

# INQUIRY INTO FLYING-FOX MANAGEMENT IN THE EASTERN STATES

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A diluting or removal of or streamlining the process in attempt to override the protections in place for Flying Foxes, certainly the Grey Headed Flying Foxes, is counter indicated, nor of benefit to the environment or Australia. The importance of Flying Foxes should not need to be repeated again.

The short period of time allowed to make a submission to this inquiry shows an indecent haste that one can only imagine is to catch out those who know the importance of Flying Foxes to Australia, as well that they should remain on the endangered list of native animals, with even greater safeguards to the legislated protections. The letter of which, in many cases, are already circumnavigated, ignored or not enforced. But not gone unnoticed.

## **Flying Foxes are Correctly Listed - Endangered**

Flying Foxes are correctly listed as being endangered. Their protection should not be diluted, or in any way diminished. Flying Fox numbers have been decimated in every instance, and at every location where they were once reasonably plentiful even after white settlement and by the atrocities [too numerous and cruel to mention here] perpetrated against them. So should not be delisted at any level or site. Every aspect of human occupation has placed them at a disadvantage and none more so than the increasing rise in temperature.

The reason Flying Foxes are in the sights of various levels of government, is profit for a few, motivated. Profit motivated logging operations have destroyed existing maternal and colony roosts and food sources of Flying Foxes. Having forced them out of their normal territories by indiscriminate, unthinking practices for making money, and are then branded a pest. We have seen the same diabolically incorrect assumptions cause the extinction of the thylacine, just to mention one. Environmental synergy is lost to any who wish profit or have little or no tolerance or empathy. Cherry picking science is not the answer either.

### **Interaction Between State and Commonwealth**

Already it can be seen that the various tiers of government are not adhering to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. In fact, there is bending and even breaking the act to accommodate state and local government, real or imagined concerns. The Department of the Environment and Energy already defers and delegates its responsibility to the state organisation who are pressured by local interest and influence of people who can see profit in manipulating them. Certainly here in Victoria.

Grey Headed Flying Foxes are moving further inland for the same reason that has made them move in the first instance. They now come into this area to feed at night, and we welcome them.

In a country once populated by millions of Flying Foxes, who found food plentiful, these long distance pollinators and seed distributors need to travel greater distances just to survive. Human intervention has created a wildlife cleansing effect, reinforced by government policy, that has already made too much of Australia's uniqueness extinct.

Government environmental authorities at all levels are generally doing a job, not their job of protecting wildlife, educating people how they can live with these refugees of logging and land clearing, but assisting business to make more profit, and further degrade what belongs to all Australians, not businesses.

Those who desire greater profits are usually those who know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

### **Managing Flying Foxes at a Regional Level and Scale**

Flying Foxes do not require management. This has been the problem all along. Correct logging and land use practices need to be instigated and managed by taking all factors of an area into consideration rather than slash and burn. Strategic roost sites created, and Flying Foxes encouraged to use them, where they do not "inconvenience" the population that has been adopted by a colony is another management technique. Careful manicuring of any roost sites so they are not an encumbrance to the human population. These things can and should be managed.

Education of the population to live with an Australian native animal who arguably has a more legitimate right to settle where they and many other species have been usurped by human pressure is the way to manage the Flying Foxes, and other species.

### **Streamlining the Regulation of Flying Fox Management**

Suggesting streamlining the management of Flying Foxes demonstrates that expediency is more important than informed decision. A blanket policy over all Australia is in error. Each site where there are complainants against the Flying foxes should be examined separately. One size does not fit all. The location of the colony, the level of knowledge and tolerance for the Flying Foxes in the community which they have adopted should be explored. Education increased where required. The opinion of the majority should be considered and deliberation of a suitably peopled committee, not an election stimulated Minister, should

determine what strategy is to be used and what action, if any, should be taken.

This does in fact indicate the opposite of “streamlining”. It is investigation and what reasonable, sensible and properly educated people engage in.

### **Success or Otherwise of Management Actions**

In our experience Flying Fox roost sites are considered “problematical” [an inciteful terminology] because a few influential individuals have been inconvenienced by their presence. There is no attempt made to accept, or by various strategies defray, what they consider an intrusion. The thing that is evident where dispersal is reasonably successful, is the people who have requested the colony be dispersed, care not if they land or adopt a roost where they inconvenience others, as long as they no longer have Flying Foxes near them.

Attempting dispersal of Flying Foxes causes trauma to these, that we can only imagine. The deaths that result from such an action are not all instant or immediate, and Flying Foxes already under pressure from current and longer term effects of human activity, having driven them away from their historic home since white settlement, have to contend with dispersal, now burdens them further. No thinking person can imagine this to be either desirable or sensible.

Many of us see Flying Foxes as refugees. Like all refugees they need our consideration, especially since we are the cause of their displacement. If human beings destroy what Flying Foxes need to survive, and they find it closer in to our populations centres, how are able to deny them and consider them pests?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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