



Speech by

Mrs D. PRATT

MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH

Hansard 5 April 2001

FLYING FOXES

Mrs PRATT (Nanango—Ind) (10.12 a.m.): I have received numerous complaints concerning a huge colony of flying foxes that have taken over a residential area, causing unprecedented stress to residents and business owners. Environmental protection officers have been called and have done nothing to find a win-win solution. They have informed the community that the foxes will move on.

That does not resolve the here and now, with the stench and the noise. Two people, who have either worked in the area among the dung or live right next to it, have become very ill—one almost to the point of death with what has been termed an unknown virus. While no blame was put directly on the flying foxes, a doctor involved in the treatment of one patient asked if he had been working with animals. The answer was, 'Not really, just living near bats.'

I want to know how far we must go before we bring back a modicum of sensibility into this issue. It is necessary to employ reasonable culling methods to keep animals at a sustainable level where they can cohabit happily with humans. I know that we humans are to blame for encroaching on the animals' habitat and that, therefore, we should put up and shut up. But hold on, it does not matter where we build a house; we will be displacing some poor animal, including ants and snails. If the greenies and animal libbers want to continue to live in the manner to which they are accustomed, they have to be realistic. I should have the choice as to where I wish to live. I should also care enough to want to ensure that provision is made for those I displace.

In a recent edition of the *7.30 Report*, it was reported that flying foxes had taken up residence in the botanical gardens in Melbourne. They are happily defoliating trees that are as old as 100 years. But that is not the worst of it. Now we have the greenies threatening to cull the bats, and the animal libbers marking trees in the park that they intend to destroy in retaliation. How long will it be before humans wake up to the fact that, while we should be responsible for our flora and fauna, we should not be held to ransom by it.

Most people who advocate for the protection of roos, flying foxes and galahs, et cetera do not live with and experience them in plague proportions. I strongly advocate sensible culling programs for all animals that cause problems in one way or another. The federal government has introduced a \$10 bounty on feral pigs, knowing full well that if foot-and-mouth disease ever gets into this country it will spread like wildfire.

Time expired.
