



# Australian Rat Fanciers Society Inc.

Phone: 0401 741 162 (*voice calls only*)  
Email: [ausrfs@ausrfs.org.au](mailto:ausrfs@ausrfs.org.au)  
Website: [www.ausrfs.org.au](http://www.ausrfs.org.au)  
Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/AustralianRatFanciersSociety](http://www.facebook.com/AustralianRatFanciersSociety)  
Rat Advice Lines: 0401 741 162 or 0498 021 237  
Rescue Service: 0414 864 278

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## RAT CAGES

Rats are kept in cages, similar to a large bird cage. They need good air ventilation, so should not be kept in enclosures with completely solid walls, and absolutely NEVER in a glass aquarium.

There aren't many good rat cages available and although many cages are described as being suitable for rats, a lot of these are far too small or have bar space which is far too wide for rats. Also be aware that accessories that may come with a "rat" cage might not be useable, for instance the drip drink bottles that come with most cages, are usually not suitable for rats, as the ball size is too heavy for rats to use, and they won't be able to get any water out of them.

Most people start out with a smaller, less expensive cage and upgrade to a better one, or in a lot of cases upgrade several times! So in the long run it's cheaper to invest in a better cage in the first place. A good quality cage will look better, last longer, be easier to clean and decorate and will make life with your new pets much easier and more enjoyable.

Cages differ a lot in their design and quality so it's a good idea to actually see all the options before purchasing - taking into account where the cage will be placed and how you will be keeping your rats. For example you may prefer a freestanding cage on wheels if you are going to be moving the cage from room to room. If you are not going to litter train your rats, you will need a cage with a deep base to spread with litter, but if your rats use a litter tray to toilet in then you don't have to have a cage with a deep base. If you are new to rats, it's a really good idea to speak to different people about how they keep their rats, and if possible go and see their cage set ups as different things work for different people. For more ideas for things to put in your cage see the AusRFS book *The Pet Rat Care Guide* or do an internet image search on words like "rat cage set up" "rat cage decoration" etc.

**Size:** Bigger is definitely better. The ABSOLUTE smallest cage for 2 rats would be around 61cm high, 61cm wide and 36cm deep with 1 full level and a couple of ½ levels. We don't recommend keeping rats in this size cage unless the rats spend a LOT of time out of their cage. We highly recommend investing in something larger.

**Bar spacing:** This is also very important. Rats can squeeze through very small spaces! Bar spacing shouldn't exceed 1.25cm. Young rats or small adults may be able to get out of anything over 1.25cm.

It's a good idea to check a newly purchased cage to make sure there are no bent bars, any places where the bar spacing is slightly wider or other odd gaps that might allow rats to escape or get stuck trying to get out. Any gaps can be securely covered with non chew material such as a patch of Mouse wire (available from Bunnings), held in place with enough cable ties to hold it close to the bars so the rats can't push in between.

Cages with wide bar spacing can be made escape proof by covering the entire cage with mouse wire, but this is definitely not ideal. It's a lot of work to do, it's difficult to cut the wire without leaving sharp edges; a huge number of cable ties are needed to attach the wire all over and the wire makes it much harder to clean the cage.

## **Shape/Flooring/Levels**

Cages with a good amount of horizontal space are best. A wide cage with a few large levels is much more practical than a tall, thin cage with lots of small platforms. Rats need good sized flat areas to safely run, wrestle and play with each other and their toys as well as providing plenty of room to place hide houses, boxes food dishes etc.

If you have a tall cage, it's very important, to provide ladders, ramps or other items which are not too steep so the rats can easily get to the various levels. It's also important to place platforms, hammocks or other items strategically throughout the cage to prevent a rat falling all the way from the top to the bottom of the cage. Some rats are good climbers but a lot are not, old rats often have trouble climbing at all, and need to be housed in a single level cage.

Additional levels can be easily added to most cages by attaching the levels onto the cage bars with cable ties.

Rat cages should not have wire flooring, these can cause ulcers and injuries to rat's feet. If your cage has wire levels they should either be replaced with solid levels or covered with some sort of a solid sheeting. Very thick plastic is best but something like vinyl flooring will also do. Any company that cuts/moulds plastic should be able to make levels and trays to measure, but the AusRFS can provide details of companies that our members have used. In addition some people also like to cover their cage levels with fleece fabric, others prefer to lay down newspaper.

Galvanized metal cages aren't recommended but if you really must use them, be sure to wash the cage thoroughly with a vinegar solution to avoid the risk of zinc poisoning.

Cages can be professionally powder coated to give them a new look or new colour. The AusRFS can advise of a company that some of our members have used.

The AusRFS has a permanent stock of the blue based cages listed on page 9, we sometimes have other new cages for sale. Second hand cages are sometimes available but they are offered for sale to club members first.

The following pages contain details of some of the most popular cages available at the moment. If the cage you are considering is not listed here please feel free to send a link to the AusRFS to check if it's suitable for rats.



## **FERRET KINGDOM & FERRET KINGDOM JUNIOR**

**NOTE: PuppyPower (the only seller of these cage) has suspended sales of both these cages for the foreseeable future. So there are no new Ferret Kingdoms or Ferret Kingdom Juniors available. But the details are this cage have been kept here an example of the ideal rat cage. This cage has been considered the benchmark cage in Australia for many years. FK/FKJ can sometimes be found secondhand. But be cautious, and make sure it's a genuine FK/FKJ you are buying.**

Because Ferret Kingdom/Ferret Kingdom Junior cages are so well known and highly regarded, they are copied – a lot ! Copycat cages are often advertised as Ferret Kingdoms so please make sure you are know what you are buying. The copies can look very similar in a photo but the quality can be very different, bar spacing is one common difference, some have fake doors or gaps where rats can escape. Also there is a cage called “Pet Kingdom” which is not the same cage. New Ferret Kingdom cages were only ever available via Puppy Power, so if a new cage is currently be advertised as a FK or FKJ, it's a fake.

These cages are very sturdy, excellent quality cage providing plenty of room. The Premium, powder coating is durable and rust resistant. The large doors open up the whole front of the cage, making cleaning and decorating a breeze and also allows trays and levels to be easily inserted. The cage is on lockable wheels and is easy to move around. The door latches very are secure. The 1.25cm bar spacing which is ideal for rats – even babies.

### **FERRET KINGDOM**

**Price:** \$545.00 approx

**Size** (including stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 159.5cm

**Size:** Living Space (excluding stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 121cm

**Bar spacing:** 1.25cm

The Ferret Kingdom can be divided into 2 completely separate living quarters by blocking off the ramp access between the levels. Some owners keep their rats in the top section and use the bottom section for storage if their rats don't need access to the full cage



### **FERRET KINGDOM JUNIOR**

**Price:** \$325.95 approx

**Size** (including stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 98cm

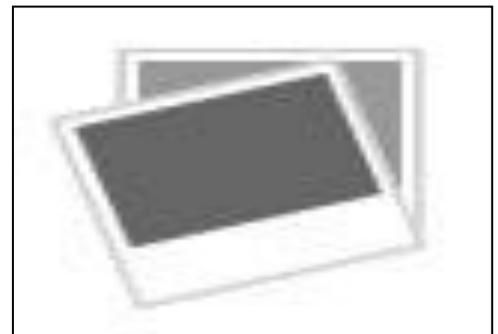
**Size** Living Space (excluding stand)

Length 93.5 x Depth 63.5 x Height 60.5cm

**Bar spacing:** 1.25cm

Ferret Kingdom Junior provides half the cage space of the Ferret Kingdom – it's basically the bottom section of the Ferret Kingdom, so it takes up the same floor space – it's just not as high.

If you prefer the cage to be up higher, you don't have to use the stand. The cage can be placed on a table or cabinet.



Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

These are American cages, available for purchase from the US via Amazon.

Excellent quality cages, which have been the benchmark rat cage in the US for many years.

A great option if you can get free shipping from the USA.

**NOTE:**

This company makes another cage called Ferret Nation which is designed for larger animals and is NOT suitable for rats. The Ferret Nation cage has a bar spacing of 2.54cm which is far too wide for rats. Please note the Model Numbers listed below to ensure you are buying the correct cage.

### **CRITTER NATION – DOUBLE UNIT**

Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

Model No. 162

Approximate Price: \$486

Size: 91.4cm x 61cm x 160cm

Bar Spacing: 1.27



### **CRITTER NATION – SINGLE UNIT**

Brand: MidWest Homes for Pets

Model No. 161

Approximate Price: \$295

Size: 91.4cm x 63.5cm x 97.8cm

Bar spacing: 1.27cm



## **CRAZY SALES – 4 LEVEL PET CAGE**

Approximate Price: \$340

Size (including stand)

Length 93cm, Depth 63cm, Height 160cm

Bar spacing: 1.5cm approx. See *note below*

This is a solid, heavy cage. The quality is medium. But is good value for the price.

**NOTE: The 1.5cm bar spacing is alright for chunky adult boys but too wide for young rats or small females. The seller lists the bar spacing as “150 approx” so some gaps may be wider than 1.50cm. Please take this into account before choosing this cage.**

The metal trays have been known to rust overtime.

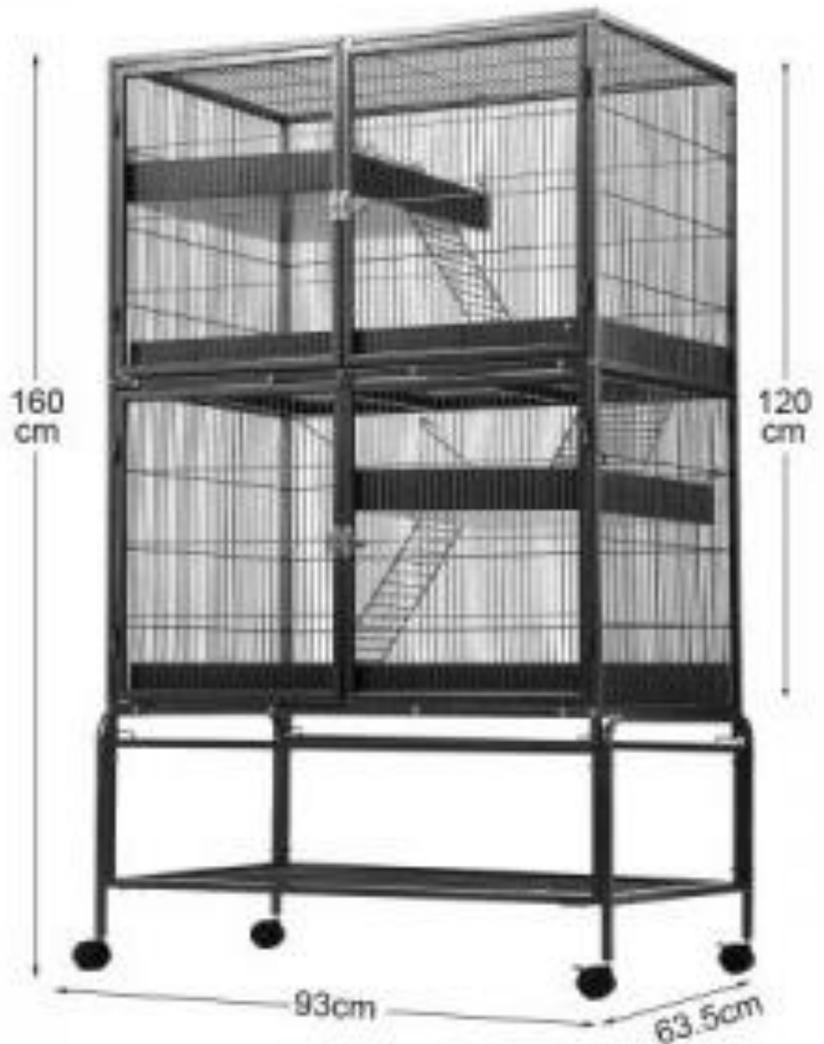
The trays are good for preventing litter etc from being kicked out onto the floor, but can be problematic for older rats as they need to climb over the sides to get up and down from the levels.

This cage is delivered flatpacked in 2 boxes. The boxes are sometimes despatched separately and delivered on different days.

Please note: Crazy Sales sells a few different cages. There other cages are either too small or have even wider bar spacing.

Available via the Crazysales website.

<https://m.crazysales.com.au/online-4-levels-pet-cage-rabbit-hutch-cat-hamster-guinea-pig-ferret-chinchilla-house-164819.html>



## **ROUNDED CORNER - LARGE FERRET CAGE - 4 LEVELS**

Approx Price: \$250

**Size: Length 94cm x Depth 59cm Height 161cm  
(including stand)**

**Cage size: Length 92cm x Depth 55cm Height  
115cm**

Door size: 48 x 40cm

Bar spacing: 9mm

Floor bar spacing: 8mm

Platform access hole diameter: 15cm

This cage is of fairly light construction, it weighs less than the previously listed cages. But the quality is good and is durable, if not being knocked around.

The levels and ramps some fixings are plastic but are durable. Rats could chew the plastic but we haven't heard of any doing this.

Although this cage has a metal pull out litter tray on the bottom, the wire cage base sits on top of this. Therefore something solid needs to be placed on top of the wire base so that rats are not walking on the bars, (eg corflute or Perspex sheet, vinyl flooring offcut etc). This makes the metal pull out tray useless. If you are handy you can probably work out a way to modify the metal tray to use to cover the wire bars.

This cage has rounded corners which would make replacing or adding levels a little difficult.

It has 2 good sized doors. The levels have access holes positioned over the ramps, which takes away some of the usable area of the levels.

Available on the Budtrol store on ebay

The Store is located in Sydney and ships Australia wide.

<https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/232018492601?hash=item3605613cb9:g:nIEAOSwHP1eDH-2>



### **METAL CAGE – 3 level**

**9mm Bar Spacing Rat Cage Hamster Cat  
Ferret Rabbit Cage Hutch Enclosure**

Approximate Price \$250

Size: 83 cm (H) x 93.5 cm (W) x 63 cm (D)

Bar spacing: 9mm

A great option for up to 4 rats. Fully opening doors. Trays and ladders are removable for easy cleaning. The casters can be removed and the cage placed on a cabinet or table if required.

This cage is suitable for “messy” rats as the deep tray stops litter etc being kicked out. Also for rats that are not litter trained as and the whole tray can be covered with a layer of litter.

The bar spacing is perfect for all rats.

As with most cages listed here, adding additional levels would increase to the useable space.

#### **Available on the Budtrol store on ebay**

The Store is located in Sydney and ships Australia wide.

<https://www.ebay.com.au/itm/231445760705?hash=item35e33e0ac1:g:JEQAAOSwG5teOLDN&frc=ctupt=true>



## AVI ONE FLIGHT CAGES

**Approximate Price: \$230**

These are bird cages but can be modified to make them suitable for rats, by putting in levels and ramps or ladders. They are a sturdy, well made cage, and the wheels make them easy to move. The large door give very good access to the cage.

Although this cage has a metal pull out litter tray on the bottom, the wire cage base sits on top of this. Therefore something solid needs to be placed on top of the wire base so that rats are not walking on the bars, (eg coreflute or Perspex sheet, vinyl flooring offcut etc). This makes the metal pull out tray useless. If you are handy you can probably work out a way to modify the metal tray to use to cover the wire bars.

There are about 5 different Avi One flight cages which are the same design, but different sizes. Model number 603 and 604 are reasonable sizes for a small number of rats and seem to be the better ones for the price. The bigger models are quite expensive so other cages listed here would be better value

### Model Number 603

Measurements: (cage only) **Length** 65 x **depth** 43.5 x **height** 70cm.

The stand is about 70cm high bringing the total height to about 140cm

### Where to buy

On line or pet supply stores – shop around - the prices vary a lot.



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Avi One Cage - as comes  
(set up for birds)



Avi One Cage with levels and ladders added  
to make it suitable for rats.

## **PLASTIC BLUE BASE CAGE**

Price \$150

Size: L - 78cm, W- 43cm, H - 50cm

Bar spacing: 900cm

The smallest cage we recommend.

This is a good option if space is an issue. The size is adequate as long as the rats are getting a good amount of out of cage time.

Probably the best quality of all the moulded plastic base cages available. The bars are not coated so they don't chip and they don't tend to rust. This cage can be used for all rats including newborns as the bars are a consistent small spacing.



It's fairly light cage for the size, it has a deep base making it very suitable for "messy" rats or those that are not trained to use a separate litter tray, as the whole base of the cage can be covered with a layer of litter if necessary.

Because it is wide rather than high, its good for older rats who are not able to climb very well.

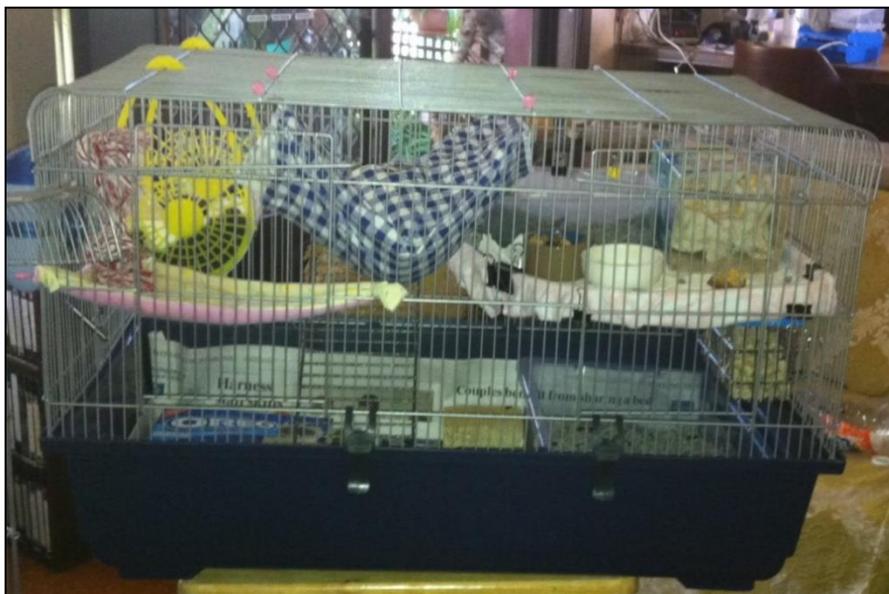
The cage features 2 doors, which are a reasonable size. The wire top unclips from the base for cleaning and to get houses and other larger objects in and out of the cage.

They come with a litter tray, drink bottle, 2 food dishes, tubing with ventilation holes and a corner shelf.

Additional levels can be added to make more useable space for rats.

### Where to buy

The AusRFS sells these cages. We have an account with the importer, so can offer them at a very good price.



## **PLASTIC GREY/GREEN BASE CAGE**

Price \$120 approx

Size: 100cm x 64cm x 53cm

Bar spacing: 900cm

Optional stand available.

A medium sized cage. The largest of all the moulded plastic base cages available

The quality is reasonable. It's very light cage for the size. The bars are plastic coated so they can chip and as a result can also rust. This cage can be used for all rats including newborns as the bars are a consistent small spacing. If using for babies, please check for bent bars which may leave a gap big enough for babies to get out – this commonly happens around the top corners of this cage.



The deep base makes it very suitable for “messy” rats or those that are not trained to use a separate litter tray, as the whole base of the cage can be covered with a layer of litter if necessary.

Because it is wide rather than high, it's good for older rats who are not able to climb very well.

The cage features 2 doors, which are a reasonable size. The wire top unclips from the base for cleaning and to get houses and other larger objects in and out of the cage.

Comes with a litter tray, drink bottle, 2 food dishes, tubing with ventilation holes and a corner shelf.

Additional levels can be added to make more useable space for rats.

### Where to buy

Via Gumtree, this seller is located in Berwick Victoria offers these cages at a very reasonable price.

<https://www.gumtree.com.au/s-ad/berwick/pet-products/rat-or-ferret-cage-and-stand-100cm-cage-110-1051387891>

Note: this seller has other cages available that are not suitable for rats – either too small or with wide bar spacing.

## **PET ONE - Model Number 505**

Price \$100 (Approx)

Size: Length 61cm x Width 36cm x Height 60cm

Bar spacing: 900cm approx

### **WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS CAGE** **IT IS SMALL AND NOT VERY GOOD QUALITY.**

**This cage is only included here because it is widely available and commonly bought by first time rat owners who don't realise the needs of rats, how big rats can grow and how much space they need.**

The only situation where this cage would be suitable is if owners have their rats out of the cage most of the time – basically using the cage as a base station and sleeping quarters only. It's certainly not big enough for more than 2 rats, the small space makes it difficult to fit hide houses, hammocks, litter trays, toys etc, and the 2 small shelves don't give rats a large enough surface to run and play

This is a very basic, economy cage and the quality is reflected in the price. The pull out tray is very shallow and isn't suitable to put litter directly into. Often the trays do not fit the cages very well, leaving a gap big enough for small rats to escape or get stuck in, so sometimes some modification is required.

The cage comes with a wire grill which is made to go on the base of the cage (over the plastic tray), which will need to be covered, so that the rats aren't walking on the wire. Alternatively the grill can be repositioned and used in the middle of the cage to make an additional level. To do this, cut an access hole into one of the corners of the grill using wire cutters, and attach the grill just under the top door using cable ties. The rats will then have access onto the plastic pull out tray, so the tray may need to be secured to the wire section, to ensure that they can't push in between the wire and the tray.

Please note: Pet One make quite a few cages for different animals, most of them are small (even if they are described as being suitable for rats). This cage comes in 2 sizes (that look the same), This model is small, the other models are even smaller.

There are generic cages available which look exactly the same as Pet One cages. The quality is usually comparable but the measurements can be slightly different.

### Features

2 Doors opening size: 26cm wide x 16.5cm high

2 ladders

2 wire shelves

Colours: available in black or white.

### Where to buy

On-line stores, ebay, pet shops etc.



Pet One Cage - as comes



Pet One Cage set up for rats