

Wildlife Act Review

Issues Paper questions – Response 51:

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Primary interests:

- Protection and conservation of wildlife and habitat
- Management and control of wildlife causing problems or damage
- Wildlife welfare
- Compliance and enforcement

Question responses

4.1.1 Does the Act require an adequate degree of transparency about, and accountability for, decision making on matters relating to wildlife? If not, how could this be improved? For example, which activities/decisions/criteria should be more transparent? Which parties should be more accountable and for what?

I was responsible for the discontinuance of requiring returns for ATCWs based on our knowledge that many of the returns had little relationship to reality - they were selected works of fiction. Some ATCW holders would claim that they had shot all the kangaroos on their permit, thinking that this would mean they would get another ATCW readily. Others would claim only a small number of their permitted allocation, also thinking that this would aid in getting another ATCW. Yet others would stop counting when they reached the number permitted on their ATCW, but would keep shooting. And then there are those who simply don't apply for an ATCW and shoot whatever wildlife they perceive to be causing them problems, or that they can feed to their dogs. That's the reality. These comments are based on hearing from landholders over many years while I was in the role of what was called the "Wildlife Damage Control Officer". I strongly believe that there should be restrictions on what species are permitted to be handled by wildlife rehabilitators. Abundant species such as the Eastern Grey Kangaroo and, in urban areas, Common Brushtail Possums, should be excluded from the list of species able to be rehabilitated. It makes no sense for effort being put into rehabilitating species for which many thousands are authorised to be destroyed each year, in the case of EGK, and of Common Brushtail Possums, where they are abundant and problematic in urban areas. Several other aspects of some (many) wildlife shelter operations are troubling, and stem from lack of scrutiny. These include releasing animals in areas other than where they came from; keeping domestic dogs and cats with wildlife, or where they use the same areas, risking transmission of diseases; over-humanising animals; keeping animals that should have been killed humanely at the outset; and keeping animals for long periods - all of these aspects being breaches of the Code of Practice under which they are authorised.

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