

**DR HUGH WIRTH**  
President  
RSPCA Victoria



“ It’s responsible, not cruel, to keep your cat safely at home. Cats kept safely away from road accidents, fighting and diseases live longer and happier lives than those that roam. The best way to keep your cat home safe is to have a backyard cat enclosure that is connected to your house by a cat door. That way, your cat can stay inside or safely enjoy the outdoors. Our precious wildlife faces many threats. Keeping your cat at home is a simple and humane step you can take to help protect native birds and animals.

”

**DR CAROLE WEBB**  
Executive Director  
Cat Protection Society of Victoria



“ The safest place for your cat to be is at home. I’m a veterinarian and too often I see the results of cats that are allowed to wander – diseases, traffic accidents or just getting lost. This can mean lots of heartache for cat owners and big vet bills. That’s why responsible cat owners keep their cats at home. Cats adapt well to living in the house and in cat enclosures in the garden. And by keeping your cat at home, you can also help look after the local native wildlife.

”

The Darebin Parklands Association has worked since 1973 to transform Darebin Parklands from a degraded former tip into one of Melbourne’s best urban bush parks. The park has walking and cycle trails, barbecue and picnic facilities, lookouts and dog exercise areas. It is home to dozens of species of native birds, mammals, reptiles, fish and frogs. The Darebin Parklands Association is working to restore the habitat of the platypus, which traditionally lived in the Darebin Creek.

Darebin Parklands Association ☎ 9499 3849

darebinparklandsassociation@yahoo.com



The Darebin Parklands Association gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the City of Banyule and the City of Darebin in producing this leaflet.  
Printed on recycled paper.

Designed by Kat’s Meow 0438 68 6311  
Illustrations by Matt Golding www.threefingers.com.au

# Home cats safe cats safe wildlife



Lost cat?  
Banyule ☎ 9434 7155  
Darebin ☎ 9230 4667

## Your cat is a much-loved companion.

### Did you know that you can take some simple steps to help your cat live two or three times longer?

**How?** By simply choosing to make your cat a home cat. Instead of roaming, home cats live inside the house or in special cat enclosures in the garden.

- Home cats live up to three times longer and they have happier, healthier lives. This is because home cats are kept safe from road accidents, fighting and serious illnesses such as feline AIDS.

- Home cats also have happier owners, because they don't have to worry about losing their cat or seeing it killed or injured in an accident. They also have much lower vet bills!

- By making your cat a home cat, you can also help the wildlife that lives near your house in the Darebin Parklands.

- Hunting comes naturally to cats. Even well fed, well-behaved cats like yours can kill and injure the native birds, possums, lizards and frogs that live nearby in the Darebin Parklands.

- Pet cats kill an estimated 30 native animals a year. The Darebin Parklands Association is working to improve the park so that one day platypus may again live in the creek. But this can't happen without the help of all pet owners.



### Is it cruel to keep cats locked up?

No! The RSPCA and the Cat Protection Society agree it's kind, not cruel, to keep cats home, safely away from accidents, fighting and diseases.

### My cat's collar has a bell. Isn't that enough?

Cats are skilled hunters and very smart. They can move without ringing the bell. Native animals that are chased or bitten can die later from infections or shock.

### My cat sleeps in the house at night. Doesn't this protect the wildlife?

Keeping your cat inside at night is a great first step. Keeping your cat home during the daytime helps protect animals that are active during daylight hours, including birds, lizards and frogs.

### How can I keep my cat at home?

The simplest way is to keep your cat inside the house. Your cat will be very happy as long as it has food, toys, a comfortable sleeping place and a litter tray.



### How can I keep my cat in my garden?

It's easy, quick and cheap to make a cat enclosure with steel pickets and wire from the hardware store. You can also enclose part of your patio or balcony with wire mesh.

### I'm elderly. Who can help me build a cat enclosure?

Ask a family member, friend or neighbour or check the classifieds in the local newspaper for handymen who offer seniors discounts. The Grey Army ( ☎ 9482 9211 ) also provides low-cost home maintenance.

### Can I buy a cat enclosure?

Many companies make modular cat enclosures that are suitable for gardens and balconies. Look under "Pet Shop Suppliers" in the Yellow Pages or do an internet search for "cat enclosures".

### Are there cheaper options?

Yes! Check the classified ads for second hand aviaries. Old children's cubbies also make great cat enclosures, especially when joined to a cat run made with steel pickets and wire.

### Won't my cat be bored in a cat enclosure?

Keep your cat happy with a scratching post, a branch or log to climb on, toys, a sheltered place to sleep and lots of love and attention.

### My cat is used to living outdoors. How will he adjust?

Most cats adapt easily. Feed your cat inside, and gradually increase time spent indoors or in the cat enclosure. Talk to your vet if you are concerned.

### Won't a cat enclosure look ugly in my garden?

Use green coloured wire, creepers and shrubs to help your cat enclosure blend in or build it out of sight along the side of your house.