

Organisation Policy

Organisation policy title	Management of Barbed Wire Policy 2021
Organisation policy owner	Director Environment, Recreation, and Infrastructure
Approved by	Bayside City Council
Date approved	15 June 2021
Scheduled review	June 2026
Document reference	DOC/21/209986

([Council Policy](#) is a high level public statement formally resolved by Council, which clearly states Council's requirements, intent or position with regard to a particular matter or issue. It is not intended to be procedural in nature).

1. Policy intent

The Management of Barbed Wire Policy (The Policy) is intended to reduce the risk of harm to native wildlife in Bayside from barbed wire that is on properties located on Council owned or managed land.

The decline in Australia's biodiversity is one of the key environmental issues of our time. Bayside City Council is committed to protecting and enhancing and increasing conservation effort within its unique natural areas. Council adopted the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 2018. There are two key goals in the BAP that support the development of this Policy: *Biodiversity Conservation and Protection* and *Managing Threatening Processes*.

2. Policy purpose

The Grey-headed Flying Fox (GHFF) is commonly found in Bayside and is one of two flying fox species listed as threatened under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and they are considered 'Vulnerable' due to a significant decline in numbers as a result of loss of their prime feeding habitat and disruptions to their camp sites.

Key threats to GHFF include habitat destruction, camp disturbance and heat stress events.

An additional threat is entanglement in either inappropriate fruit-tree netting (where unsuspecting bats landing in fruit trees draped with netting become entangled causing life-threatening injuries) and/or entanglement in barbed wire. These entanglements

inflict a terrible toll not only on the wildlife, but also on the time and resources of wildlife rescuers and carers. Around 80% of all GHFF entangled in barbed wire die slow and painful deaths or need to be euthanised. Barbed wire can also take a similar toll on owls and tawny frogmouths, and both these species also found in Bayside.

Barbed wire is a major hazard for wildlife. Each year throughout Australia, thousands of animals face death or permanent injury from entanglement on barbs, usually on the top strand. Many fail to see the fence or cannot clear the height under windy conditions. Most of those rescued are too severely damaged to return to the wild.

Barbed wire has become both an animal welfare and conservation issue throughout the country and is recognised as a threatening process in draft and/or recovery plans for several vulnerable native species, including the GHFF. Due to increased promotion and awareness of these entanglement issues, there are now a number alternative types of wildlife friendly fruit netting and fencing types that can be used to reduce the impact on native wildlife.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- protect and reduce the risk of harm to native wildlife (in particular the Grey-headed Flying Fox, Tawny Frogmouth, and various owl species) from barbed wire in Bayside;
- eliminate barbed wire wherever possible on Council land;
- not install any barbed wire in the future, except in rare and exceptional circumstances for security purposes and in these cases restricts the use of barbed wire to a single, marked strand; and
- where it is not possible to eliminate barbed wire due to either security and access reasons, providing wildlife-friendly alternatives such reducing the number of strands to one single strand only and making barbed wire visible with brightly coloured flagging tape.

The implications of the Policy have been assessed and are not considered likely to breach or infringe upon, the human rights contained in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

3. Glossary - Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
GHFF	Grey-headed Flying Fox
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan

4. Scope

This Policy is applicable to all Council-owned and managed open space and/or buildings in or adjacent to Council-owned and managed open space areas.

5. Policy statement

Bayside will eliminate (where possible) and/or reduce the risk of harm to native wildlife in Bayside from barbed wire on properties located on Council owned or managed land.

Bayside will not install any barbed wire in the future, except in rare and exceptional circumstances for security purposes and in these cases restricts the use of barbed wire to a single, marked strand

6. Monitoring, evaluation & review

- An audit of all Council properties is required to determine how much barbed wire is in Bayside.
- Depending on the location, amount, and reasoning behind the initial installation of barbed wire, barbed wire will be removed completely or, if complete removal is not possible, replaced with a single strand of flagged barbed wire.
- This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis or until all barbed wire in Bayside has been removed and/or significantly reduced.
- Evaluation measures will include:
 - The number of properties with barbed wire completely removed;
 - The number of properties with barbed wire reduced from three strands to one strand; and
 - The reduction in reported incidents of wildlife entanglement in Bayside.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

The Manager Open Space, Recreation and Wellbeing is responsible for approving, implementing, complying with, monitoring, evaluating, reviewing, and providing advice on this Policy.

Relevant Council staff will inform the Manager on best practices for reducing risk to native wildlife around Council owned and managed buildings, and to eliminate where possible any identified associated impacts from security fencing and/or wire.

Protection of Grey-headed Flying Foxes falls under State and Federal legislation.

All Victorian native wildlife is protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

In addition, GHFF are listed nationally as vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and as a threatened species in Victoria under the *Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Harassing or causing injury to this nationally threatened species carries a maximum penalty of \$3,109.

Under the *Wildlife Act*, causing the death of a Flying Fox can result in a fine of up to \$37,310 and/or 24 months' imprisonment.

Further penalties under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* may also apply.

As a management authority for Crown Land and other public spaces, Council has a duty of care to ensure protected native wildlife is free from harm and to reduce or minimise known risks to these species where possible and practicable within Council managed land and open space.

8. Related documents

Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wildlife Act 1975</i> • <i>Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986</i> • <i>Victorian Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> • <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
Policies	
Strategies/Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Environmental Sustainability Framework 2016-2025</i> • <i>Bayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2027</i>
Procedures/Processes	
Other	

Please note: This policy is current as at the date of approval. Refer to www.bayside.vic.gov.au to ensure this is the latest version.