



MEDIA RELEASE

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Grants program to help in bat wars

A STATE government grants program could help Hinchinbrook Shire Council continue its fight to keep flying foxes out of Ingham, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said he was pleased the Department of Environment and Science announced they would provide \$2 million over the next four years (2021-2024) to assist local governments in Queensland to mitigate the impacts of flying-fox roosts on their communities and to better support residents and businesses to coexist with flying-foxes.

"This announcement will help councils manage their flying fox problems across Queensland with the financial means to disperse bat colonies in populated areas," Mr Dametto said.

"Hinchinbrook Shire Council has spent upwards of \$250,000 since 2020 to engage contractor Biodiversity Australia to successfully manage our bat colony in Ingham, which was at plague proportions. Although flying fox management is a continual process, the bats have not returned in anything like the numbers we saw last year. It's important council keep up dispersal activities to maintain that deterrence.

"This all costs money and I'll be pledging my full support for any application council makes for one of these grants."

Funding will be delivered via six competitive rounds over the next four financial years enabling councils to access funding twice annually over this period. All projects will be approximately 50 per cent co-funded by the local government (including in-kind contributions), however exact contributions may vary in some cases.

The grants are split into three different streams: immediate/high-priority actions, development of roost management plans and implementation of roost management plans.

The program is expected to launch in the middle of this month with the closing date for round one applications to be about one month following that.

Mr Dametto said he had enjoyed a strong working relationship with both council and Biodiversity Australia on tackling the bat colonies around Ingham.

"Hinchinbrook Mayor Ramon Jayo has really taken this issue by the horns and led from the front. The team at Biodiversity Australia have been consummate professionals at all times. They are the subject matter experts when it comes to these challenges by ensuring flying foxes were not harmed

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



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during dispersal activities while also keeping the health and well-being of local people front of mind," Mr Dametto said.

"I believe the work that was undertaken in Ingham during our bat dispersal should be used as a benchmark by the State Government to guide other towns across Queensland on how they can manage their flying fox problem.

"In saying that, I believe the State Government has a responsibility to contribute to council's previous flying fox dispersal which was done at the expense of ratepayers."

—ENDS—

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Photo captions

0851 and 0867: Flying foxes at the back of Ingham Botanical Gardens in January 2020.

0842: Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto, Hinchinbrook Mayor Ramon Jayo and Biodiversity Australia Operations Manager & Senior Ecologist Karl Robertson inspect a flying fox roost at the back of the Ingham Botanical Gardens in January 2020.

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