

When the cat's away ...



South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter's Michele Phillips with a rainbow lorikeet. Picture: ANDY BROWNBILL

Suzan Delibasic

CAT owners will be forced to lock moggies up at night from 2020 under tough new laws to be enforced by Monash Council.

The curfew will put an end to late-night roaming of domestic cats in a bid to protect native wildlife.

It follows public consultation on the council's draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021.

South Oakleigh Wildlife Shelter

manager Michele Phillips, who rescues more than 2500 animals a year attacked by cats, said she was pleased with the council's decision.

"I've been battling for more than 10 years for council to enforce this. Far too many cats are being run over or injured as a result of fights so this will law will prevent this from happening," Ms Phillips said.

But Ms Phillips believed the law should go even further and require

cats to be locked up under a 24-hour curfew.

"For less than \$200, pet owners could install barriers along their fences to ensure cats could not escape," she said.

Cr Josh Fergeus said it was a win for the community, demonstrating an evidence-based policy which would protect native wildlife.

RSPCA chief executive Dr Liz Walker said the organisation

encouraged owners to confine cats within their properties.

However, Cr Shane McCluskey said the move was outrageous.

"We should stick with what's established and educate residents without giving them another imposition on a law which is extremely difficult to enforce," Cr McCluskey said.

Mayor Rebecca Paterson said the community was asked about

Moggies must be inside at night under law to protect wildlife

reducing cat nuisance by delivering an education program outlining the benefits of keeping cats indoors at night.

"There were 72 respondents ... 46 saying they'd like to see the council go further than education and implement a cat curfew," she said.



Do you support a cat curfew?
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