



Statement of Management Intent

For

Flying fox roost management

In

FRASER COAST REGIONAL
COUNCIL

Local Government Area

November 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Statement of Management Intent (SoMI) is to document the position of Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC) for the management of flying fox roosts in the Fraser Coast local government area (LGA). It also includes advice on how to co-exist with flying foxes when they are near residential areas.

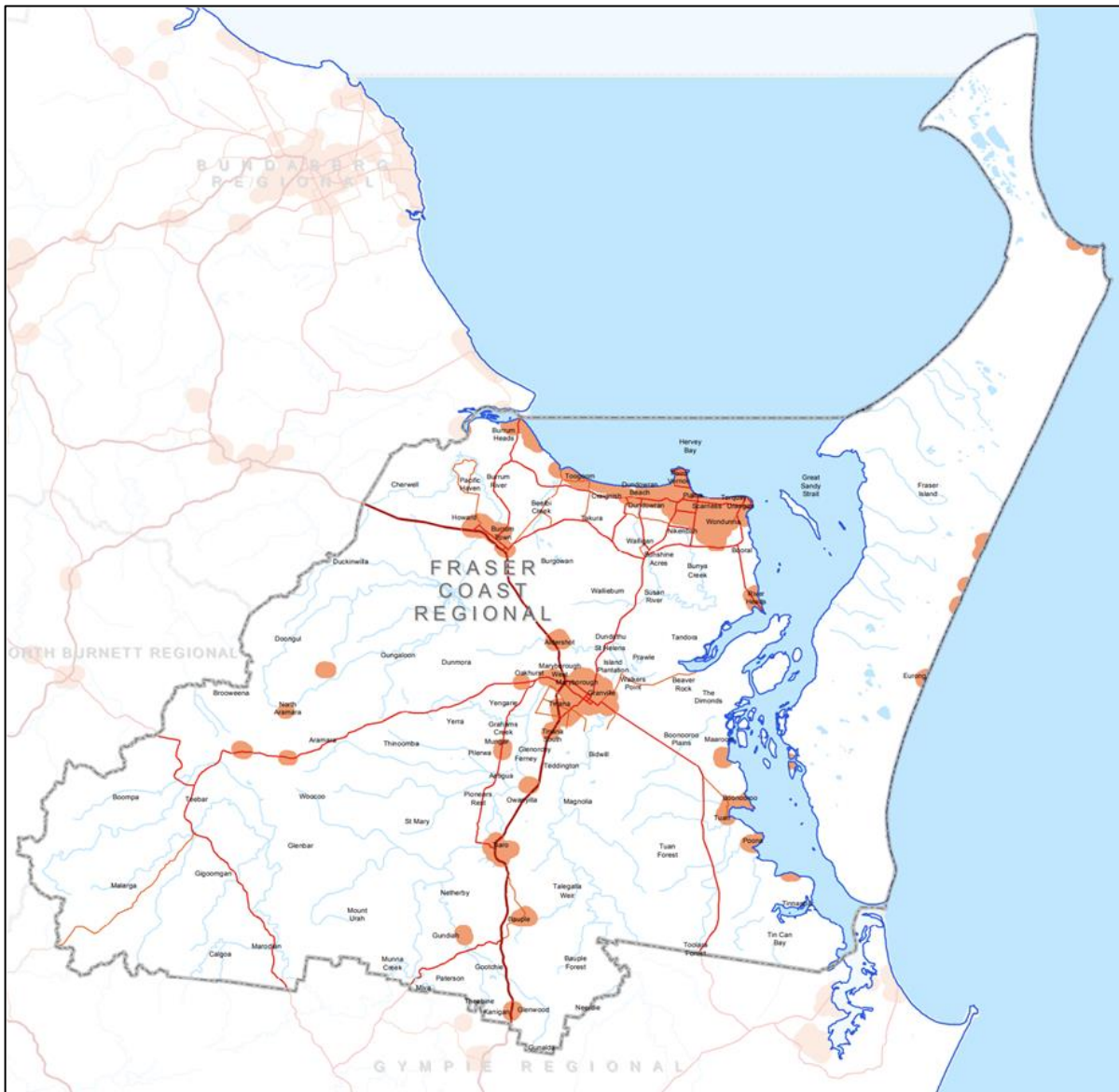
2. Background

Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, local governments in Queensland have an as-of-right authority to undertake flying fox roost management in designated Urban Flying fox Management Areas (UFFMAs) provided they comply with the *Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable management of flying fox roosts* (The Code).

Outside an UFFMA, local government requires a Flying-fox Roost Management Permit (FFRMP), available from the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation. Local government has the option to apply for a FFRMP should it wish to trial roost management techniques that are outside The Code. A non-council applicant requires a FFRMP irrespective of the location of the roost.

3. Urban Flying Fox Management Areas in the Fraser Coast Regional Council LGA

The map below depicts the UFFMAs within the Fraser Coast Regional Council area (orange highlight).



Source: [Urban management area maps | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qld.gov.au)

4. Council position on flying fox management

FCRC will not undertake actions aimed at the disturbance or relocation of flying fox roosts located within its LGA, regardless of whether the roost is located within or outside of a mapped UFFMA.

Over the past few years Council has had, and continues to have, significant flying fox roosts located within its area of responsibility. During this time, affected residents have sought Council intervention to “move on” these roosts. Council’s approach has been not to disturb the animals, instead allowing the flying foxes to disperse naturally. This position is based on research, and the experience of other land management agencies throughout Australia, which shows that disturbing and relocating flying fox roosts is an expensive and uncertain operation. There are no guarantees the animals won’t return to the site they were dispersed from (Roberts and Eby 2013, Roberts *et al* 2011).

Council provides advice to affected residents (see Section 6) on how to coexist with flying foxes.

Council may consider the modification of vegetation within a roost located inside an UFFMA where such modification is necessary for public safety or to protect community property and where such modification is *not* considered to be significant enough to relocate the roost or to make the site less attractive for its continued occupation. It should be noted that any modification of a site carries a risk that the roost may abandon the site for a location that could affect a greater number of residents. A full risk analysis will be undertaken before any actions are delivered.

5. Flying foxes in the Fraser Coast LGA

The following information and advice is provided to assist in the identification of flying fox species within the Fraser Coast LGA. Image 1 below shows the different species of Australian flying fox; three of which can be present in the Fraser Coast LGA.



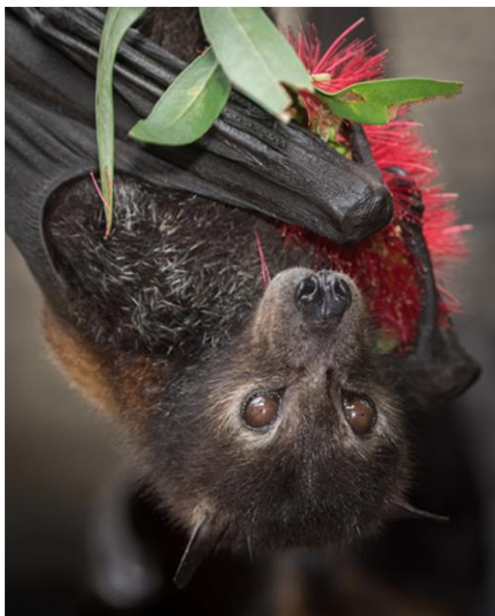
Image 1: Australian flying fox species and their distribution.

Black flying fox – *Pteropus Alecto*

Black flying fox are generally black in colour but can have a red or golden collar and are the largest species of flying fox in Australia.

They travel long distances at night (up to 50 km) foraging for food. This long-distance foraging, combined with a fast digestive system means that they are a very effective long-distance pollinator for native forests.

Black flying fox peak conception time occurs in March and April, with pups generally born between September and December. Pups will be carried for four weeks before they are left at a roost in a ‘creche’ while mothers forage at night. At two to three months of age, young will begin to leave the roost to forage.



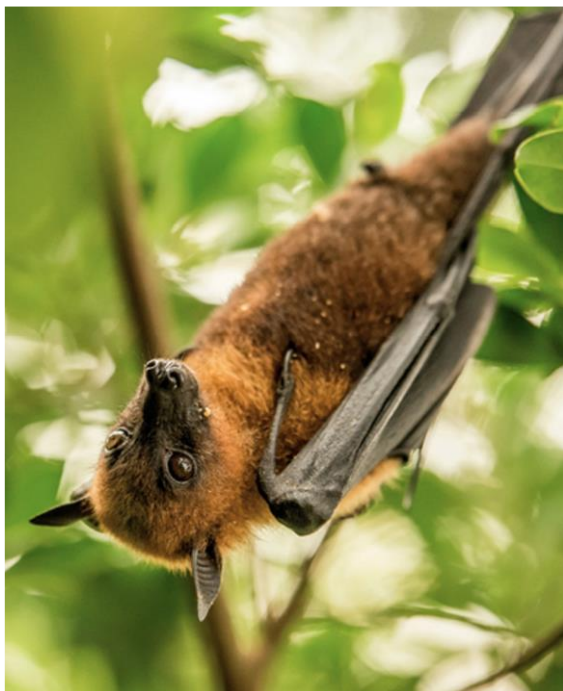
Black flying foxes.



Little Red flying fox - *Pteropus scapulatus*

Smaller in size than the Black flying fox, the Little Red flying fox has short red-brown fur and pale brown wings that appear translucent in flight. This animal can tolerate varying climates and as a result are highly nomadic; they will generally stay only stay at a site for around six weeks before moving on when food becomes scarce at the end of flowering events, unless they are breeding.

Little Red flying foxes are specialist nectivores which means they feed primarily on nectar, but supplement with cultivated fruits, other plant parts and insects. Peak conception is from November to January and birthing generally occurs between March and May. Breeding cycles can vary when animals are subjected to periods of high stress. Pups become capable of independent flight at around two months of age after sucking their mothers in the roost.



Little Red flying foxes.

Grey-headed flying fox - *Pteropus poliocephalus*

The Grey-headed flying fox is listed as Vulnerable to extinction under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

This flying fox is generally found within 200 km of the coast, with Rockhampton representing the northern extent of this species' distribution. This animal forages and roosts in rainforests, open forests or closed and open woodlands, often within urban or peri-urban areas. Peak conception occurs between March and April and birthing generally occurs between September and October.



Grey-headed flying fox.

6. Tips for residents - living near flying foxes

In recent years habitat loss for all species of flying fox has occurred, leading to a redistribution of their populations into urban and peri-urban areas. With this redistribution has come human-wildlife conflict. Resident concerns include nuisance of the noise, smell, damage to properties due to droppings, and damage to vegetation caused by flying foxes.

Council recognises that roosts may present an inconvenience and nuisance to residents; however, this is usually non-permanent as flying foxes generally self-manage and move on of their own accord. *Don't purposely disturb flying foxes – disturbed colonies will often be the noisiest and most highly stressed.* If animals are exhausted from being disturbed, they are less likely to be able to relocate to another area.

Disturbance can affect breeding success; this coupled with habitat destruction could contribute to localised and general extinction in the future. Additionally, as with the human common cold, higher stress within an environment can cause higher viral loads, thereby increasing the transmission between individuals.

Here are some tips for living near flying foxes:

- Park cars under shelter where possible.
- Bring washing in before sunset; this is when the bats begin foraging.
- Install netting around fruit trees (or put bags around fruit). It is preferable to use white thick-knitted netting pulled tight rather than black netting, to reduce the risk of wildlife becoming entangled.
- Avoid the use of barbed wire fences near flowering plants so flying foxes can't become entangled.
- Keep doors and windows closed at dawn and dusk to reduce impacts during fly-in and fly-out.
- Keep dogs and cats inside at night and away from roost sites. Keep their food and water indoors.
- Don't attempt to pick up or touch a sick or injured flying-fox – call a trained and vaccinated wildlife rescue professional on 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625)
- Ensure that children are aware that they must not touch any sick, injured or orphaned flying foxes and to report it to a responsible adult.

Human health concerns

There are often misconceptions about the health risks of living near a flying-fox roost. Queensland Health advises that disease risks are generally low and simple to mitigate. Information on human health concerns can be found on the Queensland Health website:

- [Bats and human health | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health-and-wellbeing/bats-and-human-health)

Horse owners

Horse owners concerned about the potential health risks relating to Hendra virus can follow these simple steps:

- Discuss horse vaccination with your local vet.
- Cover horse feed and water containers.
- Remove horses from paddocks containing flowering/fruited trees.
- Clean up any fruit on the ground in horse paddocks.
- Isolate any horse that becomes sick until a veterinarian's opinion has been obtained.

More information about the Hendra virus is available on the Queensland Government – Business QLD website:

- [Hendra virus | Business Queensland](https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/health-and-wellbeing/hendra-virus)

7. Privately owned land

Management of roosts on privately owned land is the responsibility of the landowner. If a resident is concerned about a roost that is on private land, they can apply to the Queensland Government for a roost management permit.

If a roost is on private land, low impact activities such as mulching mowing or weeding can be undertaken by the landholder near it, where the activities are not directed at destroying the roost or disturbing the animals. These activities must be undertaken in accordance with the *Code of Practice – Low Impact Activities Affecting Flying-fox Roosts* (link below).

Any individual or organisation wishing to undertake roost management or dispersal actions must be approved by the QLD Government and must complete any management actions in accordance with the *Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable management of flying-fox roosts*, which is available on the QLD Government (link below).

- [Code of Practice - Low impact activities affecting flying-fox roosts Nature Conservation Act 1992 \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/nature-conservation/act-1992)
- [Code of practice - Ecologically sustainable management of flying-fox roosts \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/nature-conservation/act-1992)

Residents are reminded that unauthorised activities resulting in the disturbance of flying-fox roosts can result in prosecution under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and/or *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

8. Further information

Further information on the Queensland Government’s roost management framework is available at:

- The Queensland Government website: <https://www.qld.gov.au> – search “authorised flying-fox roost management”.
- Fraser Coast Regional Council website: www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au – search: “flying fox”.

9. Enquiries

Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation: Wildlife and Threatened Species Operations – Governance and Operational Policy. Email: wildlife.management@des.qld.gov.au

Fraser Coast Regional Council: 1300 79 49 29 or enquiry@frasercoast.qld.gov.au

10. References

Roberts, B, Eby, P 2013, *Review of past flying fox dispersal actions between 1990 and 2013*. [flyingfoxsub-jenny-beatson-part2.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/files/2013/12/flyingfoxsub-jenny-beatson-part2.pdf) , accessed 12 April 2023

Roberts, B, Eby, P, Catterall, CP, Kanowski, J & Bennett, G 2011, *The outcomes and costs of relocating flying fox camps: insights from the case of Maclean, Australia*. http://meridian.allenpress.com/book/chapter-pdf/2647927/fs_2011_028.pdf, accessed 12 April 2023