



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 27 October 2011

MYSTIC SANDS, FLYING FOXES

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.59 pm): During the last sitting of this parliament I spoke about the huge colony of flying foxes that had taken up residence in the backyards of residents at Mystic Sands near Balgal Beach in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. Today I lodged a petition on behalf of 284 constituents requesting that the Minister for Environment put the health and welfare of the local community ahead of protecting what can no longer legitimately be called an endangered native animal. The petition calls on the minister to immediately issue a damage mitigation permit and make available the resources of the Department of Environment and Resource Management to deal with this totally unacceptable situation and move on the flying foxes to a more suitable location within the thousands of hectares of state forest and national park adjacent to this community. The petition seeks to draw to the attention of the House the severe health risk and the significant diminution of living amenity suffered by the residents at Mystic Sands due to the presence of this enormous colony of flying foxes.

I wrote to the minister on 11 October 2011 on behalf of my constituents at Mystic Sands pleading with her to take action on this issue without delay. A full week after I had written to the minister requesting immediate action to move on the huge colony of flying foxes, the only response from DERM had been to distribute an awareness flyer into the mailboxes of local residents at Mystic Sands. The minister's response to my representations received on Tuesday this week was bitterly disappointing, confirming what people in a number of communities across Queensland that have previously been inundated with these bats already know: the Bligh Labor government will abandon them when they need help to deal with the stench, the noise, the damage to their properties and the total loss of any quality of life in favour of the perceived rights of the bats.

Last Friday afternoon most of the bats in the colony of flying foxes at Mystic Sands left after several weeks of intolerable disruption of the lives of local residents, particularly between Howitson Drive and Augusta Drive. However, we can never know when the bats will return and repeat their unwelcome intrusion or how long they will stay on that occasion. What I can say to my constituents at Mystic Sands is that an LNP government will not abandon them as the Bligh Labor government has done. An LNP government will work with councils and landowners affected by nuisance flying fox colonies to ensure the health and welfare of local communities is not adversely affected. An LNP government will overhaul the damage mitigation permit system to allow for the faster and more effective relocation of unwelcome flying fox colonies. An LNP government will issue DMPs for longer periods of time so that councils can act quickly should bat colonies return. The LNP is committed to listening to local communities in Queensland.