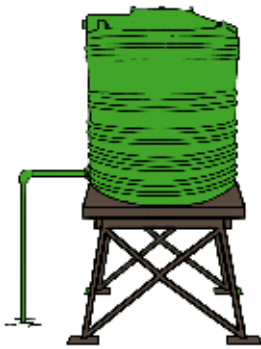


# Fact Sheet

## *Flying-foxes and Rainwater tanks*

### Do flying-foxes visit your area?

Flying-foxes often feed at night on native and introduced tree species in residential areas. Like other mammals, including cats, possums, etc, these mammals carry a range of potentially harmful microorganisms. If flying-foxes or other animals, are present around your residential area and occupying locations on or above roofs, guttering or rainwater tanks, there is potential for them to contaminate the rainwater. This could happen when contaminated material (faecal material from the animals) containing viruses, bacteria or other microorganisms, collects on the roof and gets washed into the rainwater tanks.



Refer to the *Queensland Health: Bats and Human Health* factsheet for information on diseases.

**Faecal contamination**—Like all mammals, flying-foxes can contain potentially harmful bacteria in their intestines. Faecal bacteria and other microorganisms are able to last for an extended period of time depending on the amount of contaminating material that enters the tank. These bacteria and other microorganisms have the potential to cause gastroenteritis. Typically, the risk of faecal contamination of water by low numbers of flying-foxes is no different to that risk posed by birds or other mammals such as possums or cats. However, if increased numbers of animals frequently visit your property, extensive soiling of the roof and other surfaces with faecal matter represents an increased risk to human health.

### How to Reduce Risks in your rainwater tank

If managed well, rainwater tanks can continue to provide a source of water suitable for drinking or other domestic purposes. There are several things you can do to reduce the likelihood of your rainwater tank becoming contaminated.

- Install a first flush device to divert the initial dirty flow away from the tank;
- Use a 1mm (or less) mesh screen to prevent material from entering the tank when roof run off water is collected.
- Inspect tank for bottom sediments and flush tank to remove debris if possible (every six to 12 months)
- Prune or remove all overhanging vegetation and debris from roofs, gutters or tanks (every three to six months)
- Check for evidence of animal access to tank and repair and close any openings to the tank (every six months); and
- Regularly disinfect the rainwater tank by adding a suitable disinfectant (e.g. 40mL of liquid sodium hypochlorite per 1000L of water).

For further information on managing rainwater tanks contact North Burnett Regional Council on 1300 696 272.