



**Draft Northern Beaches  
Flying-fox Camp Management  
Plan Snapshot**



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## Introduction

This snapshot document provides a summary of the Draft Northern Beaches Flying-fox Camp Management Plan. Council has developed the draft Plan to guide the management of grey-headed flying-fox colonies (or 'camps') located on bushland reserves at Balgowlah, Warriewood and Avalon. It sets out a cohesive management approach for flying-fox camps on Council-managed land across the Northern Beaches Local Government Area (LGA).

The grey-headed flying-fox is an ecologically important species listed as vulnerable under NSW and Commonwealth biodiversity legislation. As a threatened species, any activities which may impact upon flying-foxes or their habitat require approval under the NSW Flying-fox Management Code of Practice 2018 or Part 2 of the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

The former Pittwater and Manly Councils prepared Camp Management Plans for the Avalon and Balgowlah camps in 2015 and 2016, respectively. As these plans have now lapsed, a new Plan is required to enable Council to continue to manage the Balgowlah and Avalon camps, as well as the Warriewood camp, effectively and in accordance with community expectations, legislative requirements and State policy.

### The draft Plan sets out a three-tiered management approach with a focus on:

•	routine reserve maintenance (e.g. mowing, path maintenance, revegetation, weed control, hazardous tree management)
•	support for affected residents
•	community education
•	maintenance of existing buffers between properties and flying-foxes
•	habitat restoration in less populated areas.

The draft Plan outlines the management actions proposed to be implemented over a five-year period. We are asking for the community's feedback on Council's proposed management approach, including how the actions included in the plan may affect you and suggestions on how we can do things better.

## About flying-foxes

The grey-headed flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) is the largest bat in Australia and by far the most common flying-fox species found in Sydney, including our local camps.

Like other flying-foxes, the grey-headed flying-fox plays a vital role in pollinating and spreading the seeds of our eucalypt forests and rainforests. These forests need the pollination and seed dispersal services provided by flying-foxes to spread into new areas and remain genetically diverse and healthy. Essentially, much of our native bushland and rainforest could not survive without the essential ecological services that these animals provide.

Grey-headed flying-foxes are listed under State and Federal environmental legislation as 'Vulnerable to Extinction'. This is based on scientific studies which found that the Australian population had declined by more than 30% in just a decade, due to habitat loss from land clearing, fires, floods and drought, illegal shooting, entanglement in unsafe fruit netting and heat stress events which are becoming more prevalent as the climate changes.

As more of their habitat and resources are lost, flying-foxes have been forced to move into urban areas where there are plentiful supplies of water and food such as backyard fruit trees. So while it may seem that the population is increasing, overall numbers are believed to be still declining, particularly in their natural habitats outside of the cities.



## Draft Camp Management Plan

### Scope

While the Department of Planning and Environment is responsible for management of wildlife and threatened species in NSW, as a land manager Council has an obligation to manage its reserves in a way that achieves a balance between social and environmental outcomes. The draft Plan therefore deals with the three flying-fox camps on Council-managed reserves at Balgowlah (Burnt Bridge Creek), Avalon (Cannes Reserve) and Warriewood Wetlands. Flying-fox colonies on private land and sites managed by other authorities are not addressed in the draft Plan.

### Relevant legislation and policy

The draft Plan has been prepared to align with State legislation and policy including:

- Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016
- Flying-fox Camp Management Policy 2015
- Flying-fox Camp Management Code of Practice 2018
- Flying-fox Camp Management Plan Template 2019

### Objectives of the draft Plan

The draft Plan is guided by the following objectives:

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| • | guide management of the Balgowlah, Avalon and Warriewood camps in accordance with the NSW Flying-fox Camp Management Policy |
| • | minimise community impacts and avoid future conflict  |
| • | improve community understanding and appreciation of flying-foxes including their ecological role                            |
| • | conserve flying-foxes and their habitat   |
| • | support community resilience to flying-fox impacts  |
| • | clearly define roles and responsibilities for management actions  |
| • | ensure actions are in accordance with relevant legislation.   |

### Tiered approach

The State Government's Flying-fox Camp Management Policy requires flying-fox camp management to follow a three-tiered approach, starting with the lowest level of intervention necessary and only moving to higher level actions if other actions are unsuccessful in mitigating conflict between camps and the community.

•	<b>Level 1</b> – community education, private property modification (e.g. window secondary glazing, air conditioners), subsidised items/services (e.g. car wash vouchers, dryers, air purifiers), routine reserve management (e.g. path maintenance, mowing, weed control, revegetation)
•	<b>Level 2</b> – removal/trimming of roost trees to create buffers between flying-foxes and residents, noise attenuation fencing
•	<b>Level 3</b> – 'nudging' of flying-foxes away from conflict areas, partial or total dispersal of a camp

The draft Plan sets out a proposed management approach focusing on Level 1 and Level 2 actions, including maintenance of existing buffers at the Balgowlah and Avalon sites. Level 3 actions are also highlighted as a potential last resort option if other actions are unsuccessful in mitigating conflict, noting that research shows most dispersal attempts are ineffective in the long term, with bats either recolonising the original site or establishing nearby splinter colonies in around 90% of cases.

## Proposed actions

The draft Plan outlines a number of Level 1 and Level 2 actions proposed to be implemented over a five-year period. We are asking for the community's feedback on Council's proposed management approach, including how the actions included in the plan may affect you and suggestions on how we can do things better.

Level 1 actions	Details	Location
Keeping the community informed	Keep the community updated and informed about flying-fox management, conservation and public safety. This will include online information, signage, direct engagement with residents and community events. A QR-code guided interpretive trail will be established at Warriewood Wetlands which will include information on flying-foxes.	LGA-wide
Support residents	Investigate delivering further rounds of the Residents Assistance Grant Program for residents affected by the camps which could include grants for air conditioners, windows double glazing, air purifiers, dryers, car wash vouchers and blinds	All camps
Routine camp maintenance	Undertake regular weed management, pathway maintenance, mowing, revegetation, habitat restoration and emergency tree removal.	All camps
Water quality management	Monitor and remove obstructions from waterways. This will include maintenance of the Gross Pollutant Trap at Balgowlah and removal of aquatic weeds and fallen trees/branches.	Balgowlah and Warriewood camps
Habitat creation in low conflict areas	Protect existing habitat in low-conflict areas of the camps (i.e. away from residences) and investigate establishing new roost habitat at other sites in less populated areas.	LGA-wide
Odour reducing / masking buffer	Investigate establishing buffers of odour reducing/masking plantings along boundaries with residences to mitigate odour impacts.	Avalon and Balgowlah camps
Camp monitoring	Regularly monitor flying-fox numbers and contribute this data to the National Flying-fox Monitoring Program.	All camps
Maintain high welfare standards	Ensure management actions are undertaken in a way that is consistent with animal welfare requirements.	All camps
Heat stress event management	Develop a Heat Stress Response Plan to guide management of public safety and animal welfare risks during periods of extreme heat.	LGA-wide
Support flying-fox carers	Identify opportunities to support the efforts of local wildlife carers.	LGA-wide
Support research	Support research into flying-fox behaviour, with a focus on projects which will assist in mitigating impacts to residents.	LGA-wide

Level 2 actions	Details	Location
Maintain existing buffers	Maintain existing buffers between residents and flying-foxes through selective vegetation management undertaken when camps are not occupied by flying-foxes (e.g. at night during the non-creching season).	Balgowlah and Avalon camps
Investigate canopy-mounted sprinklers	Investigate installing canopy-mounted sprinklers to potentially increase the buffer between residents and flying-foxes	Balgowlah camp

Level 3 actions	Details	Location
'Nudging' or dispersal of camps	'Nudging' (i.e. actively dispersing flying-foxes from one part of the reserve to another) or dispersal of a camp may be considered if Level 1 and 2 management options have been exhausted and risk has not been sufficiently mitigated.	Not currently considered suitable for any camp





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