

Participant Information Statement

Research study: VetCompass Australia (VCA)

Professor Mark Krockenberger
Sydney School of Veterinary Science
Email: vet.compass@sydney.edu.au

1. What is this study about?

We are conducting a research study about the prevalence and severity of diseases, risk factors, patterns of behaviour, emerging health trends, treatments and outcomes, aiming to improve the overall health and welfare of animals in Australia. Taking part in this study is voluntary.

Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

2. Who is running this study?

The study is being carried out by veterinary researchers from the VetCompass Australia consortium, led by the University of Sydney.

3. Who can take part in the study?

We are seeking veterinary clinics and animal care organisations that are willing and able to share de-identified clinical and care records with us.

4. What will the study involve for me?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to share an extract of clinical or care information, along with related documents and data, to a secure location at designated intervals. Records are the normal ones take or collected as part of your standard procedures. The project is designed to be of minimal cost and inconvenience to your organisation.

If we do not have an existing data extraction query for the software you use, we will work your software provider and technical support team to develop this at no cost to your practice.

Information about VetCompass Australia should be readily available to your clients. To this end, we will provide information flyers for your waiting room(s) and to include in your client onboarding process, as well as a badge for your website.

If a client wishes to opt-out, we ask you to record this in the electronic records as 'client opt-out', or direct them to contact us directly at info@vetcompass.com.au or vetcompass.com.au/community. Please contact a member of the project team who will delete all past records from that client in the VetCompass Australia database and they will not be included in any studies. Future records of that client that may be included in general practice export reports will be deleted. Where past records have already been used in the analysis of data, the animal's data will remain included in the study.

5. Can I withdraw once I have started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part.

Your decision will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at The University of Sydney or any other consortium university.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind, you can withdraw by contacting a member of the project team who will cease data collection from that moment. Once data is exported to VetCompass Australia, it is an indication of practice consent for that data to be used for the purposes outlined in the Participant Information Statement.

6. Are there any risks or costs?

Participation in VetCompass Australia has been designed so that it does not impinge on the time, efficiency or efficacy of a busy practice or care provider. The main impact is during the initial set up, when we will work with you and your team to set up automated data extracts and to establish staff understanding of the aims and significance of the project and client opt-out option. There may be a small burden of time if, in the future, you change the software you use or if you agree to assist with validation of results. You are not obliged to consent to this validation process.

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

7. Are there any benefits?

Benefits may include:

- broad coverage of clinical information
- return of information from the project to you, primarily via peer-reviewed literature
- summary information made available to the public
- help in education of prevention and control of common animal diseases

- extra publicity and proof of commitment to improved animal welfare by having your practice logo on the VetCompass Australia website, with a hyperlink to your practice website (optional)
- increased staff motivation and public perception of your organisation as engaging with national scientific research to improve animal health and welfare

8. What will happen to information that is collected?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting information from or about you for the purposes of this study.

Any identifiable information you provide us will be stored securely and will only be disclosed with your permission unless we are required by law to release information.

We plan to publish the study findings. You will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

VetCompass Australia will collect records of each individual's or group's visit, including their demographics (species, breed, colour, date of birth, sex, neuter status, count, microchip number or other identifier, insurance status, body measurements and, where relevant, the owner's postcode or where they were found), clinical information (clinical notes, presenting complaint, diagnoses including test results and reports, treatment and costs) and outcomes (e.g., deceased status and dates, release location). Animals and groups of animals are each given unique identifiers, allowing us to collate complete case histories from separate events.

VetCompass Australia will not collect any client information other than their postcode. This may be used to identify and monitor geographical trends.

Should a need for further studies be identified that involves your records, a VetCompass Australia researcher may be in contact with you to request further information. Participation in this original VetCompass Australia project does not put you under any obligation to participate in further studies. If you do wish to participate, a new consent form and ethics approval number will be provided for this further study. You will be asked to re-identify the animal(s) from the animal identifier code(s), then send a letter of request and consent to the associated client(s) for voluntary participation in this further study.

Sharing research data is important for advancing knowledge and innovation. A de-identified set of the data collected in this study may be made available for use in future research.

9. Will I be told the results of the study?

You have the right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. We will share details of publications and presentations on our website.

We do not provide individual feedback and any results are general and aggregated, not case specific.

10. What if I would like more information?

When you have read this information, the following researcher(s) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have:

- vet.compass@sydney.edu.au
- Further information can be found at: vetcompass.com.au

11. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney [ethics reference: [2026/HE000158](#)] according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the University:

Human Ethics Manager
human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
+61 2 8627 8176

This information sheet is for you to keep