

Port Elliot Dog Waste Project

Australian dog owner awareness, attitude, knowledge and behaviour regarding dog waste.



Introduction

A dog waste survey was developed and implemented as one strategy of the South Australian Port Elliot Dog Waste project funded by an Alexandrina Council Community Environment grant in 2019. This project was coordinated by Friends of the Port Elliot Dog Park (part of the Port Elliot Town and Foreshore Improvement Association) in partnership with Alexandrina Council, Fleurieu Regional Waste Authority and UniSA.

Two dog waste surveys were distributed using the same method via social media community groups and dog owner groups in December 2019 and May 2020. The survey was to gather information from dog owners about awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to dog waste. Seven questions and three demographic questions were included, and in survey 2, responders were also asked if they had completed the survey before (in December 2019).

Questions included dog ownership and dog size, knowledge about different dog waste bags and the Australia Compostable bags symbol (seedling logo), dog waste collection and disposal methods and importance of diverting dog waste from landfill. Demographic questions included age, gender and postcode of usual residence.

Survey Data

Test surveys, blank surveys and surveys completed by people who did not own a dog were removed from the analysis. Data from survey 1, survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys were summarised.

Results

There was a good response rate to both surveys with over 1,900 dog owners viewing the survey, and information for analysis included more than 1550. Most dog owners were from South Australia (90 and 87%) and about two thirds of responders were aged 39 years and over with very few aged under 18 years. Survey responders represented 2,663 dogs and just over half of the dogs were large dogs and just over half the dogs were 'only' dogs.

1. Dog owner awareness

1.1 Differences in dog waste bags

Dog owners' who reported awareness of the differences between compostable, biodegradable and plastic bags

1.1.1 Survey 1 - 59%

1.1.2 Survey 2 - 63%

1.1.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 91%

1.2 Australia Compostable Standard symbol (seedling logo) meaning

Dog owners who reported they'd seen the seedling logo before

1.2.1 Survey 1 - 15%

1.2.2 Survey 2 - 20%

1.2.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 45%

2. Dog owner knowledge

2.1 Knowledge of Australia Compostable Standard symbol (seedling logo)

Dog owners who had seen the logo before

2.1.1 Survey 1 - 23%

2.1.2 Survey 2 - 28%

2.1.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 60%

3. Dog owner attitude

3.1 Rating of the importance of reducing dog waste to landfill

Dog owners who gave a 'rating of extremely important' or 'very important'

3.1.1 Survey 1 - 85%

3.1.2 Survey 2 - 74%

3.1.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 77%

4. Dog owner behaviour

4.1 Bags Use

The 'usual' way dog owners collected dog waste:

4.1.1 Survey 1 – 42% used bio/oxydegradable bags, 28% used compostable bag

4.1.2 Survey 2 – 36% used compostable bags, 35% used bio/oxydegradable bags

4.1.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 64% used compostable bags, 22% used bio/oxydegradable bags

4.2 Dog poop disposal method

The most common 'always or usual' dog poop disposal method:

4.2.1 Survey 1 – general waste bin (47%), green bin (39%)

4.2.2 Survey 2 – general waste bin (44%), green bin (41%)

4.2.3 Dog owners who answered both surveys - green bin (58%), general waste bin (19%).

Dog owners who 'always or usually' compost or bury dog waste:

4.2.4 Survey 1 - 14%

4.2.5 Survey 2 - 9%

4.2.6 Dog owners who answered both surveys - 11%

Appendix

Survey Questions

- Q1 Please indicate the size of your dogs and how many dogs of this size live with you.
- Q2 Do you think it is important that the amount of dog waste sent to landfill should be reduced?
(5 options: Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not important, not at all important)
- Q3 Are you aware of the differences between biodegradable, compostable and plastic bags? (Information about bag differences provided)
- Q4 What sort of plastic bags do you use at home?
- Q5 Have you previously seen this logo? (Picture provided)
- Q6 Were you previously aware of what the Australian Compostability Standard Symbol means?
- Q7 How do you dispose of dog waste at home?
(6 options: general waste bin, organics waste bin, recycling bin, I have a dog compost system at home, I bury dog waste in the garden, other)
- Q8 Age group
- Q9 Gender
- Q10 Postcode of usual residence

Contact:

Ruth Miller

Coordinator Port Elliot Dog Waste project

ruthmiller5212@gmail.com

