

Heatwave and bats (flying foxes)

As you may be aware the current heatwave conditions being experienced in North Queensland are having an unexpected impact on the bat population in local areas causing mass deaths.

Bats – whether alive, dead or dying pose significant risk to humans, so the safest advice is “DO NOT TOUCH BATS”.

Additionally, for the clean-up of dead/dying bags:

- Councils should remove bats that could come into contact with children (child care, playgrounds)
- Use brooms and shovels, no-touch technique, unless vaccinated for rabies.
- Apparently ‘dead’ bats have frequently bitten people in the past
- Bats can bite through towels and gloves

For people wanting to ‘rescue distressed bats:

- Rather call the vaccinated, trained wildlife carers
- Failing that, you could drench the bat and place shade over it without touching it – some would recover
- If you need to move a live bat, use no-touch technique such as a shovel
- Place dead bats in bins or bury them without touching
- See medical advice if bitten or scratched

Should there be any further queries in relation to bats/public health issues, the Townsville Public Health Unit can be contacted on 4433 6900.