



Media Release

From the Department of Sustainability and Environment

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MANAGING MELBOURNE'S FLYING FOXES

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) will this week resume activities to disperse grey-headed flying-foxes from Melbourne's city gardens as the three-year program to relocate the animals continues.

DSE acting Director, Flora and Fauna, Dr Robert Begg, said the program had earlier this year been successful in clearing the flying-foxes from Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens – for the first time in almost 20 years.

“Some of the flying-foxes have left the State as part of their normal migration and the remaining over-wintering population has relocated to areas including the Fitzroy Gardens in inner-Melbourne,” Dr Begg said.

“After successfully clearing the Royal Botanic Gardens of flying-foxes, attention is now turning to moving part of the original colony from their temporary roost in the Fitzroy Gardens.

“The roosting site in the Fitzroy Gardens is not consistent with the longer-term management objective to relocate the flying-foxes to areas along the Yarra River, preferably to the purpose-built site at Horseshoe Bend, Ivanhoe.

“The Fitzroy Gardens is not a suitable long-term roosting site for flying-foxes. That is why we are taking the responsible action of moving them on before they settle in.”

The DSE, with assistance from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Zoos Victoria and Parks Victoria, will conduct another dispersal program for up to 30 days, starting tomorrow. The program will aim to relocate the animals from the Fitzroy Gardens to the Yarra River, 1.5 kilometres away.

The DSE will continue to liaise with the City of Melbourne to keep it updated on the progress of the dispersal program.

The same noise deterrents as those used during the previous dispersal effort will be used in the early morning and at dusk, including sound buggies playing recorded noises, banging of metal objects, starters' pistols, and possibly 'Bird-frite', which sounds like a firework.

“Dispersal activity will occur simultaneously across a number of inner-city parks and gardens to discourage the flying-foxes from resettling in the general area,” Dr Begg said.

Members of the public seeing a group of 10 flying-foxes roosting in areas other than inner-city parks – particularly along the Yarra River – are encouraged to contact the DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Meanwhile, restoration efforts have begun in the Royal Botanic Gardens and the most severely affected area, Fern Gully, has started to show the first signs of recovery.

A maintenance dispersal program is now in place to prevent the flying-foxes from returning to the Botanic Gardens.