

S00170 – P.R. Ramm

Thank you for allowing me to comment on this issue.

There is in my mind no doubt that the uncertainty surrounding licensing for flying fox mitigation has led in part to the decline in the stone and pomefruit farms in the Hills Hawkesbury Bilpin region, not knowing that you could plant new trees with some level of confidence that you would be able to control bats, has led to a large decline in new and replacement planting.

My comments as follows:

1. With regard to licensing for flying fox mitigation, orchardists, need long term clarity of policy to plant and maintain orchards profitability.
Not threats that licensing for controlling bats will end as has been the case in recent years, e.g. 2014,2016,2017 and now 2020.
2. The less onerous the rules are the better, as far as orchardists are concerned.
For instance, flying fox record sheets could be recording less unnecessary information.
3. Orchardists generally are aware of cruelty issues and should be allowed to operate with less regulations.
4. Ability to control flying foxes by culling needs to continue not only for unnetted orchards but also for netted orchards that have been subsidised by NSW Government as the cost of repair and replacement of nets will no doubt be prohibitive. Also coastal development will force bats into areas previously marginally affected.