

Our Ref: 22/2 (1256191)

15 November 2016

Committee Secretariat
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into flying-fox management in the Eastern States- Parliament of Australia

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to your inquiry into flying fox management in the Eastern States. Maitland City Council is able to provide responses on a number of your terms of reference and where we provide no response we are unable to provide opinion as these topics are outside of our area of control.

The interaction between the State and Commonwealth regulatory frameworks:

This is very confusing when managing flying fox impacts as both State and Commonwealth have regulatory roles and licensing involved but whilst State legislation applies in all cases of threatened species, Commonwealth only applies in certain conditions for Grey Headed Flying Foxes. Both the State and Commonwealth should have dedicated staff to manage impacts at camps rather than leaving the responsibility to land managers to avoid the inconsistencies of regulation that have occurred across the eastern states.

Strategic approaches to managing species at a regional scale:

NSW has recently created a camp management policy that directs land managers to undertake responsibility of managing flying fox impacts on their land through a camp management plan. It is assumed that the majority of sites are on Council owned land, and has suggested that Councils may take on the role of management on private land. The Local Government Act has strict conditions on works on private land which makes the process difficult to manage, and leaves the camps located on private land without consideration by the State Camp Management Policy.

Management of species at a regional scale is a preferred approach and will see the reduction of wastage of time and resources for individual camp management plans for sites as the reality of actions is limited and can be dealt with on a broader regional scale. Any dispersal actions require licensing and detail is provided in the form of the application and would not be provided on an individual camp management plan scale.

Management of the species at a regional scale will also provide clarity of the breadth of the issue, rather than the focus of one camp and will assist in education and knowledge gathering.

The success or otherwise of management actions, such as dispersal of problematic flying fox camps:

This is a difficult situation as successful dispersal of flying foxes is seen as an impact (whether this be a reality or not) to other camps that have increases in numbers at the time or at a later date. More State and Commonwealth action should be focussed on creating appropriate camp sites where they are currently not problematic and ensuring the ecosystem required to maintain the species (both roosting and foraging).

Current reviews of State legislation should be evaluated for their impacts to species such as flying foxes and whether the changes which relaxes the requirements relating to the removal of vegetation will increase the impacts to both the species and urban areas.

Yours sincerely

Bernie Mortomore
Executive Manager – Planning, Environment and Lifestyle