



MEDIA RELEASE

Minister Garrett signs a death warrant for the endangered iconic Flying Foxes

The NSW Wildlife Council condemns the forced removal of the iconic Grey Headed Flying Fox from their century's old camp in the Royal Botanic Gardens approved by Minister Garrett on Friday 14 May.

No longer will Sydneysiders and tourists enjoy the nightly spectacle of the iconic Grey-Headed Flying Fox flying across the Domain, due to the decision by Minister Garrett to agree to the forced removal of the bats from the Royal Botanic Gardens. This decision shows a complete disregard for the welfare of the Grey-headed Flying-fox which was declared Vulnerable in 2001 and predicted to be extinct by 2070.

NSW Wildlife Council Chair, Audrey Koosmen had this to say, "Once again, biodiversity and the environment come second best. It is unbelievable that the Minister has ignored the advice of the wildlife experts on the Royal Botanic Trust's Steering Committee to address the problems associated with the bats in the Botanic Gardens. The Grey-Headed Flying Foxes are a threatened species protected under both state and national environment law. They play a crucial role in pollination and seed dispersal in our native forests. Protecting this species is therefore very important to our biodiversity," Ms Koosmen said.

"The Council wants Minister Garret to know that at least 4,500 wildlife rehabilitators and many thousands more people across NSW who want a better deal for the bats." Ms Koosmen added.

"On behalf NSW Wildlife Council and the wildlife groups of NSW, I call on Minister Garrett to step in to stop the dispersal of the Grey-Headed Flying Fox and review the very high handed approach taken by the Royal Botanic Trust which has consistently ignored the advice of Flying Fox experts."

"The role of the Steering Committee was to guide the planning, implementation and evaluation phases, in order to ensure the best possible outcome for the bats." This has not happened. The Botanic Gardens Trust has ignored it's own policies and reports, and commitment to the wildlife experts who have volunteered so much of their time on the Steering Committee. Over the past months there has been no involvement of the Steering Committee in the proposed dispersal which is very disappointing." said Ms Koosmen.

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