

# Vile possum find

Crime | Tim Michell

## Gruesome killings horrify RSPCA

WILDLIFE authorities have been left stunned by two “disgusting” acts of animal cruelty in which possums had their throats slit and tails chopped off in Chadstone.

South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter carer Michelle Phillips said she first received reports of an adult brushtail possum being attacked three weeks ago at Batesford Reserve, but suspected a fox may have done it. It was only when a

second dead possum was found in the reserve last Wednesday that she feared humans were responsible. “It’s horrifying to even think that someone could do this,” Ms Phillips said. “In the first case we thought a fox may have been behind it, but the precision and nature of the second kill suggests otherwise.”

People caught harming animals face fines of up to \$60,000 and two years imprisonment.

Ms Phillips said the kills were as gruesome as anything she had seen. “I just can’t think why someone would want to do this to a helpless possum,” she said.

RSPCA Victoria senior inspector Simon Primrose said there had

been a rise in cruelty toward possums — which are a protected species — in recent weeks.

“The RSPCA is appalled and concerned at the recent spate of reported cruelty cases involving possums,” Mr Primrose said.

He urged people having issues with wildlife to contact the appropriate authority rather than tak-

ing matters into their own hands.

Department of Sustainability and Environment spokeswoman Brigid Ennis confirmed the department was aware of the possum deaths. Police are expected to investigate the incidents.

To report animal cruelty, phone the DSE on 136 186 or RSPCA Victoria on 9224 2222.



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