

**For immediate release**

**20 JUNE 2012**

**CONSERVATIONISTS CALL FOR GOVERNMENT CONSISTENCY ON WELFARE FOR WILDLIFE:  
CRUELTY TO FLYING-FOXES, AS WELL AS TO DUGONGS AND TURTLES, SHOULD BE ILLEGAL**

Flying fox conservationists today criticised the inconsistency of the Queensland Government on its approaches to humanness for wildlife. Yesterday's introduction in Parliament of legislation intended to improve the welfare of dugongs and turtles contrasts with the government's intention to overturn a 2008 ban on shooting flying-foxes in orchards.

Conservationist Dr Carol Booth said that the LNP Government's intention to revive lethal damage mitigation permits for flying-foxes in orchards would require removal of humaneness requirements from the Nature Conservation Act.

"The shooting of flying-foxes was banned after the Government's welfare advisory committee evaluated the evidence and found it was inhumane. A government-appointed panel in NSW also found it was inhumane," Dr Booth said.

"Either the Government will have to make a special cruelty exception for flying-foxes or they will remove the humaneness requirement altogether for damage mitigation permits under Queensland's Nature Conservation Act.

"If we return to the situation prior to the 2008 ban on shooting, thousands of flying-foxes are likely to die slowly from shotgun wounds and thousands of their young will starve to death. This clearly constitutes animal cruelty.

The president of Bats Conservation and Rescue Qld Louise Saunders said she welcomes the message from the Government that "animal cruelty is never acceptable" and that it should be applied to all wildlife, including flying-foxes.

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*"All Queenslanders will now have the same animal welfare obligations and it's important every Queenslanders understands animal cruelty is never acceptable."*

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry The Honourable John McVeigh, Media release, 19 June 2012

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"We demand that the same animal welfare standards apply to flying-foxes as to other wildlife.

"For most of Queensland's history of environmental laws, flying-foxes were exempted from laws that applied to other wildlife. Prior to 1994, farmers didn't even have to apply for a permit to kill flying-foxes and there were no limits on numbers killed.

"Now, it seems that the government intends to once again exempt flying-foxes from the laws that apply to other wildlife.

"We can only repeat the government's own words – 'animal cruelty is never acceptable'."

**Contacts: Carol Booth: 0448 868 984; Louise Saunders: 0425 73 4008**

- For further information or rescue assistance call Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld's rescue helpline on 0488 228 134. Visit our web site to find out more about these amazing mammals: [www.bats.org.au](http://www.bats.org.au)