



Speech by

Ted Malone

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Hansard Wednesday, 7 June 2006

NORTH ETON, FLYING FOXES

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (10.15 pm): I rise to speak on behalf of the residents of North Eton in the Mirani electorate. For quite some time there has been a colony of flying foxes in the area. There has been ongoing contact between some residents, the Eton North Bowls Club and the department of natural resources during that period. However, the number of flying foxes has approximately doubled in a fairly short time frame. At present there are approximately 5,000 nesting foxes.

As members would appreciate, this growth in population is causing major problems in the area. Residents are subjected to continuous loud screeching when the flying foxes are feeding and nesting in their host trees. This, of course, is accompanied by an unbearable smell and copious amounts of excrement and other body fluids. Residents are unable to hang their laundry on their clotheslines, tend their gardens or spend any quality time outdoors at all.

The Eton North Bowls Club has lost 15 members over the past three years, with five of those in the past year. Added to that, the number of visits by members from other clubs has reduced substantially due solely to the strong smell, droppings et cetera from the flying foxes whilst bowlers are endeavouring to play fixtures and interclub carnivals. As members could imagine, the loss of members' dues and green fees from visiting bowlers to a very small club such as Eton North Bowls Club is financially devastating and is threatening its future viability.

Overriding all of these social and economic impacts, however, is the health and wellbeing of the residents. Many are understandably concerned about the transference of disease and other conditions and symptoms affecting their health. One resident recently had a life-threatening illness which was unable to be diagnosed, but residents have no doubt that the bats were to blame.

On behalf of all residents of North Eton, I implore the minister to take necessary action to expedite the relocation of these flying foxes to a more suitable location to enable the community to again enjoy some quality of life. I know without doubt that urgent attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated by the North Eton community.