




The management of the Kareela Grey-headed Flying-fox Camp

So close to managing the camp in situ and then.....dispersal

 Sutherland Shire COUNCIL

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 ecological AUSTRALIA



Kareela - protect the vulnerable children




Photo: Ian Drinnan

Slide 2

n2

beginning of 2013

noelb, 30/08/2016




Brief history

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- Mid 1990s to 2006: Kurnell – desal plant mainly winter camp
 - Summer 2006 – 2007 - on the move from desal to Kareela, a permanent nationally significant camp
 - Conflict 2008 to date, residents and schools, squeaky wheels, radio DJs, newspapers, political agendas, sixty minutes
 - 2013 - Management Plan, core aim was to provide strategies to lessen the conflict, and protect the schools
 - We pushed hard for in situ management, to avoid dispersal,
 - we nearly got there....but



Stage 1 - *in situ* management to reduce conflict

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- In situ conservation with actions to reduce the impacts of the flying-fox camp
 - Education, research, monitoring, community health and safety, resident property improvement grants, schools liaison, changing Council operations
 - Constructing visual barriers, giant fences up to 12m in height, extra shade cloth protection, cleaning options
 - All aimed at protecting schools and residents



Stage 2 – the buffer

Buffers

- 2010 – 12m buffer, to move the FFs away from the Bates Drive school boundary
- 2014 – 20 m buffer to move FFs away from residents and all school boundaries. Included 15% of the core roosting habitat.
- Eleven nights – chainsaw, high powered lights, tritterer and mulchers
- still not enough – dispersal



Communication

All targets and methods explored:

- **Targets:** school staff, parents, residents, community, other camp managers, wildlife rescue organisations, Councillors, other politicians and potentially affected stakeholders
- **Methods:** social media, local paper, information sessions with NSW Health, Council's website, onsite residents meetings, education nights, school Principal meetings, flying-fox working party, Councillor briefings, direct emails to those directly affected, letters to politicians and lots and lots of meetings!



Photo: Ian Drinnan

Dispersal – despite our best efforts

So with all this communication why dispersal?

- Politics
- Poor flying-fox PR
- Sensational journalism
- Elections
- Lots of emotion
- DJ jibes

So what were the consequences of dispersal?

- Unknown flying-fox impacts
- Emotionally draining
- Staff turnover
- Struggling to keep faith in ourselves
- Splinter camps
- No end in site



Photo: Ian Drinnan

Actions and costs to date

- Vegetation trimming 2009 **\$2000**
- Vegetation buffer clearing 12m adjacent school 2011 **\$25,000**
- Planting of additional camp habitat 2012 **\$15,000**
- Plan of Management prepared 2013 **\$60,000**
- Vegetation buffer clearing 20m adjacent all schools and residents July 2014 **\$55,000**
- Regular community engagement and education 2013-2015 **\$10,000**
- Revegetation and maintenance of 20m buffer 2015-2016 **\$80,000**
- Dispersal cost ongoing **\$275,000** to date
- **Total to date \$500,000+ spent and still spending**





Lessons



- No one can argue against protecting vulnerable children
- Politics has a life of its own
- Communication is scary and necessary
- Dispersal needs greater consequences
- With all the facts in the world emotion will win
- Managing a camp is not easy and every situation will be different but the end point doesn't have to be the same
- Dispersal is not a sustainable action for managing flying fox camps



Photo: Ian Drinnan

ANY QUESTIONS?

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