

Cats curtailed as council curfews rein in marauding moggies

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Cats clause: More than 25 local councils now have some kind of curfew for roaming felines.

Cats, and cat owners, you have been warned: the roaming moggie's right to fight, feed and fornicate at night may be a thing of the past.

Many local councils have imposed night curfews for felines in recent years, and there is growing pressure for others to follow suit.

More than 25 councils now have some kind of cat curfew, with other local governments studying the possibility of introducing the curfews.

The Mornington Peninsula Shire and Yarra Ranges Councils have implemented 24-hour curfews to keep cats at home at all times. The restrictions have the support of the RSPCA.

Mount Eliza animal foster carer and cat owner Sarah Davison said she supports the total cat curfew in her municipality. "They're at risk of being hit by cars for a start," she said.

"You've got to take responsibility for your cats. If you're at work all day they should be inside with a litter tray and definitely inside overnight," she said, adding that roaming cats fights with other felines and also posed a

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risk to wildlife.

But she said she was concerned the curfews had resulted in more cats being trapped and impounded.



RSPCA Victoria animal services executive manager Helen Cocks said it is possible for cats to live happily within property boundaries.

"RSPCA's policy goes beyond curfews and instead focuses on keeping cats within a boundary at all times," she said.

But cats also need exercise and "environmental enrichment," she said.

"Cats can also enjoy regular walks outside on a harness and lead with their owners. This gives them new scenery and scents for mental stimulation and exercise."

South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter manager Michele Phillips is lobbying the Monash City Council to implement a 24-hour curfew.

She has also written to Glen Eira City Council in the hope it will also introduce restrictions.

She said free roaming cats were susceptible to diseases, including feline AIDS. "It's rampant," she said.

Ms Phillips said she treated up to 3000 animals each year, mostly birds and possums. At least 1800 of them had been harmed by cats.

"They only need a scratch from a cat and it's a death sentence," she said.