



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Flying-fox petition to be presented to the Mayor**

30 July 2013

**The Mayor will today meet with representatives of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre to receive over 5,000 petition signatures calling for Council to leave the Cairns flying-fox colony where it is.**

“There has been an unprecedented level of community concern on this issue, with over 5,000 people signing the petition to the Mayor over the past month” explains Cairns and Far North Environment Centre Coordinator Anna McGuire. “Many people are concerned about the repercussions for the local flying-fox population, as well as the excessive cost of the dispersal, the low chance of success and the potential loss of trees from the CBD.”

“The message of the petition is simple: please leave the flying-foxes where they are. Attempting to relocate them will begin an ongoing cycle of disturbance for this protected species, as they are likely to move to a problematic location and require further dispersal efforts. In the process we are likely to lose these beautiful trees from the CBD, and potentially cause problems for local businesses and residents as the flying-foxes are likely to form multiple colonies at unknown locations within the CBD if dispersed.”

“Many people in the community appreciate that our native wildlife such as flying-foxes are what makes Cairns unique. The colony is popular with the many tourists who come here to see our unique city in the rainforest and the many native species of the area. Ridding our city of native wildlife and large trees in this way will detract from its beauty and tourism value, and would be a sad loss for the community.”

“There are alternatives to the proposed dispersal, such as covered walkways and educational signage, which would result in better outcomes for the community in the long term. We will present an alternative proposal to the Mayor today and we hope that he will consider this option.”

“Council’s decision to disperse the colony is an unpopular one and there is still time for Council to find a better solution. Past relocations show us that it is not possible to predict where the flying-foxes will move to. In most past dispersal attempts the flying-foxes did not leave the original area, and in instances where they did move they generally moved less than 600 metres from the original site.”

“The harsh reality is that this proposed dispersal would be costly and unlikely to succeed, and is likely to create more problems than solutions. We are asking the Mayor to consider alternatives to dispersing the colony, as the current course of action is not in the best interests of the community.”

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**Media opportunity post-meeting:** 3pm Tuesday 30 July, Council chambers