



Hon Vicky Darling MP
Member for Sandgate



Minister for Environment

Ref: CTS18942/11

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 27 October 2011, enclosing a copy of Petition No.1799-11 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition draws to the attention of the House the severe risk to health and diminution of living amenity suffered by our community due to the presence of an enormous flying fox colony in the heart of our residential area. The Petitioners therefore request that the House direct the Minister for Environment to put community and individual health and rights to a peaceful existence ahead of wildlife protection and immediately issue a mitigation permit and make available the resources of her Department to deal with this totally unacceptable event so as to move the flying foxes to a suitable area in the thousands of adjacent State Forest or National Parks land adjacent to our community.

While it is important that flying foxes are protected, I recognise that these animals can come into conflict with the community. I appreciate the genuine distress that can result from living near to a roost.

Management of flying foxes in Queensland therefore needs to be responsive to the social and economic needs of the community, while protecting the flying fox population, and the long term environmental benefits derived from these animals.

For Damage Mitigation Permit applications to be successful it must be demonstrated that dispersal methods are humane and do not cause harm to the colony (eg. disturbing a roost containing mothers with their young), that alternative roost sites are available, that the dispersal is justified on economic or health grounds, and that the dispersal has a good chance of success.

While individuals can apply, it is recognised that councils are the best applicants so that a roost movement and dispersal can be managed in the best way for the entire community.

The department has met with Townsville City Council on several occasions, including on-site, to discuss the management of flying foxes at Mystic Sands.

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I am advised that in recent weeks the flying foxes have moved further away from residences of their volition. The department will meet with Council at a mutually suitable time to discuss options which may be open to them. This includes the option for Council to submit an application for a damage mitigation permit to disperse the animals, to modify vegetation in the roost and/or the development of a flying fox management plan to address longer term management of flying foxes in the township.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Ashley Bunce, A/Director Wildlife Management of the department on telephone 07 3330 5274.

Yours sincerely



Vicky Darling MP
Minister for Environment