

## Wildlife Act Review Submission

### **Topic for consideration**

Enforcement of accountability to breaking the wildlife act.

### **Reason for submission**

As a wildlife shelter operator and veterinary nurse I have had many experience where I have reported cases of members of the public braking the wildlife act to DELWP, where I have not even had a response to my report. I have had juvenile magpies brought in where they have been hand raised by unlicensed members of the public, who have released them at a young age, with no idea they are a magpies and have ended up flying onto people's heads. Even with the MOPs personal details given to them, my report was ignored.

I had a magpie fledgling brought in where it's wings had been clipped by a member of the public who obviously wanted to keep this wild bird as a pet, my report went ignored.

My list can go on how many times I have had to witness the act and laws being broken but no action has been taken.

### **My Review suggestion**

There must be stronger enforcement of the legislation with an independent regulator to support accountability of breaking the wildlife act.

### **Topic to Review**

Welfare of wildlife under veterinary care

### **Reason for review**

Many veterinarians see wildlife during times in between their schedules, which suggests many wildlife cases with potentially painful injuries do not receive sufficient care, which may include euthanasia, analgesia, fluid therapy or referral. Leaving any wild animal in lengthy captivity for treatment that is most likely not going to be successful is considered unethical. Wildlife are incredibly vulnerable to stressors such as handling, captivity and noise from domestic animals, so if the decision is to euthanase then it must be made quickly. Unfortunately wildlife can be left in cages for up to 12 hours before even being examined by a veterinarian. As a veterinary nurse in private practice I witness this daily, and this is unacceptable for the welfare of this animal.

### **Proposal for review**

Veterinarians need to be given a legal responsibility to examine and review sick and injured wildlife within a reasonable time limit. It should be an offense for any wildlife to be left untreated for long periods of time in amongst noise from domestic animals and human presence, with no veterinary intervention.

### **Topic for review**

Euthanasia of brushtail possums from commercial buildings

### **Reason for review**

Currently the council provide permits to commercial buildings for the entrapment of brushtail possums. The council then transfer these possums into veterinary clinics for euthanasia, even though the Cruelty Against Animals Act explains trapped possums should be released on site of capture. Healthy possums, including mums with joey's, are then euthanased which causes severe stress on veterinary staff and places a lot of pressure on the wellbeing of the staff having to be involved. I work as a veterinary nurse and have had to deal with this problem for 15 years. I have contacted both the Australian veterinary Association and DELWP about this case. Both agreed that healthy possums should be released on site of capture. However Pest Controllers still present healthy possums, in good body condition that suggests they are living in a sustainable habitat. They are euthanased with no queries from the veterinarian on why this animal was not released.

### **Solution**

Under the wildlife act veterinarians should be made to review each possum presented individually with a health assessment. Detailed evidence from pest control officers must be obtained as to why the animal was not released on site of capture. If a veterinarian feels the possum is in good condition, then pest controllers should then be enforced to release the possum on site of capture. If the procedure is not followed correctly by either veterinarian or pest control officer, then suitable reprimand is imposed. Only if the possum is compromised should it then be allowed to be humanly euthanased.

### **Submission Topic**

Humane euthanasia of wildlife

### **Reasons for review**

It is currently advised by zoo and wildlife veterinarians that all wildlife should be euthanased under sedation or general anaesthetic, any other form of administering a barbiturate is considered unethical. However many private practice veterinarians still administer the lethal barbiturate into organs of wildlife while conscious. Handling causes severe stress to wildlife, and the barbiturate is a thick solution that causes pain when administered, this is an unethical approach and welfare concern to euthanasia of wildlife.

### **Solution**

Legislation should make it mandatory for all wildlife to be provided a sedation or anesthetic prior to euthanasia, to prevent welfare issues for that individual. All life deserves a pain free and respectable death.

**Topic of review**

Hunting of native wildlife

**Reason for review**

The Kingsford study has been operating for over 30 years and is entrusted to report waterbird abundance ahead of GMAs recommendations to the Minister. This year they found waterbirds had dropped a further 23%, bringing Eastern Australia's total waterbird loss to 90% in the past four decades - it should have cancelled the season. Threatened species are shot every year, even birds such as swans and crested terns are shot by shooters who cannot identify what they are shooting.

No native wildlife should be hunted.

**Solution**

**Stop all hunting of Native Australian wildlife**