



BUSHFIRE CRISIS AND WILDLIFE CATASTROPHE

As fires rage around the ACT, uncontrolled and unlikely to be fully extinguished for months, kangaroos are fleeing into the ACT, many dying of their wounds, or on our roads, or on our barbed wire fences.

The ACT was once a refuge for kangaroos fleeing shooting in surrounding NSW. Now it is a deadly sink where thousands of these animals are slaughtered every year.

The government defends the annual slaughter by claiming that shooters are required to adhere to a Code of Practice.

Spokesperson for APA, Robyn Soxsmith described this claim as "unforgivable hypocrisy".

Former member (for nearly 18 years) of the ACT government's own Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC), Frankie Seymour, explains that the entire purpose of the Code of Practice is to exempt from prosecution acts of cruelty that would otherwise be offences under the ACT's own Animal Welfare Act.

Ms Seymour asserts, "The ACT government had the option of developing a humane code of practice: one that prohibited killing of mothers with dependent young, bludgeoning joeys to death or orphaning them to starvation, prohibited herding and driving kangaroos into a state of fatal myopathy. They could have had a code that recognised the ACT as the 'Bush Capital', recognised Canberra's unique role in providing a refuge from the unfettered carnage underway in NSW. Instead they joined the other states in betraying our native animals for all the worst possible reasons.

"I believe the killing serves no other purpose than to garner votes and agistment fees for cattle grazing from farmers, and high rents and rates from developers. It has nothing to do with protecting the environment," Ms Seymour concludes.

Robyn Soxsmith continues. "The ACT government claims its slaughter of kangaroos is science-based and environmentally beneficial. But when you look into the sources they quote in the references section of their Kangaroo Management Plan, you discover that there is no independent science that justifies the annual massacre.

"Even the CSIRO found that three kangaroos per hectare is better for the environment than none, and no worse than one or two. Yet the government's 'calculator' of how many to kill is based on the totally imaginary and arbitrary premise that more than one kangaroos per hectare is too many. In deference to this science-free calculator, the government religiously kills any kangaroos in excess of one per hectare."

The APA, together with Animal Liberation ACT, Animal Justice Party (AJP) ACT, Vegan ACT, and the Anti-Speciesist Action Collective are calling on the ACT government to assure the people of Canberra that, in view of the fires and the ACT's status as a refuge for kangaroos who have miraculously escaped into the Canberra region, there will be no government slaughter of kangaroos this year.

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