

Options for Keeping Your Cat at Home

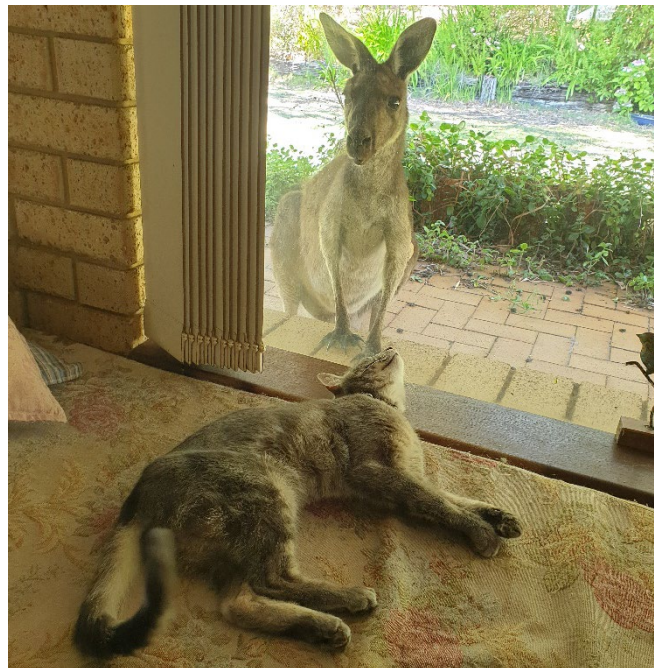
Inside the House

Raising a cat indoors is a great way to keep your cat safe and happy and is suitable for all home styles, large and small.

There are lots of creative ways you can enrich the indoor environment to meet your cat's needs. You can bring the outdoors in so your cat can enjoy the creature comforts of the outdoor environment. Your cat can bask in the sun on the windowsill, on a cat shelf or on a high cat tower. You can create high perching spots for them to observe the world as it passes by. You can always pair this option with the harness and lead option below to give your cat the best of both worlds.

This option is best for raising younger cats who have not spent a lot of time outdoors. If you are looking to transition an outdoor cat, the best option would be to consider an enclosure.

You can watch a video about Laura of Dalyellup's experience in keeping her cats inside at <https://youtu.be/NpyEJcrauYM>.



Debbie, Gelorup

Using a Harness and Lead

Your cat can enjoy all the outdoor textures, smells and sunshine while staying safe on a harness and lead. You might have a cat that stays inside the house and would like to give your cat the experience of exploring outdoors.

It is important that you are always close by while your cat is in a harness and lead. You should only have the cat on a harness and lead during the day. If your yard is easily accessible to a neighbourhood dog, tethering your cat is not recommended.

You can watch a video about Brittanie of Carey Park's experience of using a harness and lead at <https://youtu.be/4cS52MPWIHU>.



Monique, Carey Park

Enclosing Your Patio or the Side of Your House

Enclosing your patio or the side of the house is an excellent way to utilise existing structures to create a space to spend time with your cat outdoors. You could use cat net to enclose all or part of your patio and add a simple L shape zipper or a swinging door. If you have a sliding door down the side of your house, you can insert a lockable extension into the tracks with an inbuilt cat door. Cat net offers a low visibility option that is less like a cage to keep both yourself and your neighbours happy.

Permissions

It is important to consider whether you require any permissions before you enclose your patio or the side of your house:

Before you affix anything to a boundary fence or wall, it is important to gain support from your neighbours.

Rental Property Owners

If you are in a rental, you will need approval from the property owner. Some cat owners have had success attaching cat net without needing to drill holes, for example using bulldog clips or tucking the net under fence capping. However, it is more secure to fix the cat net using drill holes. Drill holes in masonry walls or wood can be plugged with putty when the netting has been removed.

Councils

Enclosing your existing patio with open weave cat net does not require council approval. Affixing cat net to your boundary fence (without structural framework) does not require council approval in the Greater Bunbury Region if you have support from your neighbour. You could affix the cat net to your boundary fence using tensioned wire rope and eyelets or steel rods and panel clips. These fixture options do not require structural framework to hold the cat net in place. See other sections below for council approval for other additions to your enclosure.

Design Considerations

Gates

A swinging gate is exempt from the requirement for approval under the WA Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 as long as your property is not a Heritage Protected Place. This exemption applies to most urban dwellings. The gate needs to be contained within the property, including when it is open. You can send a photo to your local council to confirm before installation.



Swinging gate

Structures on the boundary

To build enclosure framework on the boundary attached to your dwelling, an open structure not exceeding 2.4m high and not exceeding 20m² floor area is exempt from requiring a building permit under the WA Building Regulations 2012. This is the definition of a pergola.

For free-standing structures to be exempt from requiring a permit, the floor area should not exceed 10m², the height should not exceed 2.4m and the covering should be open weave material. The framework should be independent of the fence.

It is recommended to check with your local council when you have a design to ensure your plans fit within the exemption requirements.

Weld mesh

You may want to consider enclosing your existing patio or the roof of your side alley enclosure with open weld mesh as shown below. It is best to check with your local council first.



Tower mesh enclosures

Waterproofing part or all the area

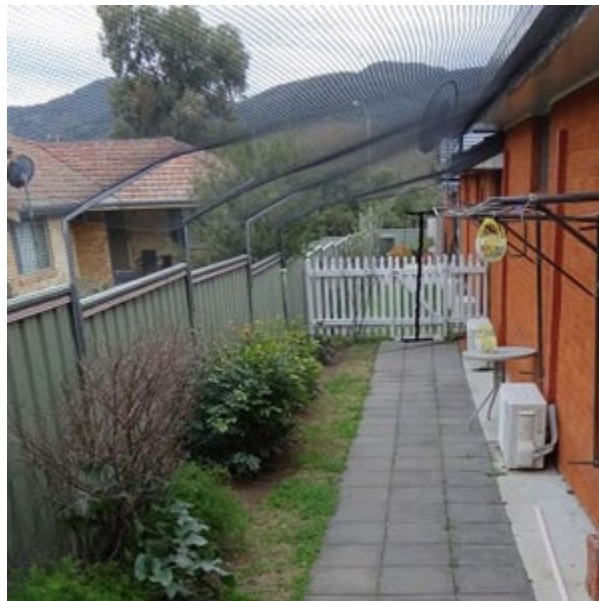
If you are considering installing a polycarbonate roof, you will need a setback from your boundary fence and appropriate measures to contain stormwater on your property. Check with your local council's Building and Planning departments before commencing any work. The framework should be independent of the fence.



Polycarbonate roof

Angled fence brackets

Check with your local council before affixing these to your boundary fence. This option is best if the total height including the brackets will be 1.8m. Just a caution, cats have been known to find a way of escaping if the entire space of the enclosed area is not covered with cat net!



Angled fence brackets

Fence rollers

We have received lots of feedback about cats finding a way to escape using fence rollers. There have also been concerns about other cats being able to get into the backyard. If you would like to proceed with this option, it is best to check with your council first. Offsetting the fence rollers so they are on the inside of your fence like the image on the right will allow for the safe passage of threatened western ringtail possums along the top of your fence, all while your cat is safe inside the property. A win win!



Fence rollers

Zip access

A zip access is a simple and cheap option to gain access into your enclosure. Our recommendation is to purchase a zip already sewn into the cat net panel; the easiest option when it comes to installation.



Zip access

Shade cloth or bird netting

Cat's claws can become stuck in these materials and leave your cat in distress. The material is weak compared with cat net so they can chew through and make an escape route.

Impact on the streetscape

If you are looking to enclose a section at the front of your house, please phone your local council to check the setback, height and visual permeability requirements. Screening vegetation is encouraged to reduce the view of enclosures from street, wherever possible.

You can watch a video about Jenny of Eaton's experience of enclosing her cat down the side of her house at <https://youtu.be/Agr0SsgfV38>. To watch Lucinda of South Bunbury's experience of building an enclosed patio, click here: <https://youtu.be/Z7mG2XaM5To>.

This information should be considered as advice only. Cat owners are encouraged to send an enclosure plan to their local council, neighbours and property owners prior to commencing installation. In no event shall the South West NRM be liable for any incident or consequential damages resulting from the use of this material.

Contractors, Suppliers and Resources

The following companies install cat enclosures and provide DIY supplies within the Greater Bunbury region:

Diamond Nets

- O'Connor, WA
- Website: diamond-nets.com
- DIY supplies. Pick up or postage available
- (08) 9314 3003
- diamondnetworks@iinet.net.au

Katzone

- Capel WA
- Website: katzone.com.au
- Installations only
- 0438 685 124
- katzonewa@gmail.com

South West Cat Enclosures

- Dunsborough, WA
- Website: southwestcatenclosures.com
- Installations and DIY supplies (pick up only)
- 0448 518 295
- swcatenclosures@gmail.com

Cat Runs WA

- Wangara, WA
- Website: catrunswa.com.au
- Installations and DIY supplies
- 0418 917 502
- sales@catrunswa.com.au

Kitty Kingdom

- Perth, WA
- Website: kittykingdom.net
- Servicing Perth Metro suburbs, Bunbury and surrounding areas
- Installations and DIY supplies
- Business hours (freecall) 1800 185 000
- Ricky@kittykingdom.net

Petnets WA

- Perth, WA
- Website: petnetswa.com.au
- Installations only
- 0414 949 465
- petnetswa@outlook.com

West Coast Aviaries and Enclosures

- Perth, WA
- [Facebook page](#)
- Installations only
- 0457 189 765
- westcoastenclosures@outlook.com.au

Catnets

- New South Wales
- Website: catnets.com.au
- DIY supplies
- (02) 9772 0889
- sales@catnets.com.au

Other Resources

Facebook Groups

- [Responsible Pet Owners SW WA](#)
- [Cat Enclosure Ideas – Western Australia](#)
- [Bunnings Cat Hacks Australia](#)

Websites

- [Pets Away Possums Play from GeoCatch](#)
- [Safe and Happy Cats from RSPCA](#)
- [Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife from Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria](#)
- [Tassie Cat](#)
- [Happy at Home from South West Group](#)

Factsheets

- [The Impact of Pet Cats on Australian Wildlife](#)
- [Living with Western Ringtail Possums Avoiding Conflicts](#)
- [The Impact of Cats in Australia](#)
- [Urine Cleaning Guide](#)
- [Bird Friendly Rodent Control](#)