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Queensland Premier's bat squad proposal condemned as unnecessary and repugnant

Bat Conservation and Rescue Queensland president Louise Saunders today condemned the proposal by the Queensland Premier to form a so-called bat squad to disperse and cull flying-foxes.

"It's unnecessary – as Queensland Health has consistently advised, it is safe for people to live near flying-foxes," Ms Saunders said. As long as people leave flying-foxes alone, there is no health risk.

"It's impractical – as so many local governments have found, if you chase flying-foxes from a camp they will usually disperse to back yards or more inconvenient places and then later return to their original site. This occurred even when shooting of camps was allowed.

"It's a waste of money – some local governments have wasted hundreds of thousands of ratepayer dollars trying to move flying-foxes.

"It's ethically repugnant – the premier's proposal would lead to terrible animal welfare problems and is not the way that we should be treating wildlife, including threatened species. Two of the four species in Queensland are nationally threatened.

"There are more than 200 flying-fox camps in urban areas in Queensland. The majority of people living near these camps are fine about it. However, it is obvious that the people of Queensland do need more information about the low risk of disease and that it is safe to live near flying-foxes.

"In summary, the bat squad proposal is unnecessary, impractical, a waste of money and ethically repugnant," Ms Saunders concluded.

Contact for interview

Louise Saunders, President, Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld: 0425 73 4008

Photographs of bats are available on request.