



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries

Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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HODGKINSON GOES INTO BAT FOR LOCAL FARMERS

NSW Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson today said the State Government is working hard to help farmers limit the damage caused by Flying Foxes to valuable horticulture crops.

“There is no question something must be done to stop the destruction of valuable fruit crops like apples and stone fruit,” Katrina Hodgkinson said.

“Some of the State’s premier inland fruit growing regions such as Young, Orange, Bathurst and Tumut are now witnessing significant numbers of Grey-headed Flying Foxes.

“The State Government will not abandon farmers at this time.

“Environment Minister Robyn Parker and I are working side by side to ensure we find a balance between protecting farmers’ orchards and the unnecessary destruction of Grey-headed Flying Foxes.

“The former Labor Government sat on its hands on this issue – the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government will not do the same.

“That is why on the second day as Minister, I asked the NSW Department of Primary Industries to present an options paper for the State Government to consider.

“The options paper raises the possibility of calling on the Federal Government to re-assess the listing of Grey-headed Flying Fox as a vulnerable species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act and investigating the extension of bat netting grants and financial assistance measures for NSW fruit producers.

“The State Government will be examining a number of options aimed at assisting orchardists to protect their crops now and into the future, but not at the expense of animal welfare.”

To assist farmers currently struggling to protect their crops, Minister Hodgkinson said the NSW Government would immediately act to:

- **Fast track the issuing of shooting licences (from 48 hours to 24 hours)** and the application and approval for relocating camps if required.

Member for Orange Andrew Gee said the increased populations are putting pressure on crops and causing significant damage to late season apples.

“In Orange alone, there are reports of 3,000 flying foxes roosting in trees on the outskirts of the city,” Mr Gee said.

“We are told that last year flying foxes caused around \$250,000 worth of damage to local fruit crops in the Orange district – that is why we are acting immediately.”

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