](https://www.awlqld.com.au/pet-owner-help/seniors-pet-support/golden-hearts/)

<https://www.awlqld.com.au/pet-owner-help/seniors-pet-support/golden-hearts/>

### [4 Paws Animal Rescue \(QLD\)](https://www.4pawsanimalrescue.org.au/)

<https://www.4pawsanimalrescue.org.au/>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-30/4-paws-animal-rescue-finds-new-homes-for-old-pets/13010872>

### [Emergency pet plan – Emergency pet plan developed by NDIS and Feros care](https://www.feroscare.com.au/ndis/projects/emergency-pet-plan)

<https://www.feroscare.com.au/ndis/projects/emergency-pet-plan>

## In development

Safe Animal Friendly Eldercare (SAFE)  
– Multi-species/Pet risk-management framework for aged care

In progress at University of South Australia, funded by Society for Companion Animal Studies (UK)

Contact Dr Janette Young via email at [janette.young@unisa.edu.au](mailto:janette.young@unisa.edu.au)

## Reports

### [RSPCA Pet Care Support, or Companion Animal Programs \(CAPS\), Toolkit](https://www.rspcasa.org.au/the-issues/petcaresupport/)

<https://www.rspcasa.org.au/the-issues/petcaresupport/>

### [Animal Welfare League Australia: The pets in Aged Care National Snapshot 2018](https://issuu.com/animalwelfareleagueaustralia/docs/pets_in_aged_care_snapshot)

[https://issuu.com/animalwelfareleagueaustralia/docs/pets\\_in\\_aged\\_care\\_snapshot](https://issuu.com/animalwelfareleagueaustralia/docs/pets_in_aged_care_snapshot)

## Other

Contact your local council or community centre to see if they offer any pet support programs or resources for older people.



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