

Port Elliot Dog Waste Project

Dog Waste Surveys



Introduction

A dog waste survey was developed and implemented as one strategy of the 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 in December 2019 and May 2020 to gather information from dog owners about awareness, attitudes, knowledge and practices 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 Dec 2019 (pre post responders).

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 both surveys were compared with data from dog owners who answered both surveys.

Table 1. Data in Tables for surveys 1 and 2 and responders of both surveys

Dog Waste Survey Data	Survey 1	Survey 2	Both surveys
Survey date	10 th December to 31 st December 2019 (22 days)	20 th May to 30 June 2020 (40 days)	NA
Total Responses	Total N = 1254 Blanks N = 281 No dogs N = 3	Total N = 844 Blanks N =148 No dogs N = 3	NA
Data used for results	N = 970	N = 693	N = 64
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DNA 30 (3.1%)• SA 871 (90%)• Vic 28 (3.8%)• NSW 24 (3.3%)• Qld 10 (1.4%)• WA 4• Tas 2• NT 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DNA 55 (7.9%)• SA 603 (87%)• Vic 26 (3.8%)• NSW 3• Qld 3• WA 1• Tas 1• NT 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DNA 4 (6.3)• SA 59 (92%)• Tas 1
Non-SA postcodes	N = 69/940, 7.3%	N = 32/638, 5%	N = 1, 1.7%

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 the state of South Australia (90 and 87%), and Victorians were the second most common responders, followed by NSW.

There was a much higher response rate from dog owners from Fleurieu region postcodes who completed both survey 1 and survey 2 (55%, compared with 20 and 30%).

Figure 1a

Number of dog owners who completed Survey 1 (Dec 2019), Survey 2 (May 2020) and both surveys

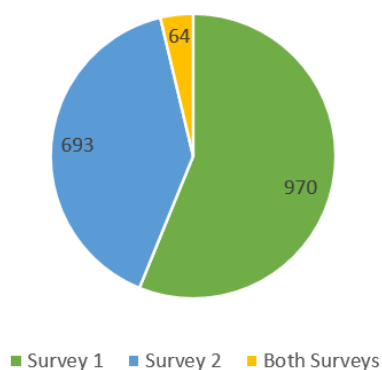


Figure 1b

Percent of responders to dog waste surveys from Fleurieu postcodes

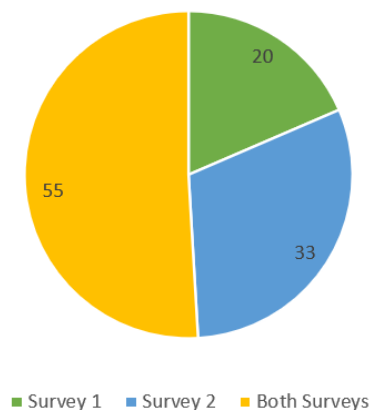


Table 2a. Gender of responders

Gender	Number (Survey 1)	Percent (Survey 1)	Number (Survey 2)	Percent (Survey 2)	Number (Both surveys)	Percent (Both surveys)
Male	100	10.3	98	14.1	11	17.2
Female	847	87.3	549	79.2	50	78.1
Did Not Answer	23	2.4	46	6.6	3	4.7

The large majority of responders were female, with slightly more males in survey 2, and almost one in 5 people who completed both surveys were male.

Table 2b. Age of responders

Age	Number (Survey 1)	Percent (Survey 1)	Number (Survey 2)	Percent (Survey 2)	Number (Both surveys)	Percent (Both surveys)
Under 18	5	0.5	3	0.4	0	0
18 to 38	204	21.0	181	26.1	8	12.5
39 to 59	486	50.1	279	40.3	24	37.5
60 to 79	263	27.1	192	27.7	29	45.3
80+	4	0.4	3	0.4	0	0
Did not answer	8	0.8	35	5.1	3	4.7

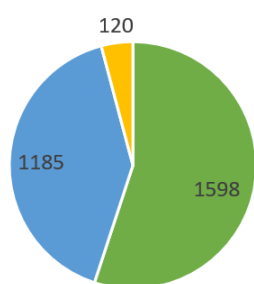
Most responders in both surveys were aged between 18 and 79 years old. About two thirds of responders were aged more than 39 years, very few aged under 18 years, and more responders under 39 years completed survey 2.

Table 3a. Number of dogs owned by survey responders in Survey 1, Survey 2 and for those who answered both surveys

Number and % of dogs owned by responders	Number (Survey 1)	Percent (Survey 1)	Number (Survey 2)	Percent (Survey 2)	Number (Both Surveys)	Percent (Both surveys)
1 dog	539	55.6	365	52.7	27	42.2
2 dogs	320	33.0	242	34.9	29	45.3
3 dogs	64	6.6	47	6.8	3	4.7
4 or more dogs	47	4.8	39	5.6	5	7.8

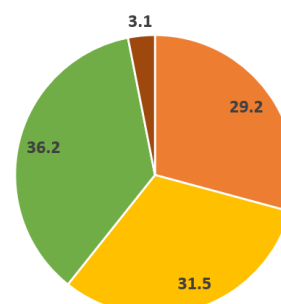
Survey 1 reached dog owners with a total of 1598 dogs, and survey 2 reached dog owners with 1185 dogs. Most dog owners had one or two dogs. Over half the dog owners in survey 1 had one dog, this was slightly lower in survey 2, but more dog owners who answered both surveys had two dogs.

Number of dogs owned by responders of the dog waste surveys



■ Survey 1 ■ Survey 2 ■ Both Surveys

Percent of dogs by size owned by responders in Survey 1 (Dec 2019)



■ Small ■ Medium ■ Large ■ Giant

Table 3b. Size of dogs owned by survey responders

Number and size of dogs	Survey 1 #	Survey 1 %	Survey 2 #	Survey 2 %	Both #	Both %
TOTAL	1598	100	1185	100	120	100
Small - Jack Russel	466	29.2	299	25.2	30	25
Medium - Kelpie, Beagle	503	31.5	385	32.5	36	30
Large - Labrador, Rottweiler	579	36.2	473	39.9	52	43.3
Giant - Great Dane, St Barnard	50	3.1	28	2.4	2	1.7

The size of dogs owned by responders was fairly evenly spread between small, medium and large sized dogs, though more dog owners who owned large dogs and more dogs responded to both surveys. Perhaps people with more and larger dogs are more conscious of dog waste than others!

Table 4a. Dog owners’ awareness of differences in types of dog waste bags in Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

Aware of differences in types of bags	Number (Survey 1)	Percent (Survey 1)	Number (Survey 2)	Percent (Survey 2)	Number (Both surveys)	Percent (Both surveys)
Yes	569	58.7	435	62.8	58	90.6
No	399	41.1	258	37.2	5	7.8

We know there is confusion about the different types of dog waste bags available for collecting dog waste. Awareness of bag differences by dog owners was much greater among those who answered both surveys, suggesting the first survey was effective in improving this awareness (greater than 30% increase).

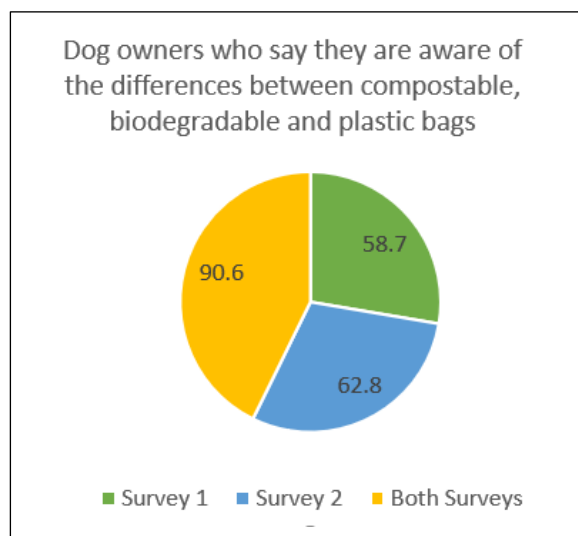


Table 5a. Type of dog waste bags dog owners say they 'usually' or 'sometimes' use in Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

Type of dog waste bags used	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
	Survey 1			Survey 2			Both surveys		
Compostable bags (usually green)	273 (28.1%)	200 20.6%	239 24.6%	247 35.6%	129 18.6%	138 19.9%	41 64.1%	10 15.6%	4 6.3%
Biodegradable/Oxydegradable bags (usually black)	405 (41.8%)	255 26.3%	161 16.6%	243 35.1%	182 26.3%	117 16.9%	14 21.9%	19 29.7%	1523.4%
Plastic bags (any colour)	106 (10.9%)	132 13.6%	382 39.4%	85 12.3%	79 11.4%	222 32.0%	3 4.7%	5 7.8%	21 32.8%
I don't use bags	119 (12.3%)	87 9.0%	226 23.3%	62 8.9%	40 5.8%	7 1.0%	2 3.1%	9 14.1%	7 10.9%

Dog owners were asked to give a response to four different methods of collecting dog waste. When using dog owners' 'usual' method of collection, the most common in survey 1 was bio/oxydegradable bags (41.8%), followed by compostable bags (28.1%). In survey 2, compostable bags and bio/oxydegradable bag use was more similar, and for dog owners who completed both surveys, two thirds usually used compostable bags (quite a substantial increase) and just over a fifth usually use bio/oxydegradable bags (quite a substantial decrease).

Figure 5a

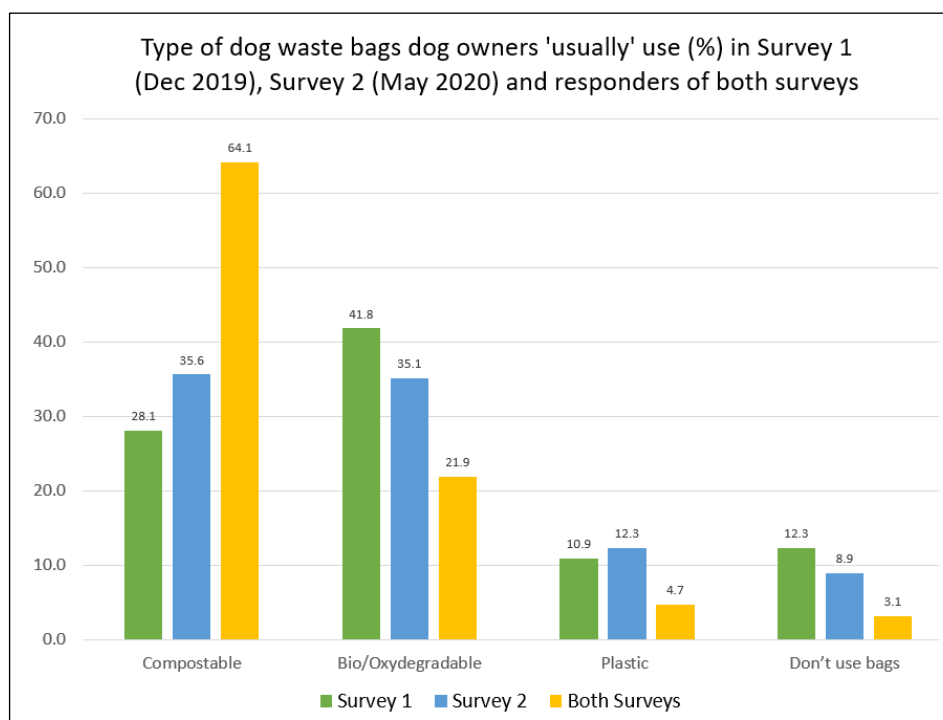


Table 6a. Method of disposal of dog waste by dog owners reported in Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

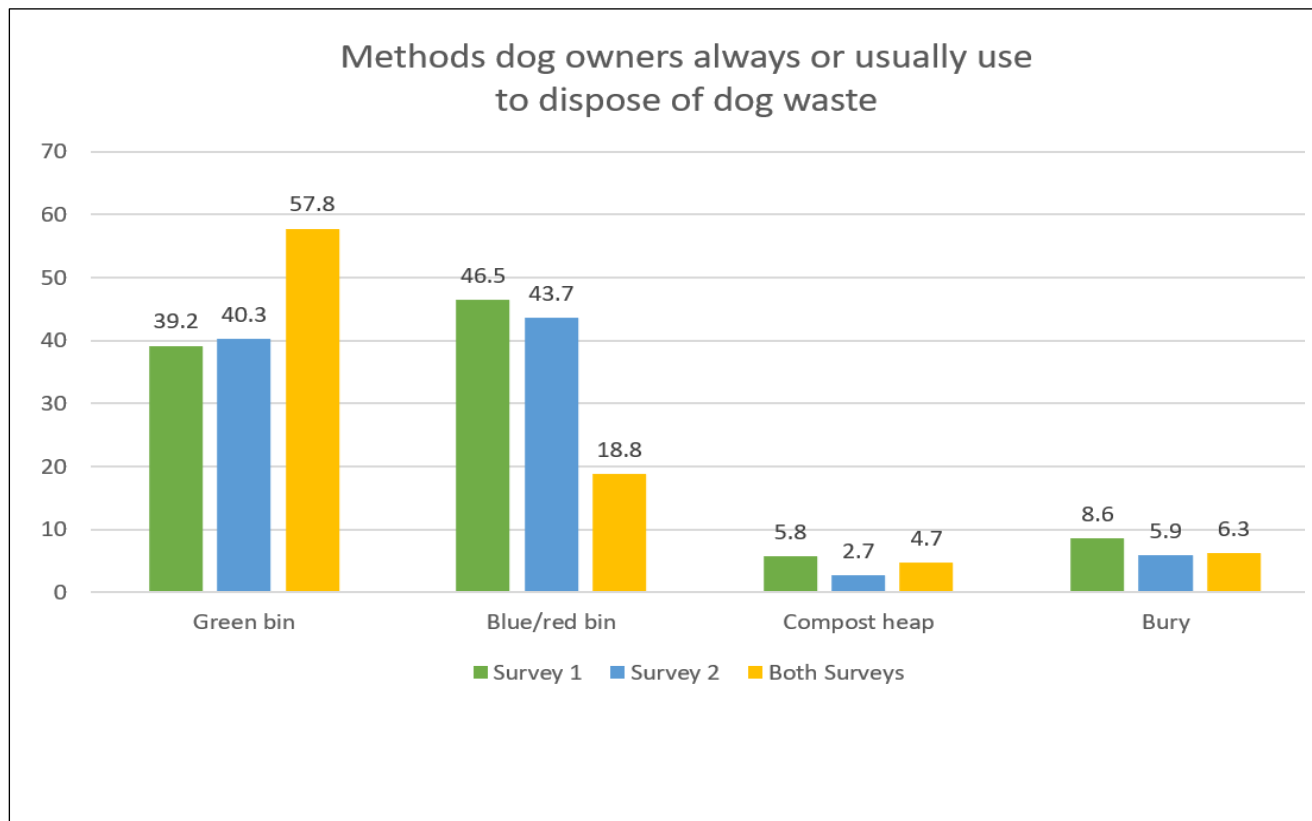
Disposal method %	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Always & Usually	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Always & Usually	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Always & Usually
	Survey 1					Survey 2					Both surveys				
Green Bin	21.5%	17.6%	16.7%	27.9%	39.2	19.6%	20.6%	17.3%	21.6%	40.3	19.6%	20.6%	17.3%	21.6%	57.8
Yellow (recycling) bin	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%	66.2%	0.3	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	55.4%	0.4	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	55.4%	3.1
Blue or Red (general waste) bin	27.2%	19.3%	23.9%	17.0%	46.5	26.1%	17.6%	27.7%	10.8%	43.7	26.1%	17.6%	27.7%	10.8%	18.8
On the compost heap	1.6%	4.1%	10.3%	54.6%	5.8	0.9%	1.9%	9.8%	45.5%	2.7	0.9%	1.9%	9.8%	45.5%	4.7
Bury in the garden	2.8%	5.8%	15.9%	49.4%	8.6	1.3%	4.6%	16.3%	40.4%	5.9	1.3%	4.6%	16.3%	40.4%	6.3
Other method	1.4%	3.0%	4.4%	15.1%	4.4	2.0%	2.5%	4.2%	2.9%	4.5	2.0%	2.5%	4.2%	2.9%	4.7

Reported disposal method for dog waste by dog owners was quite similar in survey 1 and survey 2 (39.2 vs 40.3 for green bin), however dog owners who answered both surveys reported a much higher ‘always’ or ‘usual’ use of a green bin for disposing dog waste (57.8%).

Reported disposal method for dog waste by dog owners was quite similar in survey 1 and survey 2 (39.2 vs 40.3 for green bin), however dog owners who answered both surveys reported a much higher ‘always’ or ‘usual’ use of a green bin for disposing dog waste (57.8%).

The use of the general waste bin for dog waste was the most common disposal method reported by dog owners (46.5% vs 43.7%), however dog owners who answered both surveys reported a much lower 'always' or 'usual' use of the general waste bin for disposing dog waste (18.8%).

Figure 6a



Reporting about use of compost heaps or burying dog waste as disposal methods for dog waste by dog owners was very low, compost heap (5.8%, 2.7%) and burying (8.6%, 5.9%). This reveals lots of scope to determine and implement strategies to improve this.

Figure 6b

Percent of dog owners who 'always' or 'usually' compost or bury dog waste as a means of disposal for Survey 1 (Dec 2019), Survey 2 (May 2020) and dog owners who answered both surveys

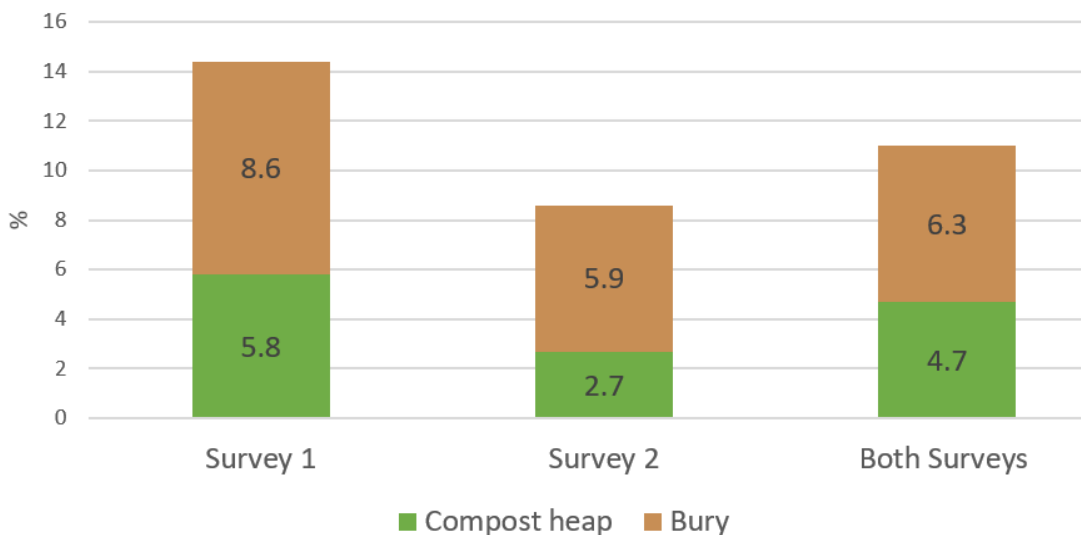


Table 7a. Dog owners' responses to whether they had seen the Australia Compostability Standard symbol before (seedling logo) for Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

Seen the seedling logo before	Survey 1		Survey 2		Both surveys	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	222	22.9	194	28	39	60.1
No	576	59.4	351	50.6	11	17.2
Unsure	170	17.5	133	19.1	12	18.8
No answer	2	0.2	15	2.2	2	3.1

Less than a quarter of dog owners reported seeing the logo before in survey 1 (22.9%) and this increased slightly in survey 2 (28.5%). Dog owners who completed both survey 1 and survey 2 were much more likely to report having seen the logo before (60.1%).

Figure 7a

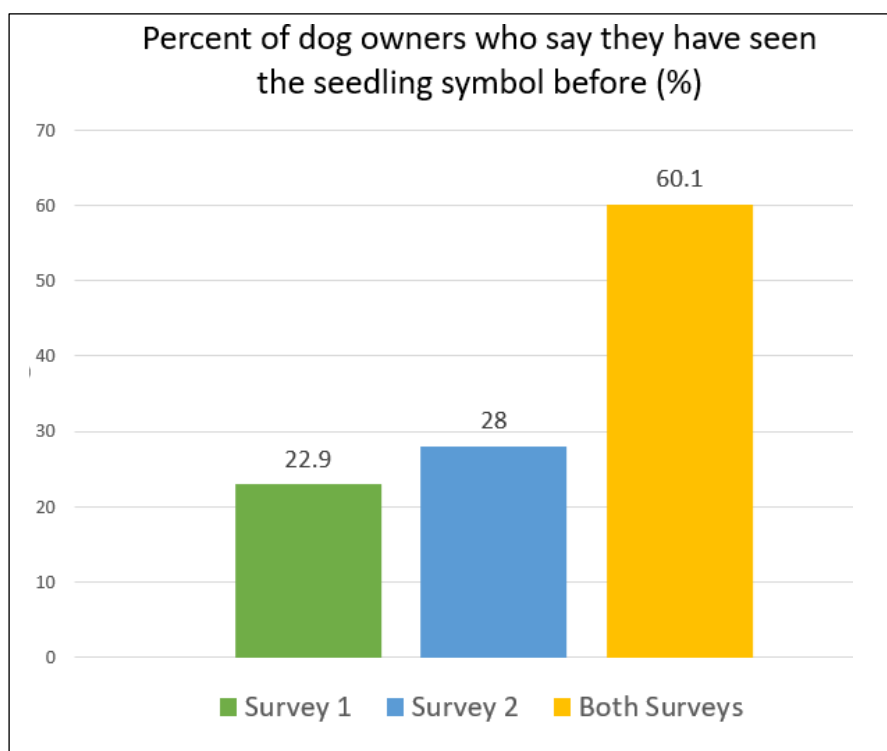


Table 8a. Dog owners' responses to whether they were previously aware of the Australia Compostability Standard symbol meaning for Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

Previously aware of seedling logo meaning	Survey 1		Survey 2		Both surveys	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	144	14.8	138	19.9	29	45.3
No	760	78.4	474	48.5	30	46.9
Unsure	60	6.2	60	8.7	3	4.7
No answer	6	0.6	21	3.0	2	3.1

When it comes to what the seedling logo actually means, in survey 1 this was less than 15%, increase to almost 20 percent in survey 2, and again, three times the number who had completed both surveys said they understood the meaning..

Figure 8a

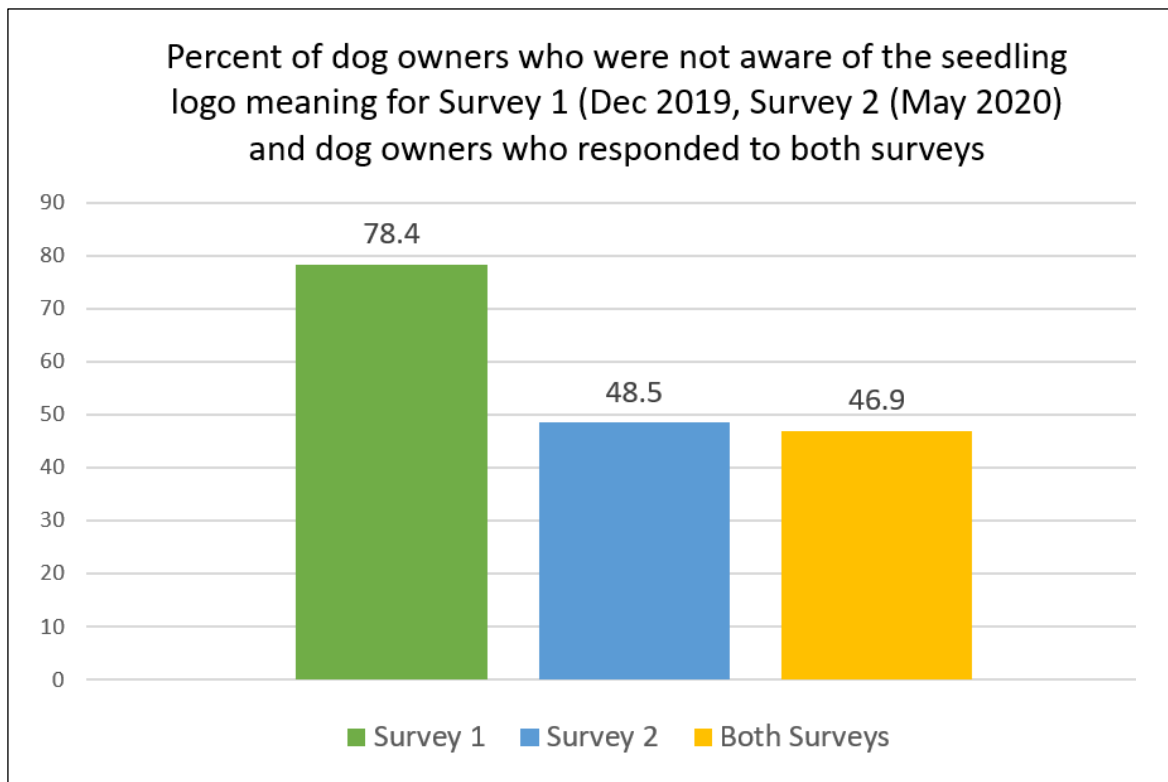
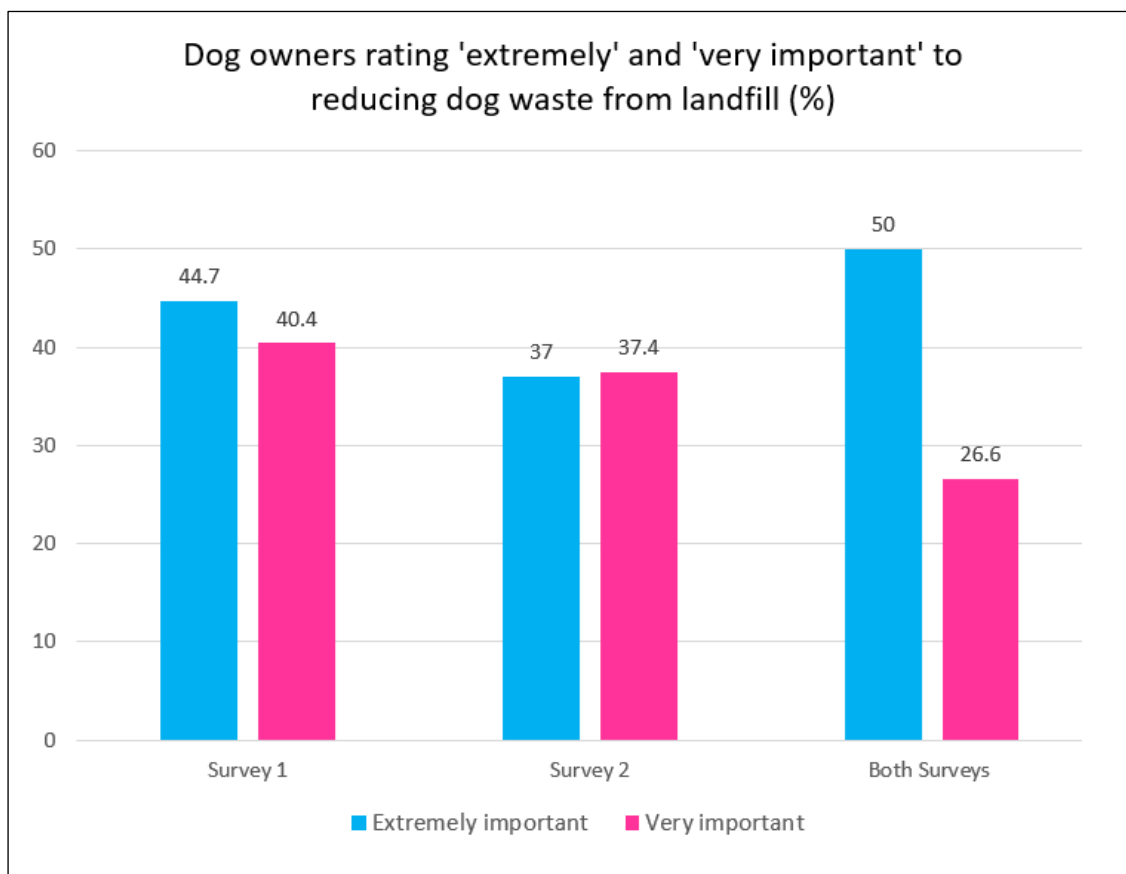


Table 9a. Dog owners' responses to rating the importance of reducing dog waste to landfill for Survey 1, Survey 2 and dog owners who answered both surveys

Importance of reducing landfill	Survey 1		Survey 2		Both surveys	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Extremely and very important	826	85.2	514	74.2	49	76.6
Extremely important	434	44.7	255	37.0	32	50.0
Very important	392	40.4	259	37.4	17	26.6
Not very important	119	12.3	123	17.7	11	17.2
Not at all important	12	1.2	14	2.0	1	1.6
No answer	13	1.3	42	6.1	3	4.7

Surprisingly although the number of dog owners who felt it is important to reduce dog waste from landfill in survey 1 was high, this decreased by ten percent in survey 2. Interestingly, only three quarters of dog owners who answered both surveys rated reducing landfill as extremely or very important.

Figure 9a



Responses from dog owners from about the importance of reducing dog waste to landfill

Summary sentences

Most responders in both surveys were aged between 18 and 79 years old. About two thirds of responders were aged more than 39 years, very few aged under 18 years, and more responders under 39 years completed survey 2.

Most responders were female, with slightly more males in survey 2, and almost one in 5 people who completed both surveys were male.

A very high percent of people who completed the survey were from the state of South Australia, with non-SA postcodes accounting for less than eight percent of responses. Victorian postcodes were the most common after SA, followed by NSW.

There was a much higher percent of responses from the Fleurieu region for survey 2 and those who completed both survey 1 and survey 2.

Survey 1 reached dog owners with a total of 1598 dogs, and survey 2 reached 1185.

Most survey responders had one or two dogs.

Over half the responders in survey 1 had just one dog, this was slightly lower in survey 2, but more dog owners who answered both surveys had two dogs.

The size of dogs owned by responders was fairly evenly spread between small, medium and large sized dogs, though more people with large dogs and more dogs responded to both surveys. Perhaps people with more and larger dogs are more conscious of dog waste than others!

We know there is confusion about different poop bags available for collecting dog waste. The awareness of dog owners about the different bags was much greater for people who answered both surveys, suggesting the first survey was effective in improving this awareness (greater than 30 percent increase).

When it comes to what type of bags people usually use, the bio/oxy bags rated highest in survey 1, compostable bags just led in survey 2 and there was almost double the number ranking compostable bags as 'usual bags used' among those who answered both surveys, quite a big change.

Disposal method for dog waste did not change much between survey 1 and 2. Use of the red/ blue general waste bins was most common, followed by use of the green waste bin.

A question was asked in the survey to find out if dog owners had seen the seedling logo before. Less than a quarter had on survey 1, this increase slightly in survey 2, but was almost 3x higher for those who completed survey 1 and survey 2!

Hence recognition for the seedling logo grew among those involved in this project.

When it comes to what the seedling logo actually means, in survey 1 this was less than 15%, increase to almost 20 percent in survey 2, and again, three times the number who had completed both surveys said they understood the meaning.

Surprisingly although the number of dog owners who felt it is important to reduce dog waste from landfill in survey 1 was very high (85%), this decreased by ten percent in survey 2. Interestingly, only three quarters of dog owners who answered both surveys rated reducing landfill as extremely or very important. Despite this difference, many dog owners feel this is important.

Appendix 1

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