

#IRIS VOXPOP



Who Let The Dogs (and Cats) Out...?

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There is a disconnection in our community between how dog and cat owners view themselves as responsible pet owners and how their neighbours view them. And when compared to the latest dog and cat control data from some of our local councils, the neighbours may be closer to the mark.



According to the latest IRIS Research #IRISVoxpop online survey on dog and cat pet ownership in the Illawarra, nearly all dog owners believe they take reasonable precautions to stop their dog/s from escaping their property, but over one third (**35.6%**) of respondents said some dog owners in their neighbourhood allow their dogs to escape from their property regularly. They can't both be right!

Wollongong City Council 2014/15 figures alone reveal that **1,099 roaming dogs** ended up in the animal shelter last year. Council received **564 barking dog** complaints, **229 dog attack** complaints, **110 complaints about aggressive dogs** and **122 complaints about dogs on beaches** related non-compliance. Of the dogs impounded, **only 72% were microchipped** and **only some 45% were registered**. If replicated across Illawarra's five LGAs, these figures suggest some local dog owners are not being as responsible as they should be.

When it comes to cats, the disconnection is even more pronounced – while **79.5%** of cat owners indicated they try to keep their cats indoors at night, **81.8%** of respondents indicated some cat owners in their neighbourhood allowed their cats to wander at night. Perhaps the only saving grace is that there might be fewer cats than dogs – **24.2% of respondents indicated they owned at least one cat, while 44.4% own at least one dog** according to the #IRISVoxpop survey results. Wollongong City Council **impounded 1,010 cats**, of which **only around 15% were microchipped** and a **mere 4% were registered**. Looks like cat owners need to do better here.

When respondents were asked to choose the main types of nuisance neighbourhood dogs and cats caused, the top three were (by count):

1. They bark incessantly (93)
2. They repeatedly defecate on other people's lawns (84)
3. They constantly roam (64)

The good news is that the largest single response (count of 166) was that the neighbourhood dogs and cats were not a nuisance, which is good news for the owners and the animals.

Finally, we quizzed respondents on the laws of companion animal ownership in NSW and it is clear that there is still some confusion in the community about the responsibilities of dog/cat ownership. The findings were:

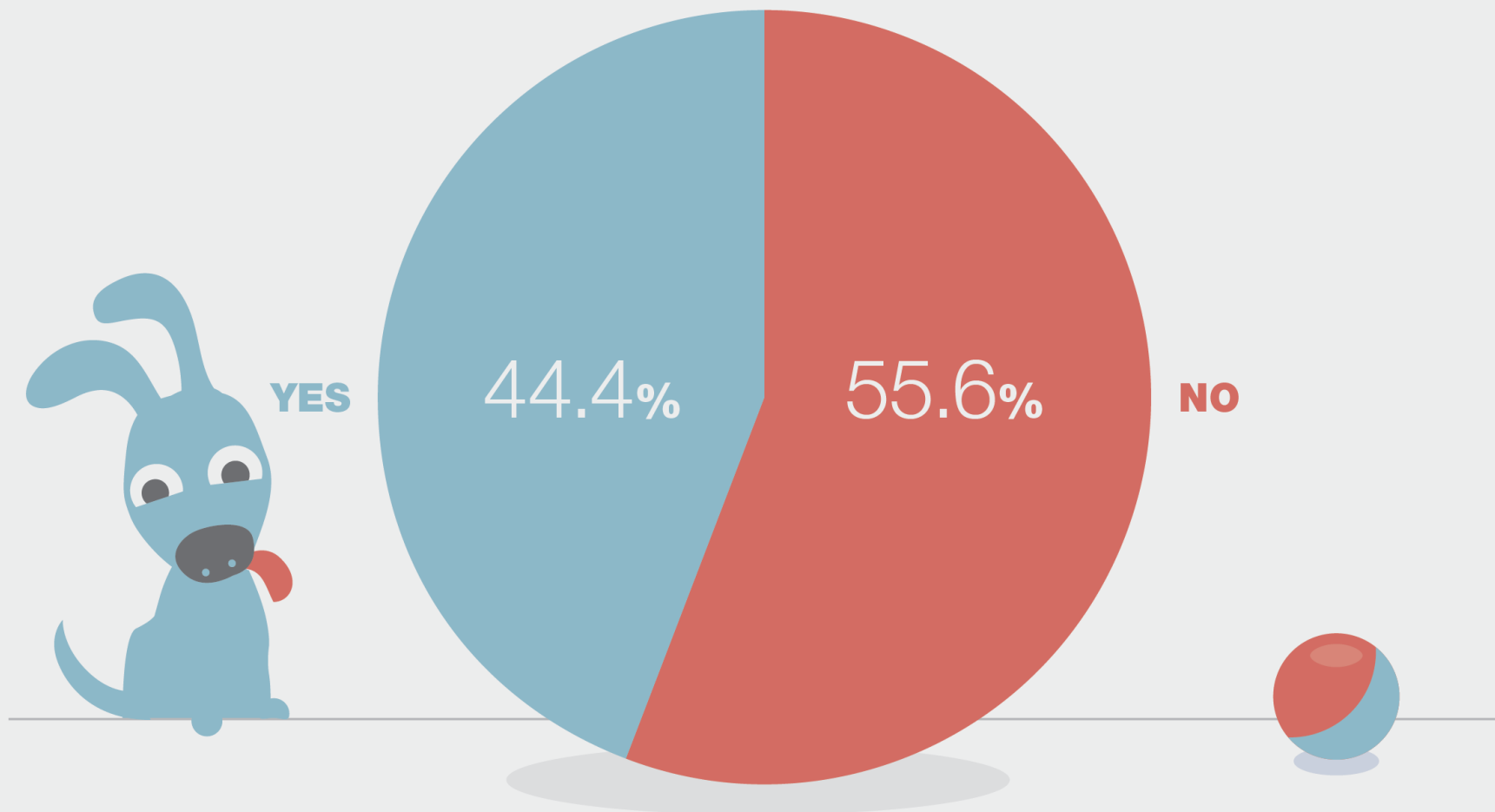
- **10.1%** of respondents **incorrectly answered** that dogs and cats do not have to be registered with their local council – they do.
- **42.6%** **incorrectly believe** that dogs are allowed within 10 metres of a children's playground – they can't.
- **12.6%** **incorrectly answered** the question that micro-chipping of dogs and cats within 12 weeks of birth is the law in NSW – it is.
- **37.2%** of respondents **mistakenly agreed** with the statement that dogs are allowed within 10m of food preparation and consumption areas (except where café/restaurant owners do not allow it) – they aren't.
- **13.3%** of respondents **agreed** with the statement that dogs are allowed on school premises – they're not.
- **28.4%** of respondents **agreed** with the statement that dogs are allowed in wildlife protection areas if kept on a leash – they are not allowed in these areas at all.
- **Almost half (49.2%) of respondents did not know** that Council must be advised within 28 days of the death of a pet – you must.

The NSW State Government's new \$900,000 *Responsible Pet Ownership Grant Program* announced today could not be more timely," said Peter Watts. "As a social market researcher and community engagement specialist armed with pet ownership research like this recent Pets #IRISVoxpop, we are well placed to work with councils and communities to improve all areas of dog management for stakeholders, including the wellbeing of the animals themselves," he said.

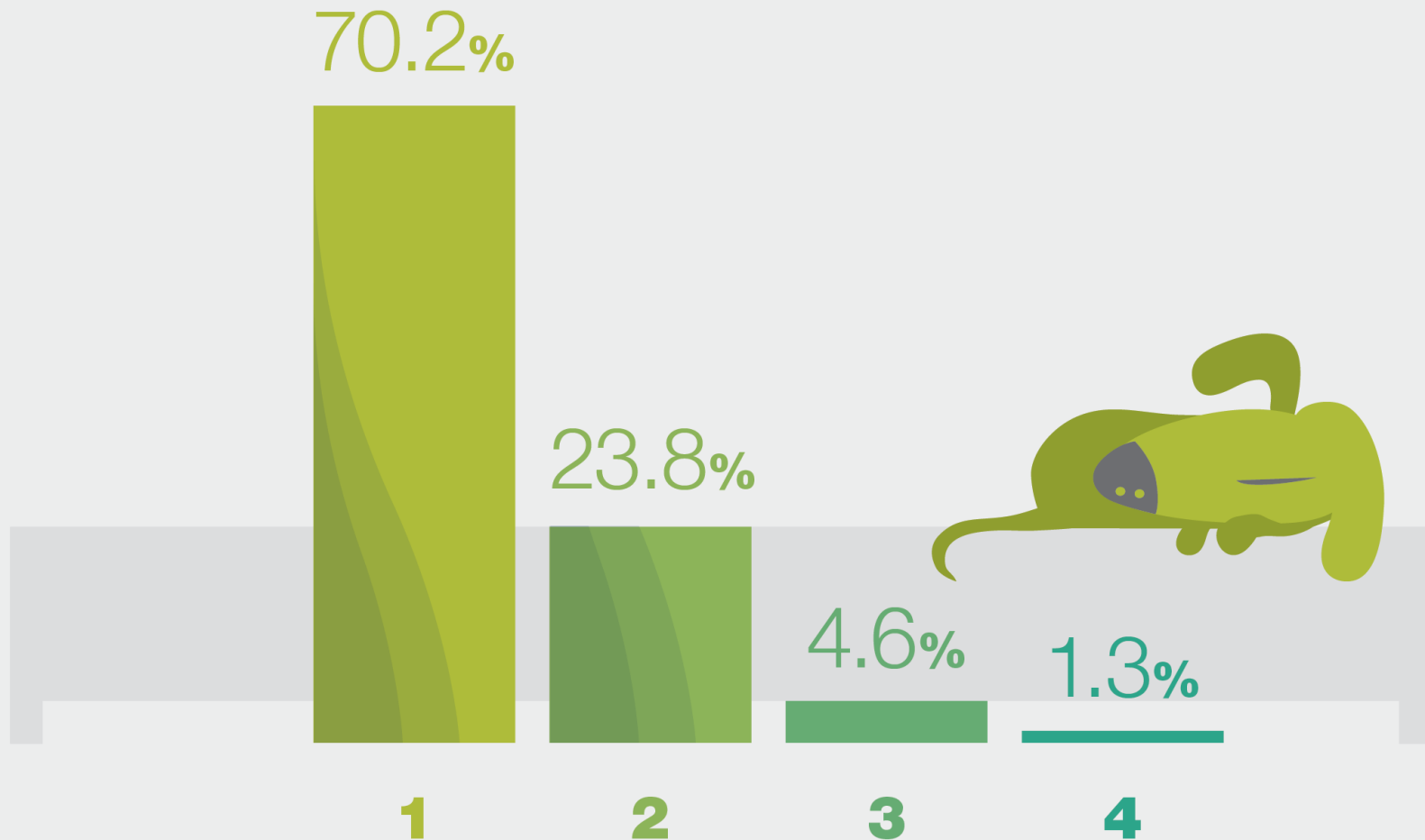
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349 locals responded to the Pets #IRISVoxpop run on 15-16 March 2016 making this the most popular #IRISVoxpop to date. That's a massive 19.1% response rate from our terrific on-line panellists. As always, we are grateful to the people of the Illawarra for being willing to share their views with us through the #IRISVoxPop series.

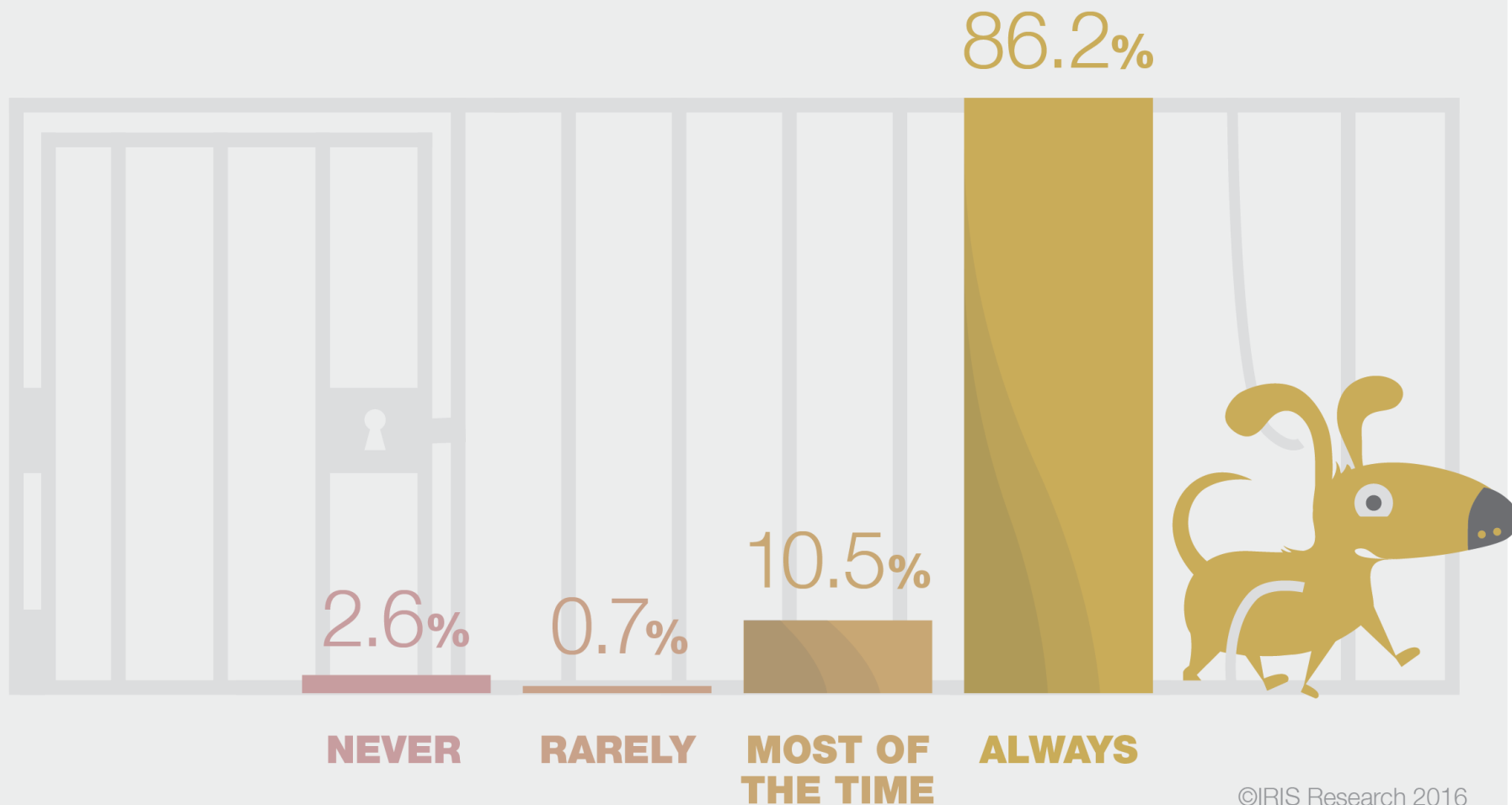
Do you keep any dogs as pets?



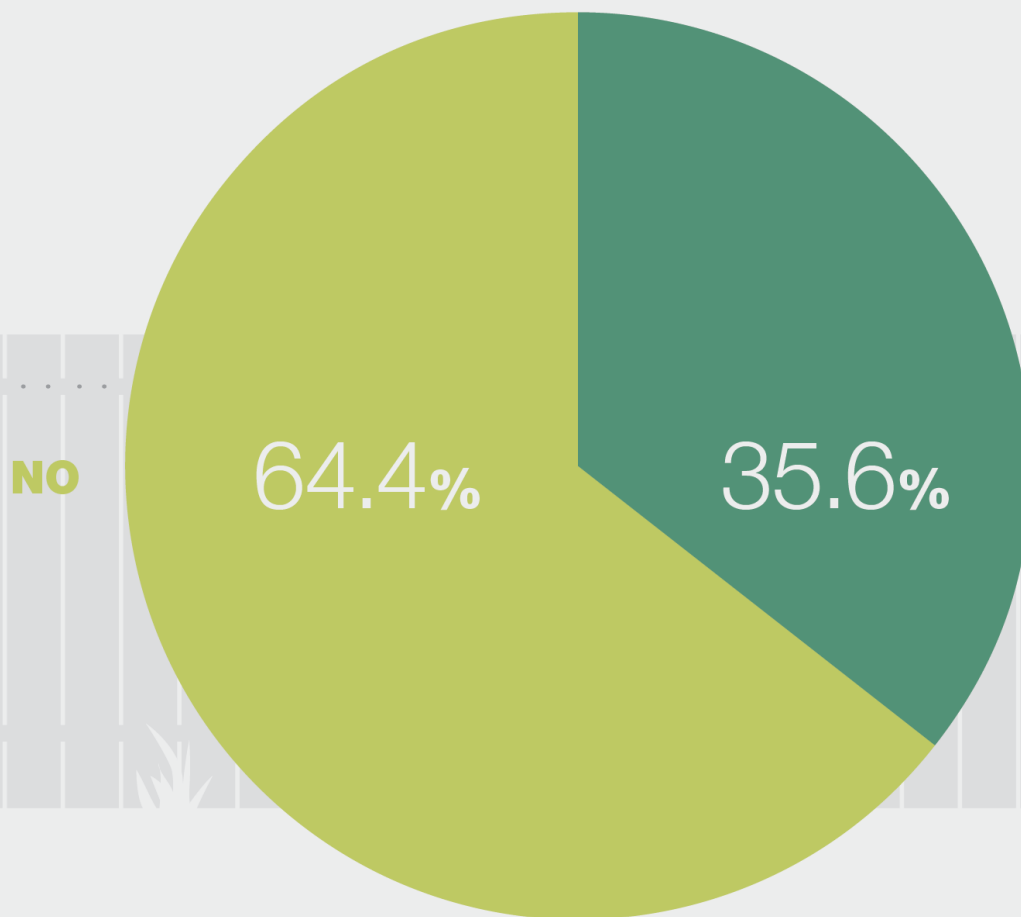
How many dogs do you have?



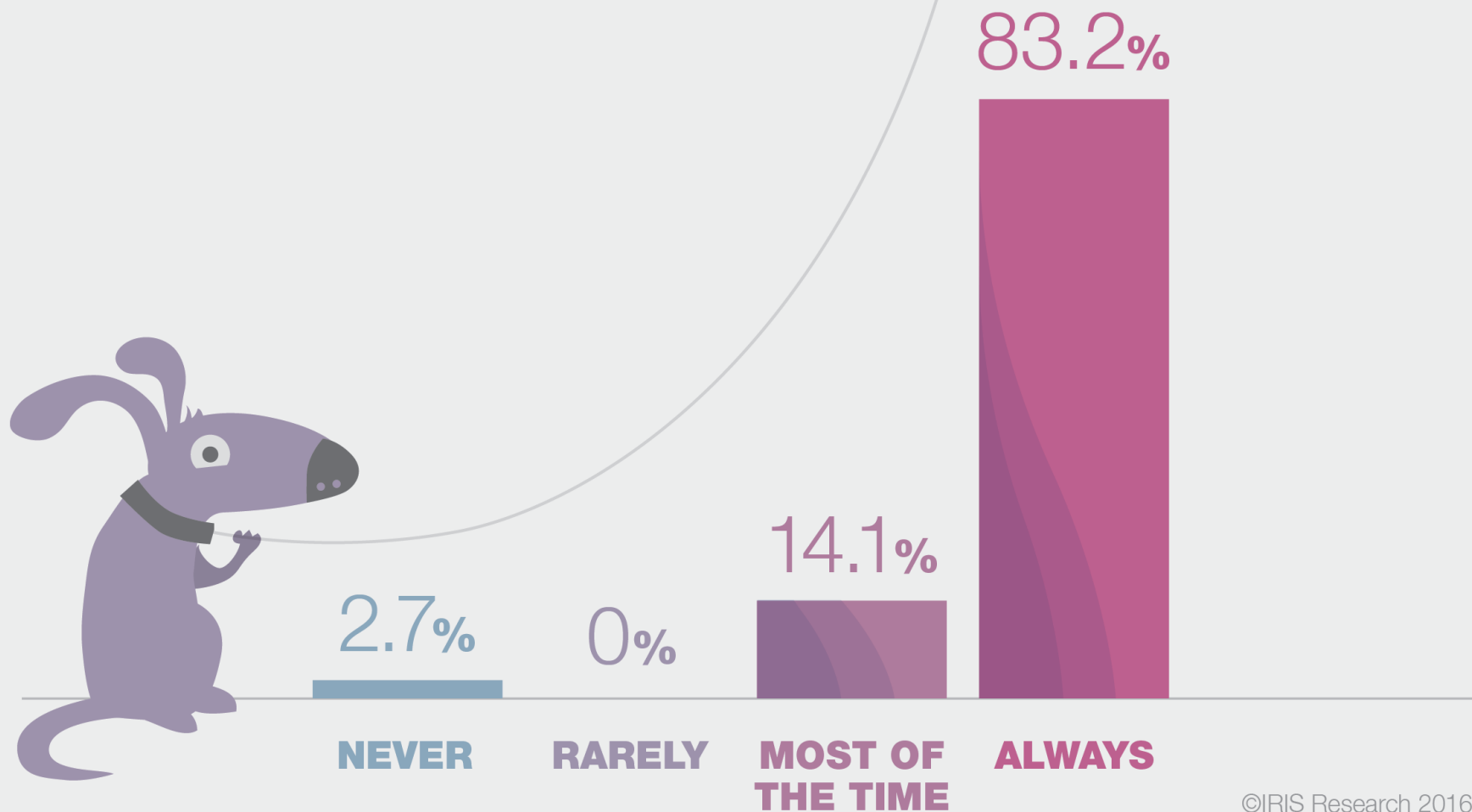
I take all reasonable precautions to prevent my dog/s from escaping the property on which it is kept



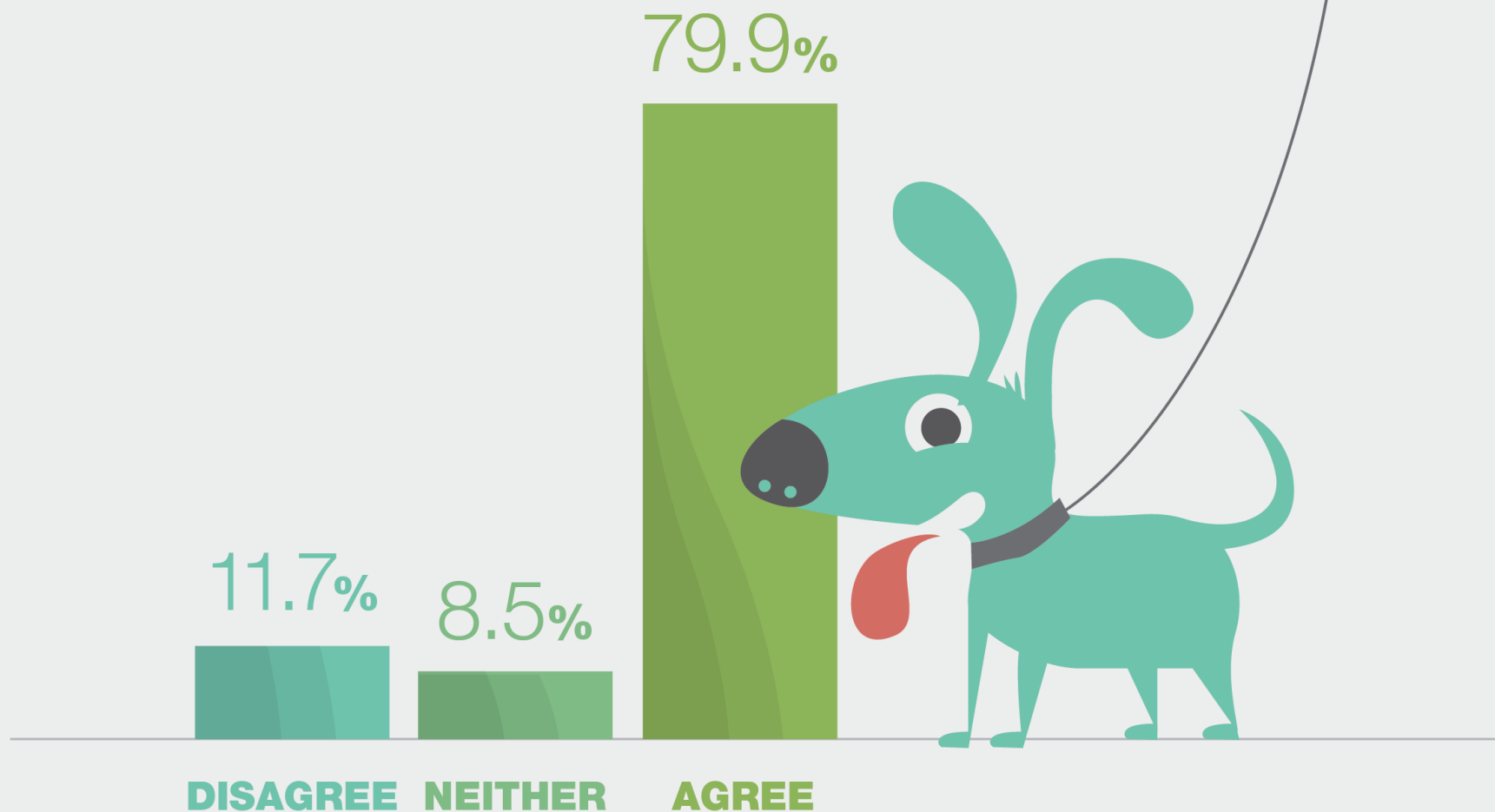
Some owners in my neighborhood allow their dogs to escape from their property regularly



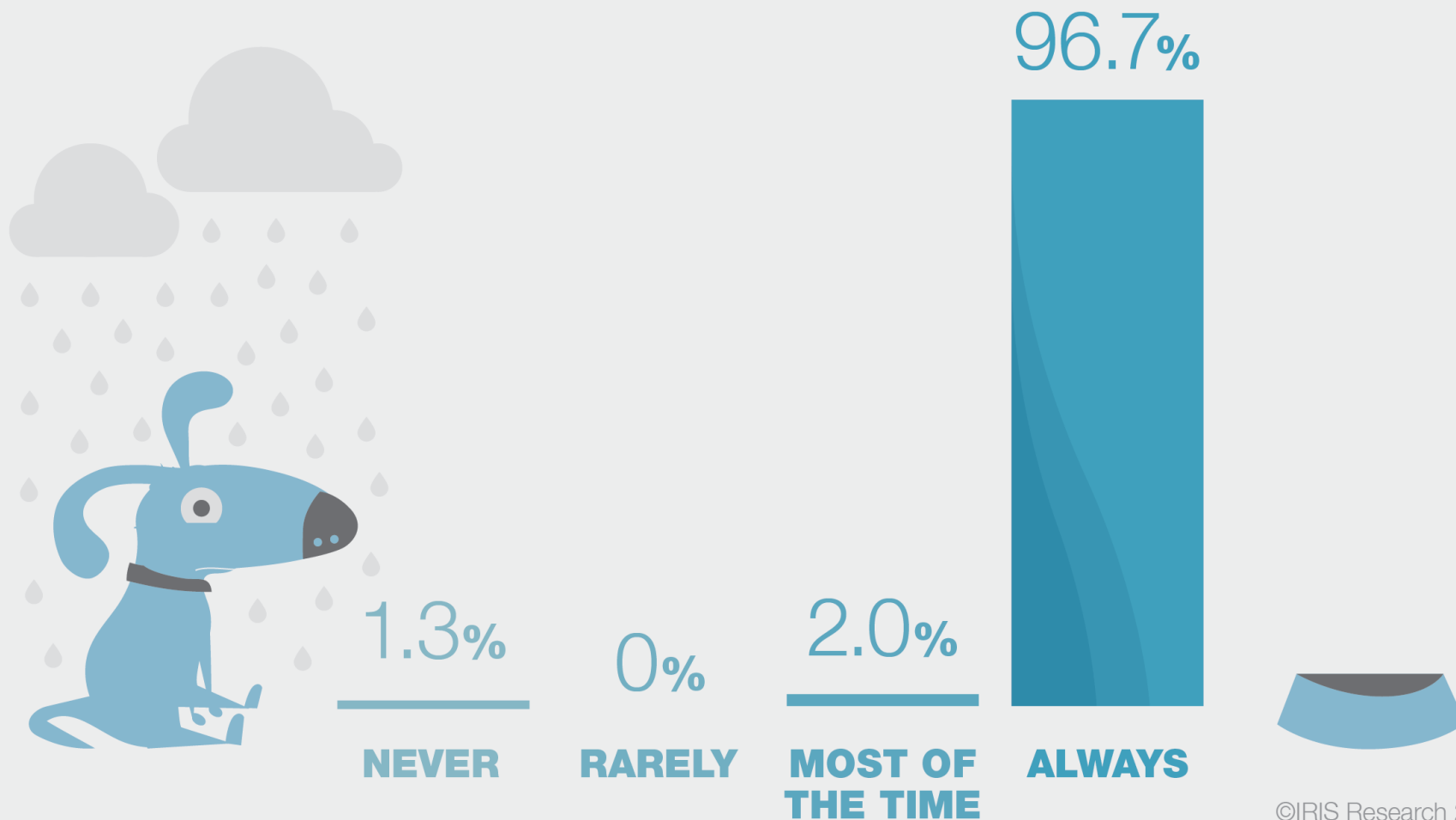
I keep my dog/s under effective control of a competent person at all times



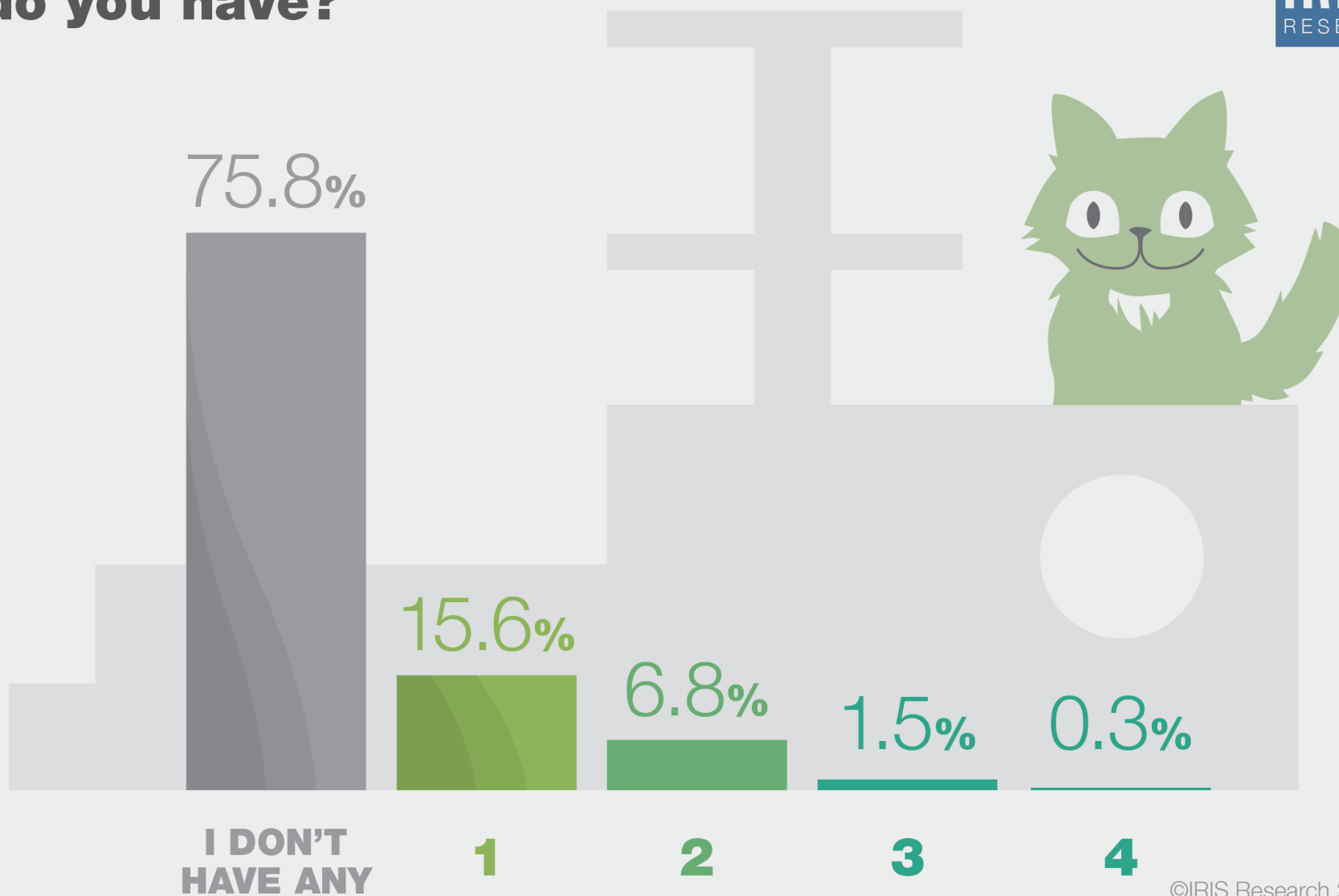
Most owners in my neighborhood keep their dog/s under effective control when out in public



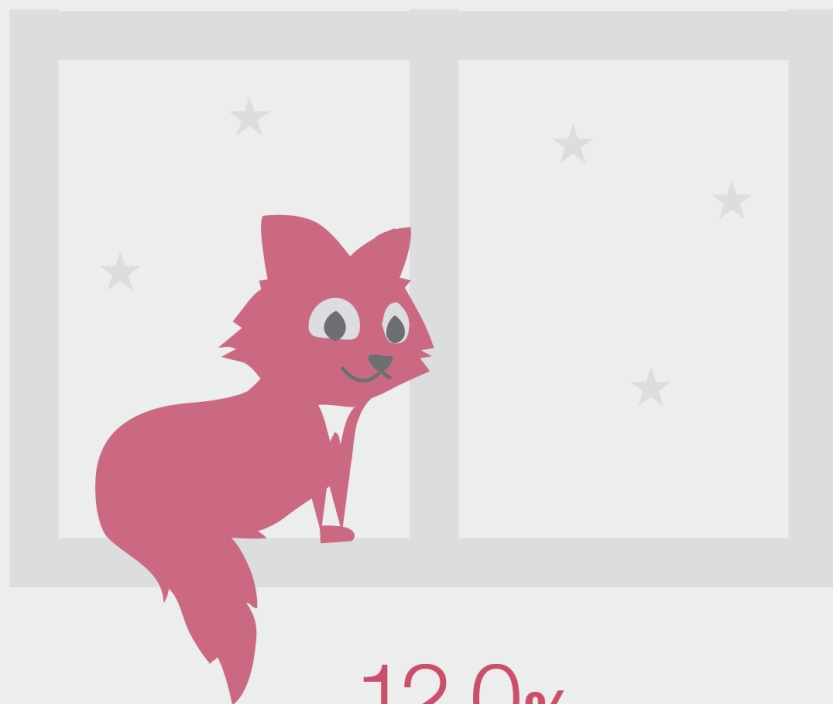
I always arrange appropriate care of my dog/s when absent from home for more than 24 hours



How many cats do you have?



I try to keep my cat indoors at night



12.0%



NEVER

8.4%



RARELY

22.9%



**MOST OF
THE TIME**

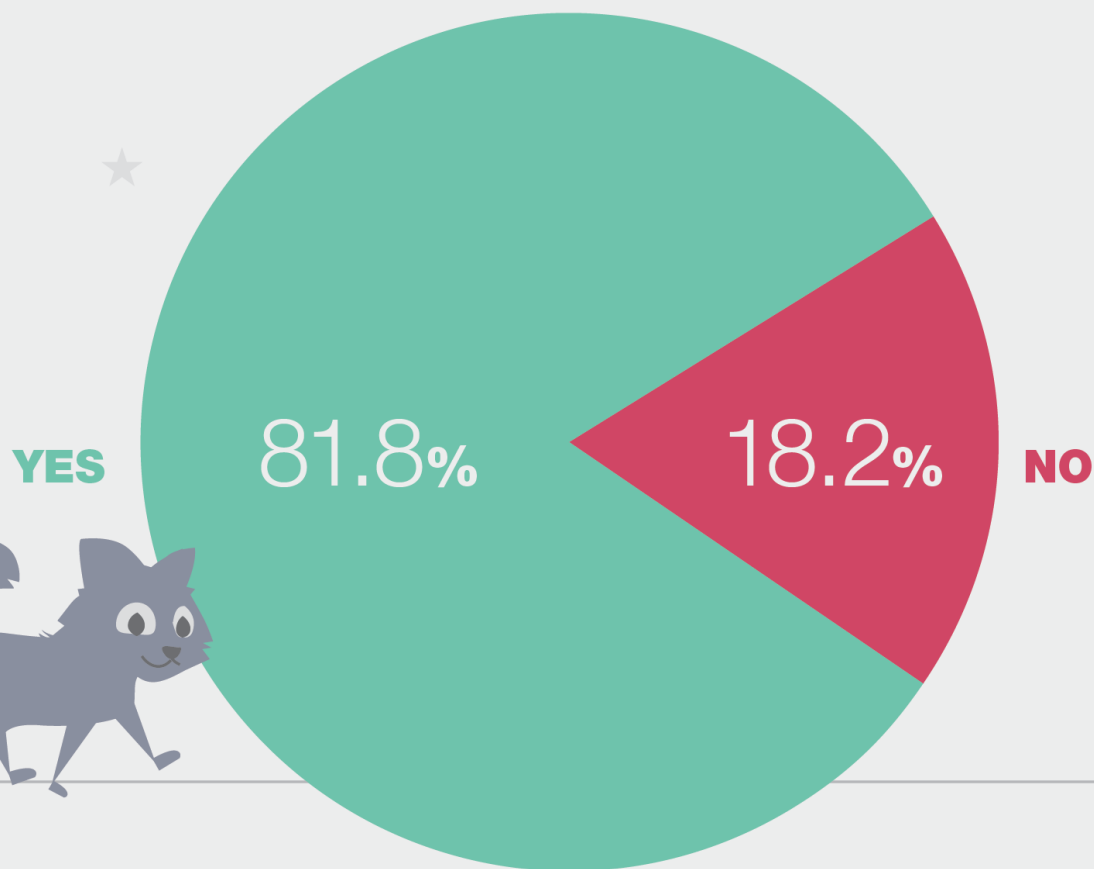
56.6%



ALWAYS

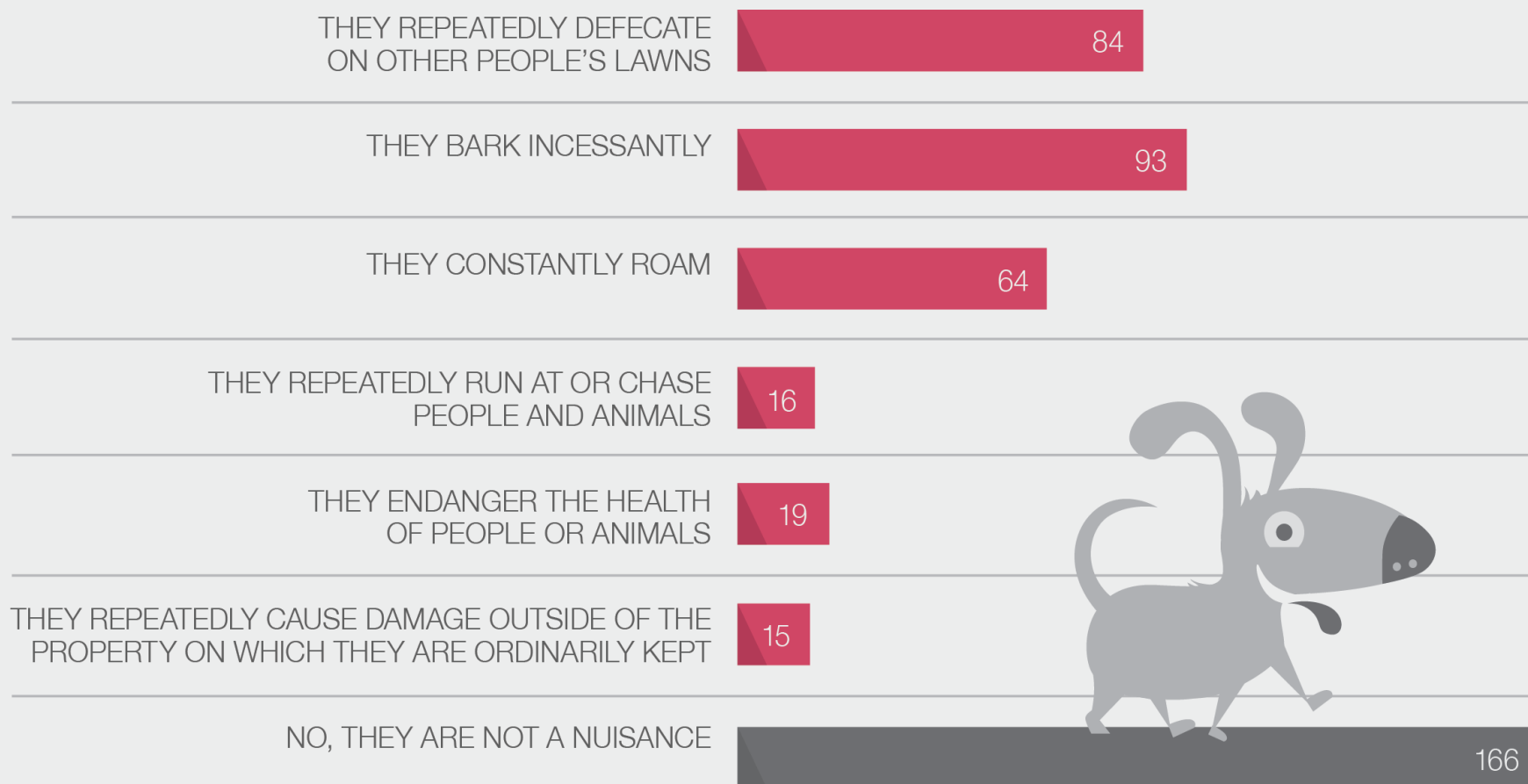


Some cat owners in my neighborhood allow their cats to wander at night



NUISANCE

RESPONSES, MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION



QUIZ

TRUE

FALSE

DOGS AND CATS MUST BE REGISTERED
WITH YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL



DOGS ARE ALLOWED WITHIN 10 METRES
OF A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND



MICRO-CHIPPING DOGS AND CATS WITHIN
12 WEEKS OF BIRTH IS THE LAW IN NSW



DOGS ARE ALLOWED WITHIN 10m OF FOOD PREPARATION
AND CONSUMPTION AREAS EXCEPT WHERE CAFE/RESTAURANT
OWNERS DO NOT ALLOW IT



DOGS ARE ALLOWED ON
SCHOOL GROUNDS



DOGS ARE ALLOWED IN WILDLIFE PROTECTION
AREAS IF KEPT ON A LEASH



HAVE TO ADVISE COUNCIL WITHIN 28 DAYS
OF MY PET'S DEATH





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