

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 721

asked on Wednesday, 16 October 2013

MR KRAUSE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE PROTECTION (MR POWELL)—

QUESTION:

How is the government assisting residents of Boonah address issues resulting from flying foxes establishing roosts in urban areas?

ANSWER:

The Newman Government recently announced a proposed new framework for authorising the management of flying-fox roosts in Queensland, particularly in urban areas. The approach places the health and wellbeing of the community before wildlife, while providing increased flexibility for local councils to manage roosts in urban areas.

While this new approach is being finalised, the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is continuing to work closely with Scenic Rim Regional Council, most recently in approving significant works at a flying-fox roost in Bicentennial Park, Boonah. This has resulted in the removal of multiple large trees toward the north of the Bicentennial Park site, and vegetation modification and weed management on the outer eastern edge of the site to ensure a reasonable buffer remains between the flying-foxes and a neighbouring motel.

The council advised the department on 24 October 2013 that a number of local residents have expressed that they are happy with the outcome at Bicentennial Park, and that no further complaints have been received for this site.

By the end of the year, the new policy approach will make greater use of self-assessable codes of practice to reduce the range of activities that require a permit and hence the regulatory burden of roost management, particularly for councils. This is in line with the government's objectives of reducing red tape and will empower local councils to make their own decisions on whether to disperse, remove or otherwise manage flying-fox roosts in urban areas without having to apply to the department for a permit.

Management of roosts by councils outside of the designated urban areas will continue to require a permit. Where councils choose not to act, individuals, community organisations or businesses can still apply for a permit through the department as they would currently. The process by which these permit applications are assessed has also been revised and will be managed under a streamlined, 'customer first' ethos.