



Animal welfare experts and advocates are reeling at the ACT government's preposterous assertion that a non-fatal wounding rate of 5% of the kangaroos it kills represents a "relative infrequency of adverse events".

If the government is asking us to believe that this 5% is likely to be consistent across all nights of killing, across all ACT reserves in 2023, it means some 52 kangaroos, in this year alone, suffered the agony of wounding before they died. If the government is arguing that this 5% is consistent across all nights of killing on all reserves since its annual slaughter began, it means that around 1600 kangaroos have suffered wounding before they died.

This is in addition to the suffering of the 10,000 pouch joeys who have been bludgeoned to death or decapitated, the thousands more at-foot joeys orphaned to die of hypothermia, thirst, hunger and myopathy, and uncounted adults and juveniles fleeing the shooting in panic, who have collided with barbed wire fences or motor vehicles.

Even worse, this horrific estimate that 1600 kangaroos have suffered excruciating wounds before dying or being finished off by the shooters is very likely to be a significant underestimate. The shooters would have known the vet was observing them, and would have been on their best behaviour, far more careful than usual not to breach the Code of Practice in any way.

Eyewitness to the ACT's kangaroo slaughter for the last 12 years have reported frequent breaches of the Code or Practice.

The Code states that where the conditions raise doubts about achieving a sudden and humane death, shooting must not be attempted. Yet witnesses repeatedly report shooting occurring in high winds of up to 45kph, heavy rain, and fog – all of which pretty much guarantee a high wounding rate.

The Code requires that if an animal is wounded but not killed, no further shooting must take place until it is found and dispatched. Yet in 2017 at Issacs Ridge, witnesses heard kill shots over an hour after the shooting had finished.

It should be stressed that, aside from the numbers wounded, the panic related injuries and the appalling treatment of the joeys, killing healthy, free-living wild animals is always cruel because it rips apart families, traumatises the survivors, and prematurely robs the victims of their lives.

This sum total of cruelty to sentient beings would be hard to justify whatever the reasons for it. The ACT government's alleged reasons for killing kangaroos have been so thoroughly debunked by the CSIRO analysis of the government's own on desirable kangaroo numbers, by their wildly inaccurate estimates of kangaroo populations, and by their biologically impossible assertions about kangaroo breeding rates.

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