

October 2014

As a current Petplan customer I was alerted to “countless numbers” of complaints of their product via their Facebook reviews. The main complaints seemed to be that policies had increased by exorbitant amounts in many cases over 100% once the new policies were sent out. The new product and changes appear to have commenced in or around March this year. These reviews appear to no longer be available as this section seems to no longer exist.

As a result of these complaints and knowing it could greatly affect me I did some investigation on the product. In my circumstances I have a dog who is almost 9 and therefore will not be able to get the same or similar cover elsewhere once he has his next birthday. Any change of company would need to be done before then. I also have another dog who is 10 and he can't change over due to age. I have been a customer of Petplan like many people for a number of years.

The current policy disclosure statement (PDS) the Standard Dog Policy which all current customers would be using if they have not yet had to renew since about March this year is what I will call CURRENT. This current policy also has Budget and Supreme price range. Mine was their Standard Dog Policy. The policy (PDS) for those that have renewed since March is now called Classic Ultimate and I will refer to it as NEW. I am comparing just the one product, Standard Dog, with the same product they will be offering me and others on the Standard Dog product as me when renewal comes through. I have not gone through the entire policy in the areas of policy called theft, boarding kennel fees, holiday cancellation etc primarily because they do not affect me personally and it is time consuming to go through every portion and make comparisons.

CURRENTLY Standard Dog

New Policy Classic Ultimate

Vet Fees and Alternative treatment Max \$15,000

Maximum \$2000 (aggregate of total vet fees.

Under Definition Section Excesses
Separate excesses apply for
Veterinary and Complimentary if you
claim both for the same illness.

Both policy definitions state in their definitions that the alternative practitioners must be QUALIFIED in their areas. I.e QUALIFIED physiotherapist, chiropractor etc. The cover summary on the new policy is a little more liberal in some parts referring a member of our recognised associations.

I have asked Petplan to provide me a list in each state of the vets that they accept in the various areas of Alternative Treatment. Nothing has been forthcoming as yet. I have emailed the various state bodies for vet registration and three have got back to me and are unable to supply a list.

It then poses the question is the alternative coverage worthwhile especially if you live somewhere where these specialised fields aren't covered by vets.

Death From Illness or Injury

Current Policy Standard Dog

Death From Illness- Nil

Death From Injury - \$1000

New Policy

Optional Extra on both illness
and injury \$1500

It is also worth noting the current Policy Limits and Exclusions regarding this Section 4 it states **Any amount for death from an Illness** or disease occurring after **Your Pet's** 8th birthday, or if **Your Pet** is a **Select Breed**, its 5th birthday.

Theft or Straying

Current Policy
Standard Dog \$1000

New Policy
Optional Extra Benefit \$1500

Second Pet Discount

Current Policy 10%

New Policy
blank on the new PDS

Excess

Current Policy

This cover applies to dogs which have been insured with Petplan Pet Insurance for at least 3 years on one of the above plans and now has reached 10 years of age or more, or **Selected Breeds** aged 7 years of age or more. The cover offered is as per one of the 3 options above, with the following additional conditions. A fixed **Excess** of either \$125, \$250 or \$500 (as shown on **Your Certificate of Insurance**) plus 35% of the cost of any **Veterinary Treatment** or **Alternative Treatment** that **Your Pet** requires. No cover is provided for death from **Illness**

New Policy

It now reads it will depend on the product you choose, where you live and the breed and age of your pet

I have tried to get information as to what I will be charged for the new excess in the new policy year. I have been unable to get a response other than I will have to wait until the renewal comes. I have requested information on what the percentage that I will be required to pay as this is important and it would seem for whatever reason I am unable to find out. I assume if it was across the board as per the previous year nice and clear so you understand what you get it would be documented. Do I assume that it is more based on how many claims or how much you have claimed from them that determines what your percentage will be?

As part of the Petplan marketing there is great emphasis on the fact they pay 100% of claims. This is not the case for many dogs that are insured and almost certainly for every dog over a certain age) (whatever that age now is). Misleading in my view. It is also inaccurate that they are the only company that overs for Life cover. I dont know all that do but Bow Wow Meow is another that does.

Australia has two pet insurance underwriters. Allianz which is the Petplan underwriter and Petsure which covers most of the others companies. I have spoken to both people at the top in underwriting for their brands. I find the Petsure brand easier to get answers from and more transparent.

The problem I have with what Petplan has done for their existing customers like myself which due to age of one of my dogs mean I cant move him so my option is to pay the 100% increase or to opt out of pet insurance. I might add this dog has had no claim with Petplan since he has been with them for several years. Many people will be like me backed into a corner with two choices.

Then we have people that can move as far as age goes but here comes the problem. A lot will have pre-existing conditions that will be excluded if they go elsewhere. You would be surprised at what

things can be excluded if you have ever claimed before. I am challenging two exclusions with another company at the moment and there is more to come on that. It will however highlight the types of things we are talking about.

In terms of the Petplan claim service the last claim I made with them for about \$400 (approx) took several months to complete. All documentation was provided at the time of claim and no further vet records were called for. I also recently claimed via Bow Wow Meow for the passing of Frodo in April. I was paid out several thousand dollars in 36 hrs.

It is hard to give advice on pet insurance other than to say choose wisely as once you make the first claim it may well prevent you from going elsewhere. The pre-existing clause is definitely not clear on countless conditions. Pet insurance companies do not advise you of any pre-existing conditions until after you make your first claim when they inspect your pets medical records so it makes it very hard for owners. Even if you ask them upfront when you call you may not get the right advice on a pre-existing as the decision comes down to what is determined by someone else from claims who is not who you talk to when you make enquiries on pet insurance.