



AUSTRALASIAN BAT SOCIETY, INC.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Premier Newman's bat squads

The Australasian Bat Society, Inc was dismayed at Premier Newman's comments to the media on 27/3/2013 regarding the mobilisation of so-called "bat squads" to cull flying-foxes in populated areas and his encouragement of local councils to act in a similar manner.

Premier Newman needs to be aware that culling will not solve the problem because the bats regularly move long distances amongst numerous camps.

Therefore, culling will never provide a local solution because bats will keep arriving to replace those killed.

In scientific studies conducted since the late 1980s, individual flying-foxes have been found to move distances of up to 1200 km, and to use several dozen roost sites each.

More recent research using satellite trackers shows even more extensive movements between colonies than previously realised, and demonstrates that flying-fox colonies are part of a dynamic network, rather than stable, independent camps of individuals.

Flying-foxes are 'keystone' species in natural ecosystems because of their essential roles in pollination and seed dispersal. Destroying flying-foxes would also remove their economically valuable ecosystem services and will have serious consequences for the health of our natural environment.

Actions taken in Queensland will affect the ecological role of flying-foxes in other states because of their frequent long distance movements across borders.

The ABS sees a responsibility for State and Commonwealth Governments to help local councils and shires to develop management strategies to resolve the conflicts between the interests of the public and flying-foxes.

The ABS believes that the best way to achieve resolution is to recognise the valuable role that scientists and other experienced bat specialists play by seeking to engage them on such matters.

The ABS has offered Premier Newman the collective specialist scientific knowledge and experience of its members to help him resolve the complex and long standing issues of flying-foxes in populated areas.

About the Australasian Bat Society, Inc.

We are 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, students, wildlife carers and members of the general public. For further information please visit <http://ausbats.org.au/>.