



Media release

From the Department of Sustainability and Environment

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A PLAN FOR MANAGING MELBOURNE'S FLYING-FOXES

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) today announced that a draft plan to manage Melbourne's colony of flying-foxes at Yarra Bend Park would be available for public comment from Friday 12th November 2004.

Dr Robert Begg, Deputy Director Flora and Fauna, DSE, said that the draft management plan focuses on managing the flying-fox colony on a sustainable basis to minimise risk of the colony relocating to inappropriate sites, such as residential areas or back to the Royal Botanic Gardens.

"Moving Melbourne's colony of Grey-headed flying-foxes out of the Royal Botanic Gardens was one of the largest and most ambitious wildlife management trials undertaken in Victoria. The relocation was a success and the Gardens have been free of flying-foxes since April 2003.

"We are now turning our focus to managing the colony in a twenty-six hectare section of Yarra Bend Park in a way that protects this threatened species, improves the park and provides for local residents and park users," he said.

Community input into the details of the flying-fox management plan is encouraged. The plan will be available for public comment from 12 November until 10 December 2004.

The draft five-year plan adopts a holistic approach to management and will involve extensive revegetation and weed control at the site, the creation of artificial roost structures and wetlands and the installation of viewing platforms, paths and interpretive signage.

Dr Begg said that Yarra Bend Park was originally identified as one of the top four locations considered appropriate as an alternative flying-fox roost site.

"Flying-foxes will always be a part of Melbourne's urban wildlife due to its plentiful and year-round food supply and Yarra Bend Park provides an opportunity to locate the colony where conflict with people is as low as can be expected in such a highly urbanised environment," he said.

Copies of the draft flying-fox management plan for Yarra Bend Park are available at www.dse.vic.gov.au or via the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Customer Service Centre on 136 186. Copies can also be obtained from the Parks Victoria office at Yarra Bend Park, Yarra Bend Road, Fairfield, or at the free information day being held on Saturday 13th November at Bellbird Picnic Reserve in Yarra Bend Park.

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