

To Whom it May Concern

My family and I live at . We are one of the houses that back onto Cannes Reserve. Cannes Reserve over the last 10-15 years (depending on who you speak to) has had Grey Headed Flying Foxes (GHFF) roosting. Anywhere from 50-3500 GHFF's. Cannes Reserve is also surrounded by homes. People who are severely impacted by this colony.

I am writing this submission to express my concerns and plead for further action to be taken. That there must be opportunities to streamline the regulation of the management, especially in cases where human beings are being impacted. We did not build our houses around the GHFF, they have come. The council has been supportive, however their hands are tied by the "red tape" and licensing to carry out any works to manage the problem. Our understanding is that there is currently a national census being conducted to help ascertain the status of the GHFF, however I would imagine this to be a lengthy process and action needs to be taken in the mean time to assist and allow councils to manage/disperse GHFF colonies in affected areas.

I would like to say there was a short period where there were no GHFF in the reserve for about 4 weeks after the council did an initial dispersal. This dispersal was deemed unsuccessful however the council was denied by OEH to prune trees that were significant to the dispersal which did not coincide with the plan of action and thus in my opinion was a strong contributing factor to an unsuccessful dispersal. Since then the council has stated they no longer have the "man power" to carry out dispersals and there was a limited time frame/hours to this dispersal enforced by OEH. In this short period with no GHFF's our lives felt completely different. Our children were able to play outside and not be terrified when the GHFF started flying around in circles above us when someone started up their lawn mower as part of routine yard work. We were all able to sleep. We were not woken up by screeching, horrendous and disturbing noises from the hours of 3-6 am. My children were new children, well rested. We were able to enjoy having our doors open and windows open and simply enjoy the smell of fresh air and the smell of fresh rain, instead of the foul smell of the GHFF. We no longer had to close our doors and windows shut to minimise the smell. We no longer had to clean defecation off our house, cars and children's outdoor toys. We no longer had fear of disease. Life was simply good.

We also have large concerns about disease, Australia Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) to be exact. As a Registered Nurse, I am aware that ABLV is only transmitted through a bite or scratch from a GHFF or other bat species. The council has been told to stop their works because there are babies now at the camp. My concern is that children - human beings are curious and what is to stop a child from picking up a baby GHFF? Of course we can educate children, but it isn't necessarily going to stop them. Who is going to be held accountable when there is a death of a child from ABLV that gets bitten or scratched from picking up an injured animal in Cannes Reserve, when there have been numerous complaints from residents, raising concern about disease and begging and pleading for the GHFF to be removed for that reason. I would like to point out that as council has done a great job of clearing Cannes Reserve, I have witnessed children playing in the reserve. I have also on one occasion visited 29 Therry Street and was informed by the resident living there that when there are baby GHFF, they often drop down from their mothers onto their property out the back. NSW Health states that "**It is assumed that any bat in Australia could potentially carry ABLV**". This is our HOME, our kids simply should be able to enjoy the simplicity of their backyard and neighbourhood. At times there are 3500 GHFF!!! 3500!!! How can we let our children run and play free without worry? Does it not increase their risk when their backyard and neighbourhood is home to 3500 GHFF that we should assume are carrying ABLV?? Once again the same question that we have asked so many times is when do our rights as human beings count? When do our stresses count? If we were a school this colony would have been dispersed years ago, parents would have been calling for action. Unfortunately we are not a school and we are small in numbers fighting for our children and neighbourhood and it shouldn't make a difference who we are or our numbers.

I know that there are vaccines for ABLV, so should every child that comes to our house be vaccinated before coming to our house? Is that fair? Is it fair that we need to live like prisoners and treat our children like prisoners keeping them indoors and safe from GHFF.

Further action needs to be taken. This cannot just be something that again we have to wait for it to be the right timing for the GHFF, human beings also need to count. Councils must be allowed to have their own decision making abilities to improve quality of lives for human beings or at least have a management plan that can be quickly actioned without mounds of paperwork, loop holes and red tape to get through.

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