

## Fact Sheet

# Flying foxes

## Quick guide to living with flying foxes

### Flying foxes in Ipswich

Three species of flying fox are present in Ipswich:

- Black flying fox (*Pteropus alecto*)
- Grey headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
- Little red flying fox (*Pteropus scapulatus*)

Black and grey-headed flying foxes live in Ipswich year-round, while the nomadic little red flying foxes typically visit in summer.

Flying foxes sleep in trees throughout the day, fly out at dusk to search for food and return to the trees again near dawn.

The trees that flying foxes sleep in and use for breeding are known as roosts. Populations at roosts often vary, sometimes dispersing seasonally or when food is no longer available nearby.

Flying foxes eat nectar and fruit from over 100 species of native trees and vines. When their natural food sources aren't available, they supplement their diet with fruit from introduced plants, however these do not meet their nutritional needs.

Flying foxes can fly up to 50 km in a night in their search for food, and they disperse seeds and pollen as they feed. Eucalypts rely heavily on these pollinators. Without flying foxes, there is less cross-pollination between trees, which impacts habitat for species such as koalas.

### Health

Queensland Health advises that flying foxes may carry bacteria and viruses which can be harmful to humans, but the risk of infection is low.

The best protection is to avoid handling flying foxes. People who are not trained and vaccinated should not handle flying foxes. **No touch, no risk.**

In the unlikely event you are bitten or scratched, wash the injury site thoroughly but gently with soap and water and seek medical advice straight away.

### Council's role

Flying foxes are highly mobile wild animals. Their choices for roosting and feeding locations cannot be controlled or readily predicted. Council's role is to monitor and advise people on how to minimise the impacts of living near flying foxes.

#### Council is committed to:

- regular monitoring of known and new roosts
- providing advice to community members
- managing roosts on council land
- enhancing habitat outside urban areas

#### Council will not undertake the following:

- management of roosts on private land
- dispersal or destruction of roosts.

## Conservation and legislation

All three species and their habitat are protected under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

The grey headed flying fox is also listed as Vulnerable and protected under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Activities which may impact flying foxes are regulated, but there are actions you can take to minimise the impacts on your property and family.

## Activities near flying fox roosts

All persons are authorised to undertake low impact activities on their property, but the activities must be done in accordance with the *Code of Practice: Low impact activities affecting flying-fox roosts, Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Operating outside of the code of practice without an authority may have legal consequences.

Find the Code of Practice online:  
[https://www.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/221027/cp-wl-ff-low-impact-roosts.pdf](https://www.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/221027/cp-wl-ff-low-impact-roosts.pdf)

## What you may do

- Mulching and watering under or near roost trees
- Mowing and weeding
- Minor trimming of roost trees by hand. Up to 10 per cent of canopy in a 12 month period when flying foxes are not present
- Installation, maintenance or removal of infrastructure.

## What you can't do

- DO NOT TOUCH flying foxes, even with gloves
- Low impact activities are not to disturb, drive away or otherwise negatively impact flying foxes
- Tree trimming must not be undertaken when flying foxes are within the tree or nearby (for example, within 10 metres)
- Roost trees are not to be removed

## Tips for minimising impacts

- Plan ahead for the summer influx, by trimming trees near your house, swimming pool and other high use areas, removing understorey vegetation and mulching under trees (in accordance with the Code) before flying foxes numbers increase
- Bring your washing in before dusk
- Park your car under cover
- Use fauna-friendly netting on your fruit trees
- Use a pool cover
- Avoid disturbances such as loud noise, as flying foxes make more noise when they are stressed

## Heat stress

Flying-foxes are susceptible to mass dying events in temperatures above 38°C or when there is a combination of high heat and high humidity.

It is important to minimise the stress on flying foxes, as mass death can be a serious public health issue.

Typically, flying foxes will spread into lower vegetation in an effort to stay cool. They may end up in unexpected locations on your property.

If this happens, do not touch flying foxes. Reach out to a wildlife carer for assistance if needed.

## Contacts and further information

### General queries about flying foxes

Department of Environment and Science  
13 QGOV (13 74 68)

### Queries about flying foxes in Ipswich

Ipswich City Council  
(07) 3810 6666 or [flyingfox@ipswich.qld.gov.au](mailto:flyingfox@ipswich.qld.gov.au)  
or [ipswich.qld.gov.au/flyingfox](http://ipswich.qld.gov.au/flyingfox)

### Injured flying fox or live flying fox on the ground

Contact a wildlife carer and request assistance:

- RSPCA: 1300 ANIMAL
- Bat Conservation and Rescue Qld: 0488 228 134
- Bat Rescue Inc (Ipswich): (07) 3062 6730