

Management Action Summary – Flying-fox Management Plan

Lockyer Valley Regional Council (Council) has endorsed a Regional Flying-fox Management Plan (FFMP) which outlines Councils management intent for flying-fox roosts across the region. This Management Action Summary (MAS) provides an overview of:

- 1. Council's role and responsibilities in relation to flying-fox roosts;**
- 2. How Council will approach management of roosts; and**
- 3. What actions may be undertaken by Council.**

Flying-foxes

Flying-foxes, commonly described as 'fruit bats' are a genus of megabats which occur across the southern hemisphere, with at least 60 individual species known. Across the Lockyer Valley Region three (3) flying-fox species are known to occur and inhabit a range of habitat types.

Flying-foxes play an integral role in regulating and maintaining the eastern Australian environment and are a keystone species within the eastern Australian states. Species of flying-foxes are key species in pollination and dispersal of fruiting seeds, contributing to maintenance of ecological functions throughout the landscape. Flying-foxes have been recorded travelling 50 km from a roost to search for food, and can travel hundreds of kilometres over several nights by moving between roosts. All three flying-fox species found in the region are capable of travelling large distances, which allow them to arrive in large numbers overnight to local flowering events. The large distances travelled nightly by flying-foxes, allow them to effectively pollinate and disperse seeds to improve the genetic diversity and health of forests, which in turn provides habitat for other native species.

The species of flying-foxes found within the Region are nocturnal, form congregations called roosts during the day, with the sizes of congregations ranging from several individuals to hundreds of thousands. Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, flying-fox roosts are protected, with management actions required to comply with State Codes of Practice. Under these Codes of Practice specific restrictions apply to management of roosts.

As the size of flying-fox congregations grow, they can be a source of community concern, with impacts such as noise, odour, disease, damage to infrastructure and damage to fruit crops experienced by nearby residents and landowners. Historically within Queensland and across Australia, Local Government (Councils) have led and coordinated management of flying-fox roosts where impacts to communities have occurred.

Council is committed to managing impacts of flying-fox roosts with a strategic regional approach which provides long-term and ecologically sustainable outcomes, balancing both human/wildlife conflict and conservation outcomes.

Impacts of climate change, extreme heat events, bushfire, changes to food resource availability are driving changes in flying-fox behaviour across roosts throughout region and adjacent local government areas. Council aims to manage public health, amenity, critical infrastructure supply and conservation considerations in a long-term, holistic and balanced way, ensuring equitable treatment is provided to communities across the region.

Council's Role and Responsibilities

Responsibility to manage flying-foxes (where sought to be undertaken) lies with the owners of lands on which a flying-fox roost is located. Council is not responsible for the management of flying-foxes on land that is not managed by the Council (e.g. private or State controlled lands).

Council may contribute to joint management activities when human-flying-fox conflicts arise, and the flying-fox roost is located, on both private and Council lands. The contributions and extent, in these circumstances are at the discretion of Council and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Council's Approach to Management of Flying-fox Roosts

Management of flying-fox roosts is a complex process regulated by Local, State and Commonwealth environmental regulations. Roost management actions are likely to be costly, and often have worsening or unpredictable outcomes which may not resolve conflict between humans and flying-foxes. Council's position is to avoid and minimise interference with flying-fox roosts. Significant roost management actions are only to be undertaken on Council managed land where a clearly unacceptable impact to public health, amenity or environmental values can be demonstrated.

Council will seek to monitor all roosts located on Council lands, or lands which are accessible to Council, and will proactively engage with the community to understand impacts of flying-fox roosts to residents and land users. Council regularly undertakes monitoring of roosts to build a long-term understanding of flying-fox roost dynamics and to respond to changes in roost location, extent and size. Council will provide comprehensive flying-fox education to build community knowledge of flying-fox ecology, their role in maintaining healthy environments and options for mitigating impacts of nearby flying-fox roosts.

Where a clearly unacceptable impact to public health, amenity or environmental values can be demonstrated roost management actions may be undertaken in a staged approach, with low impact, lower cost works undertaken in the first instance.

Council's position is to establish buffers (to a distance of 35m where necessary) between sensitive receptors (such as houses, schools and other community areas) and flying-fox roosts to minimise impacts to residents, while balancing amenity, public health and conservation considerations.

Council does not support dispersal of flying-fox roosts due to the extreme level of uncertainty in management outcomes, high cost to ratepayers, risk of exacerbating impacts to communities and severe health risks to the flying-foxes themselves.

Stages of flying-fox roost management are shown in Figure 1. Council may progress through the identified management stages proactively in response to observed changes to a roost or in response to engagement with impacted residents and communities. Council will consider impacts to residents in a balanced manner where impacts are demonstrated. Where any works are undertaken Council will conduct these in a staged approach, with low-cost, low impact management approaches being conducted prior to more costly and uncertain levels of management.

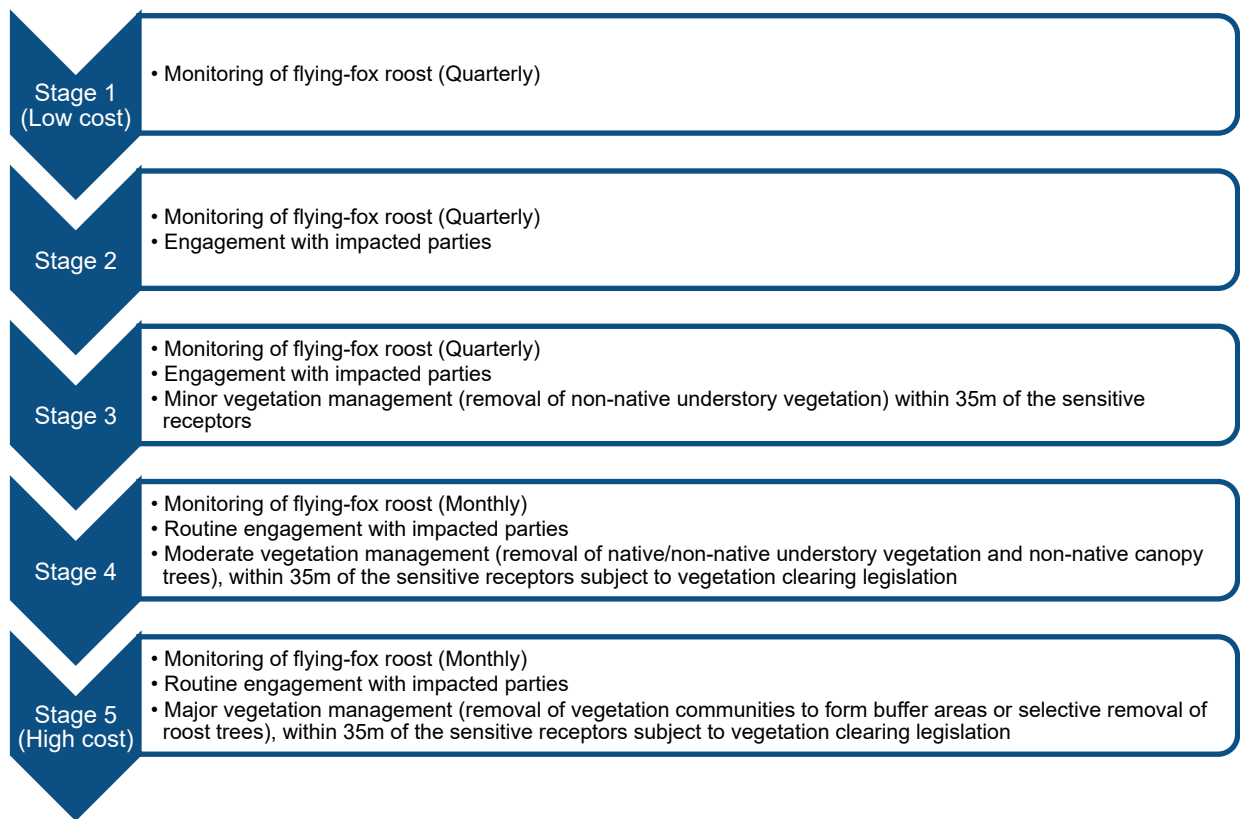


Figure 1 Stages of flying-fox management

Who do I contact if I live near a flying-fox roost and have questions?

Visit www.lockyervalley.qld.gov.au/wildlife for more information.

Council Officers are available to discuss local flying-fox roosts and options to mitigate potential impacts with you. If you are impacted by a flying-fox roost that is located on private property or State government land, speaking with that landowner is also recommended.

Council Officers are available on Ph:1300 005 872 or email: mailbox@lvrc.qld.gov.au.