



PRESS RELEASE - ACT KANGAROO SHOOTERS CONTINUE TO ENDANGER PEOPLE'S LIVES

When laws and government institutions are carefully twisted to ensure that the buck stops nowhere, government officials can commit crimes against the public with impunity. Each crime the officials get away with gives them permission to commit a more extreme crime. The rule of law quickly ceases to exist altogether.

APA reserve watchers, Robyn Soxsmith and Frankie Seymour were on watch for kangaroo shooters last night at the Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve. (Ms Seymour recently stood as the Animal Justice Party candidate for the seat of Eden Monaro in the federal election, coming in fourth out of nine candidates behind only the major parties and the Greens.)

Ms Soxsmith witnessed first-hand this progression of government misbehaviour from bad to worse. Ms Soxsmith claims that at around 6.00 pm, a shooter, unaccompanied by any government rangers, rode his quad-bike along just inside the Isaacs Ridge Nature Reserve fence, shooting kangaroos as he went. He was shooting less than twenty metres from Mugga Lane.

‘At first, we thought he must be a private recreational shooter using the protection of the shooting signs on the reserve fences to have his own little blood orgy,’ said Ms Soxsmith this morning. ‘We were thinking of calling the police, but then someone nearby sounded an air horn.

‘Shortly afterwards, I saw the radio on the shooter’s dashboard light up and not long afterwards, the rangers arrived. We assume the shooter must have called the rangers to ‘protect’ him from the air horn, so he must have been one of the government’s hired guns after all.’

Ms Soxsmith comments, ‘Last year, the government’s shooters got away with shooting kangaroos very close to the Centenary Trail on the Rose Cottage Horse Paddocks - a trail which cyclists and dog walkers use at all hours of the night.

A court case arising from a separate incident last year revealed that the government’s standard licence for shooting kangaroos was invalid because it referred to the wrong clause of the Nature Conservation Act.

‘But that was just a technicality,’ Ms Soxsmith said. ‘The shooters had no way of knowing the officials back in the TAMS office were incompetent. But they did know the shooting near the Centenary Trail was illegal, no ifs or buts; and it was certainly dangerous, putting public safety at risk.’

Ms Seymour added, ‘The APA complained about the illegal and dangerous shooting on the Horse Paddocks to the ACT Ombudsman. The Ombudsman responded that the *Ombudsman Act* specifically precludes the Ombudsman from investigating misbehaviour by officials engaged in ‘environmental management. He suggested we complain to the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. So we did.

“The Commissioner told us it was nothing to do with her, we should tell it to the police,” Ms Seymour continued. “The Police Operational Standards Monitoring Centre and, after that, the Law Enforcement Ombudsman - without any attempt to deny that the shooting was both unlawful and endangered human life - dismissed our complaint for no apparent reason. All the bodies that are supposed to be government watchdogs slammed their doors in our faces.

“So now these officials think they have *carte blanche* to allow shooting to take place anywhere they like, with or without a licence. And they appear to be doing it. It is only a matter of time before a person is shot. No doubt the government will try to make out the victim was a protestor and ‘they brought it on themselves’. But it won’t be. It will be a cyclist or a dog walker or a passing motorist,” Ms Seymour said.

Full documentation for every detail of the matters mentioned above is available to any investigative journalist with the time and interest to peruse them.

“Meanwhile,” Ms Soxsmith noted, “This year’s slaughter continues unabated. After the shooting earlier in the night, we heard a lot of the soft, muffled ‘euthanasia’ shots. Evidently, many kangaroos had not been killed by the first shot, and had to lie around in agony until the shooter or the rangers, whichever it was, could be bothered cleaning up after their killing spree.”

“And then there is all the usual collateral damage, the ones terrified onto the roads, hit by cars, crucified on barbed wire fences, drowned in dams. Neither those, nor the thousands of joeys killed even count in the government’s published ‘kill’ numbers,” Ms Soxsmith noted.

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