



# **Robyn Parker MP**

## **Minister for the Environment**

## **Minister for Heritage**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wednesday, 13 February 2013

#### **NSW PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN FLYING FOX CENSUS**

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today welcomed NSW's participation in the most comprehensive survey of flying foxes ever undertaken, including surveys of the grey-headed species entire national range.

"I've advocated a national grey-headed flying fox census since my first days as NSW Environment Minister and I am pleased to say the first count will be carried out this week between 14 and 16 of February," Ms Parker said.

"The grey-headed flying fox needs our protection but we also need to ensure that camps located near schools, homes and parks are managed to avoid creating unreasonable difficulties for local communities.

"This breakthrough census will deliver a reliable benchmark on the current size of the grey-headed flying fox population in 2013 and hopes to give an indication of population trends at the end of four years.

"It is a critical step in gathering important information to assist many communities manage the impacts of, and live with, flying fox camps and to contribute to the conservation of the species."

Ms Parker said that early last year she wrote to the Australian Government Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Tony Burke, to develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the management of grey-headed flying foxes generally and in particular issues in local communities.

"It's terrific to see this census get underway across the State and NSW will commit its resources and the efforts of volunteers to ensure a reliable national census is established," Ms Parker said.

Ms Parker said the grey-headed flying fox was listed as a threatened species in 2001 based on the best available information indicating that the species had declined dramatically over the preceding 10 years.

"Population estimates of grey-headed flying-foxes are based on research done eight years ago and there is a real need to obtain more up-to-date and robust information on population numbers and trends," Ms Parker said.

"We will be using new scientific techniques to establish reliable information on population trends."

The National Flying fox Monitoring Program will comprise the first full national population census of grey-headed flying foxes throughout NSW, Queensland, Victoria, the ACT and South Australia.

The census will involve quarterly counts every year for the next four years and will be conducted simultaneously across every single known daytime roost in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, the ACT and South Australia in February, May, July and November each year.

“This is a huge undertaking requiring the cooperation of every state government and the Australian Government as well as the scientific expertise of the CSIRO,” Ms Parker said.

“In NSW the effort is being co-ordinated by the Office of Environment and Heritage and has gained unprecedented support from community volunteers, OEH staff, local council officers and catchment management authorities.”

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