



## ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

### Our Mission

- To provide rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and orphaned bats
- To protect and conserve bat colonies and habitat
- To educate the public about the importance of bats in our environment
- To lobby all levels of government to ensure the future and welfare of bats

### Who are we?

Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Inc is a self-funded volunteer organisation whose members are permitted under the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) to care for sick, injured and orphaned bats.

Our aim is to:-

- provide accurate and informative education to the general public regarding the importance of bats through literature, presentations and community events
- provide a fast, efficient and humane service to rescue and rehabilitate sick, injured and orphaned bats and return them to the wild
- be active in the conservation of bats and their habitat
- adhere to the guidelines set out in the DEHP Code of Practice, 'Care of Sick, Injured or Orphaned Protected Animals in Queensland'

Our organisation was formed in February 2007, to address the increasing demand for assistance for both microbats (insect eating bats) and megabats (flying-foxes).

### Why do we do it?

Did you know there are over 53 flying-fox camps spread across the Greater Brisbane region?

Fossil records prove that flying-foxes have been around for approximately 35 million years and they have evolved a symbiotic relationship with Australia's forests as essential pollinators and seed dispersers. Important forest species such as eucalypts and melaleucas release the majority of their nectar after midnight and close down their pollen receptors before dawn. This means that bees and other daytime pollinators are not the pollinating partners that our forests rely on! It is flying-foxes that travel up to 100 km each and every night, pollinating and spreading the seeds of biodiversity as they fly across our landscape. With these long distance pollinating partners, forests are able to keep pace with climate change, maintain forest diversity and integrity which in turn, enables our forests to hybridize on a scale unmatched by any other forests on earth.

The city of Brisbane is surrounded by nectar producing native forests that support the largest population of flying-foxes in Australia. However, as Greater Brisbane expands these foraging areas are being impacted upon and available food resources are now becoming regionally scarce.

As a result of this development, communities have an increasing need for our rescue and rehabilitation service to care for injured and orphaned bats. Common injuries include breaks to wing bones as well as rips and tears to wing membrane.

Bats can be injured and orphaned by:



- incorrectly installed, large aperture backyard fruit tree netting
- being trapped on barbed wire fences near flowering/fruited trees
- being electrocuted on powerlines (e.g. 90% of orphans are from electrocuted mothers)
- dog attack from feeding in low vegetation or coming to the ground to eat dropped Cocos fruit
- motor vehicle collisions
- extreme climatic events and seasonal starvation due to the ongoing loss of foraging habitat

## **What do we do?**

### **Bat Hotline**

We field phone calls from other animal welfare organisations, the community, industry, councils, schools and Government agencies. Some calls are requests for advice whilst the majority of them are to rescue bats from both private and commercial premises. During an average year, our volunteers respond to over 2,200 calls for assistance.

### **Bat Rescues/Call Outs**

Our volunteers undertake:

- onsite rescues
- educating the public at rescues to the plight and vulnerability of bats
- health checks and viability assessments
- treatment for injured bats or euthanasia if necessary
- short and long term care - from 7 days up to 12 months
- the raising of orphans
- soft release at an approved facility
- fruit cutting and maintaining crèche and release sites

### **Education/Events**

We attend many community events throughout the year and we work to change the public perception of these fascinating mammals. With our hand raised education flying-foxes we can demonstrate the beauty, fragility and intelligence of flying-foxes. Most people only ever see dark shapes swooping out of the trees. They never get the opportunity for an 'up close and personal' experience and most are usually amazed and enchanted by the inquiring little face returning their gaze. In 2010, we were awarded an \$18,000 grant to outfit an audio/visual education trailer which we now use to attend schools, community and corporate events.

### **Data Collection/Research**

Data collection is one of the most important contributions we can make to improve outcomes for bats. We link to and provide data to the scientific community, individual researchers, organizations and universities that work in the field of bat studies. By sharing our rescue data, we can advise governments and researchers on significant trends and precursors to starvation events.



### **When/How do we do it?**

Our busiest rescue period is from October to January, as this is when flying-foxes give birth. Each year, many flying-fox mothers are trapped and die in backyard drape netting, on barbed wire fences or are electrocuted on powerlines. This results in injured or orphaned flying-foxes requiring time in care. From January to May our volunteers are then busy soft releasing juvenile flying-foxes back to the wild through an approved release program.

Our volunteers and limited resources are often severely stretched during periods of drought and seasonal starvation events.

### **Where do we do it?**

Our dedicated team of volunteers conduct rescue operations within a 300km<sup>2</sup> radius of Brisbane and we service an area from Caboolture to Tweed Heads as well as co-ordinating other members in regional Queensland. We also have an education team who visit schools, councils, industrial areas, shopping centres and private properties within these precincts.

We maintain a release facility located on private land at Camira and our rehabilitation cages are privately owned and maintained by members across the region.

### **Our successes**

- We are the largest bat specific rescue organisation in Queensland with a growing membership currently maintaining around 140 members. This figure includes rescue, care and associate members.
- We are recognised by Government as a reliable, humane and responsible organisation. We are often consulted for statistical information, advice and rescue assistance.
- We annually rehabilitate and release approximately 600 bats back to the wild.
- We successfully raise and return over 150 orphaned baby flying-foxes to the wild each year.
- We were awarded an \$18,000 grant to kit out an audio/visual education trailer which we use at schools, community and corporate events.
- We work in conjunction with the RSPCA and we attend to the majority of their bat rescues and enquiries throughout South East Queensland.
- We have benefited from a variety of grants from Local and State Governments to support us in the area of rescue and community education. Brisbane City Council has assisted with carer equipment and fuel vouchers for volunteer effort. Logan City Council supported the design and purchase of a flying-fox character costume as well as funding education literature. Redland City Council has contributed to the purchase of hardware for a database server, provided funding for the purchase of rescue and personal protective equipment, education literature and two large worm farms.
- We present and attend many education talks, events and displays to the general community, schools and councils each year.



- Along with other Queensland bat specialists, we have successfully negotiated an ongoing liaison role with Biosecurity Qld regarding bats in their media releases. These sources supply us with current virus information and relevant bat policies.
- We co-authored the 'Living with Flying-Foxes' factsheet which was produced by Queensland Health.
- We gained endorsement as a deductible gift recipient organisation and we were placed on the Register of Environmental Organisations by the Federal Government in March 2011. We achieved Charity status in the State of Queensland in October 2011.
- We are regional partners for the United Nations 'Year of the bat 2011-2012'  
<http://www.yearofthebat.org/>

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Charity Registration Number: CH2090

Web site: <http://www.bats.org.au>

Give Now Donation page: <http://www.givenow.com.au/bats>

We are not government funded and rely on the kindness, support and generosity of the community to assist us in the rescue and care of bat species.

All donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible. Direct deposits can be made to:

Bat Conservation Fund, Westpac bank

BSB: 034 070

Account: 427443

For information and enquires – [info@bats.org.au](mailto:info@bats.org.au)

Our volunteers offer a free 24/7 rescue service for bats found injured or alone through the day. Add this number to your phone and please call us if you see a bat alone, in distress or electrocuted on powerlines.

**Rescue Phone: 0488 228 134**