

Flying Fox Management - Q&A

From www.ehp.qld.gov.au

Why do we need a new approach to flying-fox roost management?

The Queensland Government appreciates the significant impact flying-foxes have had on some towns across the state. This approach is empowering local governments to act more responsively in the interests of their communities when flying-fox roosts are causing problems.

How does the new approach differ from the current one?

The new framework gives councils the right to disperse, remove or otherwise manage flying-fox roosts in designated urban areas without having to apply for permits and approvals from state government, subject to a new code of practice, the permission of relevant landholders and other applicable laws.

In the defined urban areas members of the public will still be able to apply for a Flying-Fox Roost Management Permit where councils don't exercise this right. Outside of the defined urban areas, the permitting system will still apply.

Where and when will people be able to disperse flying-foxes?

In urban areas, councils will have the authority to disperse, remove or modify flying-foxes without a permit from the Queensland Government provided they operate in accordance with a code of practice. Outside of urban areas, everyone (including councils) will still require a permit.

How will councils be able to disperse flying-foxes?

All dispersals in urban areas will need to be carried out according to a statutory code of practice.

Will flying-foxes lose their protected status under the *Nature Conservation Act* in the new approach?

No, flying-foxes will stay classified as protected wildlife in Queensland, including in urban areas.

Won't this lead to a free-for-all approach to flying-fox roosts?

No, it won't. Councils are being given greater rights to respond to flying-fox issues in urban areas. This recognises their level of accountability and role to act in the interests of their communities. They will be encouraged to prepare plans for how they will do this and to make them publicly available. Councils

will no longer need to apply for permits in urban areas but they will need to abide by a code of practice that will permit only non-lethal methods. Councils wanting to conduct activities within a defined urban area that are non-compliant with the code are required to obtain a Flying Fox Roost Management Permit (FFRMP) from EHP.



Anyone (including councils) seeking to disperse flying-foxes outside the defined urban areas will also still need to apply to EHP for a FFRMP and go through the necessary approval process.

Urban areas cover a very small proportion of the state but are where most flying-fox impacts on people occur. In the last two years, 95 per cent of the applications to remove or disperse flying-fox roosts have been in urban areas.

Full information is on the Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries website at www.daff.qld.gov.au.

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Will councils be permitted to use lethal measures to manage flying- foxes?

Local councils are best placed to manage flying- foxes as they have the people on the ground to trim trees and move flying foxes on. In the instance that all non-lethal measures have been exhausted, councils have requested the ability to apply for a lethal damage mitigation permit. The government has announced that it will legislate to make these changes in 2014. The details of this approach will be developed with the Commonwealth Government over the coming months.

What will be defined as the urban area?

Urban flying-fox management areas (UFFMAs) include all areas that have an urban zoning under council planning schemes as well as a one- kilometre buffer around these areas.

How will the government ensure conservation of flying-foxes?

Permits will continue to be required for dispersing or removing roosts outside of urban areas. Urban areas cover only a very small percentage of the state, although they are where most flying-fox roost problems occur.

It will be councils' decisions as to which roosts are moved on taking into account the interests of the community.

The Australian Government, in collaboration with relevant state governments, is conducting a national survey of two of Queensland's flying-fox species—the grey-headed and spectacled flying- foxes. This data will be used to evaluate the national population and population trends of these two species. This information is also expected to provide valuable scientific data to inform future management actions.

What about animal welfare considerations?

The new codes of practice include provisions aimed at ensuring acceptable welfare outcomes for flying-foxes.

Flying-foxes often congregate at roost sites to breed and there are welfare issues associated with trying to disperse flying-foxes once they start birthing or have dependent young. The new approach will minimise these issues by giving councils the ability to respond rapidly when animals first arrive at a roost site and

before they begin to breed.

Members of the community wanting to disperse flying-foxes in urban areas will still need to apply for a permit, in accordance with the *Nature Conservation Act*.



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