



## **Wildlife care groups oppose flying-fox kill plan and call for fairer funding of rescue services**

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Queensland wildlife care groups today called for the LNP to drop its plans to allow killing and greater harassment of flying-foxes, and to commit to funding for all wildlife rescue services rather than just for koalas.

The Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (the peak body for wildlife rehabilitation groups) and Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld said the LNP's plans would increase the burden on voluntary organisations that rescue about 6–8,000 injured and orphaned flying-foxes in Queensland each year.

“Wildlife care groups oppose any plan to return to government-sanctioned killing of flying-foxes,” said president of Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Louise Saunders. “We are trying to conserve their numbers, not raise them to be shot.”

On Saturday, the LNP promised \$800,000 for the rescue and care of injured koalas as part of a \$26 million package for koalas. In contrast, the LNP has said flying-foxes are to be killed for crop protection, and no funding has been promised for the recovery of the two nationally threatened flying-fox species.

“All voluntary community groups involved in the rescue and care of Queensland's wildlife do it tough. We welcome funding for koala rescue but are concerned that there is nothing for other species, including flying-foxes, which will be under extra pressure if LNP plans to allow killing and greater harassment go ahead,” said Glendell Applefort, Secretary of Queensland Wildlife Rehabilitation Council.

“We call on any future Queensland government to take a balanced approach across species rather than single out just one. Funding for rehabilitation of threatened species such as flying-foxes, koalas and quolls should be made available in recognition of the role that groups play in protection, education and service delivery,” Ms Applefort said.

Rescue groups for flying-foxes perform the following services, relying on community donations and volunteers:

- Providing a free specialist rescue service in response to calls by community and government – all rescuers are trained, certified and vaccinated.
- Protecting community health by reducing the risk that members of the public handle flying-foxes – most exposure to the risk of Australian Bat Lyssavirus occurs when members of the public attempt to rescue flying-foxes rather than call a trained rescuer.

- Conducting public education about flying-foxes, including providing factual information about health risks and how to safely protect backyard fruit trees. The conservation of two threatened flying-fox species is dependent on a much better community understanding of flying-foxes.
- Improving welfare outcomes for several thousand animals every year and returning animals that would have otherwise died, including threatened species, back to the wild.

“Rescue groups are all too aware of the suffering that will result from any plan to return to shooting or electrocution of flying-foxes in orchards. We are able to rescue the occasional shot flying-fox but the majority will die slowly from their wounds. In areas where there are orchards, rescuers have sometimes found dozens to hundreds of dead and dying orphaned young in bat camps,” Ms Saunders said.

#### **Contacts:**

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**Images:** Images on the website [www.dontshootbats.com](http://www.dontshootbats.com) are available for media use. Other flying-fox images can be made available by emailing [info@dontshootbats.com](mailto:info@dontshootbats.com). Photographs can be taken of flying-fox orphans currently in care by calling Louise Saunders 0425 734 008.

## **The story of two rescued shot flying-foxes**

### 1. Pete, a shot flying-fox with a chance

Pete, a black flying-fox, barely more than a baby, was rescued after a kind passerby reported a flying-fox on the ground. An x-ray revealed he had been shot, and had a pellet lodged in the back of his shoulder. The pellet had paralysed one side of his body. Had help not come, Pete would have lain conscious but unable to move in the hot sun for up to four days as he died slowly of dehydration, or was killed by predators. He now faces many months of physiotherapy to regain movement in his damaged shoulder, or euthanasia. This was the damage from a single air-rifle pellet; the multiple injuries inflicted from the spray of a shotgun will be many times worse.

Images available: photos + video

### 2. A shot flying-fox who had to be euthanased.

This flying-fox was found alive in a flowering Grevillea. He had been shot with a slug gun many times. The pellets had broken fine finger bones and splintered his arm bones. He could not fly with those injuries. Some pellets had lodged in his flesh but he did not die of his wounds. Two days after being shot he was rescued and taken to the Australian Wildlife Hospital but there was nothing they could do for him except swift and kind euthanasia. Most bats who suffer shot gun pellet wounds die slowly over hours or days. Many are females who, if lactating, lose babies to starvation and crows.

Image available: X-ray