



Keeping pets safe

ELISE SNASHALL-WOODHAMS

BENDIGO cat owners are turning to custom-made enclosures to ensure their pets are kept safe from harm.

Jim Byers is one of the only, if not the only, person in Bendigo who makes customised cat enclosures.

Mr Byers said people had contacted him after reading reports in the *Bendigo Advertiser* of a man in Strathdale who was trapping and killing wandering cats.

North Bendigo resident Janelle Harman was one person who wanted to do the right thing by her pets.

She approached Bendigo Animal Welfare and Community Services (BAWCS) after she read the *Bendigo Advertiser* stories, keen to find a way to keep her two cats Simba and Milo on her property.

"Simba is always getting out and

won't come back, he's a real escape artist," Ms Harman said.

"When they get out they go hunting for mice on neighbouring properties. I'm concerned people might get fed up with them and then take matters into their own hands."

BAWCS president Debbie Edwards decided the group would help Ms Harman have an enclosure installed because she was not able to afford the full cost by herself.

"We support responsible pet ownership so we supported the cost of the first tower to be installed on their property," Ms Edwards said.

The enclosure was installed by Mr Byers this week, and Simba and Milo couldn't be happier with their new abode.

The "tower" includes lots of perches to climb onto and a comfy

hammock.

"The idea that we are trying to get across is you don't have to spend a lot of money," he said.

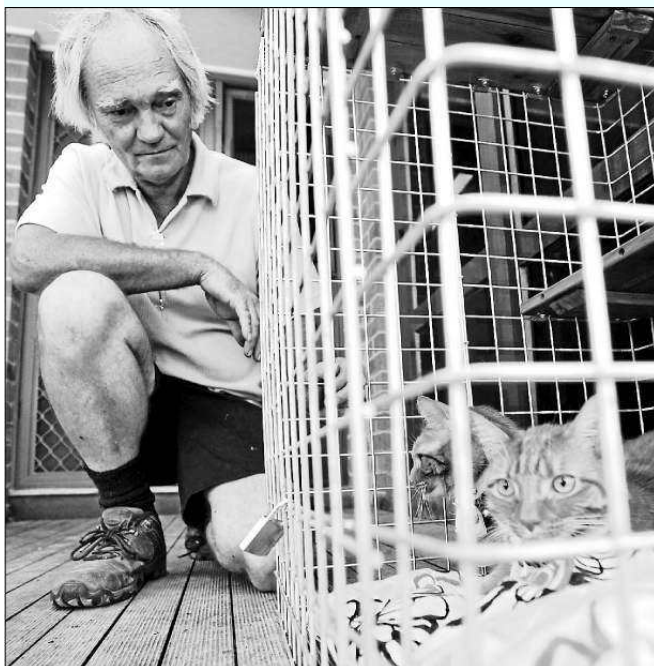
Mr Byers, a retired cat breeder, started making enclosures several years ago when Bendigo's cat curfew was introduced.

He said a good enclosure should have access to the house, usually through a window, and should be secure enough to stop cats getting out and big dogs getting in.

Mr Byers said cats were usually better off inside, if given the right stimulation.

To find out more about Mr Byer's pet enclosures, visit www.byers.net.au

Ms Harman's enclosure was installed with the support of State Trustees.



SECURE: Jim Byers with Milo and Simba in one of his cat enclosures.

Picture: MATT KIMPTON