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Bat management dumped on Local Councils

Conservationists are alarmed that Minister Powell has handed the authority to manage flying fox roosts to local councils.

Capricorn Conservation Council Coordinator Michael McCabe said, “Flying foxes are long range pollinators and seed dispersers essential for healthy native forests which provide fresh air and clean water for native species, farmland and people.”

“Bat populations are already under pressure from tree clearing, urban encroachment and dislocation by major storms and cyclones which destroy food trees and breeding sites.”

“The loss of rural bushland causes colonies to migrate. Urban encroachment into natural flying fox roosts may have given the misconception of flying fox ‘plagues’. The planting of low shrubs, like the exotic *Durante* sp., may be attracting flying foxes into closer human interaction and visibility and heightening unrealistic fears for human health.”

“Low reproductive rates and the predicted greater extremes of, hotter dry periods combined with less frequent but more severe storm events, plus continued land clearing could lead to devastating population collapses and enforced migration”

“Native bats are protected under State and federal law. Two species are listed as vulnerable. Local councils do not have the resources and ecological expertise to have this responsibility dumped on them. The Minister’s decision flies in the face of the sound advice from Biosecurity Queensland and Queensland Health on how to coexist with flying foxes.”

“The Queensland Government is legally responsible for protecting habitats and native species. The solution lies in the creation of more protected areas (National Parks and Nature Refuges), protecting peri-urban bushland and public education.”

“The community needs to be provided with better understanding of ecological role of flying foxes and how to live along-side and protect Queensland’s biodiversity, for example through planting appropriate garden trees and shrubs in the suburbs and urban fringe.”

ENDS

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