

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of five minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on 14 June 2016

Name	
Agenda Items – 10.00am	
Peter Cormick	GMR16/011 Public Exhibition of the Draft Community Engagement Framework.
Sarah Cowan	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Lucy Norman	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Gus A. Araya	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Viviane Wheatley	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Kathy Kemeny	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Brooke Miljenovic	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Caroline Meyn	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Allison Rowe	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Russell Schneider	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Hugh Pitty	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Danielle Smith	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Dianne Thompson on behalf of Australasian Bat Society Inc	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes - Dispersal Plan
Joanne Evans	PSR16/016 Grey Headed Flying Foxes – Dispersal Plan
Peter Bernard	FBD16/033 Budget review

Public forum 14 June 2016 – Peter Cormick

Item GMR16/011: Public Exhibition of the draft Community Engagement Framework

It appears from the information presented in today's agenda and attachments, that sometime after having begun its own research on what has been called a Community Engagement Framework, in April 2015, council engaged a firm by the name of KJA to produce a draft Community Engagement Framework. In fact KJA produced what they have termed an Outcome report, with the Framework being a component of it, along with Guiding Principles, an Engagement Charter, Recommendations and Key Actions and a Decision Making Tool. A great deal in fact - but quite moderate against the total volume of the huge, onerous agenda.

As senior staff and councillors know, the subject of community engagement is one that I am passionate about and have addressed in this chamber on many occasions. It is only through genuine engagement, at this coal face of local government, that we are able to take part in true democratic processes. After all, government is meant to be for the people, by the people. These must never be empty words but I feel that, increasingly, at all levels of government, they are taking on a hollow ring.

On its website, KJA says of itself that it “specialises in managing issues that are affecting project deliverables or impacting a client's corporate reputation.”

KJA also tells us that “with regard to its delivery of engagement opportunities and proactive communications” council has been “performing at a high level”; and that “Despite this commitment and demonstrable performance, there has been frustration with persistent negative media coverage, vocal community opposition and a perception of mistrust in some pockets of the community”. So, it would seem that the problem is not with council – since it has been performing at a “high level” - but with the community's misperceptions.

There is no question that the challenge of community engagement is an enormous one – with no simple solutions. But, as I have said many times before, no matter how well-formed a methodology might be, it simply won't work if its application is not genuine. Council's present engagement policy, which incorporates the beautifully articulated IAP2 core values, is, in my view, all that we need - if it were to be applied as it should be applied. It is the method by which that policy should be applied, that has been missing.

What KJA *has* provided that the current policy does not – and which is a very important improvement - is what they have termed a Decision Making Tool, by which the level of engagement that ought to occur is determined. The concept is a simple one but the methodology which is meant to take a decision-maker through comprehensive, rigorous, consistent and soundly-based steps, is quite a challenge.

The methodology presented by KJA is, in my view, a very good start, as far as structure is concerned, but it needs to be supported by rigorous rationale. I would dearly like to know for instance what the rationale was for ranking "local events", licencing and leasing at the lowest engagement level of 1. No regard has been paid to the nature of the associated activities in the determination of a rank. And as to social impact, for example, that is not considered until after the ranking has taken place. In my view, that is a very significant deficiency in the Decision Making Tool - but one that can be corrected. The structure is there. Given that the Huntfest issue is all to do with licensing, one can only wonder how or why we should find that process assigned to the lowest level of community engagement.

Sensibly, KJA commenced its work by seeking to, in its own words, "capture stakeholder perspectives on the current operating context for Eurobodalla Shire Council and to provide a stakeholder view of Council's performance, operations and activities". It has described this initial stage as "Situational analysis". On page six of the Outcomes Report we see just who was interviewed and who was not, according to those stakeholders "identified by [staff]". Incredibly, councillors are not included in the list of those interviewed, though they did take part, as a group, in a two hour workshop during the second stage of the process –in developing the Framework and the Decision Making Tool.

As far as the interviewing of community groups was concerned, just two, with very small, even uncertain, memberships were invited to take part. SAFE, which has been consistently and articulately advocating for proper community engagement for the past four years, and which has a paid-up membership of more than 120, was excluded. That is not only disgraceful and insulting, it is the very height of hypocrisy to not engage with such an organisation when seeking to improve council's engagement practices. Even with a subsequent opportunity to identify additional stakeholders, staff chose not to include SAFE. And you wonder why we don't accept that you are genuine about community engagement. The need for a cultural change within council is well overdue.

Questions:

What has been the cost of this exercise by KJA, to date, and what is it expected to be at the end of the day?

Was the Decision Making Tool applied to Huntfest and if so, what Ranking total was obtained?

2015

Week 47 NOVEMBER

Sarah Cowan

Tuesday 17

321-044

08.00 I am here today to speak against proposed management and dispersal of the Water Garden's flying fox colony.

09.00 These wonderful creatures have come here because they need to - whether we like it or not - it is our fault, they are environmental refugees. They have come to an ecological garden, on the Nature Coast and instead of being protected and nurtured, they are feared, ~~and~~ despised, and demonized.

11.00

Since 1999, across Australia, scores of dispersals have been attempted - all have failed. Please, look at the research, there is reams of it! Most commonly dispersal causes the flying fox shock, terror, trauma, injury and death.

Most commonly dispersal causes the colony to create splinter groups, often as close as 350m from the original colony. Will that solve your problems? Where do you think they might go?

14.00

Attempted dispersals have ongoing costs between \$396k and \$3 million dollars. I, for one, am opposed to my rates dollar being wasted in this way.

Those of us against dispersal far outnumber those in favour. Personally I have been afraid to take part in the forum due to the hatred, the ignorance, and the mass-hysteria ensuing from a noisy lynch-mob.

17.00

I have been deeply disturbed by the lack of research done by residents and council alike; I see so many twisted facts, mistakes and mythology in this forum. Health risks are hugely dramatized, parents infect their children with their own fear and nature is even blamed for mental illness!

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu							
DECEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER Week 47

2015

18 Wednesday

322-043

08.00 Flying fox poo is as easy to remove as seagull poo, and Russell, it does not spoil crops, it is fabulous fertiliser! Again - please do the research.

09.00

I love the flying fox. Every night my visitors and I marvel at their mass flyover; I rejoice in their sweet lullabies of chirping and twittering as they pollinate my spotted gums and add guano to my depleted soils.

11.00 Why have we not implemented any nature tourism around them? Nature walks, goth tours, halloween gatherings. How has it come to slash, burn and destroy?

12.00

I urge council not to be misguided by the aggression. I have watched with dismay as council has gone from a strong environmental stance to caving in to a noisy minority.

14.00 I ask council NOT to embark upon this project which is cruel, an endless waste of OUR money, and according to stacks of research - doomed to failure. Many other creatures in the Water Gardens will be affected - the ibis colony, the spoonbills, the coots, the ducks and the frogs.

16.00 If we think we can manage and control nature we will be very disappointed.

17.00 In closing I would also like to say that if environmental laws can be overlooked to quell the anger of a handful of environmental terrorists, we should ALL be very afraid.

18.00 What will be next?

Thank you for listening.

NOVEMBER	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon							
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Hi, my name is Lucy Norman, and many people know me as someone that is fighting for bat rights over human rights. This is not the case. My goal is the same as the goal of all of the people in this room: to end the conflict between humans and flying foxes.

I am happy to agree with everything that the residents have to say in relation to their negative experiences. I agree with any speakers that follow me that will discuss the smell, the faeces on the washing. The noise of the colony, the inconvenience of having to wash cars and other surfaces when soiled by droppings. Any speaker that wishes to discuss those things has no argument from me. I agree with you. You are asking for HELP. For REAL HELP to improve your situation. I agree that you need help. You are beyond breaking point, and you need *someone* to do *something*.

The someone is the Council. The something is not dispersal. I have made myself unpopular by telling you the truth: dispersal will not work. It will not help you.

I'm not a bat expert. Neither are most people in this room. So we have to be guided by that the experts are telling us. They ALL agree that active dispersal will have NO effect on the things that are affecting you. If the colony does disperse, it is expected to splinter into smaller colonies in people's backyards in Surf Beach, Long Beach, Sunshine Bay, Batehaven, and a bigger colony in Catalina.

Even if you chopped down EVERY TREE in Bateman's Bay – not just the water gardens, but the entire town – you would STILL have a bat problem. Because you live in a flight path. Just like an airport, those bats in the sky at night are a permanent fixture, they will continue to fly over your houses, leaving droppings, making mess, making noise, for as long as the nomads are here. Which WILL NOT be forever! They're not only migratory, but nomadic. While they are here, it doesn't matter where they SLEEP. When they are AWAKE, they will continue to do the things that are causing you distress. Council knows that, these are Council's words: “Under all realistic scenarios we will continue to see impacts across Eurobodalla because of feeding and foraging, these impacts simply cannot be eliminated”.

Unless they move at least 30 kilometres away, the behaviour that you currently experience from dusk till dawn will remain functionally the same.

The politicians know that dispersal will not help. They have lied to you as part of an election campaign. You deserve better than that. If they actually cared about you and your problem, they would have approved a plan that aligns with the advice that the experts have given in terms of what we learned from other dispersals. The conditions associated with the funding were that the money be spent immediately, and on active dispersal. If the Council tries to defer, it loses the money. If they try to use the money to support residents, the funding is withdrawn by the State. Federal money is contingent on winter dispersal as well.

Why?

Because the bats are naturally dispersing in winter. So any dispersal strategy is going to have the appearance of being effective, at least until 2 July. After that, it doesn't matter to the politicians whether or not you have problems with bats, because the election is over. They have hoodwinked you! And when the colony returns in February – guess what? There is no more money. You are going to be in exactly the same position you are now – but there will be no more money left to defend the bay from the returning flying foxes (although there will be fewer of them). And the politicians will just be laughing at you.

This Council KNOWS that dispersal won't work. From its own agenda paper (pp 15 - 35):

- Success of other attempts has been low -- high risk, and high cost
- Because of those (and other reasons specific to this local context) independent advice recommends against dispersal
- The likelihood of seeing the flying foxes return in the same unprecedented number is very low
- The power failure issue with Essential Energy is considered to be “solved”
- And additional THREE experts are quoted, all agreeing that dispersal attempted in Bateman's Bay has a low likelihood of success AND significant risks
- There is a VERY strong belief in this community that flying foxes are making people sick, that they all carry deadly diseases, and are posing a serious health risk. Council KNOWS that isn't true. The risks of Lyssavirus and Hendra are negligible, and according to NSW public health data, there was no significant increase in people presenting with acute illnesses that could be caused by bats. “There is no evidence that flying foxes are causing or exacerbating illness”.

Council needs to develop and deliver an education campaign to provide people with accurate information – not approve funding decisions based on people's mistaken assumptions.

There are only two decision-makers in this room that I think actually believe that dispersal will work. Those two are Milton Leslight and Russell Schneider. I have become aware that Milton Leslight is currently selling a property that adjoins one of the flying fox roosts. He has a personal financial incentive to wrap this up fast, not necessarily well. I would suggest that this conflict of interest would lead him to unjustly support a plan that will send the flying foxes to other people's backyards and out of his own.

I am aware that Liz Innes has been campaigning hard for dispersal on behalf of her mum, but as an intelligent woman, I suspect that she is aware that dispersal will not have the desired effects.

At this point, she is supporting a plan that she knows will not work simply because there is money temporarily available because of an election stunt -- might as well have a crack at it. A few other councillors may be thinking the same. The money is there, so we might as well give the people what they are asking for. Maybe it will work, maybe not. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. No harm, no foul.

Plenty of harm, plenty of foul. 95% of this species died out in the last century. This colony, in 2016, represented a quarter of a species. Doing ANYTHING that puts them at risk is plenty harmful and plenty foul. This species is one of the cornerstones of our entire ecosystem. You have no right to approve action against such an important and vulnerable species. We need them, and they are being wiped off the face of the Earth. 30% died just in the 1990s. It may seem like there is an endless supply of them – but that's because they are being driven to the cities by habitat destruction. They are vanishing.

I would also like to point out that Russell Schneider's taskforce recommendations and the community consultation process are both highly questionable. I would also like Milton and Russell to please address the Council, and justify why, in the face of every single expert – they are still trying to convince people that dispersal will work.

What is there to gain from implementing a plan that has been essentially guaranteed to fail by EVERY expert? Upon what grounds do you disagree with the unanimous expert opinions? Upon what grounds do you expect this to succeed where 95% of other attempts have failed – and their chances of success were SIGNIFICANTLY higher than this? If it is just “that you do”, or that “it's better than nothing” or “we have to try something”, those are not only flimsy reasons, but they are

breaches of the laws that govern how public money is spent.

You can NOT legally spend our money on something you believe will fail. It's illegal. Even if you think you have the support of state and federal governments – spending money on something that you have admitted will fail is illegal, and I promise you that legal action will be taken. I am happy to provide more information on that if you like.

I suggest that you adopt recommendations 4, 5, and 6 ONLY from the list on page 17 of the agenda, and that you immediately develop a resident support plan including educational support, and

My name is Gus I have worked for various federal departments over the space of ten years as a senior business analyst. Basically I look at the way systems work or don't work and how they can succeed.

Success or failure depends on how well the parts within it work with one another.

Anything that matches that description is a system, a motor engine, the human body, this council are all systems.

So imagine with me a small business -say a successful mechanic's shop with different components: things like supplies, mechanics, good administrator, good manager, etc.

Say you had a problem with your supplier who has annoying habits- may be he is rude, makes deliveries in his own time, etc, yet he is the only supplier around, in fact he is the manufacturer. One day you have had enough, so you stop the supplier. Your small business might go on for a while on its reserve stock but eventually that would dry out too. The shop, in spite of all other components working perfectly in the long run would not survive. You will not be able to feed or clothe yourself or family members. You and those you love would eventually suffer as a consequence.

In a system the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Remove an essential part and the system breaks overtime.

Our most important system is the one we live in. Our ecosystem. This is our big business, really. All other business pales in comparison. The motor engine, parts of the human body, this council, can be replaced however our ecosystem...is irreplaceable. This is where we live. Our country. Our nation.

In Australia's ecosystem flying foxes are one of the most important parts within our big business. They keep plants and animals healthy and alive. This is why they are referred to as "keystone" species. A corner stone. A foundation without which the rest of the community will weaken ...and like a brick house with a weak foundation would fall on its inhabitants killing or injuring them in time. The dispersal plan is aiming at attacking this corner stone. And while it will not succeed in dispersing them, it might succeed in decimating them. Weakening our foundations.

- The flying foxes role in Australia's big business - our eco-system is as primary pollinators and seed dispersers – Gum trees and bats need one another to survive. The flying foxes do billions of dollars of work for free. Work that once lost will not be able to be recuperated. They move seeds and pollinating flowers large distances. As they crawl and fly from tree to tree their furry bodies carrying pollen helps flowers and the production of honey. Sharing the genes of mature trees making them stronger against future environmental changes. *In turn, native forests provide valuable timber, act as carbon sinks, and stabilise river systems and water catchments, and provide recreational and tourism opportunities worth millions of dollars each year.*" (Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection). Unlike the rude supplier you may not renegotiate the deal once they are gone. Their number decimated, our forests die.

For some of Bateman's bay inhabitants they are very much our rude supplier.

They can be smelly, unsightly, noisy, and leave their droppings as they fly overhead on their own time. For this they have suffered.

- 95% of their entirety have been wiped out in the last century.

Many residents believe have encountered health issues while the flying foxes have been at their rudest. Most visible.

Belief is not fact. And there is a strong community belief that the flying foxes are making people sick, and have a high risk of communicating lethal diseases. There has been no increase in any disease that could be attributable to flying foxes in the area.

Council is aware that these beliefs are bogus, and must therefore develop an education campaign to inform the community, and not draw a wool over their eyes- developing an action plan based on a mistaken belief and inaccurate fears. (I have notes on bats diseases if you want to ask me)

Their numbers are diminishing though large in Bateman's, this is 25% of the entire species – there is a silver lining however: scientific sources see it highly unlikely to see them together in those numbers in this area again.

Another thing that comes across in arguments is that they only been here 6-7 years. Wrong.

According to doctor Kerry Parry Jones from the University of Sydney:

There has ALWAYS been a colony here, sometimes twice as big. But it used to be on forestry land. It has only recently moved into the middle of town, but this problem has been twenty years in the making, and can't be solved over night. Because they are migratory they go where the go, and because they a fruit and nectar eaters you can entice them better with honey than with a stick.

Humans have had a patchy relationship within the history of our environment. Our role is one which has left something to be desired when it comes to taking responsibility for our actions. Too often we make decisions that impact our big business forever because of the "here and now".

Our way of life is important to us. And we react strongly with anger, outrage, rightly emotionally when it is disturbed. Our way of life matters because we matter, it is also defined by our love of our country and our nature. Of the beach, of the trees...And perhaps some of us would rather have less noise. Fewer trees that cover our views of the skies. Fewer bats. Much of this has been already achieved in cities, where the wildlife has already been dispersed and exterminated for the convenience of the city comforts. Here it is different. There is no luxury of going to nature and country when it is convenient. Here life is part of nature. Humans are part of the ecosystem more than in removed places like cities.

Here real Australians have a real responsibility that is greater for our big business. Our ecosystem.

You may or may not like flying foxes but if you care about Australia and its natural environment in any shape or form you must care about flying foxes for they are it. What we do has impact and meaning. Not just the environment but the future is at play. You, me, your children, and your children's children depend on what we do with that power.

And your role as custodians - because like it or not is what you are. Your decision will have consequences towards the extermination of a species and the condemning of our country's ecosystem. Don't sit this one out.

Don't allow petty grievances or political play-acting decide for you the future of your children and generations to come. What part you play in this moment will be something which you will be held to account. In their complex tribal societies flying foxes do more than almost any other species to maintain the ecosystem and hold its value for future generations. They are that rude supplier you can't ... We can't as a nation ...do without. Thank you.

Notes on health

Lyssavirus and Hendra are community concerns to be noted, but the factual health risks associated with flying foxes are not consistent with these mistaken views. The government advice on the likelihood of human beings becoming sick because of flying foxes is as follows:

Flying foxes may carry Lyssavirus and / or Hendra virus. Lyssavirus is only contractable when fluid from an infected flying fox (which may be on their teeth and claws) enters the human bloodstream directly. Unless someone finds an injured bat, handles it with bare hands, gets bitten by the infected bat, and the bite breaks the skin, the chances of a human being contracting the Lyssavirus are extremely low. In fact, only three people have ever contracted Lyssavirus in Australia (one case each in 1996, 1998, and 2013). A human being MUST handle an infected flying fox not any flying fox- with bare skin to contract the disease.

Likewise, Hendra virus is very, very rare. It is impossible for humans to contract the disease directly from bats. Infected bats must communicate the disease to horses, and then infected horses must deliver the virus to humans. Only seven cases of Hendra virus have ever been reported in humans in Australia.

On their ecological importance - "Flying-foxes are crucial to keeping native forests healthy. They play an important role in dispersing seeds and pollinating flowering plants. Because flying-foxes are highly mobile, seeds can be moved locally and over great distances. When seeds are able to germinate away from their parent plant, they can have a greater chance of surviving and growing into a mature plant. Seed dispersal also expands the gene pool within forests. Mature trees then share their genes with neighbouring trees of the same species and this transfer strengthens forests against environmental changes.

High mobility also makes flying-foxes very effective as forest pollinators. Pollen sticks to their furry bodies and as they crawl from flower to flower, and fly from tree to tree, they pollinate the flowers and aid in the production of honey. This reinforces the gene pool and health of native forests.

In turn, native forests provide valuable timber, act as carbon sinks, and stabilise river systems and water

catchments, and provide recreational and tourism opportunities worth millions of dollars each year."
(Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection).

Sent from my iPhone

On 13 Jun 2016, at 2:17 PM, Lucy Norman <miss_norman@hotmail.com> wrote:

These are the points I would like covered off by you, the ecology speaker, either in the main speech or in a question afterwards.

- 95% wiped out in the last century
- this was 25% of the entire species – highly unlikely to see them together in those numbers in this area again
- Explain the role of pollinators and seed dispersers – gum trees and bats need one another to survive. They do billions of dollars of work for free (notes below).
- Negligible health and safety risks (community complains of rabies, Hendra, and respiratory distress) – notes below
- There has ALWAYS been a colony here, sometimes twice as big. But it used to be on forestry land. It has only recently moved into the middle of town, but this problem has been twenty years in the making, and can't be solved over night.

Lyssavirus and Hendra are community concerns to be noted, but the factual health risks associated with flying foxes are not consistent with community views. The government advice on the likelihood of human beings becoming sick because of flying foxes is as follows.

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Likewise, Hendra virus is very, very rare. It is impossible for humans to contract the disease directly from bats. Infected bats must communicate the disease to horses, and then infected horses must deliver the virus to humans. Only seven cases of Hendra virus have ever been reported in humans in Australia.

There is a strong community belief that the flying foxes are making people sick, and have a high risk of communicating lethal disease. Council is aware that these beliefs are not accurate, and must therefore develop an education campaign to inform the community, not develop an action plan based on mistaken belief.

On their ecological importance - *"Flying-foxes are crucial to keeping native forests healthy. They play an important role in dispersing seeds and pollinating flowering plants. Because flying-foxes are highly mobile, seeds can be moved locally and over great distances. When seeds are able to germinate away from their parent plant, they can have a greater chance of surviving and growing into a mature plant. Seed dispersal also expands the gene pool within forests. Mature trees then share their genes with neighbouring trees of the same species and this transfer strengthens forests against environmental changes.*

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In turn, native forests provide valuable timber, act as carbon sinks, and stabilise river systems and water catchments, and provide recreational and tourism opportunities worth millions of dollars each year." (Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection).

My name is Viviane Wheatley

I don't believe there is any argument that bat dispersal should be delayed. The flying fox negatively impact not only residents but previously thriving flora and fauna with so many native birds disappearing. Given the general noise of urban activities in the area it is not an optimal situation for bats in daytime and nightly electrocution of numerous bats as they go to feed.

The range of papers relating to FLYING FOX from the 1930's onwards makes it glaringly obvious to me that no one has historically or currently given anything like an accurate count on FLYING FOX populations. Given the time allotted I will quote the most recent. I refer to the ongoing CSIRO National Flying Fox Monitoring Program beginning in 2013. Having read every paper I could find prior to this date I agree with the CSIRO who state:

'The counts prior to 2006 were conducted at different times of the year, using different methods and were conducted over different areas. These differences make direct comparisons between the numbers produced by the two sets of counts difficult'.

The Federal department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' fact sheet on the national monitoring program state:

'their extreme mobility means that monitoring is not a straightforward task' critically 'it is impossible to determine the degree of confidence that can be placed in any population estimate.'

The Status and Trends of Australia's EPBC – Listed Flying Foxes report prepared by CSIRO, in April 2015 recognises the same weakness in previous counts. When they drew together the old and current data they stated:

'we estimate that the population has remained relatively stable.'

The NSW Local Government conference called for a national census of FLYING FOX to re-examine quoted numbers.

The current CSIRO monitoring expects to have reliable population trends on in ten years time. I am not using this information to say whether or not the FLYING FOX are vulnerable just to illustrate that the experts and all the reports we have been asked to rely upon are theory based rather than evidence based. Local people observe the bats every day, not four times a year for a few days. There is lots of local knowledge about the numbers and distribution of the animals here being dismissed in favour of the bat experts when it should be part of the dispersal plan. Possibly the experts are being too negative about dispersal, there have been successful dispersals and every efforts should be made to find the most successful and implement them.

Every report refers to their highly migratory nature, maybe they are better disposed to loss and change of habitat than the experts give them credit for. Does their mobility and their ability through pollination lead to them creating their own future food source in new areas as they are moving south? Just as likely that by create unnatural but suitable habitats in urban areas we are unnaturally increasing their numbers. We have to do something so let's be the groundbreakers and find a solution that will be the benchmark for future successful dispersals to bushland.

The council has permission and funding to undertake non lethal dispersal of the FLYING FOX Has the council consulted with those who have successfully dispersed bats rather than asking those who are constantly predicting failure? The bats have been dispersed from various places including both the Sydney and Melbourne Botanical Gardens and our botanical gardens. They may have been smaller populations but surely the principal is the same. As someone who understands interview process I would not be keen to employ someone who had no faith in the job I was offering.

Those who profess to have the best interests of the flying fox at heart suggest, such as, turning the water gardens into a tourist attraction. This flippant suggestion shows complete lack of understanding of the people and the animals' wellbeing. The idea of a tourist attraction makes some sense if the FLYING FOX are in a more natural environment where viewing platforms and trained guides such as the proponents of this idea could create a new business venture and raise funds for their welfare and research.

How many volunteers are needed? It began with hundreds down to the latest numbers quoted by Mayor Brown during a meeting in water gardens of 30-35.

I ask why are volunteers all being directed to register on the council website, please offer paper registration, these form could be available at the BB tourist office. I am concerned that so many community members are willing to help and that very narrow focus has been applied would like to know:

- Who needs to be vaccinated, how many?
- What jobs are needed to be filled by non experts?
- How many people volunteered, how many have the council contacted?
- Not everyone has been contacted that volunteered, for example, ME.

Reading the dispersal proposal by EcoLogical I am very disappointed that volunteers have basically been factored out as unsuitable and unreliable when I can see this as a way to bring community together giving the experts and the residents an opportunity to work together. Dismissing non experts is part of the problem, there are plenty of people here with long term local geographical knowledge and observation of the bats since their arrival that can make a valuable contribution to the dispersal and, in fact, I think the success of the dispersal hinges on the co-operation and participation of local residents. The number of people, who volunteered, even those who may be unsuitable for active dispersal, shows the willingness of the residents to be proactive and do something constructive to resolve the issue. Shutting residents out in many ways is symptomatic of the disconnection and lack of understanding that I believe the council has shown on this issue. Science is not an exact science that is for sure.

To minimise return of bats to camps in residential areas I suggest:

- Council discourage planting of vegetation preferred by bats in residential areas.
- Campaign to promote and assist with removal of such vegetation in gardens.

Please give the surveys collected by doorknocking the most affected residents' proper respect and weight in acknowledging no action or delayed dispersal till February is not acceptable. Their

circumstances are intolerable. Can you assure these people and the wider community that you will act to end this untenable situation now?

Submission to Eurobodalla Council – Meeting June 14, 2016 – Public Forum – Kathy Kemeny

Council ref: e 15.9191 – 26924.16, 27299.16 and 27299.16 and 27303.16

Good morning, Mayor and Councillors, my name is Kathy Kemeny and I am speaking to you today as a member of the public. I drove here from Sydney specifically to talk because this issue is so important to all of us.

I live near the Centennial Parklands in Sydney which, like the Ku-ring-gai Flying Fox Reserve, raises awareness of the importance of the Grey-headed flying foxes and the preservation of their habitat through visitor and ranger education, and tours led by an ecologist. With a signed pathway through our main flying fox encampment, this is one of the most popular areas of our Park and visitors love to come and take photos of our flying foxes.

For ten years I lived directly across the road from one of the Park's colonies. I guarantee that no-one gets sick, children and pets play happily under the roosting trees, there is no problem with the chattering of the flying foxes, which is no louder than a gathering of people in a busy restaurant. And this is one of the most sought after real estate enclaves of Sydney. No loss of property value, in fact the opposite!

In Batemans Bay some claim there is a flying fox "problem". This is not correct as the majority in the Shire are unaffected and unconcerned.

Some neighbouring the colony are upset their lifestyle is inconvenienced by smell, noise and mess. So "the actual problem" is whether they are prepared to put up with it!

In all urban areas there are individual inconveniences, such as the post football crowd peeing on people's front gardens, the developer's noisy construction site, or the clatter and banging of garbage collectors.

Sadly, this aggressive and abusive minority is intent on using political coercion to force a NIMBY agenda onto an entire community. I captured comments of absolute abuse and bullying directed at me, and others working for a sustainable solution for the whole community. Attached is a copy of criminal cruelty intent directed at flying foxes ("burn them") and an article showing Mayor Lindsay Brown seeking statewide dispersal action last December. 880 submissions to Council for dispersal were a devised form letter showing literally 0% concern for animal welfare and 0% concern for ecosystem services. You cannot equate a form letter with carefully considered responses.

The good folk of Batemans Bay are being held hostage to the will of these awful people and the community is getting a very bad reputation.

Some comments even claim "900,000 bats being counted three times every day"!

- Council's commissioned Ecosure Report puts the number of flying foxes in the

Batemans Bay camp peaking at 120,000. Dr Peggy Eby predicted this large blossoming event back in 2014 - and the ensuing community reaction resulting in pressure on Council and a dispersal doomed to fail and waste money.

- If you do not touch flying foxes you will not get sick. You are far more likely to get fatally bitten by a horse, cow, dog – even a snake or funnel web spider.

- There is a condition associated with bats which can cause panic attacks, headaches, anxiety, screaming or crying, heart palpitations, hyperventilation or a feeling of danger. Chiroptophobia is treatable. The condition is a fear of bats.

- Ecosure's Report clearly states the overpowering smell at the Water Gardens is due to people feeding waterbirds undigestible bread. This is easily remedied.

When I asked the angry, abusive minority for information to support their claims they have none. Not even one. None.

They are not interested in facts.

The Grey-headed flying fox is a unique, vulnerable and protected keystone species and a linchpin pollinator. Other wildlife species rely on their "flying gardening services" to protect the future of our eucalypt forests. For these reasons they are of immense national interest. Bees, another pollinator, rely on eucalypt forests. The honey industry alone contributes \$60-69 million annually to Australia's economy.

We all have the privilege of sharing seasonal visits by flying foxes, from Bundaberg right down and across into Adelaide. Individuals which visit Batemans Bay also visit my Centennial Park camp.

No one community owns the flying foxes and my community expects other communities to take as good care and management of them as we do.

All expert ecologists, including Dr Peggy Eby, Dr Justin Welbergen, Dr Kerryn Parry-Jones, Tim Pearson and Ecosure say that it is habitat loss which drives flying foxes into urban areas.

All experts say that a dispersal plan is costly and will fail.

Noosa Council recently rejected a dispersal plan and adopted the wise course of following expert advice.

Like my community, Lismore Council lives in harmony with its flying fox colony and understands their important ecoservices. Residents enjoy the bats flying over at night and there is no dispersal strategy.

Council has a fiduciary duty to ratepayers and is legally bound to act in the best interests of its whole community, not just one sector.

If legal challenges currently in play against both Federal and State governments questioning aspects of the so-called "national interest exemption" and the granting of

\$2.5m to Eurobodalla Council are successful, and if Council has carried out its dispersal plan against all expert advice, any liability insurance becomes null and void, leaving all ratepayers and Councillors personally liable for legal expenses, and possibly dispersal costs. Ignorance is no defence under the law.

If Council's dispersal kills one flying fox it is in immediate breach of the national interest exemption and every other community has legal recourse rights. Council notes increased risk of electrocution of flying foxes when airborne for longer periods than usual during dispersal.

Council's Ecosure Report states power lines should be insulated to prevent electrocution and power outages.

Dispersal is cruel and designed to be stressful. Animal cruelty is a criminal act with criminal penalties.

The draft dispersal plan states "Dispersal will stop if flying-foxes are subject to undue stress levels."

There is no case for dispersal.

I propose Council adopt the recommendation of the Ecosure Report and compensate the few people whose lifestyle is directly affected so that they can modify their residences at their choice with air conditioning, double glazing or perhaps holidays during bat mating season.

I propose Council at the same time:

- adopt a sustainable approach based on the best available scientific evidence aiming to minimise impacts on both native wildlife and humans,
- work with expert bat ecologists and bat carers
- engage in collaborative research, education and rehabilitation of native vegetation, and,
- prepare a map of flying fox native food sources for preservation.

Council has a great opportunity to both build community and support an economic boost to Batemans Bay, attracting positive worldwide attention, bringing tourist and wildlife interest groups longterm through:

- engaging with other communities and state tourism commissions
- building a world-class, interesting interactive attraction
- embracing local artists, musicians, photographers, food producers, restaurateurs and café owners,
- provide education facilities on the importance of flying foxes
- facilitate habitat regeneration programs and volunteer workshops.

And how about a live bat cam^{in the colony?}? We could all follow the flying fox migration right up and down our coast!

KK

Isn't this a more interesting, exciting and positive approach for the whole Batemans Bay and wider community?

Thank you.

* * * * *

Brooke Miljenovic

I'm speaking today on behalf of the bat action group which is a group of concerned residents focused on the removal of the grey headed flying foxes in residential areas of the Eurobodalla shire. We felt it was important that we conduct a survey focusing on the impacts of the grey headed flying foxes.

The survey was undertaken in the homes closest to the water gardens, as well as the other camps at Catalina. After speaking with many of the residents closest to the camps we realized so many of these people felt isolated, powerless as individuals and many had become prisoners in their own homes. It was also evident that there were serious health impacts both physically and mentally.

None of these households had ever been approached by anyone prior to us, as had been reported. Some people cried. These people were so grateful that we cared enough to listen to their story of long term suffering. This community thought that they had been forgotten by all, despite being most affected.

On conducting this survey the impact it had on us personally was catastrophic to see with our own eyes the suffering and feel the emotions these residents were forced to endure everyday will forever be etched in our minds.

In total our survey covered 235 homes, 78% were in direct proximity to the camps.

8.9% of residents were suffering with respiratory illness, 2.5% were afflicted with pneumonia, 10.2% stressed the increasement in Asthma symptoms with serious episodes, 1.7% has suffered newly diagnosed asthma, 6.4% are suffering from aggravated sinus and 3.0% are suffering from allergies that they did not have before. These residents also pointed out that they were fit and healthy and very rarely get sick apart from the last few years. 87% of cases required treatment from their GP or hospital.

It's important to note although the health department is very quick to confirm there is no such increase to previous years in statistical data representing this they are only measuring their data from hospital admissions. I highly recommend the health department review all data available as there is certainly an evident increasement in these illnesses in clusters around the camps. They need to also

note that Batemans bay is not only one of the largest camps in Australia it is also one of a very few camps that are in such close proximity to people's homes therefore there is no existing data available to compare these results too. A much more detailed study should be undertaken by the department of health reviewing the health effects of residents living so close to roosts.

I now bring your attention to the most alarming part of our survey which centers on mental health which indicates a very severe ticking time bomb.

13.2% of residents mentioned they were suffering from severe anxiety or depression requiring treatment, 1 case specifically stated they had contemplated suicide requiring consultations with a psychiatrist.

44.7% specified they felt they were trapped inside their homes and felt totally isolated from the outside world, 21.3% stated their children were trapped inside their house and could no longer play outside in their yards and 2.6% have started taking sleeping tablets to help with severe insomnia.

These figures are very staggering and suggestive of a large problem that is growing. Mental health is a serious illness and not one to be ignored. What's to happen to these people in a few years' time as their problems increase? What's to happen to these children who have grown up trapped in their homes not being allowed to play outside like other kids in their areas. It could lead to anxiety, depression or they may become introverted affecting their quality of life as young adults. How many prescription drugs will these affected adults and children be forced to take and how long to we as a community have to wait before these effects are considered a serious problem.

Providing the residents with air conditioners, double glazed windows and access to infrastructure to build carports and close in their yards would only escalate the mental health issues as you are not providing a solution but imprisoning the residents even more. This solution has the potential to cause a great deal of more suffering as residents could feel more imprisoned, Imprisoning people in their homes is punishing them not helping them.

A basic human right as specified in the universal declaration of human rights, I refer you to Article 12 which states no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks. The flying foxes are encroaching on this very law as they further invade these residents homes.

Article 25 states everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family yet these residents are suffering in their own homes with their mental and physical health being unfairly affected

I also ask you to cite the photos I have provided for the councilors to view. These photos represent a small portion of the situation at hand as to what these residents are suffering. They give you a closer concept to understanding the severity of their situation. The flying foxes have invaded their homes, are hanging in their yards directly violating their rights to live safely in their homes.

Conservationists and ecologists are very quick to point out that they are of no harm to humans but yet the studies that have been conducted on flying foxes are grossly outdated and not unique to the situation in Batemans bay.

Living in such close proximity to the bats dramatically increases the statistics to which someone could be scratched or bitten by one. Although evidence suggests only 3 people have died from lyssavirus that is 3 people too many.

These health impacts are something I strongly recommend you to consider when making your decision on dispersal. The Eurobodalla Shire Council has a responsibility to protect and serve its residents and to ignore this situation any longer would result in a largely more widespread problem.

I implore the council to peruse these surveys that are written by individuals to really grasp and have a more thorough understanding of what these residents are being forced to endure on a daily basis. The worst thing you can do about a situation is nothing!

Brooke Miljenovic

My name is Caroline Meyn and firstly I would like to say I do not live amongst the bats but I'm here for the community.

Mayor Brown did a media release on the May 19th stating he was pleased to let the community know that all councilors are in agreement that this council will do everything possible to attempt a dispersal this winter, but contrary to that release Cllr Burnside has publicly denied his agreement to dispersal and Cllr Harding publicly posted an international petition against dispersal on her Facebook profile. Council then decided to take a break for 3 weeks when the Batemans Bay community needed them the most this was viewed by the community as a stalling tactic against dispersal. It also raises the point, why are we still here over 3 weeks later a meeting for council to vote on dispersal if all councilors were already in agreement

Council needs to actively utilize the use of volunteers across the board for dispersal. Many people have imputed through our surveys that they are willing to help in any way possible and these names were forwarded to council. Council has stated in their dispersal plan to only use these volunteers as follows: - Due to the high risk nature of a dispersal activity, possible involvement of community volunteers would be generally restricted to certain activities within their own property and reporting any incidences of roosting flying foxes outside of the existing camp.

This view is highly hypercritical; residents are living with these risks every day in their neighborhood and backyards so how does helping with dispersal outside the camps boundaries put them in any greater risk than what they face every day in their homes. The flying foxes become stressed when we walk around our homes, mow our lawns or make any noise on daily basis dispersal would be no different to these situations.

The NSW government stepped in to lend a helping hand as they could see the urgency in the situation. Batemans Bay has been given an exemption on vegetation clearing and removal and the council needs to utilize this to its full potential to pave the way for a successful dispersal.

A couple of weeks ago Mayor Brown stated that the community overwhelmingly rejects dispersal referring back to a very small and limited survey done. I personally went to every house in Bavarde ave, south street, old princess hwy including the Burrawangs and spoke with those residents that were directly affected and they stated that no one had approached them regarding this issue apart from a few who claimed they had received a pamphlet on how to live with bats.

It's noted that council placed in their report regarding submissions that our form letters were separated from other submissions as they represented a prompt to do so, in defense of this council should heed that if they had perused the individual surveys residents provided these findings and this was evident in the surveys.

The councilors need to heed the community's view including the hundreds of submissions that have been received on acceptance of dispersal.

Burnside makes reference to not wasting rate payers money on an issue that has no foreseeable outcome but yet as a ratepayer I ask you the question should there be any price put on a person's physical or mental health and even if there is a chance this might not work at least we have tried and we can move forward on finding another solution.

I would also like to raise the point that Schwarz referred to those that actually cared for our community as a lynch mob and clap trap intellectual hobos when we were the ones that did off our own backs with over 800 submissions and surveys and liaised with the residents effected while they conducted a minimal survey of under 20 and classed that as everyone's view on the situation.

Flying foxes and humans cannot cohabitate the risks to humans is too high. So many people are being pushed to breaking point with a situation they are being forced to endure. The sheer anxiety of this situation is causing a minority to take things into their own hands with devastating consequences to the flying foxes as witnessed in the last few months. Should not this prove to conservationists the importance of moving them on for the safety of the flying foxes if your interests in protecting a vulnerable species is of great importance would not placing them in a safe environment out of harm's way be what is best for their long term survival.

The commonwealth granted an exemption to ESC speeding up dispersal approval by 6 months. Since then Mayor Brown, Schwarz, Burnside and Harding have claimed the NSW government was a barrier to dispersals. At no point have they justified their public claims yet they are the councilors still to resolve whether they support dispersal or not.

Hello, my name is Allison Rowe and I live at Catalina.

I believe that dispersal should begin as soon as possible and The Eurobodalla Shire Council needs to acknowledge this problem will be ongoing for many years to come and a band aid solution will NOT fix this problem overnight.

The Grey headed flying foxes play an important part in our ecosystem and we understand the importance of sharing the Eurobodalla with them.

Nobody wants to cause any harm to these creatures but we are very well aware that bats and humans cannot cohabitate for many reasons.

It's important that the flying foxes reside in a safe and peaceful environment not surrounded by stressful factors created by humans.

The creation of a flying fox habitat in the Eurobodalla in two separate locations is a very important factor to consider managing this problem in the long term.

The Office of Environment and Heritage flying fox monitoring program suggests we have an influx in numbers every 3 years, which aligns with the mass flowering of our spotted gums, so therefore creating a sanctuary now would deal with this issue before it becomes a bigger problem in future years.

If we create two habitats in different locations in the Eurobodalla we have a chance of success. We know what flying foxes prefer and if we use this knowledge we can create a perfect retreat for them to roost in permanently unharmed and support the influx every three years.

The experts often throw off at this issue due to the fact that they are animals and will select their own areas and not necessarily go to the areas we create for them, although this is true we can slowly with time guide them to the preferred spots in their own time.

The Eurobodalla has one advantage over many other failed dispersals and that is that we are home to 70% natural forest and wetlands and we can use this to our maximum advantage for a long term successful dispersal. If we build these habitats now and constantly disperse the bats from residential areas in about three years times when our large influx incurs those created habitats will be ready. We know the physical characteristics of roosts are a closed canopy at least 5m high with upper, mid and understorey layers. Dense vegetation within 300m of a river, dam or creek; within 50km of the coastline or at an elevation less than 65m above sea level, the area needs to be big enough to sustain large numbers of flying foxes and generally within 30km of food.

If we use these characteristics in creating these areas as well as using male scented urine marked around these roosts, smoke, noise and bat calling whistles as used in Melbourne's

botanic gardens successful dispersal we will be able to slowly encourage them to roost in the created areas.

If we as a community wish for it to be a successful dispersal we must act now to create attractive vegetation areas with Casuarinas and a dam or other water source for the bats to roost in or near. It will not be an easy or straightforward operation to convince the bats to go to this area designated area but if we can move them on from their current roosts by creating a sort of "green corridor" which leads from the current roost sites towards chosen spot in the state forest somewhere; clearing and removing the remaining vegetation behind as the bats are continuously moved on towards the new site sooner or later the scout bats will find the created site and will not be disturbed from there and so will feel safe and relaxed enough to continue roosting at this new site.

If these sites are to be successful they could then be promoted as an Eco-Tourism site where people can go to view the bats in their natural environment. As someone who has recently completed a Travel and Tourism Diploma I know that Eco-tourism places and activities are emerging as very "on-trend" attractions for people who wish to get back to nature and enjoy environmentally friendly vacations and experiences.

It would therefore benefit council and the community as a source of income and revenue as well as being a promotable tourism drawcard, this suggestion also relieves the suffering for the residents of High St, Pacific St, Heron Rd and Albatross Rd to name a few; of the stress and strain of having the bats and their associated problems roosting in their backyards or very nearby.

I hope green groups will agree with me when I say that leaving the bats where they are currently roosting is NOT an option because they are experiencing stresses everyday while trying to sleep, particularly on weekends as people go about their normal lives mowing lawns, playing music, riding bikes etc. The short term distress, dispersal may cause HAS TO be beneficial in the long term because not only will the bats be relocated to a much more appropriate natural environment but the residents of the affected areas will also be able to live without the scourge of the constant noise and bat droppings constantly affecting their lives and those of their children and pets.

With the added bonus for the community being the creation of a "Flying Fox Sanctuary" for people to visit and observe the bats living happily in their natural environment. Surely Council and their dispersal management teams should be able to locate an appropriate site or 2 within the 70% of state forests that make up this shire.

I realise that the bats generally do not travel further than 20kms from their original roost when being dispersed but that shouldn't be a problem given the large amount of state forest area available between BBAY and Moruya; at least to start with anyway.

I hope council and their dispersal teams will take my suggestions into consideration when deciding how to vote on the dispersal plan today. Thank you for your attention.

Statement to Eurobodalla Shire Council meeting 14 June by Russell Schneider
AM, GAICD, Chair, Batemans Bay Flying Fox Task Force

1. The comments I make today belong to all those members of the community who have taken the time to contact me in recent weeks and I would like to thank and acknowledge their contributions and their efforts to achieve a successful outcome. They represent an enormous community resource.
2. I believe the community is very pleased that goodwill and commonsense on the part of both the Federal and State Governments, and their representatives...Ann Sudmalis and Andrew Constance...have removed virtually all the "green tape" that applies in these situations and have responded as Governments should: i.e, to put the interests of affected communities first. And I believe it is pleased that you, Mr Mayor, and Council management have responded positively and provided the relocation proposal which is before you today. And on behalf of the community I would like to acknowledge the vigor with which Councillors Innes and Leslight have pressed for action over a very long time.
3. However in my opinion, whether you realise it or not, there is a very real perception within the affected community that Council and its consultants want this project to fail. It is incumbent on the Council to reverse that perception, and the only way that can be done is by positive and resolute action.
4. The current proposition stresses there are risks associated with dispersal, but I would suggest the risk of doing nothing outweighs the risk of taking action. We acknowledge the complexity and difficulty of the task, but that does not mean it should not proceed.
5. It may prove to be a long task. It will certainly need a resolute and proactive stance on the part of all involved, both to achieve the initial relocation and then develop and implement longer term strategies to provide relief to the entire community. And it will need ongoing community involvement.
6. Those primarily concerned with the welfare of the animals can play a part: they can assist in finding a suitable alternative long term location and help encourage the Flying Foxes to stay there.

the consultants involved traditional owners who I believe use smoke as a FF deterrent.

7. This initial proposal seems to embrace many of the concepts which residents put forward via my, or their own, submissions to Council and that is pleasing. And it should also be noted that it contains very, very extensive safeguards to protect the flying foxes.
8. However, I must make the point that the proposal, while telling us what will be done, does not yet inform us when it will be done or precisely how. That, I hope, is soon to come.
9. What the community, directly or indirectly affected, need is a very clear, visible "roadmap" which makes it clear to them what will happen, why it will happen, how it will happen and when it will happen. Without that clarity we cannot expect to carry the community forward.
10. Residents need certainty. While many will tolerate disturbance as a worthwhile temporary inconvenience some may prefer to make arrangements to sleep elsewhere. Those with respiratory problems may have to go elsewhere. They are entitled to the earliest possible advice of when disruptions may occur so they can make proper arrangements. This must be an essential component of any plan.
11. It is fundamental to ensure the integration of all the agencies remains our highest priority. I shall, therefore, be encouraging ongoing involvement not just of government but also the various agencies...power, communications, health, public safety and others...to be involved. *I strongly support proposed project. Feasible provide long term solution*
12. As well as acknowledging the work done by the Council team, I would also point to the many suggestions that have been put forward by individuals in the community. They may not be experts but they are blessed with one great attribute: commonsense.
13. I note Council did accept our suggestion that it seek to involve volunteers in the dispersal project. I would now urge that the areas for which volunteers are sought go beyond active dispersal and extend to the provision of support for those directly involved, and I am sure there will be many who are ready and willing to do so. The community's desire to be involved should be welcomed, encouraged and supported,

whether it be in an active role, in supportive activities, or in simply reporting any new roostings arising from dispersal.

14. A number of suggestions from both within and outside the Shire propose new, innovative and potentially exciting initiatives which may not be incorporated in the current plan, but could and should be trialled as part of it and I hope that will happen. Because while there are risks involved in this activity there may also be opportunities.

15. When we achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome those involved will be justly praised for achieving a result which far too many have for too many years dismissed as impossible. We will be able to say, despite the problems, we did overcome.

Thank you.

Presentation

5 minutes only – My credentials – Ecologist with experience coordinating monthly flying fox counting for the past 4 years in Bega where I live opposite the flying fox colony at the Glebe Park Lagoon.

Key points

- GHFF is part of the ecology of the region - important ecological function in forest ecosystems
- Attempting dispersal with the aim to reduce the conflict in the community is folly – listen to the expert advice that dispersal is high risk and will most likely increase the impacts on the community
- Instead focus on creating buffers, education campaigns to reduce antipathy towards flying-foxes, tourism promotion & further research into GHFF behaviour and ecology.

Presentation Outline

Independent advice obtained by Council, at the peak of GHFF numbers in mid-late April, recommended against dispersal. I support this view.

- The GHFF is part of the ecology of the region:
 - It has an important role in the pollination of forest trees, in this area particularly spotted gum and bloodwood
 - “GHFF play an important ecological function in forest ecosystems as they pollinate and disperse seed at night” (Report to Council meeting - Page 22)
 - GHFF “will continue to return in varying numbers dependent on environmental conditions. Under all realistic scenarios we will continue to see impacts across the Eurobodalla as a result of foraging and feeding activity. These impacts simply cannot be eliminated.” (Report to Council meeting - Page 16)
 - “So long as there is a food source across our shire, GHFF will occur in the area.” (Report to Council meeting - Page 21)

Point 5 in the Recommendations – which calls for further research to be undertaken – I support the call for more research but please begin this research with a literature review of the existing research to date.

Point 1 in the recommendations – which calls for proceeding with the implementation of an attempted dispersal – I counsel against proceeding with the dispersal attempt because:

- The colony is naturally decreasing
- The “likelihood of seeing the GHFF return in the same unprecedented numbers is therefore low, especially in the short to medium term. As the food supply reduces and the weather continues to cool, it is expected that the GHFF will continue to disperse naturally to other areas in search of food.”
- The impracticality of the aim “to move GHFF to a new camp site (or sites) that meet the criteria of suitable habitat in the Dispersal Plan” where “suitable areas would be at least 300m from residential areas.” See Figure 3 (on page 8) of the Dispersal Plan – the likelihood is that any movement from the existing areas (shown in red) would be to the adjoining areas deemed ‘unsuitable’ (shown in yellow) which are significantly closer than the areas deemed ‘suitable’ (shown in orange) which are generally further away.
- I urge you to **listen** to the concerns about attempting dispersal raised by the other experts who have experience with the management and dispersal of GHFF:
 - Particularly the Maclean Case Study example referred to in the article by Roberts et al (2011) on page 282:

Presentation

- “The Maclean disturbance program, rather than resolving the problem, appears to have merely succeeded in moving the problem elsewhere at considerable and ongoing cost to the local community, and expanding it so that an increasing number of people are affected.”
 - “As we know from experiences elsewhere, the likelihood of dispersal being successful is low and the associated risks are high” (Report to Council meeting - Page 20)
- I urge you also to **listen** to the concern expressed in many of the submissions to Council that splinter groups will form and that evidence suggests dispersal is unlikely to succeed.
 - “The vast majority of potential habitat near the existing camps is within 300m of urban areas and therefore considered unsuitable for a GHFF camp.” (Report to Council meeting - Pages 28 & 29)
 - Figure 3 from the Dispersal Plan.
 - Experience from Noosa Council. – Distribute article from Noosa News “Science backs the Noosa bat actions”.
 - Highlight quotes from Noosa Mayor, Tony Wellington, that it is “very clear that bat dispersals don’t work and are highly likely to generate increased problems”...
“Research has clearly shown that dispersal s do not remove animals from the local area, almost never remove them from the target colony site, and frequently end up splintering the camps thus increasing the number of residents affected.”
- I urge you to focus on addressing issues of odour and noise by creating buffers:
 - Experience in Bega at the Glebe Wetlands is that the existence of a good buffer around the site minimises the impacts. I live closest to the camp (less than 50 metres away) and have had no trouble adapting to living near the GHFF camp.
- Education of the community will be your saviour in the medium to long-term:
 - If there is a perception in the community that dispersal will fix the issues & resolve conflict, yet we know that it will not, then the responsibility falls on Council to educate the community to understand why dispersal is not a quick fix, but rather is “too risky to be worth trying”.
 - Quote from Roberts et al (2011) on page 284: “In many cases public education campaigns can reduce antipathy towards flying-foxes and reduce the social or political imperative to ‘do something’ about flying-fox camps. For example, managers of urban camps (e.g. Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Wingham Brush and Ku-rin-gai (Gordon) in NSW, and Woodend in Ipswich, Queensland) have acted to alleviate the concerns of nearby residents through strategies such as community-based camp revegetation programs, coupled with minor habitat modification around the camp’s periphery, education days, and the promotion of tourism to camp sites. Similar approaches have been used to successfully manage residents’ concerns around six flying-fox camps in suburban Brisbane, Queensland, that were considered potential sources of major conflict.”

I support the call made in 12 of the submissions for the Water Gardens to be transformed into a tourist attraction that incorporates the GHFF camps.

I support further research into GHFF behaviour and ecology to build the scientific knowledge base for future decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to address Council on this important matter.

Danielle Smith- 14/06/2016- Council meeting- Speaking on the Dispersal of the Grey Headed Flying Fox.

Some of you are going to vote no to the plan for Dispersal.. why? Because the problem isn't in your backyard.. Well it is in mine and many, many other Eurobodalla residents backyards.. And this is what we deal with everyday.. (place down photos)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words.. here are 4.. do you know how hard it was to narrow down which four I was going to use.. some of you may call me a whindger or say I am heartless because I dont "care about the bats" but I will tell you.. This issue goes far past the cosmetic issues.. this issue effects my family and our lives..

Sure we live with the stench, the constant cleaning and screeching which are all obviously a massive pain and take there tole both physically and mentally but again this issue is BIGGER then that.

The Grey Headed Flying Foxes or the "Bats" impact our standard of living, they leave us confined inside like prisoners, they are the reason that we can not open our windows, they are the reason my two year old can not play outside and again not just because of the mess they make but because we are forever finding dead ones in our yard. It is not safe for him to play in his own backyard.

While we are on the topic of him not being safe lets discuss the fact that he can not and WILL not sleep in his own bed anymore. This is not an exaggeration, my two year old feels unsafe in his own home. He is woken nightly due to the noise of the bats and it was when they were at their worst that he experienced them right at his bedroom window.. I ran into his screaming and I too was shocked at just how scary they were in the night. . Right at his bedroom window..

He has actually said "I want to be safe in Mummys room" my two year old does not feel safe in his own room.. isnt that every child in Australia's right? To feel safe in their own home. . To be able to sleep in their own room?

Now not only am I dealing with a sleep deprived toddler thanks to the bats I am also dealing with the issue of not being able to study because of their noise, I am dealing with being a prisoner in my own home, I am dealing with our whole standard of living being effected by the Grey Headed Flying Fox, surely under this much pressure something is going to break..

The thing that broke.. that was me.. a 23year old women.. a person who has never had any signs of depression.. a strong willed.. out going person.. a student and the most important a mother.. I was brought to breaking point because of the bats.. do you know how weak that makes me feel? Having to seek medical help and being put on antidepressants because I could not cope with the impact the bats were having on my life and that they were having on my families life.

I wonder if I was your daughter or these were your grand kids would you want the dispersal to go ahead?

Would you want your ^{family} children dealing with bats roosting on their car tyres or having to deal with dead bats on a daily basis?

I can guarantee that your answer is no.. so why should we??

This photo represents a good indication of just how stressed out these flying foxes are. Roosting on a car tyre is not a normal behaviour ~~from~~ ^{for} a flying fox, could you imagine the danger had my son have beaten me to the car and scared the flying fox and this is what we deal with and our children deal with everyday.



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ABN: 75 120 155 626

PO Box 481

LINDFIELD

NSW 2070

<http://ausbats.org.au>

ABS President: Dr Justin A. Welbergen

Email: president@ausbats.org.au

26 May 2016

Australasian Bat Society Submission on Draft Bateman's Bay Flying-fox Camp Dispersal Plan

The Australasian Bat Society, Inc. (ABS) is pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the *2016 Draft Bateman's Bay Flying-fox Camp Dispersal Plan* (prepared for Eurobodalla Shire by Eco-Logical Australia. (The Draft)

The ABS is the peak body promoting bat conservation in the Australasian region. The primary aim of the ABS is to promote the conservation of bats and their habitats through the advancement of quality science and the extensive experience of our members (Refer to Attachment 1—*About the Australasian Bat Society, Inc* and *About the ABS Flying-Fox Subcommittee*). We recognise the intrinsic value of all bat species and their place in this country's natural heritage, and their key ecological roles by contributing to the maintenance of biological diversity in our natural environment.

This submission represents the collective views and experience of the Australasian Bat Society, Inc. and is aligned with our policy statements on the management of flying-foxes for their long-term conservation (available on our website). It is authorised by the elected executive members and released by its President.

Executive Summary

The Australasian Bat Society believes that the planned dispersal of grey-headed flying-foxes will not resolve conflict or assist residents affected by living near the Water Gardens colony in the medium- or long-term.

The ABS believes any management actions should be based on best available scientific evidence, and should aim to minimise impacts on both human communities and native wildlife. Given the high costs of dispersals and the negative consequences for both human and animal welfare, the ABS considers that the best solution at present is to make funds available for immediate real-life mitigation strategies that help local residents cope with the current difficult situation.

The ABS supports the professional advice given to the Shire council by the ecological consultancies Eco Logical and Ecosure that dispersal is unlikely to succeed, and is unnecessary given that the current influx of flying-foxes is in response to the extraordinary flowering of spotted gums and other species at this time. Numbers of flying foxes will naturally reduce as blossoming ceases as most of the flying-foxes return to other camps.

In the medium and longer term, community wellbeing would be enhanced by proactive management that prepares roosts and surrounding communities for temporary influxes of flying-foxes in response to exceptional flowering events such as the one that is currently



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unfolding in the Eurobodalla Shire. Unlike dispersal, such measures represent a robust and financially sustainable solution for the community and the bats.

We regard the notion of native vegetation clearing to control a threatened native animal to be particularly ill-advised. This solution for managing or displacing camps is not based on best practice or scientific evidence for success, and should be re-evaluated in light of the need to enhance the recovery of threatened flying-fox populations, and simultaneously reduce the rate of ongoing native vegetation clearing in Australia.

The ABS is extremely concerned about the precedent being set by the Minister in disregarding expert advice in relation to threatened species, and about the potential for dispersal to have significant impacts on the grey-headed flying-fox population.

The ABS would like to partner with all levels of government to promote the public understanding of flying-foxes, and help develop effective management approaches to events where flying-foxes may adversely impact on community amenities.

Please refer to the ABS press release: <http://ausbats.org.au/media-releases/4591750332>

Comments relating to Part 1: Introduction

The ABS recognises that an exceptional influx of flying foxes to Batemans Bay is causing distress to residents, and encourages all parties to seek a resolution that successfully minimises impacts on people while managing the welfare of our highly mobile threatened flying-foxes.

The ABS also recognises the excellent Water Gardens Camp Management Plan (ELA 2015) which was built upon extensive community consultation. The ABS was particularly impressed with the practical mitigation actions targeted to the most impacted residents and supports an expansion of these measures to assist more residents affected by the increased numbers of flying foxes.

The ABS considers that greater education of the public is needed to understand the movements and ecology of flying-foxes. Flying-foxes are extremely mobile animals, and their roosts form integral parts of a highly interconnected population at the national scale. Therefore, we need a uniform, federal approach for managing flying-foxes in our human landscapes.

The ABS considers that dispersal is a short sighted and ineffective response to this current situation. It offers no guarantee that the bats will not return at a later date, and is likely to result in negative impacts on other community members who are currently unaffected.



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Comments relating to Part 2: Licences and approvals

The ABS believes that any action taken must meet the criteria of the NSW state legislation *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) and Commonwealth legislation *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The grey-headed flying fox is listed as vulnerable at both state and Commonwealth level and ABS notes that under the EPBC Act dispersal should be considered as an action of last resort.

Grey-headed flying foxes are highly responsive to changes in food resources. Any management action taken should recognise that most animals will vacate this particular camp when the extraordinary flowering ceases.

The ABS considers that dispersal or extensive vegetation modification may cause undue stress on the flying-foxes and contravene the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Comments relating to Part 3: Proposed dispersal methods and costs

The ABS considers that there is sufficient evidence that dispersal is likely to fail, will be expensive, and require repeated actions over a timeframe from months to years.

We specifically refer the Council to the following report by Roberts and Eby (2011) on '*The outcomes and costs of relocating flying-fox camps: insights from the case of Maclean, Australia*' In, *The Biology and Conservation of Australasian Bats*. (Ed. Bradley Law, Peggy Eby, Daniel Lunney and Lindy Lumsden). Royal Zoological Society of NSW, Mosman, NSW, Australia.

The ABS believes money would be better spent on extending assistance to residents in mitigating the immediate impacts of flying-foxes, education and consultation with the community.

Comments relating to Part 4: Risk assessment

The ABS considers the risks involved in a dispersal are high given that: i) the likelihood of success is low; ii) flying foxes may move to more undesirable places; iii) the expense in both money and human resources cannot be justified; and iv) conflict is unlikely to be resolved. The ABS suggests that money would be better spent in giving residents access to mitigation measures as discussed previously and that consideration be given to creation of new habitat adjacent to the Water Gardens in a direction away from residents.

The ABS believes that short-, medium-, and long-term solutions should be sought and this can only occur with extensive community and expert scientific consultation.



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Comments relating to Part 5: Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The ABS agrees with the draft that monitoring and evaluation of any actions is vitally important and endorses all points raised in this section.

The ABS has created an evaluation form to assist monitoring dispersal and vegetation modification carried out at flying-fox camps. This evaluation will provide valuable and standardised information to assist councils and land managers monitoring the impacts of actions.

Comments relating to Part 6: Alternative Actions

The ABS encourages alternative mitigation measures to be considered, including expansion of current delivery of targeted actions, maintenance of buffers between residents and flying-fox camps, and creation of new habitat away from residents and areas of conflict.

ABS endorses research into ecology and social aspects of flying-foxes to assist in understanding their behaviour and developing strategies to assist residents living with flying-foxes.

Finally, the ABS encourages the local community to view the flying-fox camp as a potentially exploitable resource for economic benefit such as tourism.

References

ABS position statements: (available from ABS website: <http://ausbats.org.au/#/principles-and-policies/4573559802>)

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Attachment 1

About the Australasian Bat Society (ABS), Inc.

The ABS is a not-for-profit organisation, registered under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 1984 through the NSW Department of Fair Trading. Our aim is to promote the conservation and study of bats in Australasia. ABS membership is wide-ranging and includes research scientists, natural resource managers, ecological consultants, students, wildlife carers and members of the general public.

About the flying-fox subcommittee (FFSC)

The FFSC is the primary source of reliable, accurate information on Australian flying-foxes. The FFSC is represented by flying-fox specialists from research, government, industry, and advocacy groups, and it encourages a more scientific and sustainable approach to flying-fox management and conservation.

For further information please visit <http://ausbats.org.au/>.

Thank you General Manager, Mr Mayor ad Councillors

My name is Joanna Evans. I put in a submission.

I live at 12 Hazel Road Moruya Heads just near the bat colony there. The bat colony backs onto Dell Parade and parts of Hazel Road. AnD yes there have been greater numbers than ever this year with the flowering of the spotted gums. In summer they were taking over an hour and a half to fly out. They feed on the spotted gums at night all around my house. The spotted gums have been flowering for months – there are still some in flower now and yes there are still bats there. Normally they have flown away by this time.

The reason I am here is that I am a member of Wildlife Rescue South Coast (licenced by Parks and Wildife from Wollongong to the Victorian border). I have been on the committee for 5 years out of the last 10 and President for 3 of those years. I know a bit about the habits of the bats up and down the coast. I used to live in Cambewarra just north of Nowra and there is a bat colony in Bomaderry. There are houses next to that colony and people do experience some mess in their gardens – but there is tolerance and the colony exists happily there.

I can confirm that the population of Flying Foxes is not on the increase: in fact they are experiencing real stresses with the increasing numbers of heat events. Grey Headed Flying-foxes cannot cope with temperatures over 40degC. I participated in the spraying of water over the colony at Bomaderry in a heat event a couple of years ago when 5000 bats literally dropped dead. It is a maternity colony and the juveniles could not cope. There are an increasing number of these heat events occurring – there have been several in the last few years.

For this reason the coastal strip is incredibly important to Grey Headed Flying Foxes. Inland is just too hot for them in the middle of summer. This is not just a council issue: it is a National and a State issue. We have all seen what has happened to the south-east corner of Queensland. There is no coastal habitat left there. We compete directly with flying foxes for habitat.

I can sympathise with what people around the Batemans Bay colony are experiencing but dispersal won't work: you will end up with microcolonies dispersed all over the beautiful habitat in the Eurobodalla - all next to houses or next to areas where people want to build.

The other main thing I'd like to say is that we *need* these animals. These animals fly zig-zag for hundreds of kilometres all over the state. They are the sole pollinators of gum forest. *Without these animals our gum forest will not adapt to climate change.* We need these animals to carry seed and pollen, allowing the gums to adapt as temperatures change. These animals are very valuable to us if our forests are to survive.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

*Budget Review. Item FBD16/ 033 -14
June 2016*

*Through you Mr. Mayor to the General
Manager*

The outgoing council should view with concern a number of items associated with financial and planning reports of late. These are too lengthy for me to rise in five minutes.

In view of a change in elected persons a final report on the " State of the Nation " by the Eurobodalla Council should be made available to the public. This should include variances from the Budgets as displayed during the term of this council to the years 16 -17.

Within several months of IPART and the Government declaring The Eurobodalla " Fit for the Future " it would appear that they have been " Fudging with the Future ". Within several months of the IPART decision we are being told that the original figures supplied to the public need to be changed. We are now being told that the Consolidated Annual Revised Budgets have been impacted through amendments to the operational and capital works program

including deferral of projects to the next financial year.

Madam General Manager.

- 1. Have the anticipated proceeds from asset sales of \$ half a million dollars been achieved for the year 2015-2016?*
- 2. If not what is the current valid \$ figure?*
- 3 Has expenditure on purchase of new assets to the value of
\$35.165 Million for the year 2015/16 been achieved?*
- 4. IF not what is the current \$ Figure?*
- 5. Are you still expecting purchase of assets to reach the value of
\$29.3million for years 2016-17?*
- 6. If not what do you expect that figure to be?*
- 7. Is IPART aware that council is requesting permission for the " cross subsidization" of funds from the NSW OFFICE OF WATER?*

8. *Have you received permission for that process?*

9. *Madam General Manager. "Cross Subsidization "of funds from a productive department should not be carried out .That department must not be used as a "Cash Cow "for non productive departments, even it is run by the same departmental head. It was a "NO _ NO "under the previous general manager and should not be used to "Cook the Books ".*

9.0 *Madam General Manager. As a result of the recent storm surges and cost to the shire would she instigate council staff to investigate damage to all private, public and council facilities damages within the shire? The cost of any damages incurred should not be carried by its ratepayers via a rate rise. It should be a government responsibility to compensate For any damage to land and structures legally approved by councils. Any damage caused by the failure for government to protect the passage of*

water through crown lands by way of storm surges should be the responsibilities of the Crown. Insurance companies will not pay if there is any rise in the level of the sea as the result of a storm surge. This is impossible to disprove!

*Peter Bernard
12 June 2016*

I