



Nest boxes FAQ

Why use nest boxes?

The use of artificial nest boxes has been demonstrated to be an effective tool for providing refuges for native species that rely heavily on natural hollows for nesting. Native eucalypts generally need to be older than 100 years of age before they start to develop useable hollows for native marsupials. In areas that have experienced deforestation, this long timeframe for hollows to develop can mean that many species of marsupials no longer have suitable habitat to maintain a healthy population.

Nest boxes have also been shown to be a useful tool to assist with monitoring canopy based marsupials such as Feather-tail Gilders and Brush-tailed Phascogale.

The Council's Bushland Reserve Management Plans indicate a lack of understanding about what vertebrates exist within Council reserves. A greater understanding of the presence of canopy species enables appropriate management decisions to be made for these areas.

How are the nest boxes designed?

A number of experts on nest boxes have informed the design, including Dr. Dan Harley of Healesville Sanctuary. When using nest boxes, it is important to consider the target species as boxes are species specific. The species we are targeting are: Brush-tailed Phascogale, Sugar Gliders and Feather-tailed Gliders which require narrow entrance holes and nest box with a deep cavity.

How long will our nest boxes last?

Care has been taken to ensure the nest boxes last as long as possible while also considering the resources and funding available. Our boxes are constructed of dressed pine with a heavy coat of non-toxic exterior paint to protect them from the weather. We predict that these boxes should last for up to 10 years.





Do nest boxes encourage breeding of feral species?

The boxes have been designed to exclude pest species such as Indian Mynas with an entrance hole big enough for the targeted species, but small enough to exclude Indian Mynas.

The nest boxes will also be monitored at least annually to ensure invasive species are kept out of the boxes.

Can natural hollows be used as nest boxes?

Natural hollows should never be taken from the environment. Hollows both in the tree and on the ground, provide essential habitat for species.

Do nest boxes cause species to breed too much?

A number of factors limit population sizes. The availability of food resources, territory sizes, behaviour and rates of predation can all limit populations. With such a high loss of natural hollows, it is unlikely that we would be able to restore habitat to its former success.

Are trees damaged through installation of nest boxes?

We are attaching the nest boxes using various methods. Boxes will only be attached to large trees using two galvanised bolts. The bolts are screwed in with a 100mm gap to allow the tree to grow out. Where possible, boxes will also be hung using strands of thick wire with hose placed over it to protect the trunk.

Can paint fumes from a bushfire cause death to the inhabitants?

Only non-toxic acrylic paint is being used to paint the boxes. Only the exterior of the boxes is painted to provide them with more durability and weather protection. There is a lack of scientific data on the level of protection that natural hollows and nest boxes provide during a bushfire, but during extreme events, it is unlikely that inhabitants would persist in either.





Can I make nest boxes for my own property?

Yes, nest boxes can be placed on your property to provide refuges for local fauna. Council has some nest box designs that can be shared. There are some great books which can also assist in planning your own private property nest box program.

