



# RSPCA EDUCATION NEWS

ANIMAL NEWS FOR KIDS FROM RSPCA

JULY 2023



**AWARE**  
BY RSPCA  
for all creatures great & small

Education resources for Teachers and Students

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Tiny goats win hearts

Entertaining your cat

Have you considered?

Working at RSPCA  
Community highlight

## Tiny goats find new farm life



Two tiny little Boer goats came into the care of RSPCA in Victoria after being abandoned by their mothers. Cold and hungry, they were luckily found by one of our RSPCA Inspectors who was able to take them to the safety of our RSPCA shelter. Leo, who is brown and white, was estimated to be only two days old and weighed only 2 kilograms! Scarlett, who is white, was only slightly bigger at 3 kilograms and 2 weeks old.

They urgently needed a dedicated foster carer and Barn Manager Jess stepped up, bottle feeding them every few hours around the clock and making sure Leo and Scarlett felt safe and loved. Too young to regulate their own body temperatures, they wore little coats to keep warm.

The babies enjoyed coming into work with Jess each day, spending time walking around RSPCA paddocks on lead and making friends with the other barn animals

Leo is very affectionate and loves having his chin scratched. Scarlett is bouncy and loves climbing. She has even been known to climb into her carers' laps and give them a good face snuffle! Personal space isn't really a thing in Scarlett's world.



After being in foster care for two months, Leo and Scarlett were old enough to eat solid goat food and have their vaccinations. They especially like munching on yummy (for goats anyway!) milk thistle and goat pellets.

They have now been adopted by a loving new family who run a farm stay holiday property. Leo will be able to get all the face scratches he wants from visitors and Scarlett can run and jump to her little hearts content.



Visit our kids website: [www.kids.rspca.org.au](http://www.kids.rspca.org.au)

# Having fun with your cat

## (and keeping your furniture intact)



More and more pet cats now live indoors. Research shows that indoor cats live longer and can be healthier than their cat friends who roam freely outside.

Indoor cats won't get lost, are protected from cars and predators and are safe from other neighbourhood cats who might be sick or try to fight with them. Keeping cats indoors also keep birds and other small animals safe from being hunted by your cat on the prowl! A lot of local councils around Australia now require cats to be confined to their homes or an outdoor enclosure.

But how do you keep your cat having fun, using their brain and body, but not being destructive to things in your house? The answer is enrichment.

Most cats love to scratch, it relieves stress, gives them a good stretch and keeps their nails short. What you don't want is them scratching the couch or the curtains!

A cardboard scratcher or a cat tower that has scratching sections are great options (see pictures) and you can even add some catnip or catnip spray (both from pet supply stores) to make them more appealing. Your cat's scratcher or tower should be taller than them so they can get a nice big stretch when using it.

If your cat has a favourite treat you can hide them in different areas around the house before you leave for the day, they will have fun finding them for a snack.



There is a huge range of cat toys available in stores, but there are lots of things you can use just from home.

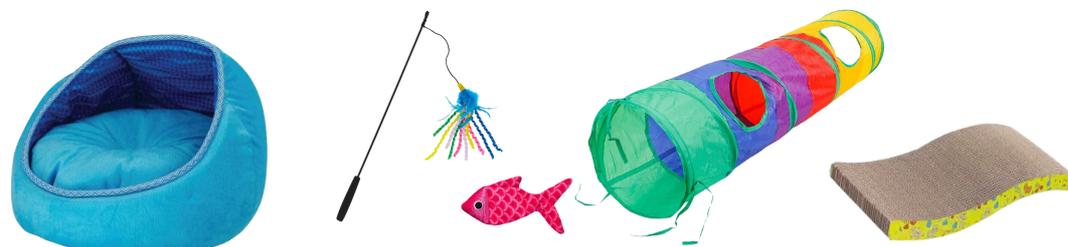
Paper shopping bags, cardboard boxes, toilet paper rolls, egg cartons with a few treats inside and an old sock with a ball tied into it will all provide lots of fun for your cat.

There are lots of cat toys to make on our RSPCA Kids site, so ask an adult's permission and go check out [www.kids.rspca.org.au/get-involved](http://www.kids.rspca.org.au/get-involved)

If you would like your cat to spend some time outside, you can take them for a walk in the backyard wearing a harness and lead. A cat collar is not suitable for walking your cat, they can easily slip their head out and run away, so keep them safe on a harness.

The other alternative for outdoor time for your cat is an outdoor enclosure.

These are cat playpens that can be built connected to the house by a cat door or window so that your cat can access some fresh air and sun when they feel like it. They can be bought from specialist companies or if you or a family member are handy, you could build your own.



# HAVE YOU CONSIDERED: A Pet Bird?

Companion birds make fun, interactive pets. They are highly intelligent, quick to learn and love to spend quality time with their owners.

There are many types of companion birds in Australia. Some are very small and some of the larger parrots that are common pets can be up to 45 cms in length!

For beginner and new owners of companion birds, starting small can be a good idea. Budgies and finches are the most common small pet birds and can make excellent companions.

Birds almost always live in flocks in the wild, so if you can, bring a pair or more birds into your home as most birds will be happiest with companions of the same kind. If this is not possible, as their owner you will need to provide company and quality time together. Try to keep pairs of the same gender, as breeding birds is best left to bird experts.



Your companion birds should be kept in a cage that is large for their size and behaviour. If your bird will not be able to spend much time out of their cage in your home (make sure all your doors are closed!) or a large outdoor aviary (special bird home), then their enclosure should be large enough that they can fly horizontally as that is normal behaviour for them.

As a general rule, wider is better than higher as birds don't fly up and down, they fly side to side. When you are buying your bird's house, look for the ones called 'flight cages' as they are designed so the birds have room to flap their wings and fly between perches.



The cage should be kept in an area where your birds can be part of family life, but where it can be quiet and as dark as possible for them to sleep well at night time. Your birds will love a hideout in their cage as they need to perform their natural nesting behaviours.

Feeding your pet birds requires a careful diet so they get all the nutrients they need. Special pellets or seed mixes from a pet supply store have all the ingredients to keep your birds healthy and you should add chopped fresh vegetables too. Seeds that are high in fat and fruit should be used as treats only and should not form a major part of your birds diet.

Providing enrichment for your birds is really important. Activities that involve chewing, shredding and foraging will be lots of fun for your birds and will be great for their mental health. You can hang vegetables or greens from the top of their cage or wrap fresh treats in brown paper and tie with cotton string. Climbing is fun, so you can provide tree branches for perching, strings of plain wooden beads or special bird ladders and cargo nets from pet supply shops. Birds also love to copy noises and you



might even be able to teach your pet bird to talk by using treats and simple words such as Hello, Bye or Hi. Using these words a lot, followed by a treat when your bird tries to copy you can be lots of fun.

There are veterinarians who specialise in birds or have lots of experience in their care, so you can always consult an expert or do lots of your own research if you have questions on how to best care for your feathery friends.

# Working at RSPCA



**Name:** Charlotte

**Job:** Animal Attendant, RSPCA Queensland

**How long have you worked at RSPCA?:** Two and a half years

**What is your favourite part of your job?:** I have a lot of responsibility in my job. I work alongside our volunteers, clean and organise food for the animals, make sure any medicine that our vet team has prescribed is being given correctly and using positive reward-based techniques to assist with their training and behaviour modification. I love the day-to-day interactions I have with each animal and seeing all the positive changes. Watching an animal's confidence grow or being part of nursing an animal back to health as they begin their recover is really something special to be a part of.

**Favourite animal:** My favourite animal is dogs, but I love all the animals we see at RSPCA.

**How many animals do you help each year?:** RSPCA Queensland had over 45,000 domestic and wildlife animals come into our hospital and care last year, so we are really busy and no two days are the same.

**Why do you love working at RSPCA?:** When animals enter the shelter, they are at their most vulnerable. Quite often they are scared, confused, sick and/or injured. Being able to be there for an animal during this time, and offer the love and support they need, makes everything worthwhile. It really is something special to be a part of a team who all have the same goal in mind - improving the lives of animals.

## Community Highlight

Lewin is an animal lover from Western Australia.

When Lewin's school held their annual Hero Day, Lewin decided to dress up as a RSPCA vet as he believes they are real life heroes and deserve medals!

Our Western Australian team loved Lewin's Hero Day costume so much they invited Lewin and his family for a visit to RSPCA Western Australia's facilities and vet clinic.

Lewin and his family had lots of great questions and really enjoyed their visit. He was even lucky enough to pick up a few gifts from the RSPCA team.

Hopefully we'll see you in a few years time Lewin, but this time working as part of the crew at RSPCA!

