



PRESS RELEASE: THE BLOODBATH HAS BEGUN - ANIMAL PROTECTORS ALLIANCE

About 60 gunshots have been heard by animal protection protesters watching the reserves since reserves of the Canberra Nature Park closed for shooting on 15 June.

Watchers heard about 20 shots at Mulligans' Flat Nature Reserve on Monday night, while the shooters' heavy vehicle ground its way over the rain-soaked mud and fragile flora of the reserve. The shooting stopped when the shooters became aware of the protesters' vehicle outside the reserve.

Last night, on Isaacs Ridge Reserve, about 40 shots were fired between 7.00 pm and 2.00 am. As in previous years, the shooting at Isaacs Ridge was dangerously close to the reserve fence and Mugga Lane road. But this time the shooters did not stop shooting, even when protesters on foot outside the fence alerted him to their presence.

The shots were mostly 10 to 15 minutes apart, suggesting that the shooters were finding it hard to find and identify kangaroos. This is not surprising because it was very foggy. Tragically, this increases the likelihood that kangaroos being wounded rather than killed outright, and decreases the chances that shooters were able to find the wounded to finish the kill.

With the loss of millions of kangaroos in last summer's bushfire holocaust, and the CSIRO findings that kangaroos have no detrimental impact on Canberra nature reserves, animal lovers and environmentalists were devastated that the ACT government decided, belatedly, to go ahead with the usual bloodbath.

The ACT government's implausible excuse for killing thousands every year has always been that there are 'too many' kangaroos, and they are damaging the environment. In fact, the opposite is true. Current science, including the above-mentioned CSIRO report, shows clearly that it is the absence of kangaroos, not an allegedly high number of them, that is detrimental to the environment.

Robyn Soxsmith, spokesperson for the Animal Protectors Alliance, reminds us, "We have always known that the real reason for the slaughter is that selling off kangaroo habitat to developers brings the government heaps of money. Adjustment fees from farmers grazing cattle on nature reserves is another money spinner for the government. And then, of course, there's the old and bizarre obsession all Australian governments seem to have with pleasing the farmers at all costs."

A recent FOI release has revealed another reason for the government's annual kangaroo slaughter. The material confirms that the government provides nearly \$1m of taxpayers' money to Parks and Conservation for the slaughter each year.

Ms Soxsmith notes, "That's a huge income for ACT Parks and Conservation. Add that to pure ego, - the desperation to save face. Over the last eleven years, the government has killed around 20,000-30,000 innocent and necessary kangaroos and pouch joeys, and orphaned probably another 10,000-15,000 at-foot joeys to starvation and death. It's not surprising they dare not now admit that they never had any justification for killing kangaroos in the first place."

"If Parks and Conservation had any interest in conserving nature rather than destroying it, they would use that million bucks on build a series of wildlife corridors to link the reserves of the Nature Park rather than to massacre the keystone species on which the other flora and fauna of the reserves depend for their survival," Ms Soxsmith concludes.