



## **Animal Protectors Alliance Response to the Christmas Bushfires - The Way Forward**

While I grieve for everyone affected by these fires, especially the animals who have died, my foremost fear is of the global impact of such a huge, sudden increase in atmospheric carbon, alongside the sudden annihilation of such an important greenhouse gas sink.

Across the Earth the clearing of forests has been every bit as much the cause of global warming as the use of fossil fuels. Now much of the carbon stored in the remnant forests of Australia's eastern seaboard is in the atmosphere, and the forests needed to draw it out again are no longer there.

As soon as the fires allow, we need to start carefully and intelligently replanting not only the burnt forest areas but also the thousands of square kilometres of paddocks cleared for grazing sheep and cattle. These introduced species were never meant to live in this environment, and can only suffer even more if we try to keep them here as the climate continues to change.

We need to manage those restored forests properly, using the techniques the Indigenous people of Australia used for tens of thousands of years, while adapting them to increasingly unstable climatic conditions.

We also need to restore Australia's crashing kangaroo population which, in NSW, is estimated to be about 11% of the original population due to hunting and habitat loss. Unlike sheep and cattle, kangaroos graze down to exactly the right level to prevent erosion, maximise ground storey biodiversity, and prevent wildfires.

Frankie Seymour  
APA Co-Founder  
January 2020