

FLYING-FOX CAMP MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPORT REQUEST – BELLBROOK

30/10/24

Ref: Bellbrook FFC / 01-24

TO: KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL (ATTN: GENERAL MANAGER – Mr. CRAIG MILBURN)

FOR INFORMATION:

GOVERNMENT & NSW AGENCIES		
FOR INFORMATION	NAME	EMAIL
KSC MAYOR	Ms KINNIE RING	KINNE.RING@KEMPSEY.NSW.GOV.AU
KSC COUNCILOR	Mr. ARTHUR BAIN	ARTHUR.BAIN@KEMPSEY.NSW.GOV.AU
MEMBER FOR OXLEY	Mr. MICHAEL PETER KEMP, MP	OXLEY@PARLIAMENT.NSW.GOV.AU
NSW ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE	VIA CONTACT ENQUIRY	INFO@ENVIRONMENT.NSW.GOV.AU
BELLBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL- PRINCIPLE	MRS. ALLISON MITCHELL	ALLISON.MITCHELL@DET.NSW.EDU.AU
BELLBROOK RFS - CAPTAIN	Mr. M. TOLHURST	TOLHURST1962@OUTLOOK.COM
THUNGGUTI LALC - CEO	Mr. RICHARD CAMPBELL	TLALC.LOT8@GMAIL.COM
BELLBROOK COMMUNITY & KEY STAKEHOLDERS		
BELLBROOK RFS	LISTED AS ABOVE	
BELLBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL		
BELLBROOK COMMUNITY HALL / PROGRESS ASSN	HALL COMMITTEE	BELLBROOKHALL@GMAIL.COM
BELLBROOK FLYING FOX SUPPORT GROUP		
BELLBROOK HOTEL / CABINS	Mr. P. O'DONNELL/Mr. D GRIFFIN	BELLBROOKHOTEL@GMAIL.COM
BELLBROOK PETROL STATION	29 MAIN ST, BELLBROOK NSW 2440	OLDGENERALSTORE29@GMAIL.COM
BELLBROOK TENNIS CLUB	COMMITTEE	MATANDLORRIE@GMAIL.COM
BELLBROOK BELLMEADOW SERVICED ACCOMMODATION	Ms R. BAILLIE	AWERSERVICES@GMAIL.COM

SUBJECT: SUPPORT REQUEST FOR FLYING-FOX CAMP MANAGEMENT PLAN – BELLBROOK NSW 2440

Reference:

- A. Flying-fox Camp Management Code of Practice 2018
- B. LGNSW FLYING-FOX HABITAT RESTORATION PHASE 2020-30

Dear Mr. Milburn,

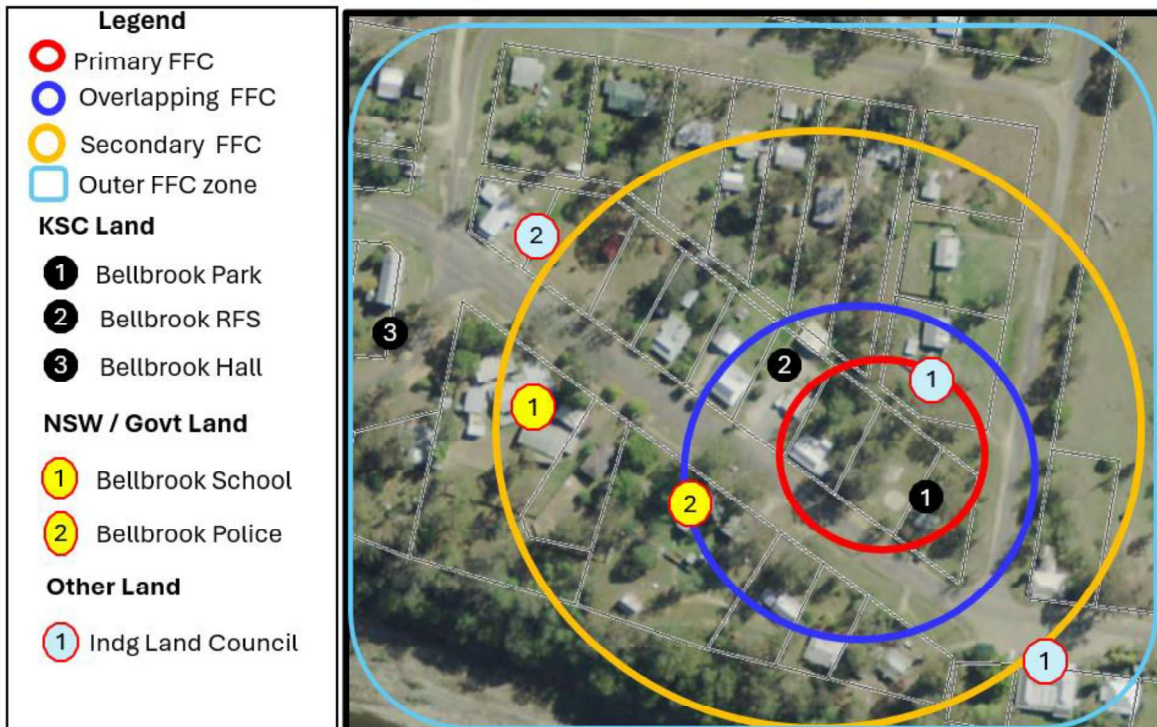
1. Please be advised there are several Bellbrook residents and key stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by the Flying Fox Camp (FFC) situation in central Bellbrook. The main FFC is located centrally in Bellbrook Park. Part of the FCC fallout reaches out to adjoining land including the RFS station and vulnerable landowners and renters.
2. The central and main FFC colony is currently located within Bellbrook Park dispersed across numerous trees (approx. 6-7).
3. The aim of this request is to seek KSC support in developing an FFC management plan for Bellbrook Community and surrounds. Our key community FCC management objectives, concerns and engagement agenda are as follows:
 - An effective long-term management approach for our small community that enables an improved living state for both the community and the FFC.
 - KSC to seek utilisation of both state and federal legislative requirements and resources.
 - KSC responsibilities and better understanding in the ongoing stresses, costs and anxiety related (Physical & Mental) impacts from long term close exposure to FFC's
 - Identify and mitigate possible costly, health and related community issues.
 - Management of the financial impact, specifically to key stakeholders in direct contact with the Bellbrook FFC.

FLYING-FOX CAMP MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPORT REQUEST – BELLBROOK

- An effective preparedness plan for existing FFC's, future FFC's and/or an increase in existing FFC's.
- Effective and collaborative community engagement.

FFC CAMP AREA & LAND TENURE

4. The following Map details FFC main camp and inner & outer zones, Public and Govt owned land.



BELLBROOK FFC HISTORY

5. The camp was first observed and locally recorded in December 2019 and is permanently occupied. The maximum total number of flying-foxes has not been officially recorded. No Bellbrook specific information was found on the Australian Government National Flying-fox monitoring viewer. No population count has been recorded (?). Their numbers are in the thousands.

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/species/flying-fox-monitoring>

6. The local consensus is that the flying foxes arrived in Bellbrook after the first fires in November/December 2019. They stayed in the village (Park) for approximately 18 months then left the area for about a year. Mid-year 2022 the flying foxes return to Bellbrook (Park) and the numbers have increased exponentially, moving from the middle of the park and closer surrounds, including, behind the school, RFS station, Police Station and Bellbrook Hotel.

REPORTED & UNREPORTED ISSUES RELATED TO THE CAMP

7. The following community issues are as follows:

- noise as flying-foxes depart and return to the camp
- noise from the camp during the day; particularly late afternoon
- flying foxes overhanging pathways/residential properties
- concentrated fecal droppings on outdoor areas, cars, yards and outdoor washing areas
- concentrated Urea smell across Bellbrook surrounds
- fear of disease
- health and/or wellbeing impacts (e.g. associated with lack of sleep, anxiety)
- reduced general amenity visits, including, parks, attractions and facilities
- damage to vegetation and residential fruit and vegetable growing
- impacts on other native animals
- impacts on businesses and tourism
- property devaluation (likely)
- diminished rental returns and conflict of rental agreement impacts
- costs of cleaning products and alike for those effected most

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF FCC

- The majority of Bellbrook community acknowledge the need to conserve flying-foxes as an important native species.
- No other known advantage at present.

LOCAL CASE STUDY

8. Mr. and Mrs. Alpha live in proximity to Bellbrook Park. They have four children between the ages 3-9. The family are directly impacted by the FCC located within the park. As a result, they are restricted to many family activities. To name a few:

- Inability to dry washing outside.
- Inability to conduct family activities in both Front and Rear yards
- Requirement to cover outdoor furniture and associated family items.
- Replacement of multiple electric clothes dryer due to inability to hang out washing.
- Increased risks to health of children and pets.
- Ongoing costs for cleaning products.

Summary: Both Mr. and Mrs. Alpha have significant and additional responsibilities to maintain their home and safety of their children. Their standard of living due to the FCC is poor. They are both bewildered by the lack of support so far. Mrs. Alpha has complained to KSC verbally and by email with no action to date. The community is worried about the conditions they face day to day. Mr. and Mr. Alpha are one of many directly impacted by the FCC.

KSC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SO FAR

9. The author is not aware of any substantial community engagement so far. It is believed the Local government has responsibilities to the community and environment of the area for which it is responsible in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and Ref A.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS' EXTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE TO DATE:

10. The author is aware of some individual enquiries to KSC and some electronic correspondence. The author is not in a position to validate this data and is hearsay.

11. The community has been frustrated with the FFC for many years and is generally confused that no FFC management plan has been sought for Bellbrook and little (if any) community engagement.

12. Furthermore, the high impact FFC at Bellbrook is solely concentrated on KSC land (community land); however, local council representatives indicate they (KSC) cannot do anything about it. The author has been advised of this directly.

13. Our Plan is to submit this request to KSC on behalf of the community and stakeholders and trust KSC will support community engagement in developing an effective FFC management plan. Our intent is not to submit a community petition as at this stage as an FCC plan clearly supports the ongoing protection of the flying foxes and environment.

14. Key stakeholders have advised they will provide this document as a supplementary enclosure for their own reporting if required. This is important to ensure that matters pertaining to potential FCC OH&S matters have been reported to their primary and senior HQ.

Conclusion

15. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Bellbrook is a wonderful community. Community and stakeholders continue to invest in this region. In the main, we acknowledge the importance of the Flying Fox protection and environmental benefits; however, for those who are directly affected by the FCC's is concerning.

NO ONE WOULD WANT TO LIVE, WORK OR PLAY IN A HIGH IMPACT FFC AREA.

Author Notes: *The author is not affected directly by the FCC; however, like many of the community, we are concerned for the wellbeing of many vulnerable people especially those close to the high impact FFC. The development of this document was a collaborative project, and the author would like to thank all those involved.*

Sincerely,

Paul Hodgson

Bellbrook Hall / Progress Association Committee
bellbrookhall@gmail.com
0448880101

Annex A: Flying Fox Camp Management Request – Summary of Stakeholders remarks

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDERS

ANNEX A

Stakeholder Interest/reported impacts	
Residents	Physical and mental health impacts are significant; especially those identified in the Primary and Secondary zones. (Table 1)
Residential and Community Farmland Growers	Residents primarily within the affected areas have difficulty growing fruit and vegetables due to constant faecal matter.
Residential Health & Wellbeing	Many residents are unable to utilise the front and/or back yards for recreation and general facilities (i.e. drying washing) This includes the inability to leave equipment's, children's toys and building materials exposed.
Business owners	Multiple Local Business are impacted in reduced tourism, smell, noise and cause and effect on public facilities, tourism and attractions.
Indigenous community	The local New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has renters within proximity to the FCC. One particular property has and continues to be inundated with problems associated with proximity living.
Schools	Bellbrook Public School is within close vicinity of the FFC. School staff are required to introduce Flying Fox awareness to minimise the potential health risks. Parent car parking is situated close to the FFC. The local Bus stop is also located at the park.
Community Facilities	Unfortunately, Bellbrook Park has limited and reduced attraction. The colonies are dispersed across many trees within the park and presents an unpleasant dirty and smelly odour.
Other/adjoining landholders and Stakeholders	[Adjoining landholders are presented with the likelihood the FFC will increase and continue to spread. The Bellbrook RFS is located within the Primary zone and has a significant impact on cleanliness, training, noise and smell.
Civic leaders and influencers (including local, state and federal politicians)	This support request will be distributed to key leaders and influencers. Refer to For Information addressees.
Local government	Local government has responsibilities to the community and environment of the area for which it is responsible in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> . Council is also responsible for administering local laws, plans and policies, and appropriately managing assets (including land) for which it is responsible. This support request will be distributed to key leaders and influencers. Refer to For Information addressees.
Local Government NSW (LGNSW)	LGNSW is an industry association that represents the interests of councils in New South Wales. This support request will be distributed to key leaders and influencers. Refer to For Information addressees.
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment	The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is responsible for administering legislation relating to (among other matters) the conservation and management of native plants and animals, including threatened species and ecological communities. This support request will be distributed to key leaders and influencers. Refer to For Information addressees.