

A submission to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

on the Land Protection Legislation (Flying Fox Control) Amendment Bill 2012

25 August 2012

Background

I am a resident of Yungaburra (Lakeside) on the Atherton Tablelands. Following Cyclone Larry in 2006, a large colony of flying foxes (spectacled and little reds, CSIRO census) established a roost in a small parcel of parkland (15000m²) in the midst of the Lakeside urban residential area. The numbers of animals varies throughout each year however have reached 35000+ (CSIRO census). The colony is at peak numbers between September and April/May each year.

Our community has voiced concerns extensively with the Tablelands Regional Council and Queensland Government, primarily about;

- Unknown risk of zoonotic disease transmission (including Hendra Virus, Lyssavirus).
- Contamination of adjacent drinking and amenity use water in Tinaroo dam only metres from the colony, from dead animals and excrement.
- Contamination of rainwater collection.
- Contamination of lawns and gardens, including edible plants.
- Extreme noise and odour, and fly infestations from dead animals.
- Lack of sleep.
- Increased prevalence of allergy and respiratory ailments.
- The need for tree removal from yards to deter animals from roosting in closer proximity to houses
- Inability to use the parkland, previously a habitat for extensive bird life.
- Economic loss through depreciation of real estate values (adjacent properties are reported to be virtually unsaleable).
- Advice from the Queensland Government to the effect that residents “learn to live” with flying foxes by airconditioning, double glazing, roof washing etc.
- Having to stay indoors after 6.30 due to the huge amount of flying foxes finding our own trees on our own land and making mess /noise and odour- the noise is unbearable
- Having been urinated on by flying foxes in our own yard from trees above and flying from tree to tree on our own property
- Damage to our vehicle from regurgitation in our own yard
- The worry of young children living immediately next to and across from the park
- The concern that domestic animals – dogs and cats live adjacent to the park
- Stress, depression and anxiety and major health risks as a result .

Our community is therefore very supportive of any mechanism that will allow us to take appropriate and humane measures to deter flying foxes from roosting in large colonies in urban or residential areas.

The number of animals is unacceptable , the area they have found to inhabit is in a residential area , the park is for the local community and is not useable , the conditions produced by the flying foxes and the effect on the physical , mental , social and economical wellbeing of the community is not acceptable, the health issues are not to be taken lightly.

The Bill

The **title** of the Bill and the accompanying **Explanatory Notes** refer to the need to address serious health risks, referring particularly to the range of viral diseases known to be associated with flying foxes. I submit that the range of issues that are deleterious to human welfare and health are far wider, as referenced in the background above. Accordingly the Bill would benefit the community if its scope or rationale encompassed wider aspects of human health and community wellbeing.

96A definitions – flying fox roost; the current definition includes “.....for breeding or rearing their young”. Should the definition be broader to include “resting”

New definition – should a definition of “health risks” and “community wellbeing” be included to give examples along the lines of those included in the background above?

96C The section relates to a landowner in relation to the owner’s land, or a local authority. Would it be possible to include action initiated by a community or individual in relation to Crown or Local Authority controlled land?

96C (2) (c) a landowner may destroy or disturb a flying fox roost, would it be possible to add “including management of and changes to vegetation to deter flying foxes from roosting.”

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation and would be pleased to offer other comment and information as necessary.

Joseph and Paula de Kroon

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Yungaburra Q 4884

Email - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]