

# Moreton Bay Regional Council

## Statement of Management Intent - Flying Fox Colonies



November 2020

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## 2 Authority to manage flying fox roosts

Under the State Government's *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, local governments in Queensland have an as-of-right authority to manage flying fox roosts in designated Urban Flying-fox Management Areas (UFFMAs). While the as-of-right authority permits local governments to undertake actions to manage flying fox roosts, it is not compulsory for local governments to do so. An UFFMA for a local government area is defined by maps developed by the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science (DES). The designated UFFMA's for the Moreton Bay Regional Council area (Council) are shown in Appendix A.

Within UFFMAs, Council is authorised to use non-lethal management actions to manage colonies in accordance with the Queensland Government's Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable management of flying fox roosts (available at <https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals/documents/cp-wl-ff-roost-management.pdf>)

For roost management outside an UFFMA, Council is required to obtain a flying fox roost management permit (FFRMP) from DES.

Residents are also able to manage flying foxes on their own properties however, approval and a FFRMP must be obtained prior to works commencing (refer section 5.2).

## 3 Statement of Management Intent

Council is aware that flying fox colonies can cause concern to and impact the amenity of residents living adjacent to them, with commonly expressed issues including:

- Noise;
- Odour;
- Aesthetic amenity of parks and surrounds;
- Damage from droppings;
- Damage to fruit trees; and
- Concerns in relation to diseases such as Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV).

The purpose of this Statement of Management Intent (SoMI) is to articulate the approach that Council will take to manage flying fox colonies within the defined UFFMAs across the region.

A map of known flying fox colony locations in the Moreton Bay Region is shown in Appendix B.

## 4 Flying Foxes of Moreton Bay Region

There are over 40 known flying fox colonies within the Moreton Bay region, which can consist of a single species of flying fox or, more commonly, are comprised of a mix of up to three (3) flying fox species.

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#### 4.1 Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)



Grey-headed flying foxes are a large flying fox (up to 29cm long), mostly dark grey except for a rusty-brown mantle encircling the shoulders, chest and neck. The wing membranes are black. The wingspan can be up to 1m.

This species is classified as vulnerable under the Commonwealth Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The period in which the grey-headed flying foxes give birth to young is between September and November, with the young being dependent on their mother until late March.

#### 4.2 Black flying fox (*Pteropus alecto*)



Black flying foxes are a large flying fox (up to 28cm long) with black fur, often with a mantle of reddish-brown fur on the back of the neck. The wing membranes are black. The wingspan can be up to 1m.

They can travel up to 50km in a night foraging for food, and this coupled with their fast digestive systems makes them critical long-distance pollinators for native bushland trees.

The period in which the black flying foxes give birth to young is between September and November, with the young being dependent on their mother until late March.

#### 4.3 Little red flying fox (*Pteropus scapulatus*)



Little red flying foxes are a smaller flying fox (up to 20cm long) with reddish-brown to light brown fur. The wing membranes are pale and appear translucent in flight.

They are a nomadic species which can gather in very large numbers for short periods, generally appearing in Southeast Queensland during the summer months following the flowering patterns of *Corymbia intermedia* (Pink Bloodwoods).

Their breeding cycle differs from the other species, with birthing from April to June. Little red flying foxes generally breed outside the Moreton Bay Region.

Image credit: Cathie Howie.

## 5 Extent of management works

### 5.1 Flying foxes on Council managed land

This SoMI outlines the extent of management works that may be carried out by Council within flying fox colonies mapped within an UFFMA.

Council will only carry out flying fox colony management actions on Council-managed land and will not undertake works to manage flying foxes on State or Commonwealth controlled land.

Council will undertake flying fox management works in accordance with the following:

- Queensland Government's Code of Practice – Low impact activities affecting flying fox roosts.
- Queensland Government's Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable management of flying-fox roost.
- Queensland Government's Flying-fox Roost Management Guideline, and
- Legislation applicable to the site, works or surrounding area.

Flying fox colonies outside the UFFMAs are not covered by Council's as-of-right authority to manage flying fox colonies. Council will, however, manage flying fox roosts on Council managed land outside of the UFFMA in line with Council's approach to flying fox colony management (see Section 6), following liaison with DES and receipt of a FFRMP.

### 5.2 Flying foxes on private land

Council does not carry out management actions on private land, however Council may provide advice and assistance to residents and landowners about flying foxes, asset protection and buffer management options. This may include:

- Support to landowners to conduct low impact activities (e.g. spreading of mulch, mowing or weeding under or near roost trees) under the *Queensland Government's Code of practice – Low impact activities affecting flying fox roosts*.
- Advice about flying fox ecology, the State and Commonwealth Government's flying fox legislative framework and approval requirements (Flying Fox Roost Management Permits).
- Providing advice, data and information to a landowner to develop a Flying Fox Management Plan for asset protection and/or buffer management purposes and apply for a Flying Fox Roost Management Permit.
- Providing advice and information about native vs. exotic/non-endemic species on their properties and information regarding environmental overlays, constraints and other related considerations for their properties.

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This assistance does not include the following:

- The development of flying fox roost management plans or flying fox roost management permit applications in relation to land development (Reconfiguration of a Lot, Material Change of Use, or Operational Works) and building applications.
- Support for the development of a flying fox roost management plan or permit for colony dispersal or for activities that will likely result in the dispersal of a colony.
- Financial assistance for the costs associated with the development of a flying fox roost management plan and/or lodgement of a flying fox roost management permit application.
- Financial assistance to undertake approved flying fox management works.

### 6 Approach to colony management

Where there is an identified conflict between a flying fox colony and the community, Council implements a staged approach to management (refer to Figure 1).

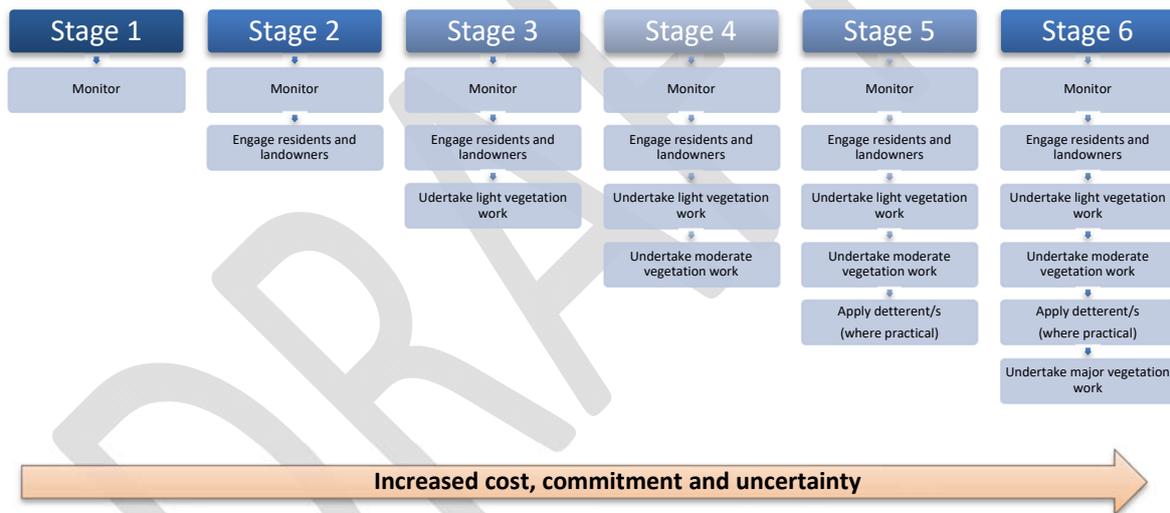


Figure 1: Stages of colony management

## ITEM 5.1 STATEMENT OF MANAGEMENT INTENT - FLYING FOX COLONIES - A20372770 (Cont.)

Council's staged approach considers multiple factors to ensure a balanced approach to colony management, including:

- Location, size and permanence of the colony,
- Species present (e.g. Little red flying foxes are highly nomadic),
- Community concerns,
- Surrounding land use,
- Environmental impacts (e.g. vegetation),
- Latest information from researchers,
- Cost of management actions, and
- The probability of management actions addressing community concerns.

Dispersal of flying fox colonies is not considered to be an appropriate management action within the Moreton Bay region. Council does not support the dispersal of flying fox colonies due to the following:

- Uncertainty of outcomes;
- Potential to splinter colonies;
- Additional disruption to the community;
- High costs; and
- Likelihood of need for on-going/follow up dispersal efforts.

### 6.1 Monitoring

Flying fox colonies on Council land will be monitored on a regular basis with the results published on Council's website: <https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/flyingfoxmonitoring/>

Information obtained from monitoring is utilised to understand patterns of influx and occupancy and informs management decisions for each unique colony location.

### 6.2 Engage residents and landowners

Council will respond to resident and landowner concerns with information about flying fox ecology and management. Concerns about human health will be referred to Queensland Health, and concerns about Hendra virus are referred to Biosecurity Queensland.

### 6.3 Light vegetation management

Light vegetation modification focusses exclusively on non-native vegetation. In some instances, the works proposed may require approval from and be conditioned by the State or Commonwealth Governments, works may include:

- Control of understorey non-native vegetation (e.g. by spraying or slashing);
- Removal of non-native tree saplings (e.g. Chinese celtis) from colony areas;
- Trimming of non-native roost trees; and
- Stem-injection (poisoning) of non-native roost trees.

## 6.4 Moderate vegetation management

Moderate vegetation modification may include native species within the understorey of the colony. The removal of native vegetation may require approval from and be conditioned by State and Commonwealth Governments, works may include:

- Removal of large sections of the understorey within the colony location (e.g. using machinery such as a forestry mulcher), with a focus on environmental weeds;
- Possible removal of native saplings <100mm diameter;
- Trimming of native trees;
- Removal of selected non-native trees which flying foxes are known to roost; and
- Ongoing maintenance of managed areas (buffer zones).

Where large sections of understorey have been removed, Council may plant native groundcovers (e.g. *Lomandra* spp.) to replace lost vegetation.

## 6.5 Deterrents

Deterrents (e.g. canopy mounted sprinklers) aim to discourage flying foxes from roosting in undesirable areas or manage a colony within its current roost site (e.g. improve the buffer zone).

The application of some deterrents requires approval from Queensland Government's DES and in some cases, approval from the Commonwealth Government.

## 6.6 Major vegetation management

Major vegetation modification may include the removal of canopy tree species both native and non-native within the colony to reduce the roosting habitat. The removal of native vegetation may require approval from and be conditioned by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Removal of significant amounts of vegetation in an area occupied by flying foxes will only be undertaken upon flying foxes vacating or being absent from the colony of their own accord.

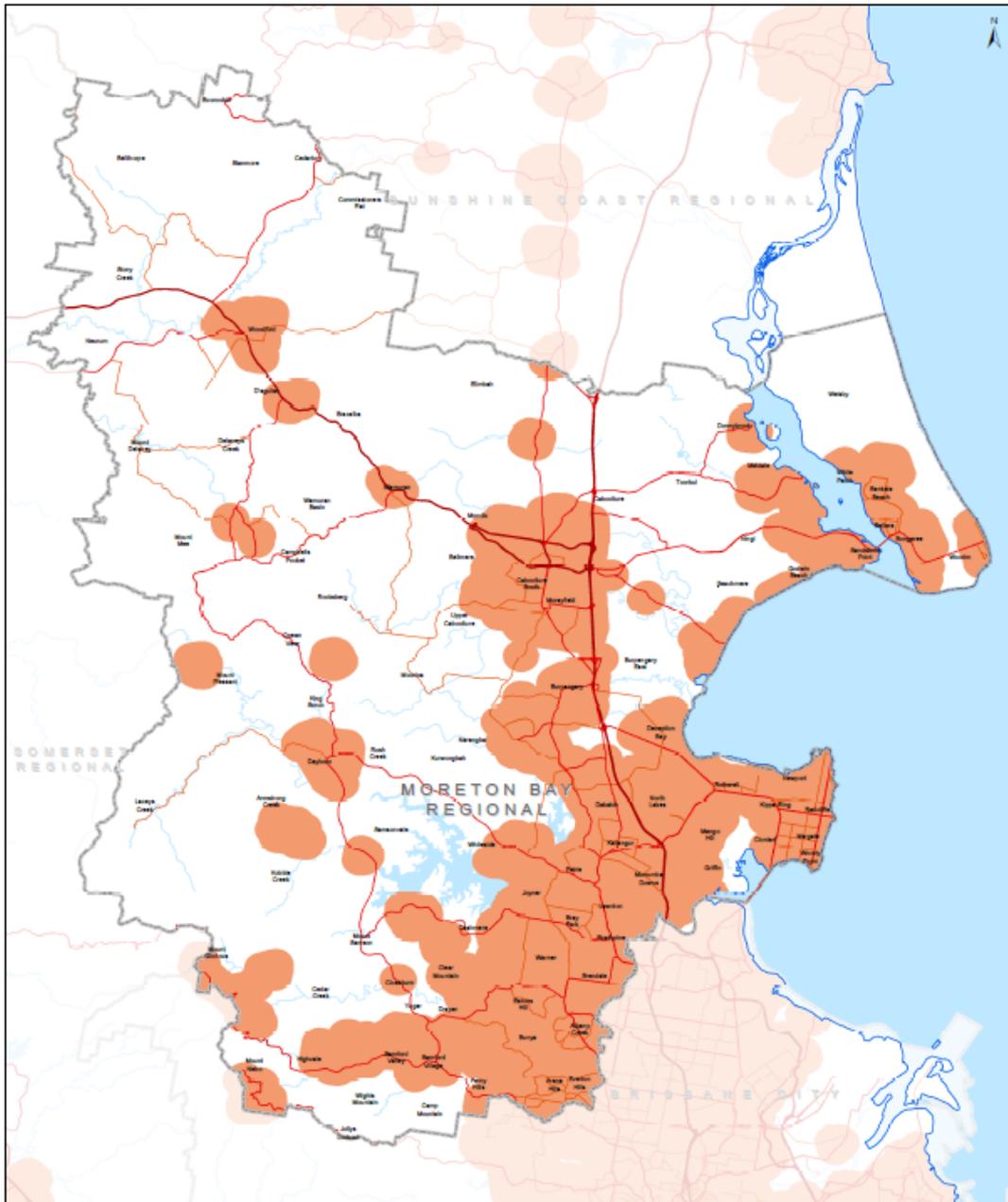
Works conducted at this stage will have a significant impact on the aesthetic value of the site and surrounding area, which will be a key consideration. Rehabilitation of the area will be undertaken with native groundcovers and low growing shrubs which do not provide future roosting habitat.

## 7 Review Timeframes

This SoMI will be reviewed annually or as determined by a resolution of Council. For further information about this document, contact Council on (07) 3205 0555 or email [mbrc@moretonbay.qld.gov.au](mailto:mbrc@moretonbay.qld.gov.au).

### 8 Appendix A – MBRC Urban Flying-fox Management (UFFMA) Map

The map below shows the designated UFFMA’s in the Moreton Bay Region (shown in orange), as defined by DES (generated 22 January 2020).



ITEM 5.1 STATEMENT OF MANAGEMENT INTENT - FLYING FOX COLONIES - A20372770 (Cont.)

9 Appendix B – MBRC Flying Fox Colonies Map

The map below shows known flying fox colony locations in the MBRC area (as of June 2020).

