

Guidance notes: Flying-fox Camp Management Code of Practice 2018 expand

These notes provide guidance for flying-fox camp managers undertaking camp management actions under the **Flying-fox Camp Management Code of Practice 2018 (PDF 233KB)** (the Code). This fact sheet should be read in conjunction with the **Flying-fox Camp Management Policy 2015**.

Camp managers will not need to apply for a licence under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (the Act) for actions covered by the Code when managing flying-fox camps.

Camp managers should prepare a camp management plan in consultation with affected communities for all flying-fox camp management actions. A **camp management plan template** is available on Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) website.

Some high impact and high-risk actions under the Code will require the development of a camp management plan. Under Part 2 of the Code, Section 6(10)(c) states that 'a camp management plan is to specify the procedures for obtaining the endorsement of the Environment Agency Head under this Code'. Camp managers should submit their camp management plan in writing to the **nearest regional OEH office** for endorsement and allow a minimum of 15 working days for the Environment Agency Head to respond.

Camp management action guidelines

Camp management actions should be carried out in a way that minimises disturbance to flying-foxes in the camp. For example, vegetation trimming should be carried out when flying-foxes are absent from the camp, either when they are foraging at night or when the camp is seasonally empty.

Camp management actions should not be carried out if the camp contains females that are in the third trimester of pregnancy according to a flying-fox expert or have dependent young that cannot fly on their own.

Camp managers should obtain advice from a flying-fox expert before carrying out camp management actions. A flying-fox expert should be present at the time trees are being trimmed or removed in a camp that is occupied by flying-foxes. The expert should assess the relevant conditions and advise the camp manager whether the action should go ahead consistent with the standards outlined in the Code.

Local wildlife rehabilitation groups should be notified before camp management actions involving vegetation trimming or removal are carried out so they can attend to any injured wildlife. Camp managers should monitor flying-foxes within one kilometre of actions that involve vegetation removal and cease work if any flying-foxes are found injured, killed or suffering from stress or fatigue. Camp managers should notify a wildlife rehabilitator immediately if a flying-fox is injured.

Camp managers should consider the relative costs and benefits of all potential camp management actions, including off-site mitigation measures to reduce impacts to nearby residents and buildings. Both on- and off-site mitigation or management actions may be required.

Camp managers undertaking actions across multiple flying-fox camps or repeated on-site management actions at one or more camps should consider their actions strategically and cumulatively and undertake appropriate strategic or regional planning to conform with the standards and outcomes outlined in the Code, including expert consultation and assistance and reference to available information sources.

Camp managers should commit to ongoing monitoring of flying-fox activity and community sentiment.

Camp management actions at **nationally important flying-fox camps** may require referral to the Australian Government Department under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Understorey weeds may provide important roosting habitat for flying-foxes, especially in heat stress events. If weed removal is likely to result in significant changes to the camp microclimate, other plantings should be established before full removal of weeds to minimise changes to camp microclimate.

Habitat enhancement or creation should not be considered a direct replacement for habitat that is removed from a camp due to the time lag between removal and the potential for occupation of the new habitat by flying-foxes.

Camp managers may consider replacing areas of flying-fox camps that require regular mowing with low shrubs less than three metres high, preferably in a mulched bed, reducing the need for regular disturbance from maintenance works.

Flying-foxes and human and animal health guidelines

Flying-fox camps near human settlements will sometimes raise concerns about possible health risks to community members, as well as noise, odour and the impact of flying-fox droppings and urine on buildings, vehicles and washing. These concerns should be addressed within community engagement and decision-making processes.

Before carrying out camp management actions, the camp manager should contact the relevant government agency for information on the health risks that flying-fox camps may pose to human health (**NSW Health**), and animal health (**NSW Department of Primary Industries**).

Communications regarding health risks to communities from flying-foxes should be wholly consistent with the information provided by these agencies.

Horse owners near flying-fox camps should contact the **NSW Department of Primary Industries** for information on animal health.

Community education and engagement guidelines

Camp managers should balance social, economic and environmental pressures in managing flying-fox camps, including responding to impacted communities and dealing with conflict. Engagement approaches should be developed to be fit for purpose in each circumstance.

Camp managers should provide feedback on the results of community engagement and education to the community and relevant government agencies including OEH.

Camp managers should seek help from OEH in understanding the regional context for flying-foxes, as well as appropriate tools and management responses.

Education and engagement activities identify those people and organisations that are interested in and/or impacted by the flying-fox camp.

Well planned person-to-person engagement with the most affected residents supports their contribution to camp management strategies.

Record-keeping guidelines

Camp managers should produce a map of the camp including occupancy of flying-foxes over time and the location of any management activities. This map should be provided to OEH. Examples of camp maps are provided in the **camp management plan template**.

Camp managers should keep records of the community engagement actions carried out in developing and carrying out camp management actions.

Monitoring protocols should be carried out before, during and after camp management actions are carried out.