

What works well in the proposed policy for managing flying-foxes?

Land managers required to develop a Flying Fox Management Plan.

What could be improved?

Greater protection for threatened species including flying foxes. The policy is a dilution of the TSC Act and EPBC Act and makes a mockery of the whole regulation process of threatened species. Greater education on the importance of bats and the low risk they pose to the community. Even Level 1 routine management actions will end up dispersing bats. Some bat camps consist of a canopy of weed species used for core camp habitat. Removal of weeds, mowing and other Level 1 activities will actually be high impact activities.

From your experience are there other things that could be included?

I work in Local Government where a bat camp is impacting on residents and the community. The impact of bats is sensationalised and there is a general over-reaction to the problems. The health risks are extremely low and can be avoided. Deaths associated with bats over the past 50 years can be counted on one hand. More deaths, injury and diseases can be contracted from dogs and cats. More children die from peanut anaphylaxis. If a person is scratched or bitten by a bat they can receive treatment. The same way we tolerate snakes. If you get bitten you get an antivenin injection. The policy should point out how low the health risks are to the community from bats.

Any other comments?

Some of the problems with bats in urban areas is a result of loss of habitat due to the State Government Native Vegetation Act which does very little to protect native vegetation. Land clearing has pushed bats into areas they have not previously set up camp. The next generation of Australians will look upon this proposal in the same way we view previous generations and legislation condoning shooting and trapping of the Thylacine, Wedge tail Eagle, possums and Koalas. Our grandparents lived in a time when shooting those species was acceptable. We say they didn't know any better. The difference is We do know better.

About you

Optional

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