



COURT THROWS OUT GOVERNMENT'S CASE AGAINST ANIMAL ACTIVIST

The Animal Protectors Alliance (APA) is delighted with the outcome of the ACT government's case against kangaroo slaughter protestor, Carol Drew today. Magistrate Margaret Hunter dismissed the charge of trespass on unleased Territory land that occurred in July 2014 (yes 2 years ago). The charge carries a maximum fine of \$750.

After a day of witness evidence on 26 April and another day of barristers' submissions today, the government's entire case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

The Prosecution's case was based on the claim that Ms Drew trespassed on the land where she was arrested, because there were two signs, one on the gate by which the Pinnacle Reserve is accessed, and another somewhere on a nearby fence, saying that entry to the land was closed because firearms were being used on the Reserve

The Magistrate dismissed the charge on two counts:

1. there was no evidence that the Minister or his delegate had caused these signs to be erected; and
2. there was no evidence that Ms Drew had been on unleased Territory land when she was arrested.

In fact one of the Prosecution's witnesses, the ranger who arrested Ms Drew, had stated clearly that she was in fact on leasehold land at the time.

The Defence (represented by Mr Karl Pattenden) had also argued that, in any case, the signage had not clearly stated that entering unleased Territory land was an act of trespass.

Mr Pattenden said there was no continuity of evidence to show that the sign in the photograph, submitted into evidence, was the same sign that had been photographed on the night in question. The Magistrate concluded that she did not need to rule on either of these matters as she had already concluded there was insufficient evidence to proceed further.

APA spokesperson Robyn Soxsmith, said this afternoon, "It is such a relief to know that some magistrates are still capable of looking at the evidence, or lack thereof, and coming to the only sensible conclusion. After the bizarre outcome of the Chris Klootwijk case in April, we had almost given up hope that we could get a just outcome in Carol's case."

Ms Soxsmith explains that Dr Klootwijk was found guilty of hindering a government official, who was overseeing kangaroo shooting, even though the shooting was taking place under an invalid licence, and even though Dr Klootwijk's reason for causing the 'hindrance' (ie by attracting the attention of the rangers) was to report an injured kangaroo.

"It was never clear why the Magistrate found Chris guilty, other than, perhaps, the fact that the ceasefire was called when Chris yelled and whistled to get the rangers' attention, rather than when he reported the wounded kangaroo. How Chris was supposed to report the wounded kangaroo without first getting the rangers' attention was never explained!"

Dr Klootwijk's appeal against the guilty verdict in his case will be considered by the Supreme Court on 21 July 2016.

“Meanwhile good people, who are concerned only about the brutal treatment of ACT kangaroos, are being persecuted by a government that cares almost as little about its citizens as about its kangaroos,” Ms Soxsmith said. “And ACT taxpayers are being expected to fork out vast amounts of money to fund this persecution.”