Frequently asked questions flying fox management consultation

1. Timing of implementation

Respondents asked when the proposal would be implemented, expressing frustration about the ongoing impacts and a desire for urgent action.

We're looking to implement a staged rollout with the first sprinklers installed towards the end of 2026 (pending any unforeseen circumstances). It was important for us to first understand community views on this management approach and discuss it with directly impacted residents. City of Moreton Bay will continue to keep residents in the area updated as investigations continue and undertake further discussion with directly impacted residents as required.

2. Effectiveness of the approach

Respondents questioned whether canopy mounted sprinklers would actually reduce impacts and whether the approach is supported by evidence.

Similar canopy-mounted sprinkler systems have been used by other councils in South East Queensland. We have been using canopy-mounted sprinklers at Redcliffe Botanic Garden's flying fox colony since 2017. We found the sprinklers were immediately effective at moving this colony away from the property boundary.

Not every colony reacts the same, so monitoring the Narangba flying foxes closely after installation of the sprinklers will help us measure how effective this approach is. We'll measure the success of the sprinklers by looking at the increase in separation between the colony and houses, not a reduction in flying fox numbers.

3. Animal welfare and environmental impact

Concerns were raised about the welfare of flying foxes. Respondents sought reassurance that the approach would not harm animals or cause undue stress.

We take a balanced approach to flying fox colony management. We work to support residents' well-being while maintaining responsible wildlife management. Our management of flying fox colonies is based on a co-existence principle. You can find out more about our approach in our **Statement of Management Intent.**

The proposed management approach does not involve dispersal, which typically involves disturbing flying foxes (i.e. by generating continued noise and smoke) to move entire colonies from one location to another. We do not support this approach.

Canopy-mounted sprinklers are recommended by the Queensland government and conservation organisations as a low-impact flying fox colony management tool. The intent of the canopy-mounted sprinkler approach is to shift flying foxes within the parkland and increase the distance between the colony and houses, not disperse the colony entirely.

Learnings from the sprinkler approach at the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens has determined that there are no observable impacts on flying foxes or other native wildlife. Use of sprinklers will be considerate of animal welfare.

4. Relocation and displacement concerns

Concerns were raised about where flying foxes would go if discouraged from the current roost, and whether impacts would shift to nearby areas.

Council will closely monitor the flying foxes after the sprinklers are installed. Based on experience using sprinklers at other flying fox roosts, it is expected that the sprinklers will encourage flying foxes to move further towards the centre of the park, rather than causing the colony to break up or relocate to new areas.

If flying foxes move into nearby areas and create similar impacts for residents, the sprinklers will be turned off. They would only be used again if Council is satisfied that their operation would not cause additional impacts or create new issues. Residents should report any movement concerns to the environmental services team by calling (07) 3205 0555 or emailing council@moretonbay.qld.gov.au.

5. Technical and operational details

Respondents asked practical questions about how the system would work on the ground (e.g. where pumps and piping would be located, times of sprinkler operation and whether increased water would create other issues).

Sprinkler heads, pipes, booster pumps and control stations will be installed around the edge of the flying fox colony on Council managed land. If sprinklers need to be installed near residential properties, this will be done in close consultation with affected residents.

The sprinklers will operate for short periods several times throughout the day during daylight hours only. We expect there may be some noise from the booster pumps and water spray while the system is operating. Our team will position the sprinklers to minimise impacts on footpaths and park users as much as possible. Signage will also be installed in the park to inform the community that sprinklers are in use.

6. Monitoring, review and next steps

Several respondents wanted to understand how Council would measure success and adapt if needed (e.g. what alternative approaches would be considered if this strategy is ineffective).

Council monitors the Narangba flying fox colony regularly. This includes counting the number of flying foxes and mapping the area of parkland they are using. After the sprinklers are installed, we will increase monitoring and include nearby areas of parkland around the colony.

The success of the sprinklers will not be measured by a reduction in flying fox numbers. Effectiveness will be measured by whether they’re creating greater distance between the flying fox colony and nearby homes.

If the sprinklers are successful in discouraging flying foxes from specific target areas, we may continue using them at the Narangba site on an ongoing basis. We will regularly

monitor the colony and adjust sprinkler settings as needed to improve effectiveness while investigating other appropriate management options.

7. Broader planning and long term strategy

Some responses called for a broader review of habitat protection and urban planning with consideration of long term flying fox management across City of Moreton Bay, not just at this site.

We know our community values Council's commitment to protecting the environment as our city continues to grow. Under our Environment and Sustainability Strategy and 2022-2027 Corporate Plan's Healthy Environment strategic objective, our goal is to preserve 42 percent of our city with native vegetation cover and limit our urban footprint to 25 percent of our land area.

We recognise that caring for our environment is a shared responsibility. We will continue to work collaboratively with all residents, community groups, experts and partners to share knowledge, ideas and opportunities that support positive environmental outcomes. We will continue to monitor colonies across City of Moreton Bay and make educated decisions based on the principles of the Statement of Management Intent.