

# No Bat, No Me

Funded by Byron Shire Council, NSW



Byron Shire in Northern NSW is home to bat species like the threatened Grey-headed Flying-fox, micro bats and more. Bats are often feared. But microbats play an important rôle in controlling insect numbers, including a range of pest species and disease-carrying mosquitoes, by eating around 40% of their body weight in insects each night.

Human-bat conflict is prominent in Byron Bay and many other areas. Key issues people living close to bats talk about are noise and smell, while other members of community worry about disease.

Bats play so many pivotal roles in our ecosystems. Many bat species are significant pollinators and seed dispersers, contributing substantially to biodiversity. Threats such as climate change and habitat loss endanger their survival.

The Byron Shire Council initiated the Flying-Fox Camp Management Plan to address these issues, emphasizing habitat preservation and conflict management. In early 2023 community were engaged in a project called "No Bats, No Me." This project aimed to reduce human-bat conflict. The Co-create, Build, Engage (CBE) process was applied. The project started with expert interviews, followed by stakeholder workshops, community co-design and design thinking sessions.

A range of prototypes, ideas and actions were indicated. These included school film nights, information in plant nurseries, and social media campaigns targeting different demographics. The materials developed aimed to engage community dispelling myths about bats, emphasizing their ecological importance, and encouraging community to take action to help protect them.

Results indicated that communication materials with calls to action garnered the most engagement, with the social media posts achieving above average engagement rates. Most importantly, community members' now have improved understanding of bats' ecological significance post-engagement.

Challenges were encountered, including initial community frustration due to perceived inaction and the need for more investment to mobilize more support for bat conservation efforts. Further action, like habitat restoration, is urgently needed to support threatened bat species such as the Grey-headed Flying-fox and ensure their survival in critical ecosystems like Byron Shire.

## Social media posts received 191 reactions, 69 comments, and 31 shares

Before School Workshop



AFTER SCHOOL WORKSHOP

