



# HANG ON

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THIRTEEN landholders across the state are armed and ready to fire the next salvo in the war on bats – but councils are worried a legal nightmare could emerge.

The collection of private residents – ranging from across Bundaberg, the Fraser Coast, Southern Downs and Townsville – were granted lethal damage mitigation permits during the past six months, giving them authorisation to shoot bats and flying foxes on their property.

So far this financial year, more than 1600 flying foxes have been marked for death as part of the quota allocated to date.

During the 2012-13 financial year, a total of 340 flying foxes were shot by 10 successful lethal DMP applicants – less than a fifth of the quota allocated to them.

Councils, meanwhile, are able to use non-lethal methods to move the animals on, but fear lawsuits could tie them up if the bats end up on private properties and cause grief after being shifted.

## **Legal concerns as residents aim lethal weapons at bats**

They want immunity not only for local governments, but all landholders.

Western Downs Mayor Ray Brown recently demanded a letter from the State Government spelling out that his council had been authorised to move bats on from Chinchilla.

Mr Brown said he had hoped it would offer them an extra level of legal protection if something went wrong.

"I said we weren't going to move unless we had that letter," he said.

"I wanted it from the Government that we had the authority to move them on, directed by the State Government – which means State Government gave local government the authority to move them on, which means when it gets to court they're

the biggest fish in the ocean and the lawyers can have a crack at them."

Bundaberg has emerged as Queensland's least bat-friendly region.

The area has raked in more than three-quarters of the State Government's lethal permits.

Ten residents in the Bundaberg Regional Council area received the go-ahead to begin killing bats during the past six months alone.

There is also one applicant each from the Fraser Coast, Southern Downs and Townsville areas getting the green light.

Meanwhile, 14 non-lethal permits have been issued for properties stretching between the Tablelands in north Queensland to Brisbane City.