

# Flying-fox Roost Management Framework

Department of  
Environment and  
Science

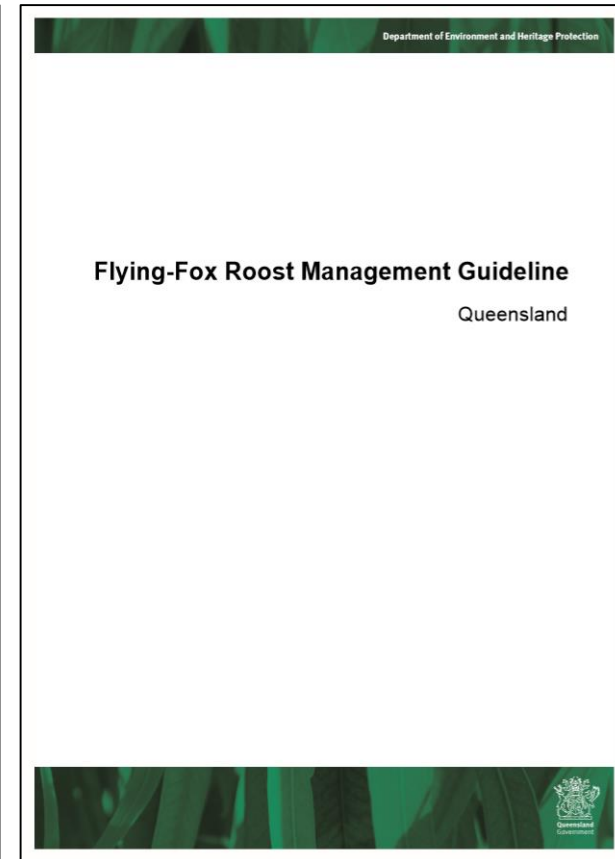
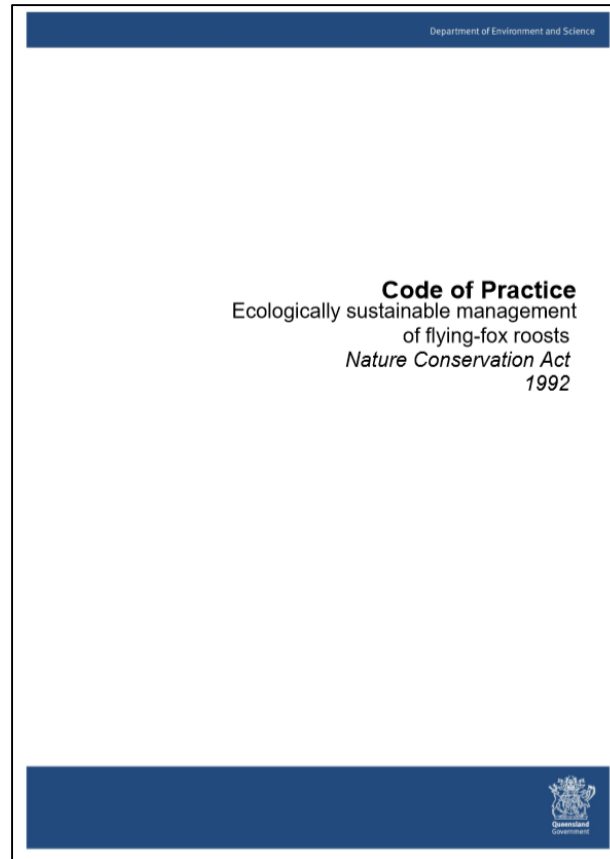
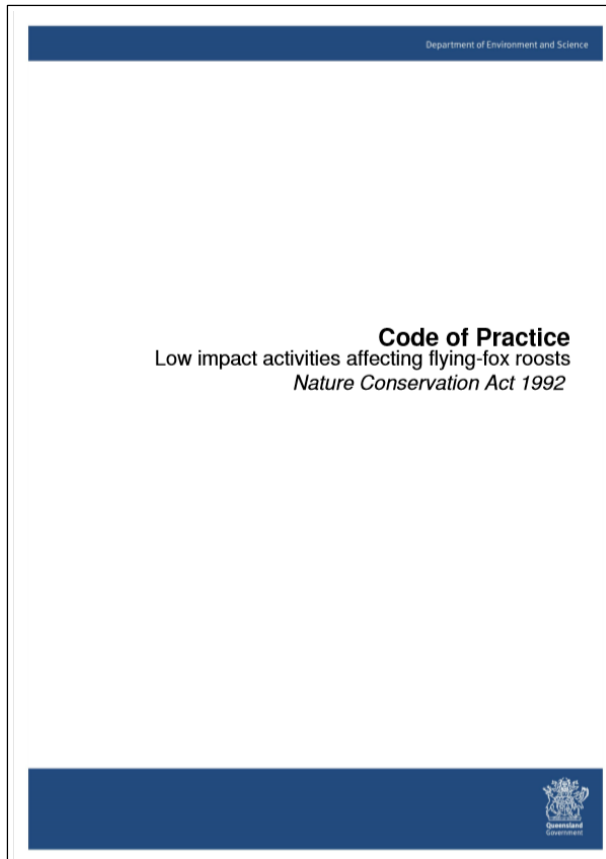
November 2019



# Background

- The Queensland Government made an election commitment in 2015 to 'repeal changes to the flying-fox management regulations and return to a modern framework of protection'.
- Since then, the Qld Department of Environment and Science has begun progressing the repeal of regulations relating to the shooting of flying-foxes for crop protection, as well as commencing a review of the flying-fox roost management framework.
- The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and Nature Conservation (Wildlife Management) Regulation 2006 provides for the protection of flying-foxes in Queensland. This is supported by the Flying-fox Roost Management Framework.

# The Flying-fox Management Framework



# Codes, UFFMAs, and permits

- Local governments operating within the roost management code of practice have as-of-right authority if they are within an Urban Flying-fox Management Area (UFFMA).
- Local governments outside of an UFFMA, organisations and individuals can apply for a Flying-fox Roost Management Permit.



# Consultation

The Qld Department of Environment and Science is nearing completion of feedback from key stakeholders including all Queensland local government authorities, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), CSIRO, and key conservation and animal welfare groups.

- Stage 1 - Cairns workshop in November 2018
- Stage 2 - Written submissions in June 2019
- Stage 3 - Face to face and phone meetings in September 2019
- Stage 4 - Final written submissions on draft codes and guideline ~ December 2019

## Key themes of the comments to date...

- Clarity
- Community notification and consultation
- Management action flexibility
- Dispersal alternatives
- Welfare
- Knowledgeable persons
- Evaluation
- Regional factors



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Clarity

A number of the terms and procedures prescribed in the codes of practice required further detail. The lack of clarity sometimes lead to misinterpretation and uncertainty.

E.g. use of 'near' instead of a prescribed distance, stating that 'works must cease and Qld Department of Environment and Science must be notified', but not providing a contact number or conditions for works to recommence.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Community notification and consultation

Stakeholders recognised the merit of a notification process prior to undertaking management actions however, some councils wanted shorter notification timeframes and a longer period of time to undertake the notified management actions.

Conversely, conservation and welfare groups requested an increase in the time between notifying the department and the commencement of management actions, and some suggested that a Statement of Management Intent (SoMI) or Roost Management Plan should be required for all councils seeking to manage flying-fox roosts.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Management action flexibility

Most councils wanted greater flexibility around procedures, noting that the activities authorised were sometimes too restrictive and weren't practical in some situations.

e.g. the very limited range of low-impact activities and specific non-lethal management actions authorised.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Dispersal alternatives

Some councils and most conservation and welfare groups noted that “dispersal” should not be seen as the default roost management action. These groups advocated “nudging” as a preferable step before consideration is given to “dispersal”.

< Case studies >



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Welfare

Conservation and welfare groups are seeking more protection for flying-foxes, particularly during breeding, pregnancy and rearing seasons, and during heat stress events.

Some councils were concerned that such restrictions would hinder roost management actions.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Knowledgeable person

Conservation and welfare groups were concerned about the skills/experience level required to be a 'knowledgeable person' was not enough. e.g. any ecologist does not make a local expert.

Councils and conservation groups wanted greater clarity about knowledgeable person powers.

Conservation and welfare groups wanted a knowledgeable person present during dispersals.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Evaluation

Conservation and welfare groups noted there is limited information for assessing the effectiveness of management actions and compliance with codes, leaving the framework open to repeating poor management approaches rather than continuous improvement.



## Key themes of the comments to date...

### Regional factors

A few councils and conservation and welfare groups noted that management actions should consider regional factors beyond the boundaries of an individual roost and the local government area.

e.g. management actions in adjoining local government areas, poor flowering and fruiting seasons, heat stress events, natural disasters



## Next steps

- The drafting of the codes of practice and guideline are currently being finalised to address stakeholder comments.
- Amendments to the roost management framework are anticipated for completion between December 2019 and early 2020.



## Related work

- Qld Government investment of \$2.7M over 4 years in the Little Red flying-fox project, including tracker collars on flying-foxes to better understand their movements.
- Qld Government continuing investment in National Flying-fox Monitoring program.
- Qld Government investment in better understanding heat stress events.

