

Celebrating 50 years of Sutherland Group 1963-2013

3 November 2013

John Rayner
General Manager
Sutherland Shire Council
Locked Bag 17
Sutherland NSW 1499

Dear Mr Rayner

Submission on Draft Plan of Management for Grey-headed Flying foxes, Kareela

I am writing to comment on the draft Plan of Management for the Grey-headed Flying foxes at Kareela, on behalf of members of the Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group.

APS and Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve

APS Sutherland Group is an active community group, committing to promoting and conserving Australian native plants. We have been actively involved as volunteers in caring for Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve at Kareela for many years, and we received Council's Volunteer of the Month Award in May 2011 recognising our efforts. We note that Council has approved a Masterplan for the Reserve in early 2013 and has allocated over \$400,000 for Stage 1 works to make Joseph Banks Reserve more attractive to visitors.

We recognise that Grey-headed Flying foxes are a vulnerable species, and play an important role as pollinators of native vegetation. However we are very concerned about the potential impact of the flying foxes on Joseph Banks Reserve. Flying foxes have potential to damage and kill the native vegetation in the Reserve, as they have in other camp locations. The Reserve has been carefully nurtured since its establishment in 1969/1970 with many Australian native plants from the local area and the rest of Australia. It is an important recreation and educational resource for Sutherland Shire residents and visitors. In addition to the vegetation impacts, the noise, odour and droppings from the flying foxes will adversely affect and discourage staff, volunteers and visitors to Joseph Banks Reserve. These impacts are not consistent with Council's Masterplan to attract more visitors to the Reserve.

Opposed to relocation to Joseph Banks Reserve

We strongly oppose any actions to intentional "nudge" the Kareela colony closer to Joseph Banks Reserve and oppose any actions which may have the unintended impact of relocating the flying foxes to the Reserve. For this reason, we do not support any attempts to relocate the colony elsewhere, as there is a high risk the flying foxes will relocate to an unsuitable location such as Joseph Banks Reserve.

Support for in-situ management actions

To minimise any potential future impact on Joseph Banks Reserve, we support the continued management of the camp in-situ at Kareela, including modifying Council operations to minimise disturbance of the flying foxes. The longer term actions presented in the draft Plan of Management do not include managing the colony in-situ, but this is our preferred option, and should be investigated further. Related actions include relocating Council's Bates Drive works depot to minimise noise disturbance.

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More information on difficulties of dispersal

In Sydney, the Royal Botanic Gardens has undertaken a major campaign to remove flying foxes which has had many difficulties. This experience is very relevant to Kareela but is discussed very briefly in the draft Plan, and only in Appendix B as the last case study. More information on the difficulties and high cost of the Botanic Gardens' dispersal efforts would be useful to put any proposed dispersal actions in perspective.

Support for education

There is potential for more community education and information on the flying foxes, both on-site at the camp, and on Council's website. We note that Hurstville Council has an information brochure about flying foxes at Myles Dunphy Reserve, Oatley on its website at <http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/Grey-headed-Flying-foxes.html>

Cost of actions

We are also concerned about the cost of some of the options proposed in the draft Plan of Management, particularly as the source of funds for the actions is not stated, and may divert funds from other priorities for managing the natural environment.

Given some actions may have to be continued indefinitely at great cost with an unknown chance of success, cost-effective alternatives to manage flying fox impacts may include relocating Sylvanvale or buying the most affected residential properties.

Yours sincerely

Rhonda Daniels
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Australian Plants Society

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