

Statement of Management Intent to Manage Flying-Fox Roosts



**GYMPIE
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**



This Statement of Management Intent was endorsed by Council on 25 August 2021 and has effect from 25 August 2021 until superseded.

Authority

Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, local governments in Queensland have an as-of-right authority to undertake roost management at flying-fox roosts in designated Urban Flying-Fox Management Areas (UFFMA) provided they comply with the 'Code of Practice – Ecologically sustainable management of flying-fox roosts'. An UFFMA for a local government area is defined by maps available from the website of the Department of Environment and Science (DES).

Outside an UFFMA, a local government requires a flying-fox roost management permit (FFRMP), available from DES. A local government also has the option to apply for a FFRMP for roost management outside the *Code of Practice*. A non-council applicant requires a FFRMP irrespective of the location of the roost.

Council's as-of-right authority permits council to undertake actions to manage flying-fox roosts within designated UFFMA, however it is not compulsory for council to act in managing flying-fox roosts.

Further information on the Queensland Government's roost management framework is available at the following webpage: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/bats/flying-foxes/roost-management>

Purpose

The purpose of this Statement of Management Intent (SoMI) is to outline the approach council intends to take with respect to roost management across the Gympie Region Local Government Area (LGA) UFFMA.

Location of Urban Flying-fox Management Areas (UFFMA) in Gympie Regional Council LGA

A broad-scale map of designated UFFMAs (as determined and mapped by DES) in the Gympie Regional Council LGA is shown in Appendix 1.

Known flying-fox roost locations within Gympie Regional Council LGA as at April 2021 are found at:

1. Inskip Reserve, Rainbow Beach
2. Seary's Creek, Rainbow Beach
3. Queen Elizabeth Drive, Cooloola Cove
4. Snapper Point, Tin Can Bay
5. Anderleigh Road, Goomboorian
6. Power Street, Neerdie
7. Beenham Valley Road, Beenham Valley
8. Commissioner's Gully, Gympie
9. Amamoor State Forest, Amamoor
10. Hyne Estate Road, Kandanga.

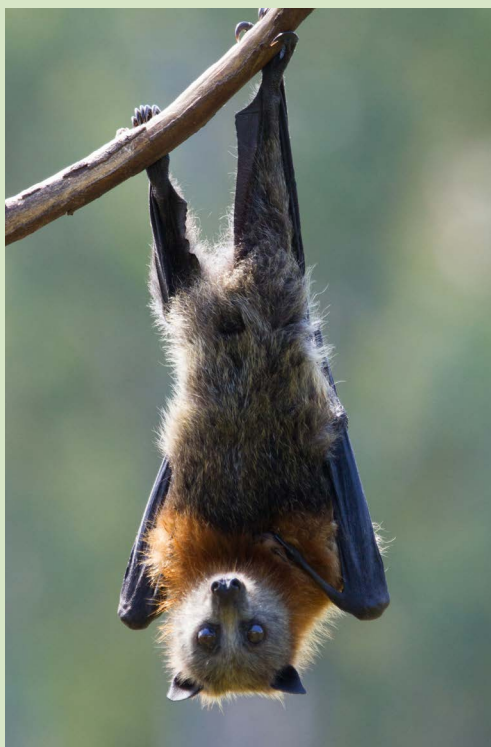
A detailed map of the Commissioners Gully flying-fox roost extent as at January 2021 as shown in Appendix 2.

Residents who wish to view a map of their own property in relation to the UFFMA can do this via the [Gympie Regional Urban Flying-Fox Management Area map \(www.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qld.gov.au)

General information on flying-fox species in Gympie Region LGA

There are three species of flying-fox that occur in the Gympie Region LGA; Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), Black Flying-fox (*P. alecto*), and Little Red Flying-fox (*P. scapulatus*). Roosts can consist of a single species of flying-fox or be comprised of a mix of all three species.

Grey-headed Flying-fox (*P. poliocephalus*)



Conservation status: This species is listed as Vulnerable nationally (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) and Least Concern in Queensland (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*).

Description: The Grey-headed Flying-fox is the largest Australian bat with a wingspan of up to one metre. It has dark-grey body fur, a grey head, and a distinctive reddish-brown collar. It is also the only flying-fox with hairy legs right down to its ankles.

Habitat and distribution: The Grey-headed Flying-fox occurs along the south-east coast of Australia, from Rockhampton in central Queensland through New South Wales to western Victoria and Adelaide. The species is considered a single national population, moving across this range in response to flowering and concentrating where food is available. They look for food in most habitats that contain flowering and fruiting trees including closed forest, open forest, woodlands, and urban parks and gardens.

Black Flying-fox (*P. alecto*)

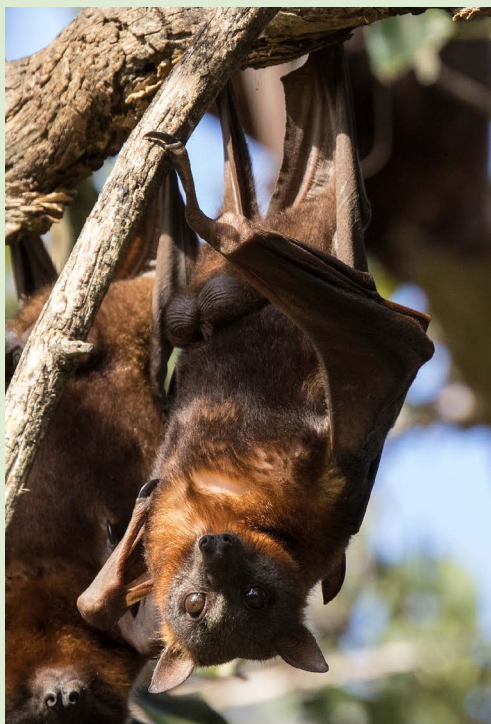


Conservation status: This species is listed as Least Concern in Queensland (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*).

Description: A large flying-fox, that grows to approximately 26cm and can weigh up to 1000g. They have short black fur over their entire body; sometimes the fur on their neck may be reddish.

Habitat and distribution: This species is common to the coastal and near coastal areas of northern Australia from Shark Bay in Western Australia to Lismore in New South Wales. In recent years there has been a southerly expansion of the range of this species, and it is now not uncommon around Sydney. It is also found in New Guinea and Indonesia. Black flying-foxes commonly roost in mangroves, paperbark swamps, eucalypt forests and rainforest. The black flying-fox has a general home range of 15-30km radius. Food availability largely dictates their feeding range.

Little Red Flying-fox (*P. scapulatus*)



Conservation status: This species is listed as Least Concern in Queensland (*Nature Conservation Act 1992*).

Description: The Little Red Flying-fox varies in colour from reddish-brown to light brown. In the Northern Territory they can be almost black. They have patches of light cream-brown fur where the wing and shoulder meet. The head can be greyish and the wings pale. It is much smaller than other species of flying-foxes weighing between 200-600g.

Habitat and distribution: This common fruit bat has a wide distribution, being found in northern and eastern Australia including Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. Common in rainforest and sclerophyll forests and extending inland to semi-arid areas. They prefer to roost nearer to the ground than other flying-fox species.

All species information sourced from DES via <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/bats/flying-foxes/roost-locations>

Council actions and principles

Gympie Regional Council will implement a balanced approach to the management of flying-fox roosts that recognises the well-being of the community and the responsible management of wildlife. Flying-foxes are a native species protected by [Federal](#) and [State](#) legislation.

Council actions	Council principles
Manage Commissioners Gully to reduce conflict with neighbouring residents, to assist residents and to comply with legislation.	Responding to community impacts associated with other flying-fox roosts in-line with council's Flying-fox Management Plan and general principles outlined in Appendix 3.
Resource Widgee Crossing to rehabilitate historical roost site to create suitable habitat in reasonable timeframe.	A focus on council-managed land only.
Identify, investigate and assess other potential roost sites in anticipation of flying foxes naturally moving over time.	Considering dispersal only as a last resort in extreme circumstances as it is a costly and risky option that may create multiple problem sites. This is likely to further increase community impact and costs to council in managing multiple sites.

Dispersal of flying-fox colonies is not considered at this point an appropriate management action for any known roosts within the Gympie Regional Council LGA due to the following:

- High costs associated with dispersal
- Uncertain outcomes – low likelihood of success
- Potential to splinter colonies leading to further conflict with the community and additional operational costs
- Further disruption to the community
- Likelihood of ongoing and follow-up dispersal efforts could become more widespread (splinter roosts) leading ongoing dispersal activity to maintain effectiveness.

Review

The SoMI will be reviewed annually or as determined by resolution of Council.

Further Information

The community should be aware that activities that result in the disturbance of flying-fox camps can result in breaches of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and/or *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* which can lead to investigation by the relevant department and even prosecution.

Residents can perform activities under or near roost trees such as mowing, weeding, mulching and/or minor trimming of roost trees. These activities can be undertaken without a permit, provided the activity is conducted in accordance with the "Code of Practice - Low impact activities affecting flying-fox roosts" which can be found at: [Code of Practice - Low impact activities affecting flying-fox roosts Nature Conservation Act 1992 \(www.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qld.gov.au)

Management of roosts on privately owned land remains the responsibility of the landowner. If a resident is concerned about a roost that is on private land or falls outside of the UFFMA, residents can apply to DES for a roost management permit. For further information, visit: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/bats/flying-foxes/roost-management#toc-5>

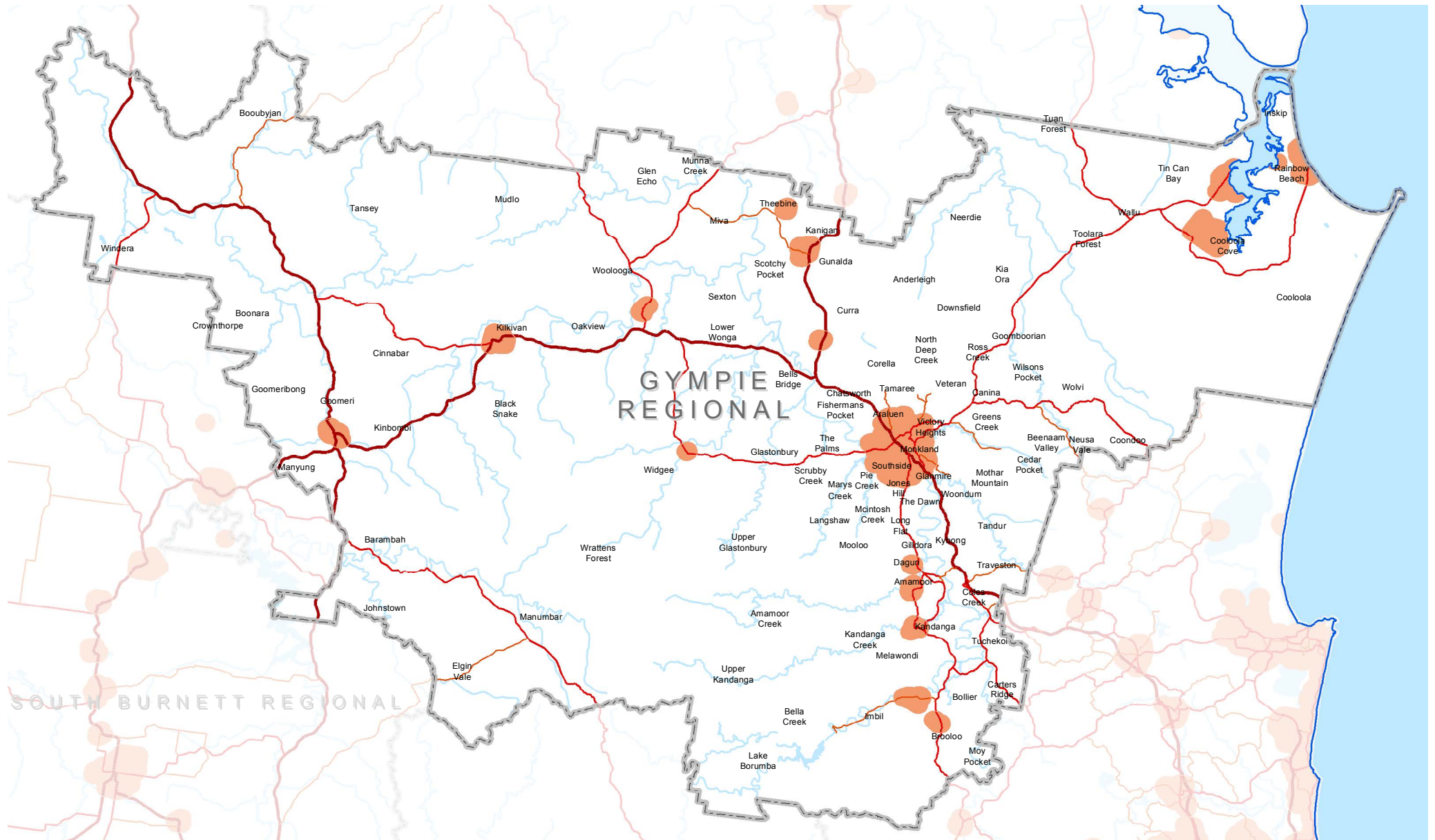
If residents are dissatisfied with council's approach at a particular roost site, they may apply for a permit directly from DES. For further information visit: <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/bats/flying-foxes/roost-management#toc-5>

Information regarding flying-foxes and human/animal health concerns can be found by visiting the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/horses/hendra-virus/flying-foxes> or Queensland Health <http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/33/14/Bats-human-health>

Further information on flying-foxes and their management can be found on the Department of Environment and Science website: [Managing impacts of flying-foxes | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](http://www.qld.gov.au)

For further information about this SoMI please contact Council on 1300 307 800 or email environment@gympie.qld.gov.au

Appendix 1 – Urban Flying-fox Management Areas (UFFMA) in the Gympie Region LGA



Appendix 2 – Commissioner’s Gully Roost Extent (January 2021)

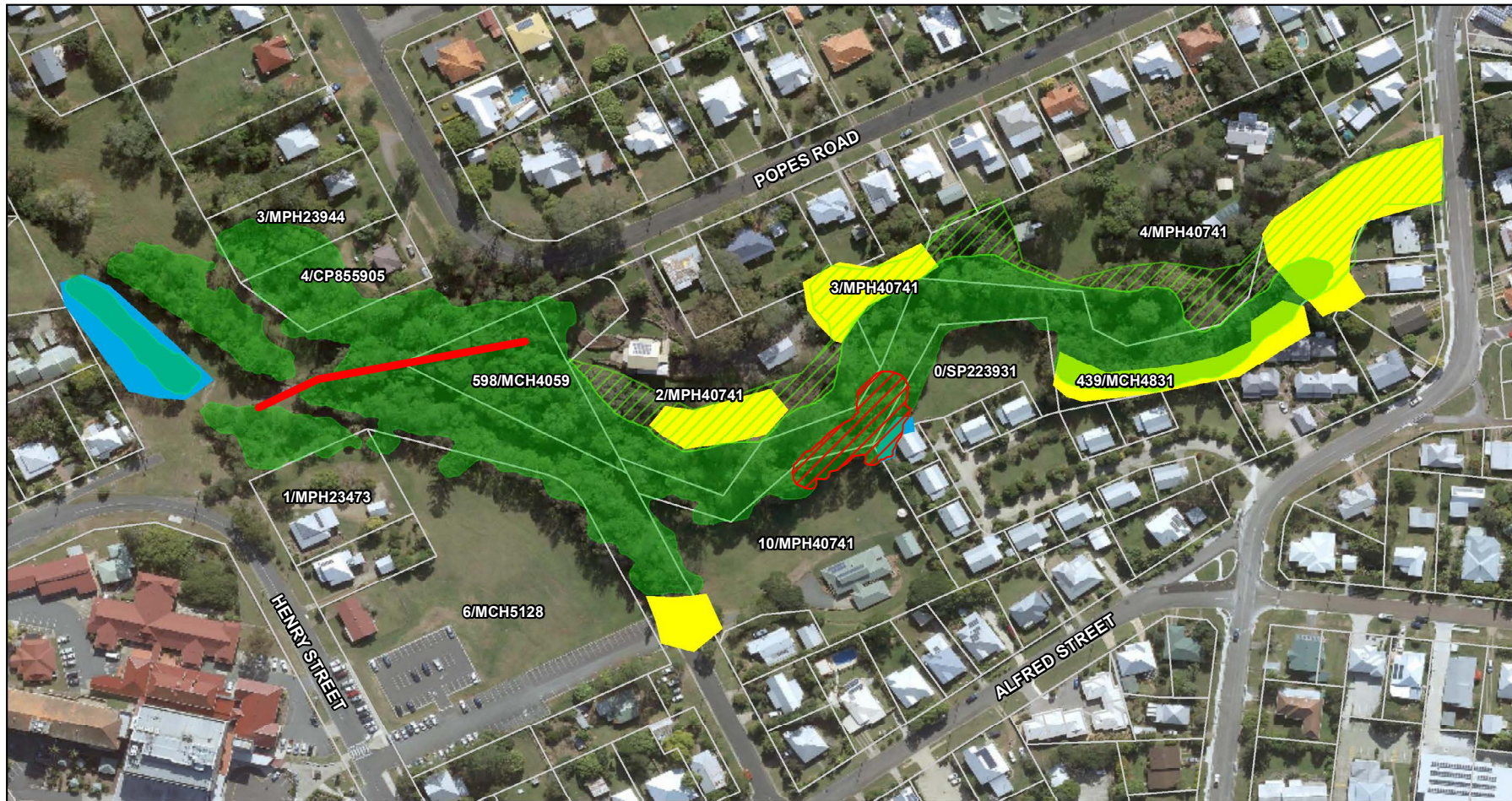





Figure 1: Management Options Stage 1

Gympie Regional Council

PR6112 Management Plan for Flying-fox roosts at Commissioners Gully and Widgee Crossing

-  PR6112_PropertyBoundary
-  Known flying-fox roost habitat from previous monitoring
-  Roost extent (GHFF and BFF) January 2021
-  LRFF extent January 2021
-  Remove fallen branches (hand removal only)
-  Immediate weed control areas
-  Weed canopy removal/trimming, immediate possible if works done at night with electric machinery OR day works after 17th February. Close supervision required.



Job number: PR6112
Revision: 0
Author: EK
Date: 22/01/2021



GCS GDA 1994
Datum: GDA 1994
Units: Degree

Data Sources: Ecosure Pty Ltd, 2021; Image: ECOSURE does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information displayed in this map and any person using it does so at their own risk. ECOSURE shall bear no responsibility or liability for any errors, faults, defects, or omissions in the information.

Appendix 3 – General Flying-fox Management Principles

A staged approach is generally applied where there is conflict between the community and flying-fox roosts (refer to Figure 4).

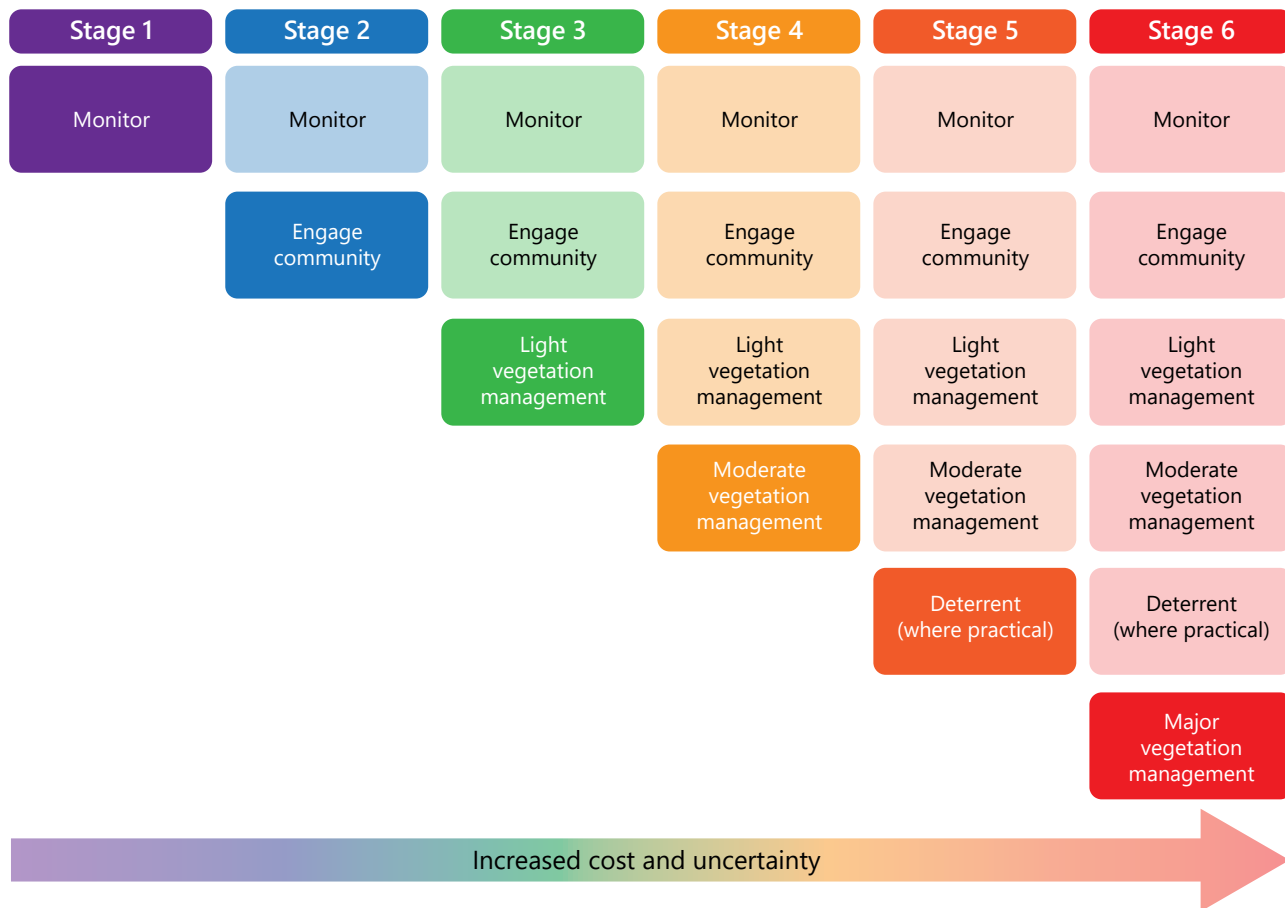


Figure 1 - Council will adopt a staged approach to managing impacts of roosting flying-foxes. Roost dispersal will generally not be considered.

The following provides further details of the actions undertaken in each stage. As management actions are implemented through the stages, the subsequent stage continues to be carried out.

The timing of activities will be planned to minimise impacts to flying-foxes (ideally when the roost is abandoned or at night when flying-foxes are away foraging). Roost management actions should never be planned during breeding season.

As well as complying with the Queensland and Commonwealth flying-fox roost management frameworks, works being considered within existing roost sites must be in accordance with other relevant legislation.

Stage 1: Monitoring

Known flying-fox roosts on Council land will be monitored on a regular basis. Information obtained by monitoring will establish occupancy patterns at known roosts. A detailed understanding of the roosts will inform the management direction for each roost.

Stage 2: Engaging the community

Council will engage with the community with information about flying-fox ecology and roost management plans. All enquiries regarding human health concerns received from the community will be referred to Queensland Health and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Stage 3: Light vegetation management

Light vegetation management at a flying-fox roost site focuses on non-native vegetation modification in this stage. There may be instances where vegetation management works require approval from the Federal or State Government. Roost management actions in this stage are aimed at discouraging flying-foxes from roosting in undesirable areas and may include:

- Control of understorey non-native vegetation (e.g. by spraying or slashing)
- Removal of non-native tree saplings from roost areas
- Trimming of non-native roost trees, subject to approval conditions (if required)
- Stem-injection (poisoning) of non-native roost trees, subject to approval conditions (if required).

Stage 4: Moderate vegetation management

Moderate vegetation management at a flying-fox roost site focuses on non-native and native vegetation modification in this stage. There may be instances where vegetation management works require approval from the Federal or State Government. Roost management actions in this stage may include:

- Removal of large sections of the understorey within the roost site, with a focus on environmental weeds, subject to approval conditions (if required)
- Possible removal of native saplings < 100mm diameter, subject to approval conditions (if required)
- Removal of selected non-native trees which flying-foxes are known to roost, subject to approval conditions (if required)
- Buffer zones established or ongoing maintenance of buffer zones if previously cleared.

To ensure a balanced approach to roost management the following is considered by council:

- Location, size and permanency of the roost
- Species present (e.g. Little Red Flying-foxes are highly nomadic and follow seasonal flowering)
- Community concerns
- Surrounding land use
- Latest information from researchers and neighbouring councils
- Cost of roost management actions
- Likelihood of roost management actions achieving the desired result.

Stage 5: Deterrents

This stage can involve the use or installation of deterrents such as sprinklers to prevent flying-foxes from roosting in undesirable areas where practical. The purpose of this stage is to 'nudge' flying-foxes' short distances rather than to disperse the colony.

The implementation of deterrents requires in depth planning to understand if deterrents are feasible and if they are likely to be effective in specific areas.

Consideration should include, but not be limited to:

- Cost of installation, operation and maintenance
- Locations of required services such as water and electricity
- Safety of the area during installation and operation
- Alternative locations where the flying-foxes may be 'nudged'
- Reporting to the regulator (DES).

Stage 6: Major vegetation management

Major vegetation management at a flying-fox roost site focuses on native and non-native tree removal in this stage. There may be instances where vegetation management works require approval from the Federal or State Government. Roost management actions in this stage aimed at reducing the roosting habitat may include:

- Removal of large amounts of vegetation from a roosting site
- Revegetation using native ground covers and shrubs that do not provide roosting habitat.

A key consideration for this stage is the impact that vegetation removal will have on the aesthetics of the site and surrounding area. Replacement plantings of appropriate (non flying-fox suitable species) to assist with land management issues that may arise. Appropriate plantings assist with managing weed species which dominate the site and become suitable vegetation structure that supports flying-fox colonies.

Stage 7: Enhancing low conflict/alternative sites

Low conflict roost sites can be enhanced, or alternative sites can be developed, to potentially attract flying-foxes to locations where there are less people. This is a long-term management option, with timeframes dependent on the condition of the proposed site, and how long it takes for any planted trees to reach a suitable height.

Methods to make a site more attractive for flying-fox roosting may include:

- Planting suitable local native trees
- Removing weedy vines from the mid-storey layer
- Ensuring there are appropriate buffers to avoid possible future conflicts
- Choosing a site with close access to water and local native food trees such as eucalyptus and melaleucas.

Consideration for this option should include, but not be limited to:

- Cost of rehabilitation
- Cost of maintenance
- Locations of sites
- Resources to undertake the work
- Cost of irrigation systems
- Cost of structures (artificial roost habitat) where there is not sufficient canopy structure.