

# Overview of final management plan for flying-foxes at Yarra Bend Park

Revised edition, October 2005



**Melbourne's flying-fox colony was successfully relocated from the Royal Botanic Gardens in April 2003 and no flying-foxes have roosted there since. The colony arrived at Yarra Bend Park in September 2003 and has made no attempt to leave.**

## Why a management plan?

To make sure that the current flying-fox roost site at Yarra Bend Park remains sustainable for the long-term, a five-year management plan will be implemented. Failure to actively manage the roost site could result in it becoming degraded and the colony relocating to another site.

Towards the end of the life of the management plan, a broader strategy for the management of flying-foxes across Greater Melbourne will be developed, taking into account the lessons learnt from managing the colony at Yarra Bend Park.

## Importance of the Yarra Bend Park colony

Flying-foxes will always be a part of Melbourne's wildlife because of its plentiful and reliable food supply. The number of flying-foxes both visiting and roosting in Melbourne has increased significantly over the last 20 years. Should this trend continue, it will pose a challenge to the residents of Melbourne and wildlife management agencies due to the potential for conflict between people and flying-foxes and the complexities associated with the species' threatened status.

Securing the colony at Yarra Bend Park provides a level of protection to other areas where there is potential for colonies to establish. Appropriate measures that can be undertaken now may reduce conflict in the future. It will also help in the protection and recovery of this nationally threatened species

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### Improvements to Yarra Bend Park

The 26-hectare flying-fox management area within Yarra Bend Park will undergo substantial revegetation and weed control, installation of a wetland and artificial roosts, plus improvements and additions to the Park's path network and visitor facilities. The habitat improvements will benefit all wildlife that uses the area and improvements to infrastructure will benefit park users.

The State Government has committed \$1.7 million to help make the flying-fox roost site sustainable and for improvements to park facilities.

Any works at the site will have minimal environmental impact. A viewing platform and information signs will be installed to cater for and manage any increase in the number of people who visit Yarra Bend Park specifically to see the flying-fox colony.

### Goals and actions of the management plan

The management plan adopts an adaptive approach so that progress is monitored and actions modified as we learn more about flying-foxes and their interactions in a highly urbanised environment.

The following key goals are identified in the plan:

- Successfully develop a sustainable flying-fox roost site in Yarra Bend Park
- Enhance vegetation and other environmental values in the management area
- Minimise the impact of flying-foxes on residents and park users
- Provide improved visitor facilities at and near the roost site
- Increase community understanding and support for flying-fox conservation

Important **actions** to achieve the goals include:

- Ensure that the colony remains within the specified 26-hectare management area.
- Implement a major regeneration/revegetation plan throughout the management area.
- Construct a wetland and artificial roost structures to concentrate the colony in a preferred area on the river flat north of the Bellbird Picnic Area.
- Take appropriate management actions to minimise any adverse impacts on park users and nearby residents.
- Construct a viewing platform and install interpretive signs in and near the campsite, including at the Yarra Bend Golf Course.
- Realign and upgrade walking tracks to the viewing platform and along the river flats.
- Monitor the size and location of the flying-fox colony and the success of habitat improvements.

- Continue to work with and inform the local and wider community about flying-fox management.
- Establish a community-based reference group and continue to liaise closely with councils and other interested stakeholders on flying-fox management.
- Work cooperatively with the Yarra Bend Park Trust to identify opportunities for promotion, including the Yarra Bend Golf Course.
- Integrate the campsite into the educational use of the Park.

### Main amendments to draft management plan

Following community input, two main changes were made to the draft management plan.

Firstly, no exotic tree species will be used at the site. Only local indigenous species will be used in revegetation efforts. Secondly, pruning of vegetation along a short, narrow section of vegetation at the southern end of the management area to prevent the colony from moving too close to houses will only be done where a problem arises, not as a pre-emptive management tool.

Where pruning is required to contain the southern extent of the flying-fox colony, an initial light prune will be conducted and the response of the colony monitored. If further pruning is required, approval will be sought from the Yarra Bend Park Trust.

### Further information

For a copy of the final flying-fox campsite management plan, go to [www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants and animals/native plants and animals/flying-foxes](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants_and_animals/native_plants_and_animals/flying-foxes), or phone the Department of Sustainability and Environment's Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

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