



MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister Hunt and a Whole Lot of Nonsense About Bats

Commenting on Environment Minister Greg Hunt's visit to the NSW south coast, Carmel McCallum, the Greens candidate for Gilmore said, "Does Greg Hunt have any idea what he is talking about?"

"It has been reported that last week at a meeting in Batemans Bay he has given the Eurobodalla Council complete freedom to do as they choose in dealing with Grey Headed Flying Foxes at Water Gardens.

"It is to be hoped that Ann Sudmalis doesn't try any similar pork-barreling tactics during the current election campaign.

"As I understand it, the matter is being dealt with through consultation between Council and the state Office of Environment and Heritage. But what can be done or should be done to resolve the problem?

"The flying fox presence is no doubt due to the unseasonal weather associated with the growing climate change phenomenon and the intense flowering event of spotted gums this Autumn/Winter season.

"Naturally the flying foxes are finding the protected feeding habitat at Water Gardens an attractive proposition, as their habitat in the forests around Batemans Bay are being destroyed by intense logging.

"The flying fox problem will no doubt be resolved naturally as the flowering falls away over the next few weeks and as we move into the winter months.

"However, the flying foxes need somewhere else to go, but while their habitat is being destroyed throughout our local forests their future doesn't look very promising.

"Little wonder they are listed as a threatened species.

"Our south coast forests need to be managed for their conservation and job-creating tourism values, not for the few logging jobs subsidised by the state government," said Mrs McCallum.

Greens NSW Senator Lee Rhiannon said, "The key issue is to save the natural habitat of Grey Headed Flying Foxes. That is the best solution for the local community.

"Minster Hunt would make a more useful contribution to finding solutions if he worked to end the logging of native forests, the natural habit of these bats. More habitat means the bats would not be concentrated in one location.

"This bat species plays a critical role in pollinating the forest species they feed on.

"The very survival of some of our local tree species such as the spotted gum is dependent on the pollinating services provided by the Grey Headed Flying Fox," said Senator Rhiannon.

For further information

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