ORDINARY MEETING 28 JULY 2021	8

FLYING FOX ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT

Brett Spencer| 52/7/7-01 | #6672612

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **Notes the minutes of the Flying Fox Advisory Committee meeting of 30 June 2021;**

2. **Endorses the recommendation of the Flying Fox Advisory Committee, contained in its minutes of the 30 June 2021, to formally disband as an Advisory Committee of the Cairns Regional Council;**

3. **Endorses the establishment of a new Resource and Performance Agreement between Council and the Bats and Trees Society of Cairns Inc. to continue on-going community engagement and funding support to wildlife carers in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in this report; and**

4. **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters pertaining to the Resource and Performance Agreement.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Flying Fox Advisory Committee (FFAC) was established in September 2015 as a key strategy to support the management of flying foxes within the Cairns Regional Council area. The primary role of the FFAC is to raise community awareness and education options relating to flying foxes.

Over the past year attendance and interest in the FFAC quarterly meeting has waned with insufficient member attendance to form a quorum, therefore meetings have been deferred to later dates. There were three FFAC meetings held during 2020 and two FFAC meetings in 2021 (February and July). The role of one community representative position has been vacant for over six months and three months ago the role of representative from a suitable animal welfare group was vacated and not filled. At the FFAC meeting held 30 June 2021 the committee discussed the future of continuing this advisory committee and resolved to recommend to Council to formally disband the FFAC on the basis that much of the committee's primary function could be carried out by Bats and Trees Society of Cairns Inc (BatSoc) or by Council in liaison with BatSoc, the motion passed unanimously.

Council currently has a Resource and Performance Agreement (R&P) in place that directs Council funding ($15,000) via BatSoc to assist with volunteer bat carers.

Council, as is BatSoc, is committed to ongoing flying fox community engagement and education, however as indicated, do not see the need to have a formal advisory committee to undertake this education process. As such, Council Officers and BatSoc representatives wish to jointly support each other through additional proposed terms and conditions to the current R&P.

The current R&P provides financial support to assist wildlife bat carers in Cairns in the provision of dietary items for flying foxes in care, training for wildlife carers, medical and veterinary supplies and services and assistance for pre-creche aviary maintenance and improvements.

COMMENT:

Bats and Trees Society of Cairns Inc. is a not-for-profit incorporated entity, their primary activities seek to engage and inform the local community of all ages about bats and trees through events and educational talks at schools. This is a constituted committee of volunteers, who hold regular meetings and minutes and financial statements are provided to Council as a requirement of the current R&P.

Proposed terms and conditions in the establishment of a new R&P are outlined as follows:

- That Council consider on an annual basis to continue funding support for Cairns based flying fox carers. That this annual consideration be dependent on current administrative requirements as outlined in the R&P acquittal process.
- That Council consider a community grant to support the annual Flying Fox Festival upon application via the Cairns Regional Council grants rounds process and requirements.
- That BatSoc and Council Officers' workshops are held every 6-8 weeks to discuss community engagement and education, and marketing/promotional assistance.
- That the Cairns Regional Council flying fox webpage remain and promote BatSoc as the key contact to the community for bat education and engagement.
- That Council flying fox brochures and marketing material promote BatSoc as the key contact to the community for bat education and engagement.
- That Council continues to provide storage at the Lake Street Car Park, as in-kind assistance.
- That BatSoc committee members have direct contact with Council Officers to enquire about flying fox operations and management and to seek support in accordance with the R&P.
- That BatSoc continue with community engagement and education through their annual Flying Fox Festival, School Holiday Bat Chats and other community talks and activities.
- That Council and BatSoc share statistical information in terms of animal counts, locations, movements and animals taken into care.

Resource and Performance Funding Agreements will provide a detailed 'Schedule' as to how the funds can be allocated, measured and evaluated on an annual basis in order to evaluate the success of community engagement activities and for funding in the future.

BatSoc is a credible and well-functioning environmental not-for-profit entity. The efforts of the President Maree Treadwell-Kerr and Vice President Sarah Steves are to be commended. Both have been active participants in the FFAC over several years and support a better understanding by the general public of the value of the under threat Spectacled Flying Fox.

Council Officers and current Councillors involved in the FFAC support the continuation of the community education and awareness partnership with BatSoc.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: (Recommended)

That Council:

1 Notes the minutes of the Flying Fox Advisory Committee meeting of 30 June 2021;

2 Endorses the recommendation of the Flying Fox Advisory Committee, contained in its minutes of the 30 June 2021, to formally disband as an Advisory Committee of the Cairns Regional Council;

3 Endorses the establishment of a new Resource and Performance Agreement between Council and the Bats and Trees Society of Cairns Inc. to continue on-going community engagement and funding support to wildlife carers in accordance with the terms and conditions outlined in this report; and

4 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any and all matters pertaining to the Resource and Performance Agreement.

Option 2:

That Council provides an alternative direction on the matter.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Expenditure in 2020/21 on flying fox management is below:

Item	Description	2020/21 YTD	2020/21 Budget
Bat Chats	Signage & Promotion		
Consultancy Fees	Flying Fox Management Plan	$433,822	
Travel	Flights and Accommodation		
Bats & Tree Society of Cairns Inc.	R&P Agreement 2020/21	$15,000	

Item	Description	2020/21 YTD	2020/21 Budget
Other	Miscellaneous Expenditure	$24,832	
		$473,654	**$110,000**
Operational Works	Horticultural, deterrent and maintenance works	$1,215,056	$400,000
		$1,215,056	**$400,000**
		$1,688,709	**$510,000**

In forecasting a budget for management activities in the 2020/2021 financial year, officers were not aware of the extent of required activities and/or the duration of these activities. Significant consultancy costs had also been incurred to obtain the necessary approvals and to provide guidance and support in establishing the flying fox relocation teams in accordance with regulatory requirements.

As indicated in previous reports, deterrent activities will continue, and this activity combined with bat carer support and required consultancy has an approved budget of $660,000 for 2021/2022 financial year.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Flying Fox Advisory Committee Minutes 30 June 2020

Brett Spencer
Manager Community Development

Destry Puia
General Manager Community, Sport and Cultural Services

ATTACHMENT 1 – MINUTES 30 JUNE 2021

Meeting Minutes					
Date	30 June 2021	Start Time 10.00am	Finish Time 11.00m	Location	Barlow Park Conference Room
Meeting Purpose	Flying Fox Advisory Committee				
Attendees	Brett Spencer, Marcelle Kentwell, Sera Steves, Maree Treadwell-Kerr, Jade Monda, Leah Nugent,				
Apologies	Steve Coulson, Dion Eades, Cr Amy Eden, Cr Max O'Halloran, Brian Ross, Carlie Thirlwell, Mel Tortike				
Observers	Nil				

Actions and Agreements

#	What	Who	When	Complete
1	Meeting opened by Brett Spencer with welcome and acknowledgement of traditional owners, councillors and committee members.	Brett Spencer	30/06/2021	Complete
2	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** Recommendation: Minutes of the meeting held 23 February 2021 are adopted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. **Moved**: Sera Steves **Seconded**: Maree Treadwell-Kerr	Brett Spencer	30/06/2021	Complete
3	**Business Arising** Discussion regarding the future of the FFAC. The FFAC agreed to disband the committee due to lack of attendance, cost and time issues under the guise that the Bats and Trees Society of Cairns Inc (BatSoc) are now in	All	30/06/2021	Complete

	a position to continue community engagement and education with support from Council through a Resource and Performance Funding Agreement. The FFAC agreed to broaden the scope of the existing Resource and Performance Funding Agreement with BatSoc with the following terms and conditions; • That Council consider on an annual basis to continue funding support for Cairns based flying fox Carer's. That this annual consideration be dependent on current administrative requirements as outlined in the R&P acquittal process. • That Council consider a community grant to support the annual Flying Fox Festival upon application via the Cairns Regional Council grants rounds process and requirements. • That BatSoc and CRC officers' workshops are held every 6-8 weeks to discuss community engagement and education, and marketing/promotional assistance. • That the CRC flying fox webpage remain and promote BatSoc as the key contact to the community for bat education and engagement. • That CRC flying fox brochure and marketing material promote BatSoc as the key contact to the community for bat education and engagement. • That Council to continue to provide storage at the Lake Street, Car Park, as in-kind assistance. • That BatSoc committee members have direct contact with Council Officers to enquire about flying fox operations and management and to seek support in accordance with the R&P. • That BatSoc continue with community engagement and education through their Annual Flying Fox Festival, School Holiday Bat Chats and other community talks and activities. • That CRC and BatSoc share statistical information in terms of animal counts, locations, movements, and animals taken into care.			
4	**General Business** Restoration of Roost sites within the Cairns catchment area;	Maree Treadwell-Kerr & Sera Steves	30/06/2021	BatSoc/ CRC future workshops

	• To determine over the next 12months what sites flying foxes roost sites can be considered for restoration and revegetation projects. Is dependent on where the flying foxes give birth and creche young this season. To be follow-up at the BatSoc and CRC Workshops including the Natural Areas Management Team. Health of T5 at the City Library; • An arborists report regarding the health and longevity of T5 at the City Library has been received. Council to discuss what, if any, action will be required, and Brett will advise BatSoc of the outcome.	Brett Spencer	30/07/2021	Will advise BatSoc of outcomes and reports
5	**Resolution of the Committee** • To disband the FFAC as of 30 June 2021 and commence a Resource and Performance Funding Agreement with the Bats and Trees of Cairns for 2021-2022. **Moved**: Maree Treadwell-Kerr **Seconded:** Sera Steves	All	Report to next available Council meeting, likely 28th July 2021.	In-Progress
6	Meeting Closed: 10.50am			

Note: These minutes are considered a true and accurate record of the meeting. Should you not agree with this record of the meeting please advise by return email within 48 hours of the time of receipt of these minutes.