



CAPITAL HERBIVORE

Winter 2014

The newsletter of Vegan ACT

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Who Said That?

Who was it who said...

'Ask the experimenters why they experiment on animals, and the answer is: "Because the animals are like us." Ask the experimenters why it is morally okay to experiment on animals, and the answer is: "Because the animals are not like us."

Animal experimentation rests on a logical contradiction.'

Answer at the end of this newsletter

WELCOME



To the brrrrr Winter edition of Capital Herbivore. The newsletter will be coming out every two months from now on, and will probably be a lot smaller than this one! This edition is packed

with letters, mostly about the emotional and ongoing issue of the annual kangaroo cull.

Keep your eye on the Facebook page and weekly update for the link to a poll regarding the newsletter. I would really appreciate it if everyone could respond.

As always I welcome input from you, dear readers. This is your newsletter and it is a much more interesting read when there are articles, info and recipes from a variety of people. Thank you very much to all the contributors this time, and please continue to send articles, recipes, suggestions and comments to me at newsletter@actveg.org.au.

Tracey Lofthouse, Ed.

Facilitator's report

From Jacky, Outreach Facilitator

The last six months have seen Vegan ACT move forward with our outreach and engagement programs. We have a new committee structure and have voted to change the name of our organisation to Vegan ACT from the ACT Vegan and Vegetarian Society. This was in response to growing awareness of the cruelty of the egg and dairy industries, as well as their contribution to climate change.

The name change will require a rebranding, which we are working on as I write. Any members interested in helping out are more than welcome!

We hosted Will Tuttle in Canberra in February and we are planning to organise screenings of *The Ghosts in our Machine* and *Cowspiracy*.

Students of Sustainability

I gave a workshop on "Eat Green and Save the Planet" on July 3 as part of the Students of Sustainability conference at the ANU in Canberra. About 15 students attended from different universities across Australia and discussions began about starting a Vegan ACT group at the ANU.

Jacky

Vegan ACT Survey Results

From Rowena, Online Facilitator

On 21 March, we opened up a survey to get some information to better know you, your thoughts and wishes. A big thank you to the 65 people who responded! 39 of these were vegan, 25 vegetarian and one omnivore. 31 out of the 65 were current members (2 concession, 18 single and 11 family members). 18 were lapsed members and 16 had never joined. 18 of the 31 members were vegan. 8 were on the south side of Canberra, 8 were outside Canberra and the rest were on the north side.

Here follows the collated responses to the open ended questions.

1) What made you choose your current diet/lifestyle?

- 59 – animals
- 32 – the environment
- 17 – health
- 6 – spirituality
- 3 – Various - “my choice”, “Facebook discussion”, “Vegan Easy”.

2) For responding members: What made you become a member?

- 16 – to be among like-minded people
- 14 – supporting the cause
- 6 – discounts
- 4 – to get information
- 1 – environmental concerns.

For the 18 responding lapsed members: What would make you join again?

- 5 – If I lived in Canberra
- 5 – Nothing. I am too busy with work or other causes
- 2 – If I saw you doing more outreach
- 2 – Nothing I don't want to pay a fee
- 2 – New website membership payment system (with more reminders)
- 2 – Reinstating the word ‘Vegetarian’ into organisation name
- 1 – Will rejoin as I'm keen on social aspects and recipe swapping
- 1 – If there were more events on the southside
- 1 – If non-veg people were allowed to join
- 1 – Unsure

For the 16 people who have never been a member: What would make you join?

- 4 – Reduced price or higher income
- 3 – I'm looking into it
- 2 – If I lived in Canberra
- 2 – Not sure
- 1 – Nothing is stopping me
- 1 – Vegan cooking classes
- 1 – If the organisation launched a strong campaign for going vegan
- 1 – If the thought of talking to vegans was less intimidating
- 1 – More time

3) What do you like about the organisation?

- 21 – Promotes veganism and compassion for all
- 18 – Facebook group discussions and information sharing
- 15 – Weekly updates
- 12 – Full of committed, kind and friendly people
- 11 – Provides support of like-minded people
- 9 – Social events
- 8 – Participation in community protests and events
- 7 – Events
- 7 – Opportunities to meet others
- 5 – It is very active
- 5 – The newsletter
- 3 – Discounts
- 3 – Talks and screenings
- 1 – Doesn't seem to do anything
- 1 – The old name
- 1 – The new name
- 1 – Great food
- 1 – Unsure

4) What would you like the organisation to do?

- 15 – Promote veganism
- 14 – Just keep doing what it is doing
- 10 – Support people as they transition to veganism
- 8 – Hold more events (especially potlucks)
- 7 – Unsure or blank
- 6 – Promote vegetarianism
- 6 – More outreach and info sessions
- 5 – Run targeted campaigns that people can easily share
- 4 – Keep the focus on Animal rights and activism
- 3 – Show link between animal rights and environmentalism
- 3 – Provide sense of community where it is easy to share discoveries
- 3 – Attract more active people
- 3 – Develop outreach educational resources
- 2 – More stalls
- 2 – Have more activities on the South-side
- 2 – More media
- 2 – Info sessions nutrition talks and education at schools
- 2 – Lobby for food labelling and other issues
- 2 – Focus more on health and environment
- 2 – Encourage food businesses to serve vegan food and promote them
- 2 – Change back to old name
- 2 – Provide recipes (maybe even compile and sell a collaborative recipe book)
- 1 – Fund ads, investigations of animal cruelty and letter-box drops
- 1 – Be more active on social media
- 1 – Provide information on research in the area
- 1 – Hold video and veg sausage sizzles
- 1 – Have a book/video borrowing service
- 1 – Look into possibility of holding events outside Canberra
- 1 – Provide cooking classes
- 1 – Get more businesses on board with discount scheme
- 1 – Promote what it does more

5) How can you contribute to the work of our organisation?

The response to this question was largely encouraging with just nine out of 65 saying they were not willing or able to do anything. We will be in contact with those who indicated interest in specific projects:

- 19 – Attending events
- 16 – Attending protests
- 14 – Researching, writing and helping to create resources
- 10 – Running or helping with info stalls and doing outreach
- 9 – Joining and renewing membership
- 7 – General volunteering
- 4 – Networking with other organisations
- 3 – Organising events or fundraising
- 3 – Accounting, Legal and marketing research
- 2 – Join the committee
- 2 – Cooking or baking
- 2 – Encourage others to join
- 1 – Give a cooking class

Anything else you'd like to add?

- Thank you for all you are doing!
- Please consider Life membership
- I like the regular emails and positive news stories
- I appreciate the chance for us to have a say
- I'd be interested to know your views on keeping pets and what to feed them
- Please make sure people are not using the discounts to get discounted cheese, eggs etc

Thanks again to the 65 people who responded! We will definitely take your feedback and suggestions on board. Special thanks to those who gave detailed answers and offers to help the Vegan ACT get out there and flourish. After all, it is up to everyone to make this world as compassionate, sustainable and healthy as we can.

Rowena

Vegan Dining Guide to Canberra 29/06/2014

Over the last couple of months we have developed a letter to send to restaurants and cafés in the region to see what Canberra has to offer vegans dining out, aside from the better known veg-friendly establishments.

The document the business owners receive details issues like what constitutes a satisfactory meal, cooking surfaces and animal product residue, additives and other lesser known products of animal origin to steer clear of, the importance of being diligent and truthful, and more.

Soon we will get all the info supportive businesses provide up onto a brand new section of the Vegan ACT website.

We hope this will make eating out a breeze for all vegans and vegans to be!

If you have any suggestions for places to contact or would like to review the letter please let us know at where@vegact.org.au.

Michelle and Gareth

Recent events

Vegan ACT Social dinner

Date: 3 May 2014

Place: Ethiopia Down Under, Pearce

On 3 May, Vegan ACT hosted a social dinner at Ethiopia Down Under in Pearce. A small and friendly bunch of members enjoyed a delicious banquet. We'd love to see you there next time!



Vegan ACT Social dinner

Date: 31 May 2014

Place: Malaysian Chapter, Belconnen



On 31 May, Vegan ACT hosted a social dinner at Malaysian Chapter in Belconnen. About 18 people came along and we sat on one long table. Just about everyone had the banquet and the food was magnificent. There is a separate vegan menu with many options, so do check this place out if you haven't been yet.

We will definitely be holding another event there soon, so keep your eye out for the announcement.

Vegan ACT Social dinner

Date: 28 June 2014

Place: Kingsland Vegan Restaurant, Dickson

On 28 June, Vegan ACT hosted a social dinner at Kingsland Vegan Restaurant. About 19 people came along and we filled up two tables – one with people having the banquet, the other a la carte. Dinner was delicious and there was plenty of food.



Some of the people on from our tables got up and danced at the end of the night,

even though there was no music! We hope to go there again soon.

Keep your eye on the weekly email and www.meetup.com/Canberra-Veg-Events/ for more events that are coming up.

Mark

Veggie Bytes

By Jacky Sutton

"Where do you get your protein and calcium?"

If I had a dollar for every time I have been asked that I would be a wealthy woman.

The idea that human mammals have to rely on the baby food of non-human animals well beyond their natural weaning for calcium has been drummed into our heads by the dairy industry lobbies for over a century.

Cows, as mammals, also require protein – as do apes, giraffes, elephants, buffalo and dozens of other herbivorous species. Plants also contain calcium, without any of the harmful side effects of cows' milk, which also contains pus, antibiotics, bio-engineered hormones, pesticides and acids, which leach calcium from human bones.

The idea that only meat contains protein has been a central meme of the meat lobby and has been around since the discovery of protein in 1839. The relationship between animal protein and cancers is often explained in terms of cholesterol and saturated fat but little research is funded into the composition of animal protein, which is the 'sacred cow' of the agro-industry.

Like milk, meat also contains antibiotics, bio-engineered hormones, pesticides and micro-proteins derived from



meat. Cattle are herbivores, but have also been fed meat-based proteins (ground up cows) in the mistaken idea that this would enhance their growth. In the 1980s it took the deaths of almost 200 people in the UK from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, before the barbaric practice of feeding cows other dead cows was made public.

These are two myths that are explored in this light-hearted song by Jonathon and Ivory:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc8TrchWeO0>

Below are 10 vegan sources of protein that are cruelty-free and won't make you sick (100g = 3.5 ounces):



1. Green

vegetables: One cup of cooked spinach (226g) has about seven grams of protein. The same serving of French beans has about 13 grams. Two cups of cooked kale has 5 grams and one cup of boiled peas has 9 grams. One hard-boiled egg has about 6 grams of protein, most red meat has about 7 grams an ounce.

2. Almond milk: One cup of almond milk can pack about 7–9 grams of protein. Eat it with some fortified cereal and you've got a totally vegan-friendly breakfast.

3. Prunes and raisins: One cup of these fruits will give about 4–5 grams of protein.

4. Nut Butter: Eat up your peanut butter, almond butter and cashew butter. A couple of tablespoons of any one of these will get you 8 grams of protein.

5. Quinoa: This versatile, delicious grain contains about 9 grams of protein per cup.

6. Tofu: Four ounces of tofu will get you about 9 grams of protein.

7. Lentils: One cup cooked delivers 18 grams of protein.

8. Beans: One cup of pinto, kidney or black beans, you'll get about 13–15 grams of protein.

9. Tempeh: One cup of tempeh packs about 30 grams of protein! That's more than five eggs or a regular hamburger patty.

10. Sprouted-grain bread: Pack a sandwich with vegan sprouted-grain bread and you'll get about 10 grams of protein in the bread alone.



Animal Liberation ACT

PO Box 320 Civic Square Canberra ACT 2608 info@al-act.org

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Monday 16 June 2014

Poor animal welfare outcomes and flawed administrative processes in ACT kangaroo culls accepted by Tribunal

The decision by the ACAT on Wednesday was a sad moment, not just for the almost 2,000 kangaroos and joeys who will be killed, but for the ACT itself.

What this decision signified is the very low standard in terms of animal welfare, scientific evaluation and administrative processes that the ACT has accepted for these government sanctioned kills.

The Tribunal did not dispute Animal Liberation ACT's evidence that a large number of orphaned joeys die from the government kills as 'unintended' victims. The Tribunal heard evidence of the 'ghost population' of joeys who are over a year old and out of their mothers' pouches, but who are still dependent on their mothers' milk to survive. It was accepted by the government's veterinary witness that hundreds of these joeys are orphaned during the government's kill, and left to die from starvation or predation. But these helpless victims are not included in the government's kill numbers – hence the ghost population of unintended animals killed during the culls.

Carolyn Drew, spokesperson for Animal Liberation ACT, said: 'The Tribunal held that this high degree of unintended mortality is "acceptable". I'm sure many Canberrans would be disturbed to know that allowing hundreds of these small animals to die a slow, painful death is now an accepted part of the government's culls. That is a very, very low standard of animal welfare for these culls.'

The Tribunal also accepted an extremely low standard of administrative checks and balances regarding the culls. The decision to grant the licences to kill the kangaroos is made by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, which is supposedly an independent decision-making entity. Yet the Tribunal heard evidence of how a single public servant in the Environment and Sustainability Directorate is responsible for proposing the scientific grounds for the culls, sitting on committees for it, preparing the briefs for the Conservator, and even writing the statement of reasons for the Conservator's decision. During the hearing, the government employee admitted to inserting scientific information that the Conservator had not even seen into the statement of reasons for the Conservator's decision. The employee also admitted that the consultants' report on the government's website justifying the kangaroo counts and density estimates this year was *not* a 'peer review' of these supposedly scientific bases for the culls.¹ Moreover the employee admitted that there was no effective monitoring of the culls or cull sites that informed the decision for the culls.

'The Tribunal just dismissed these serious flaws in the decision-making processes by saying the ACT is a small jurisdiction,' said Ms Drew. 'Well we might be small, but that doesn't mean we should accept such dismally low standards for government decisions to kill thousands of healthy wild animals on public land. Canberrans, and our urban wildlife, deserve much better than this.'

Media contact: Carolyn Drew

Phone: 0425 761 632 **Email:** info@al-act.org

¹ http://www.tams.act.gov.au/parks-recreation/plants_and_animals/urban_wildlife/local_wildlife/kangaroos/review-of-eastern-grey-kangaroo-counts-and-derivation-of-sustainable-density-estimates-in-the-act

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains all and only the digits 1 through 9.



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5	1	2				9		3
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The fourth Living Green Festival is coming



Sunday 12 October

10am–4pm

Albert Hall, Canberra

Free entry

Bring your shopping bags, bring your friends!

a kinder shade of green

Vegan ACT Events

We invite you to create an event! It's easy. Just think of something with a vegan theme that you'd like to do, and decide on a date and time. Write up a few paragraphs and include your name and email address for RSVPs, then forward the information to contact@vegact.org.au and we will publicise it for you! Then all you need to do is respond in a friendly way to anyone who RSVPs, and report on it afterwards for the newsletter.

Some suggestions: A restaurant meal in the day or evening, a brekkie get-together, a walk, a picnic, a bike-ride, a potluck in your home, a talk.

This is your society – let's enjoy creating some fun times together :) If you've never organised something before, don't be afraid! We're happy to help if you're not quite sure what to do. And please think of coming along to our General Meetings – this is a good way to get more involved and to see how it all works.

We also encourage you to RSVP if you intend on coming to an event, as this is a great help to the organiser and for catering purposes, and means we can contact you with any changes.

Coming events



From the media release:

March Australia has announced more Australia-wide rallies for the weekend of 30–31 August this year, protesting the decisions and policies of the Australian Government.

“The marches happened because concerned, caring people around the country gave their time and effort to make them happen”, said Loz Lawrey, a March Australia coordinator. “Since then we’ve been doing a little reorganising. We’re an affiliation of regional activist groups who make their own decisions, so it takes a bit of effort to liaise with each other and coordinate our efforts. It’s about combining our voices to send a strong message that many Australians are angry about things this government is doing to our egalitarian society. Our only agenda is to provide a platform for people to have their say”.

Mr Lawrey said that March Australia is also cooperating with many other community groups to support and promote each other’s rallies and events. “There’s a groundswell of discontent with this government”, he said, “even more so after the budget announcements, and people were pretty upset before that. A lot of our regional groups are talking to other groups in their area who find themselves the victims of the budget’s vicious cuts. It’s amazing. The community is coming together to challenge this government’s harsh policies.”

Canberra Rally – Garema Place

Speaker’s corner 11am. An opportunity to speak publicly about your issue(s)

Placard making 11am

Brass band 11.45am

Speakers 12 noon:

Glenn Fowler (AEU) – primary and secondary education

Jacky Sutton (ANU) – animal food industry and climate change

John Minns (ANU) – refugees

Michael Mazengarb – renewable energy

Nadine Flood (CPSU) – Public Service cuts, employment cuts

Rod Bower (Anglican Parish, Gosford) – equal marriage, compassion

Rod Campbell (The Australia Institute) – climate change

Stephen Darwin (ANU) – university education, deregulation

Tjanara Goreng Goreng (UC) – Aboriginal Australian sovereignty

Tom Swann (Fossil Free ANU) – coal, climate change

Barbara’s Edible Gardens Workshops

Where: FOOD CO-OP SHOP – Kingsley Street, Acton

Cost: \$30 per workshop – payable on the day

Contact: Barbara – mob: 0406 013 490

Email: grow@backyardfood.com

Barbara is an enthusiastic and passionate gardener and teacher with a background in architecture, horticulture and permaculture. This series of workshops is designed to help you get your garden planned, established and ready for spring and following seasons’ planting, harvesting and delicious eating!!!

AUGUST – SATURDAY 30th, 10am – 12noon

Cancelled

OCTOBER – SATURDAY 18th, 10am – 12noon

Time to Plant Summer Crops and get ready for winter crops

- Growth habit of different crops
- Where to plant what
- Harvesting
- Continuous planting
- Awareness of need to plant seeds for winter crops



RECIPES

Pls note: An American tablespoon is equivalent to an Australian dessertspoon – Ed.

MAINS

Coconut Lentil Soup

From Yummly, via Jacky – thank you

<http://www.yummly.com/recipes/vegan-red-lentil-soup-coconut-milk>

Ingredients:

- < 1/2 purple onion (large, finely chopped)
- < 1/2 red chilli peppers
- < 1 piece ginger (peeled)
- < 1 clove garlic
- < 1 cup red lentils
- < 10 ozs coconut milk
- < 3 cups water
- < 1 tsp vegetable bouillon
- < 1 tsp ground coriander
- < 1 tsp paprika
- < 1 tsp cumin
- < salt
- < black pepper
- < 1 lime (juiced)
- < 1 tsp coconut oil

Method:

- < Finely chop the red onion
- < Heat the coconut oil in a heavy based saucepan. Add the onion, season, cover and soften for several minutes
- < Mince the chilli, garlic and ginger together. Add to pan, cover and cook for a few more minutes
- < Rinse the red lentils and add to pan along with the ground coriander, paprika and cumin. Mix thoroughly and then pour in the coconut milk and water
- < Sprinkle in the vegetable bouillon and lightly season with some salt and black pepper
- < Cover, bring to the boil and then lower to a gentle simmer for 40 minutes, ensuring to stir frequently
- < Juice the lime and set aside
- < When the lentils have softened and almost disintegrated to form a thick, creamy soup, take off the heat, pour in the lime juice, taste for seasoning and serve with a few fresh coriander leaves for garnish

EXTRAS

Homemade vegan mayo

From <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/tag/healthy-vegan-recipes/> via Jyoti – thank you

Low calorie, low carb

Ingredients:

- < 1/2 cup organic soy milk
- < 1/2 teaspoon sea salt (or less)
- < 1 teaspoon ground mustard
- < 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
- < 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- < 2 teaspoons agave nectar
- < 1 cup organic canola oil

Method:

- < Place soy milk, sea salt, ground mustard, garlic powder, vinegar and agave in a blender.
- < Place the lid on the blender and turn to slow.
- < Take the middle part of the blender's lid out while the blender is still running and slowly pour in the canola oil.
- < Place the lid back on and blend until the mayo is thick and creamy.

Notes:

This recipe is awesome as is or you can use it as a base and add whatever flavor you like. More garlic, sriracha, wasabi, chives, dill, sun dried tomato, let your imagination run wild and have fun.

I suggest using organic canola oil and organic soy milk because canola or soy that isn't organic has likely been Genetically Modified.

You can double this recipe for a bigger batch if you like.

This will stay good in the refrigerator for up to a week

Vegan cashew cheese

From <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/tag/gluten-free-vegan-recipes/> via Jyoti – thank you

Wheat and soy free. Makes one cup.

Not only is this cashew cheese delicious and easy, it is super versatile. You can put it on pizza or crumble it on a big green salad. Try it in a sandwich or use it in lasagna. You can even use it as a dip and serve carrot sticks or crackers on the side.

Cashews are high in fat and protein. The good news is that we need this type of good fat in our diets. Fat from plant sources (like nuts, seeds and avocados) actually help absorb fat soluble vitamins and healthful phytochemicals!

Ingredients:

- < 1 cup cashews (130g) soaked in 3 cups (709 ml) of water for at least 1 hour
- < 2 teaspoons lemon juice (10ml)
- < 1/2 teaspoon salt (3g)
- < 2 turns fresh black pepper
- < 1/4 cup water (60ml)

Method:

- < Soak, drain and rinse cashews.
- < Place in a food processor, along with lemon juice, salt and black pepper.
- < Pulse for about 1 minute to combine ingredients.

Notes:

You may want to turn off the food processor and scrape down the cheese from the sides a couple of times.

You will have to soak the cashews for at least 1 hour. You can soak them for up to 24 hours.

The longer you soak them the more creamy they will become. If you don't want to soak them for 24 hours, soaking them for an hour is totally sufficient.

Children!

Whether you're a chef, a cook or a danger in the kitchen, if you have a favourite vegan recipe why not share it with the rest of us?

All offerings gratefully received and acknowledged.



Letters

Some published letters from members and others.

Published in the Canberra Times unless otherwise indicated.

27 June 2014



No one is above law

Like many ordinary Canberrans, I was angry when I saw footage of the smashed windows and slashed tyres of the premises and vehicles of ACT Parks.

The action of the anti-cull activists will not stop the kangaroo cull but probably will reduce the budget for other worthwhile things such as maintaining parks and bushland.

Lara Drew (Letters, June 24) excuses these destructive acts that she claims "target private property ownership" on the grounds that they are "symbolic actions" by a group whose "moral and ethical arguments" have been ignored by authorities.

Using Lara's logic, I assume she would be quite calm if pro-cull activists also felt morally and ethically justified in taking the law into their own hands.

As citizens in a democracy, Lara's friends can influence the cull debate by expressing their views through the media, by peaceful protest, by lobbying MLAs and by running for public office. They do not have the right to destroy communal property.

They are not immune from laws passed by our democratically elected assembly.

Mike Reddy, Lyons

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/no-one-is-above-law-20140626-3aw0b.html#ixzz35o0qNqcQ>

K. Keevers (Letters, June 21 and 25) asks me to justify my view that the ACT's kangaroo cull is an ecological and animal welfare disaster. This cannot be done in a short letter to *The Canberra Times*. If K. Keevers genuinely wants to read the massive dossier of information that supports this position, he should contact one of the animal or wildlife protection organisations opposing this cull. K. Keevers seems to regard vandalism as a worse evil than slaughtering sentient beings.

Vandalism, he says, is unlawful while the senseless slaughter of thousands of animals has yet to be proven unlawful. But do evil laws make evil actions excusable? Every single thing the Nazis did in the Holocaust was lawful. They were a democratically elected government, and they made the laws. Life is more important than property.

Damage to property when it saves lives is not vandalism or in any way wrong.

No police officer or firefighter could argue with that.

Frankie Seymour, Queanbeyan, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/no-one-is-above-law-20140626-3aw0b.html#ixzz35o0h2H4I>

Police act cowardly

If a member of the public fired capsicum spray at a tethered dog, the police would describe the act as cruel, cowardly and perhaps lay charges ("Police quiet on dog spray inquiry", June 25, p3).

However, when one of their own does this they investigate the incident internally. Since when are police above the law?

John Edwards, Franklin

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/no-one-is-above-law-20140626-3aw0b.html#ixzz35o2zmdUH>

26 June 2014

Red-faced on forests

Seven minutes. That is how long it took UNESCO's World Heritage Committee to dismiss the Abbott government's bid to wind back protection of Tasmanian forests. My embarrassment and horror at the government's "feeble" attempt to create this "unacceptable precedent" in Doha will take much longer than seven minutes to diminish.

Ross Goddard, Farrer

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/silence-speaks-plenty-20140625-3atgc.html#ixzz35i4xCqEa>

25 June 2014

Clear-cut cruelty

As the ACT Chief Police Officer would know, any member of the public caught on video mistreating an animal ("Cop capsicum sprayed my dog", June 21, p1) would be arrested and charged, or summonsed, and have to appear before a court of law. It is the courts that decide appropriate sentences for criminal acts, not the ACT Chief Police Officer. There is no requirement for an internal investigation by the professional standards unit. The video evidence is clear. The police officer crossed that line. He broke the law.

P.J. Carthy, McKellar

The AFP has given a particularly tepid response to the AFP member who has demonstrably carried out cruel treatment by capsicum spraying a chained up dog ("Cop capsicum sprayed my dog", June 21, p1). He has been taken off "frontline duties"! One would think the member should be suspended from the AFP. What is the RSPCA doing?

Vic Adams, Reid

Who's the pest?

While I do not condone any damage to public property, I speak in defence of kangaroos presently being killed in Canberra nature parks but also for the huge number killed in many parts of Australia for dog food and their skins, tails and body parts (eg scrotums) sold in tourist shops.

Fertile land on the outskirts of all our cities is being eaten away for housing developments, roads etc. The same goes for our bush capital Canberra. These gentle soft-footed kangaroos are so often land-locked, their familiar territory taken away and they are seen by developers/town planners as a nuisance. I do not know the answer to the problem but perhaps a stop to small acre holdings and the subsequent dams being built close to Canberra could be one way.

The kangaroo is featured on our coat of arms, every overseas visitor wants to see kangaroos in the wild and most zoos in the world value them as a drawcard. Let's not forget that introduced animals - sheep, cattle and horses - are what trample and destroy our vegetation.

Jill Mail, Holder

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/too-hard-to-defend-marist-brothers-20140624-3arff.html#ixzz35bjvNKIt>

24 June 2014

Give goons the shove

What a sickening front-page photo ("Cop capsicum-sprayed my dog", June 21, p1)! To see such inhumane treatment meted out to a dog, and a tethered one at that, by someone purported to be an officer of the law!

Was this person on duty? If so, it looks as though anything goes with regard to dress code for the boys in blue and their version of upholding the law.

Even worse was the video of the incident where this individual was seen to actively capsicum spray and then goad the poor creature - watched by his equally irresponsible mates, all appearing to be enjoying themselves immensely.

Is this the kind of person we want in our law enforcement agency?

Animals have rights too - let's respect them and give these goons the shove. Time to recruit people with some kind of integrity.

(Mrs) Pat Watson, Red Hill

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/tax-to-hit-contractors-20140623-3aopb.html#ixzz35bjTHPap>

Protest unsurprising

It is remarkable that the public can be angered by the "vandalism" at the Farrer Parks and Conservation depot yet completely unaffected by the killing of kangaroos. This illustrates the ways in which we classify property as more valuable than life. By condemning the "vandalism" rather than condemning the killing of kangaroos, we are buying into the illusion that property is worth more than life itself. It is not unusual for social movements to implement radical forms of protest given the public remains unmoved by moral and ethical argument.

For example, freedom fighters in Nazi Germany liberated Holocaust victims and destroyed equipment that the Nazis used to kill their victims. These kinds of actions are important symbolically because they target private property ownership as a cause of animal subjugation as animals themselves are treated as property and objects.

Using moral and ethical argument is important but unfortunately ignored by those in power. Is it any surprise that individuals are choosing to engage in other protest actions - especially given they are repeatedly ignored?

Lara Drew, Page

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/tax-to-hit-contractors-20140623-3aopb.html#ixzz35bik1bLu>

23 June

Roo cull needs proof

Daniel Iglesias ("Responsible roo cull essential for ecological balance", Times2, June 19, p5) should put up or shut up in his endless claims that culling kangaroos is good for the environment. In the course of three hearings before the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, as well as government responses to a stream of freedom-of-information requests, the ACT government has still failed to show any scientific basis or data supporting its notion that there are too many kangaroos on our reserves.

Frankie Seymour, Queanbeyan, NSW

Muddle riddle

I don't think any of us should be convinced by Daniel Iglesias' muddled opinion of kangaroo ecology and its relationship to biodiversity ("Responsible roo cull essential for ecological balance", Times2, June 19, p5). Is this not the senior ACT government spokesman who said we must kill off kangaroos in case they starve in the future?

Philip Machin, Wamboin, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/call-for-asylum-seeker-reform-20140622-3am7o.html#ixzz35RV3YZ24>

20 June 2014

Hopping mad over cull

It is wrong to resort to vandalism. However, when democratic processes don't seem to work, the ACT government only has itself to blame. ("Vandals vent their anger on ACT depot over kangaroo cull", June 18, p1).

The government may have recently convinced the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal that it has a "solid scientific basis" to kill kangaroos, but in the court of public opinion the jury is still out. The government has yet to prove that killing kangaroos is making a difference to the biodiversity that endangered species depend on.

It is concerning that, for the past four years, the ACAT, the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, and indeed the RSPCA ACT - all of which are meant to have independent voices - have not held the government more accountable for its "cull the kangaroo" policy, which is based on incomplete and misleading science.

It is very likely we are killing kangaroos unnecessarily. And the government is too stubborn to change course.

Philip Machin, Wamboin, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/hopping-mad-over-cull-20140619-3agts.html#ixzz358SMpkmZ>

19 June 2014

Spot the real vandals

Daniel Iglesias ("Vandals target kangaroo cull site", June 17, p3) implies that opponents of the current kangaroo slaughter are responsible for damage to locks and fences on one of the reserves where kangaroos are scheduled to be slaughtered. Just like the government's arguments for conducting the slaughter, this opinion is unsupported by facts or evidence. Most likely the damage is the result of the government's usual chronic neglect and mismanagement of the reserves.

The real vandalism here is the slaughter itself. As well as being hideously cruel, it is an extreme form of ecological vandalism.

Frankie Seymour, Queanbeyan, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/anu-sound-of-discord-20140618-3ae64.html#ixzz3527GXJU4>

Roo cull cruel

So the ACT government's kangaroo cull is to proceed with the blessing of the Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal ("Shooters will start roo cull on Monday", June 12, p 2). Many consider these land management practices a fiasco. All aspects of culling were documented in a 1988 Report by the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare entitled Kangaroos, and clearly the controversy has not diminished.

The problem then, as it is now, was uncertainties in the scientific data. The government analysis exaggerates the risks of environmental damage by kangaroos, leading opponents to the conclusion that the culling policy is sympathetic to the perceptions and prejudices of landholders, who in the main believe that kangaroos are pests.

Federal government permission to kill otherwise protected animals is granted "to contain the deleterious effects" on land use, including pasture, crops, fences and water. Sometimes damage by other animals (mice, rabbits) and insects is incorrectly attributed to kangaroos.

Although government claims about the evidence and damage are disputable, the main problem is culling. Culling is unscientific and tantamount to institutionalised cruelty, despite reassurances by bureaucrats.

With the expansion of suburban housing and other development in Canberra, large areas of kangaroo habitat are inevitably being affected or destroyed. There is a need for more sophisticated solutions.

In this regard, progress by the ACT government has been non-existent. The Senate committee concluded that, as a principle, shooting kangaroos should be a last resort.

Lynda Graf, Garran

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/time-for-a-law-regulating-gas-prices-20140616-3a8ul.html#ixzz3528I9uzB>

18 June 2014

The next three letters are from Theage.com.au

Don't blame activists, outlaw factory farming

If the producers engaged in factory farming of poultry and pigs are treating their animals humanely, what do they have to hide? Why do they feel compelled to lobby the government to introduce "Ag gag" laws behind which cruel practices can continue out of the sight of consumers ("Activists face new laws", 17/6). Coles and Woolworths are phasing out cage eggs and sow crates because consumers demanded it after seeing the horrors revealed by activists' film footage. Without that damning evidence, millions more hens would be spending miserable lives in cages the size of an A4 piece of paper and countless more sows would be confined in crates. Don't shoot the messenger, Barnaby Joyce. Legislate instead to outlaw factory farming; that is what Australians want.

Jan Kendall, Hawthorn

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/the-age-letters/dont-blame-activists-outlaw-factory-farming-20140617-3abhk.html#ixzz36N7xBlp3>

Overcrowding, hormone dosing the real threats

The tough new approach from governments to vilify and prosecute animal activists is an acknowledgement of the success of activists, not-for-profit animal welfare groups and the power of the internet and technology. Barnaby Joyce calls those who trespass and film animal cruelty "camera-carrying vigilantes". What's legal inside factory farms is not necessarily ethical. There are higher laws that transcend human constructs.

Population growth, urban expansion and exorbitant land prices are all pushing animals inside large factory-warehouses, to be part of food-producing machinery that denies their sentience and welfare. Punishing activists, and their exposure of animal cruelty, is about "shooting the messenger" instead of tackling their concerns, humanely and ethically.

The "biosecurity" threat comes about because these confined animals have compromised immune systems due to overcrowding, direct exposure to effluent and being dosed with hormones and antibiotics.

Jan Heald, Mount Evelyn

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/the-age-letters/dont-blame-activists-outlaw-factory-farming-20140617-3abhk.html#ixzz36N8Q0mBP>

You can make a difference

A recent Lowy poll found that Australians are increasingly concerned about climate change. And one of the most significant contributors to it is the animal (livestock) industry. Responsible for approximately 30 per cent of greenhouse emissions produced in Australia, our livestock industries will produce substantially more warming over the next 20 years than all our coal-fired power stations put together. In addition, the CSIRO reports that a massive 92 per cent of land degradation in Australia is caused by those same animal industries. So if you are really serious about "saving the world", reduce your dairy and meat consumption. It's the single most effective way for individuals to make a real difference to reducing global warming.

Natasha Reus, Cheltenham

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/the-age-letters/dont-blame-activists-outlaw-factory-farming-20140617-3abhk.html#ixzz36N8yBF8m>

7 June 2014

Kangaroo culling becomes a political shooting match

So, political expediency has won through ("Shooters to begin kangaroo cull", June 6, p1). I would be more convinced if I saw follow-on reports that indicated that constantly killing kangaroos down to 1.5 per hectare actually made a difference to the overall balance of the Canberra Nature Park biodiversity over the longer term.

And what about protecting the kangaroo structures, too?

In the previous government, Shane Rattenbury was keen to have a more integrated approach to the management of the Canberra Nature Park - that has not happened. I wonder why?

Philip Machin, Wamboin, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/toot-toot-for-rail-folly-20130606-2nssd.html#ixzz352WPnI5h>

14 June 2014

Kangaroo shame

I am so ashamed to be a citizen of Canberra. Every year I have to explain to my relatives and friends in Britain why we are killing thousands of our beautiful kangaroos. Please do not insult my intelligence, Ms Gallagher, by saying you are protecting our flora and fauna.

Remember the huge cull where the suburb of Molonglo is now being built? I have no doubt there will be a lot of kangaroos killed in their natural corridor on either side of the Monaro Highway. This will enable the building of the crematorium, Tuggeranong Cemetery, Taree and the finishing of the Hume West Industrial Estate.

I don't know how you sleep in bed at night knowing you are destroying one of *the* national icons of this country.

In a word, disgraceful!

Carole Briggs, Chisholm

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/if-welfares-too-much-who-started-the-cash-splash-20140613-3a2wr.html#ixzz3541xYPCq>

11 June 2014

Embrace our home

It is sad that in an era when we can communicate with tiny devices even beyond our planet, the only way we can communicate with kangaroos is through barbed wire and bullets. It is sad that 200 years on we continue to dictate what lives and dies.

When will we as a society truly arrive in this place and live as if we belong rather than as colonists fighting everything already here? Those in the future will judge us harshly for our lack of imagination and compassion.

Phil Hunt, Garran

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/tuggeranong-in-flux-20140610-39vfu.html#ixzz3542U2DqW>

24 May 2015

Costly roo cull

Freedom of information data for 2009-10 to 2012-13 show the ACT government spent just under \$1 million on program delivery in killing kangaroos on ACT public reserves.

However, when the cost of ACT government staff time in planning and defending the kill across a range of responsibilities (ecology, management, public relations, security, legal, etc), as well as purchase and hire of equipment and the imputed cost of nature reserve closure to the public for weeks are added, the total cost would conservatively balloon out to closer to \$5 million over these years.

For much less expenditure on government programs we naturally expect a comprehensive assessment against outcome measures as justification for ongoing expenditure - in this case, according to ministerial announcements, the enhanced viability of certain threatened species of grass and small animals negatively impacted on by quietly grazing kangaroos.

Yet we find there are no defensible quantitative or qualitative indicators of anticipated outcomes and no results measures of any kind even after five years of kangaroo killing. Is this the level of slack accountability we expect of government decision-making in the ACT with public money? If no evidence can be provided what then of other worthy priorities in the ACT that have to bow and scrape for assistance including no doubt for the increasing decrepit natural state of the reserves.

Professor Steve Garlick, Bungendore, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/no-budget-emergency-for-miners-or-companies-20140523-38tqz.html#ixzz354Aq8sBC>

23 May 2014

Kangaroo courtship

Paul Ratcliffe (Letters, May 20) misrepresents the kangaroos situation in Canberra almost as well as if he were a spokesperson for TAMS. The role of kangaroos in the Australian ecosystem is to maintain the diversity of grasslands and woodland understorey in a way that benefits all the other species with which they share the land. TAMS has admitted its assertion that culling kangaroos will protect threatened species is PR with no evidence to support it. TAMS has also admitted its kangaroo counts on the reserves last year were impossible due to reproduction alone, and that some of those counted must have been kangaroos from elsewhere.

That blows Mr Ratcliffe's theory about roads preventing the free movement of kangaroos. It is true kangaroo populations have risen since the end of the drought, but not nearly enough to replace those slaughtered in five years of culling. It is also true their population will reduce dramatically when the drought returns, but mainly because they will reduce breeding. This is the cycle kangaroos were maintaining for about 5 million years before TAMS took to trying to manage them.

If kangaroos or other animals in the reserves are at risk of more suffering if not shot, why is it the animal protection and welfare organisations are so determined to stop this cull?

Frances Kennedy, Red Hill

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/get-to-grips-on-trips-20140522-38rao.html#ixzz354BHFhy3>

06 May 2014

In favour of furballs

A long history of kangaroo culls, warnings about flying foxes, and now a peon of hate against possums ("Permanent possum magic is goal of combiner against 'evil furballs'," May 3, p1). Can Canberra really claim to be the "Bush Capital" when there seems to be such a dislike of any native creature that hops, flies or climbs?

Kevin Baker, Yass, NSW

If there were indeed a "possum problem" in the ACT that merited a front-page report then it should have met journalistic standards of balance, integrity and and factual accuracy - none of these evident in the article printed.

Jane Baker, Yass, NSW

Year by year, generation after generation of possums has arrived in the trees at the front of our house. Each night we put a little food out for them. After a while we gain their trust and, what a feeling, to be able to hand-feed this wonderful animal. Sometimes we are able to pat them as they eat.

Our current house possum lives in a box right above our back door. When he/she wakes of an evening I say hello as I go out. We are less than 50 centimetres apart. Another has had a home in our garage. Some nights we have had three of the little cuties sitting in the trees waiting for their dinner. We have many fruit trees and are happy to share our produce. None of our neighbours have had

possum troubles and we tell them that's because they are all over at our house. How can anyone think these wonderful native animals are pests?

Mike Lankuts, Gilmore

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/chance-to-kiss-hockey-20140505-37shz.html>

08 May 2014

It's their territory

Where there are trees, there are possums. You can't get rid of them. They are like bad neighbours - evict them and others will move in anyway. So seal your roof spaces, stop worrying and learn to love them.

Michael Plummer, Watson

Given that the brushtail possum is not a noted nest builder, it seems unlikely that the claim ("Persistent possums under fire over chimney blaze fears", May 6, p3) of the possum being a fire causer is correct. If there is nest debris in a flue then it is much more likely to be from an introduced rat. I look forward to The Canberra Times either providing definitive proof of the claim, or apologising for the libellous treatment of Mr Trichosurus vulpecula.

Michael Mulvaney, Curtin

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/for-cool-read-arrogant-20140507-37wi4.html>

11 May 2014

Roos our responsibility

FRANKIE Seymour (Letters, May 4) is right. Wild kangaroos do "manage their own population admirably". Trouble is the reserves in which roos sleep are usually near extensive sheep-grazing lands supplying them with grass and water. And during years of reasonable rainfall, those "managed" kangaroo populations soar. The relevant "management" mechanism when the inevitable drought hits is not that fascinating roo-controlled pregnancy mechanism: it's many thousands of roos, brought into existence by graziers' grass and water, horrifically dying of hunger and thirst as bare paddocks are destocked, and they are left too weak to jump one last fence. But that all happens out of sight and out of mind. The welfare of those roos is as much a community responsibility as the sheep in whose paddocks they thrived. Any grazier allowing stock to die in similar circumstances would cause community outrage and wind up in jail.

Cuthbert Douglas, Bonython

12 May 2014

Feline Predators

Small native animals also exist quietly in some backyards in Canberra ("Animals at risk in extinction whodunit", May 8, p4). But freewheeling domestic cats create havoc among these magnificent tiny furry creatures. Why aren't some cat owners more aware that their pets wander into neighbours' yards day and night like feral predators?

Michael Dwyer, Melba

Please keep your moggies in at night (at least) for the sake of wildlife, their own safety, and your neighbours' sanity – Ed.

When nature visits

I have a possum that visits occasionally and sleeps during the day in my garage carport. He/she loves to chomp on a piece of banana and, unlike many humans, he/she never causes any damage to the environment, my garden or my property.

As to breeding, when I first took up residence in Canberra in 1980 the human population was about 200,000. Thirty-four years later the human population has more than doubled, causing the removal of thousands of trees and hundreds of hectares of grasslands and pollution levels have almost tripled.

So, I suggest we should all install bird wire in our chimneys, peel a banana and enjoy nature.

P.J. Carthy, McKellar

13 May 2014

Dingoes help graziers

I refer to your editorial "Our disappearing native animals" (Times2, May 9, p2). During the years I was working as a field geologist in the open savannah woodland country of far-north Queensland, I learnt two important things about the regional ecosystem.

One was the now well-known disastrous effect that cane toads have on wildlife, especially reptiles, but also birds of prey (except the tawny frogmouth) and small mammalian carnivores.

The other I learnt from local graziers and from my own observations. Feral pigs do enormous damage to the richest grasslands along rivers and in low-lying, seasonally swampy areas.

They also prey, in groups, on cattle, particularly on heavily pregnant cows and on cows giving birth. The only natural enemy of the feral pig (apart from man) is the dingo. I once watched, fascinated, as a pair of dingoes, one in front drawing the defending larger pigs towards it, the other behind the mob making occasional lightning raids on the piglets trailing behind.

The mob was almost exhausted, and it would have been only minutes, over the ridge and out of my sight, before the dingoes had their meal. In that part of the country, at least, dingoes are one of the graziers' - and the ecosystem's - best allies.

Douglas Mackenzie, Deakin

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/light-rail-plan-absurd-20140512-385t3.html>

14 May 2014

Reserve space for roos

Few people would oppose the humane euthanasia of a kangaroo that was "too weak to jump one last fence" (Letters, May 11). But it's doubtful that any of the thousands of kangaroos slaughtered on ACT reserves in the past 10 years would fit that description.

There has never been any evidence of kangaroos starving on ACT reserves, either in the decades before the annual culling began, nor since - not even in the worst drought. Kangaroos are very well adapted to Australia's cycles of drought and plenty. Like many other wild animals, they tend not to breed when food is scarce.

For two centuries they have had to compete for pasture with sheep and cattle on the disastrously cleared land that was once their habitat. They have been exterminated as pests, harvested for meat and skins, hunted for sport, and killed on the roads. Untold thousands died in the ACT's 2003 fires.

Now they are being driven out of their last refuges in the ACT by urban expansion. Only those few remaining on nature reserves have any hope of survival. Extinction - but not by starvation - will be the inevitable outcome if annual culling on the reserves continues.

Frankie Seymour, Queanbeyan, NSW

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/reserve-space-for-roos-20140513-387rf.html#ixzz34lQLqjIR>

15 May 2014

Kangaroos no threat

Controlled burning and mowing are a far greater threat to the survival of small animals, birds and plants than kangaroos grazing ("Cull to shoot 1600 roos, put rest on pill", May 13, p3).

Kangaroos play a critically important role in Canberra's nature reserves as no other species performs their ecological role and without them the system begins to break down.

It is the misguided management of reserves that destroys the precious ecosystems.

Julie Lindner, Farrer

Read more: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/after-64-years-im-worthless-thanks-for-that-joe-hockey-20140514-38ac9.html#ixzz31jXqedf8>

23 May 2014

Kangaroo courtship

Paul Ratcliffe (Letters, May 20) misrepresents the kangaroos situation in Canberra almost as well as if he were a spokesperson for TAMS. The role of kangaroos in the Australian ecosystem is to maintain the diversity of grasslands and woodland understorey in a way that benefits all the other species with which they share the land. TAMS has admitted its assertion that culling kangaroos will protect threatened species is PR with no evidence to support it. TAMS has also admitted its kangaroo counts on the reserves last year were impossible due to reproduction alone, and that some of those counted must have been kangaroos from elsewhere.

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Frances Kennedy, Red Hill

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Freedom of information data for 2009-10 to 2012-13 show the ACT government spent just under \$1 million on program delivery in killing kangaroos on ACT public reserves.

However, when the cost of ACT government staff time in planning and defending the kill across a range of responsibilities (ecology, management, public relations, security, legal, etc), as well as purchase and hire of equipment and the imputed cost of nature reserve closure to the public for weeks are added, the total cost would conservatively balloon out to closer to \$5 million over these years.

For much less expenditure on government programs we naturally expect a comprehensive assessment against outcome measures as justification for ongoing expenditure - in this case, according to ministerial announcements, the enhanced viability of certain threatened species of grass and small animals negatively impacted on by quietly grazing kangaroos.

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Professor Steve Garlick, Bungendore, NSW

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/no-budget-emergency-for-miners-or-companies-20140523-38tqz.html>

27 May 2014

Time to step aside

I am astonished that Bill Stefaniak chose not to stand aside as president of the tribunal which is hearing Animal Liberation's challenge to this year's kangaroo cull ("Another stay for kangaroo cull activists", May 21, p7). The moment he was alerted to the public perception that he is biased, he should have disqualified himself.

It does not matter where a perception of bias comes from, or whether it is justified. What matters is that the perception is real. To protect the judicial process from the taint of bias, a decision maker who is perceived to be biased must always stand aside. Judicial and quasi-judicial systems in all democratic countries recognise this.

It is even more unbelievable that Stefaniak would use parliamentary privilege as his reason for refusing to stand aside. In doing so, he has surely just strengthened the public perception of bias. The purpose of parliamentary privilege is to protect democracy, not to undermine justice.

Stefaniak must step aside. It is the right thing to do, for his own credibility and the credibility of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

David Walker, Ainslie

Bill Stefaniak's use of parliamentary privilege as an excuse for not stepping down as president of the tribunal hearing the latest challenge to the kangaroo cull is worth closer examination.

Imagine if a government minister admitted in Parliament that he had committed rape and believed that women who are raped deserve it. Imagine that same government minister, protected from his admission by parliamentary privilege, is now a judge in the criminal courts. Imagine him sitting in judgment on a rape case. Would the rape victim's fear that the judge was biased be any less real because he had admitted it under parliamentary privilege? Would anyone question the victim's right to demand another judge?

How is this hypothetical injustice in any way different in principle from this current situation with Bill Stefaniak? I cannot believe the Parliamentary Privileges Act was ever intended to be used in such a wrongful and cynical way.

Lydia Steele, Narrabundah

28 May 2014

Stefaniak has form

Even if anyone had actually seen that obscure Hansard reference in which Bill Stefaniak admitted to being a recreational shooter of animals or heard the debate, that is not the reason for the widespread public perception that he is biased and should step down from the hearing on kangaroo culling.

Rather it is his performance as president of the previous two ACAT hearings on the issue. It is a matter of public record that at both, Stefaniak preferred the opinions of an ACT government spokesman over the evidence of a genuinely independent ecology expert. It was also the impression of observers that he systematically ignored all the contradictions and inaccuracies in the government's evidence.

That is why Stefaniak is perceived as biased. It has nothing to do with anything he ever said under parliamentary privilege in the Legislative Assembly.

Most of us are far too busy to follow those Lilliputian debates.

Frankie Seymour, Queanbeyan, NSW

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/ct-letters/tax-reform-and-gst-20140527-392cf.html>

Articles

University of Oxford College votes for vegan meals to help fight climate change

Blue&Green tomorrow

14 June 2014

By [Jemma Collins](#)

Wadham College at the University of Oxford has passed a motion to ban meat products and only serve vegan food for five nights a week on campus.

Founded in 1610, Wadham consists of 150 graduates and 450 undergraduates. It was one of the first colleges to admit women and is known for its progressive attitude.

Oxford is made up of more than 30 different colleges, with the Wadham students' union (SU) meeting every fortnight.

At a recent meeting, James Kenna, a fourth-year engineer, proposed the motion of serving vegetarian food for four nights. Ben Szreter, a second-year history student, then said to really make a change, it should be amended to five days of vegan food, which was passed.

The motion said, *"Reducing the consumption of meat is one of many steps needed to reduce the effects of climate change."*

It was agreed in a meeting in March 2014 that Wadham would have meat-free Mondays, with the motion noting, *"Excessive meat consumption is harmful to the environment and it could also lead to an increased risk of certain illnesses like bowel cancer."*

However, some are worried this will intimidate prospective students.

"Five days of vegan food may sound intimidating to students across the country, and many Wadham students I've spoken to have said that they would have applied to another college if this policy was in place when they were applying", Szreter told the weekly newspaper the [Oxford Student](#).

The SU food representative will be carrying out the motion and it will be brought to the next food committee meeting.

The University of Oxford is believed to have the largest investments in fossil fuel companies of any UK university and earlier this month it [pledged to look into selling the investments](#) with the results due to be released in July.

In *Energy Policy*, a peer-reviewed journal, a study in 2012 found the production of fresh meat makes a significant contribution to harmful greenhouse gases. The UN has also been quoted as saying the [meat industry is a large contributor to environmental problems](#).

Photo: David Bolton via Flickr



<http://blueandgreentomorrow.com/2014/06/14/university-of-oxford-college-votes-for-vegan-meals-to-help-fight-climate-change-2/>

19 June 2014

Fish can feel pain, have memories and use tools, biologist says

by: AAP and Network Writers

From: News Corp Australia



No dummy ... Fish have memories, feel pain and work together in social communities.
Picture: Thinkstock Source: Supplied

FISH have feelings and intelligence on a par with other animals and deserve better consideration of their welfare, according to a behavioural biologist at Australia's Macquarie University.

Dr Culum Brown came to that conclusion after reviewing the scientific evidence on fish capabilities. He found that fish have good memories, lived in social communities, co-operated, and learned from one another.

They displayed behaviours normally seen in primates and were even able to build complex structures and use tools.

His findings contradict earlier studies which found that fish **do not feel pain** when struggling on the end of a line.

While their brains differed from those of other vertebrates, they contained structures that performed similar functions seen in other animals.

There was also mounting evidence that they felt pain in the same way humans do.

Dr Brown believes fish are just as likely to be sentient as other animals.

He wrote in the journal *Animal Cognition*: "Although scientists cannot provide a definitive answer on the level of consciousness for any nonhuman vertebrate, the extensive evidence of fish behavioural and cognitive sophistication and pain perception suggests that best practice would be to lend fish the same level of protection as any other vertebrate."



School ... Fish live in social communities and are able to learn from one another.
Source: News Limited

"We should therefore include fish in our 'moral circle' and afford them the protection they deserve."

People rarely thought about fish other than as food or pets, said Dr Brown.

He pointed out that fish were second only to mice in terms of the numbers used in scientific experiments.

With more than 32,000 known species, fish far outweighed the diversity of all other vertebrates combined, he added.

<http://www.news.com.au/technology/science/fish-can-feel-pain-have-memories-and-use-tools-biologist-says/story-fnjwkt0b-1226959400931>

23 May 2014

More than 800 calls of animal cruelty received by RSPCA in past year

Ben Westcott

Reporter at The Canberra Times

More than 800 complaints of animal cruelty were investigated by RSPCA ACT over the past year, only four of which ended in prosecutions against animal owners.

The ACT government and the RSPCA said most complaints were dealt with through cautions and owner education.

Based on figures in the most recent Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS) annual report, there were 832 complaints of the mistreatment of animals in the ACT in 2012-13.

Four prosecutions were initiated as a result of these investigations, of which two were successful, one was withdrawn and another was still ongoing as of July 2013.

One successful prosecution banned an offender from owning any animals for two years and put him on a good behaviour bond, after he pleaded guilty to abusing a cat.

A spokeswoman for Territory and Municipal Services said the small number of prosecutions in the ACT was for several reasons.

She said complaints received by the department had ranged in severity, from a dog being left in a backyard over a weekend to more serious welfare issues.

"Complaints and issues are generally resolved through cautions and advice from RSPCA inspectors," she said.

RSPCA ACT spokesperson Josh Pickham said the territory had two animal inspectors employed by the RSPCA. They carried out all animal welfare checks in Canberra.

Inspector Judy Liosatos said some of the bizarre calls she had been asked to make included checking on a mistreated cow who turned out to be a 44-gallon drum.

She said in many animal cruelty complaints it is not suitable for the animal to be taken out of the care of the individual.

"A lot of the time it's just education that they need. That's predominantly what our focus is," Mr Pickham said.

"A lot of the time we get people just concerned about the welfare of an animal. Our inspectors go out and visit them and educate the owners on things such as food quantities and reminding them to walk their animals.

"We only like to prosecute as a last resort. It's a question of what's the best course of action for the animal, for the individual and for the RSPCA."

The TAMS spokeswoman said inspectors regularly followed up on individual cases until the matter was resolved, which may take three to four visits.

The ACT had the second smallest number of complaints investigated per capita at just over one per thousand population.

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/more-than-800-calls-of-animal-cruelty-received-by-rspca-in-past-year-20140523-zrm8r.html>

Animal-Welfare Groups Hopping Mad Over Canberra's Kangaroo Cull

Time Australia
Ian Lloyd Neubauer
May 27, 2014

The Australian Capital Territory wants to reduce the number of kangaroos hopping about town for environmental reasons. But animal-rights groups are challenging the cull in court, saying the science isn't conclusive just yet

The old cliché about kangaroos hopping down the streets of Australia happens to be true in the national capital Canberra. Set 150 km from the east coast, among vast eucalyptus forests that are heavily prone to drought, the city's parks, gardens, golf courses and sports grounds have proved irresistible to the iconic marsupial that is featured alongside the emu on Australia's coat of arms. In fact, some of Canberra's nature reserves boast the highest densities of kangaroos on the continent.

"Seeing kangaroos in urban areas is one of the best aspects of living in Canberra," says Tara Ward, a legislative drafter with the Department of the Environment. "It's one of the top things tourists want to see here because they don't have to go for long drives to see our native animals."



Eastern grey kangaroos graze near Canberra
Élodie Raitière—AFP/Getty Images

Yet interactions between humans and kangaroos can easily turn sour. In 2009, a kangaroo crashed through the window of a Canberra home, terrorized a family and gouged holes in their furniture until it escaped through an open door. In 2010, a footballer was knocked unconscious when he ran into a kangaroo in a Canberra park, while another man received deep gashes to his legs last year when he collided with one on a front lawn during his morning jog. "We both got a nasty fright — and of course when kangaroos are startled they lash out," the victim, the capital territory's minister for territory and municipal services Shane Rattenbury, said at the time.

In seeming contradiction to the philosophies of the Australian Greens party he represents, Rattenbury is now spearheading Canberra's controversial kangaroo cull. Introduced in 2008 to prevent overgrazing, this year's shoot puts over 1,600 eastern grey kangaroos in the cross hairs. "The primary goal of the conservation cull is to maintain kangaroos at sustainable densities to minimize the impact of heavy grazing on other native fauna and flora," explains the Territory and Municipal Services website. "High numbers of kangaroos can eat down the ground-layer vegetation so it is no longer able to provide food and shelter for small animals."

Australian National University conservation expert Professor David Lindenmayer says the science behind the cull is solid. "These woodlands were designed to have major predators like Tasmanian tigers, dingoes and Aboriginal hunters that were the key processes of population regulation," he says. "And now we have significant amounts of extra water and grass, so it's a double whammy."

He adds, "Herbivore overpopulation is not just happening here, but in the U.S. and Patagonia with deer and with other species in different parts of the world. So for animal-welfare groups to say there is no evidence of it happening is like people saying there is no evidence of climate change. The data is very strong."

Yet one of those welfare groups, Animal Liberation ACT, has thrown the demand for evidence-based environmental management back in the Establishment's face. Earlier this month, the group's lawyers, the Animal Defenders Office, persuaded a judge to grant a stay against the kangaroo cull on the basis that the government has failed in its duty to prove the kangaroo cull had improved biodiversity over the past six years.

"They have not collected any baseline data or monitoring data on the conditions of other species on the reserves they say they are saving," says legislative drafter Ward, who moonlights as a volunteer with the Animal Defenders Office. "If the government wants to go and kill more than 1,600 healthy wild animals, we have to be clear that the science is impeccable before we let them do that."

"And remember, those 1,600 deaths don't take into account the joeys that have to be brutally dispatched by shooters after they've killed their mothers," she says. "Part of the applicant's contention is that it is impossible to carry this out without cruelty being involved."

David Nicholls, a 70-year-old farmer who spent his whole life working in the bush — two years as a "roo shooter" — agrees. "You try to get clean head shots but it's difficult because kangaroos are very jumpy — the slightest noise or change in the wind startles them," he says. "You tell me which Olympic shooter can achieve 100% clean shots every time, even in perfect conditions? The clean-head-shot theory is a myth."

The hearing to indefinitely end Canberra's kangaroo cull commences on Thursday and concludes on June 2. In a bid to cool tempers, Rattenbury's office has announced plans to use the drug deslorelin to neuter 500 eastern greys on a trial basis — the largest neutering drive ever performed on kangaroos. But with costs projected at \$830 per animal — three times what it costs to shoot them — and data showing deslorelin can cause cancer, the trial isn't expected to go mainstream anytime soon. "And even if it does work, those nonbreeding animals will continue to eat large amounts of food throughout their lives," says Lindenmayer.

"The reality is this debate is not about science or the environment. It's about people's value sets," he says. "Some people look at the world from a purely utilitarian viewpoint; others have a strictly bioethical position."

<http://time.com/115385/animal-welfare-australia-canberra-kangaroo-cull/>

Egg producers sought to cull chickens and destroy eggs in bid to raise prices: ACCC

The Age

May 28 2014

Esther Han

Consumer Affairs Reporter

Australian egg farmers planned to kill millions of hens prematurely and bury their eggs as part of an industry-wide strategy to boost their profits, the Federal Court has been told.

The farmers, who were facing a "catastrophic" oversupply that would swamp the market, drew up the plan to create a false shortage and increase consumer demand to keep their profits intact.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has accused the industry's most powerful body, the Australian Egg Corporation Ltd, of attempting to create a cartel to manipulate egg prices for both grocery shoppers and businesses.

It is taking court action against the corporation, its managing director James Kellaway, and two directors Jeffrey Ironside and Zelko Lendich, as well as Ironside Management Services, trading as Twelve Oaks Poultry, and Farm Pride Foods.

The ACCC alleges that, in November 2010, the egg corporation told members to kill hens two weeks earlier than usual until mid-2011 to avoid oversupply and a "catastrophic" commercial result.

It also alleges that, in early 2012, the corporation organised an oversupply crisis meeting with the top 25 egg producers, saying the industry must stop the "worrying and disturbing trend threatening current profit levels", as detailed by Mr Kellaway in an email. Farmers were told production had peaked in September 2011 at 33 million dozen eggs and would continue at record levels unless they lowered output in a "co-ordinated and consolidated fashion".

At the meeting, Mr Kellaway offered three short-term solutions: donating eggs to food charities, dumping or burying eggs and bringing slaughter dates forward.

If a producer's output grew by more than 5 per cent over three years, Mr Kellaway said, they should kill birds up to eight weeks prematurely and donate eggs to Foodbank.

It was not known whether the attempt was successful. National retail egg sales were valued at \$566 million in 2012.

"Detecting, stopping and deterring cartels operating in Australian markets remain an enduring priority for the ACCC, because of the ultimate impact of such anti-competitive conduct on consumers who will pay more than they should," its chairman Rod Sims said. "Industry associations need to be conscious of competition compliance issues when they bring competing firms together."

Bede Burke, chairman of the NSW Farmers' egg committee, said egg prices were never mentioned at the crisis meeting.

"We've had a terrible oversupply," he said. "And we do this regularly, this is nothing un-normal. Since we were deregulated . in 1989 and beyond, there's no mechanism to remove oversupply."

The egg corporation refused to comment on the allegations, but said it would co-operate in court.

<http://www.theage.com.au/environment/animals/egg-producers-sought-to-cull-chickens-and-destroy-eggs-in-bid-to-raise-prices-acc-20140528-393uv.html>

More kangaroo articles:

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/canberra-kangaroo-cull-to-shoot-1600-animals-put-others-on-pill-20140512-zrae0.html>

<http://au.ibtimes.com/articles/553906/20140528/canberra-kangaroo-cull-culling-act.htm#.U7TYw9R--70>

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/act-eastern-grey-kangaroo-cull-science-called-into-question-20140604-zrxq3.html>

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/act-government-ecologist-defends-kangaroo-cull-figures-at-hearing-20140605-zrz34.html>

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/canberras-kangaroo-cull-to-begin-after-challenge-fails-20140611-zs3w1.html>

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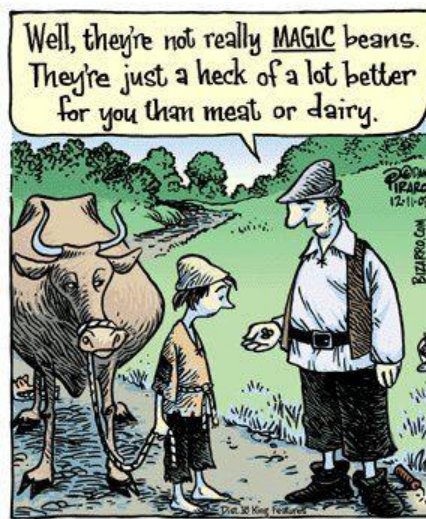
Answer to Who Said That?

'Ask the experimenters why they experiment on animals, and the answer is: "Because the animals are like us." Ask the experimenters why it is morally okay to experiment on animals, and the answer is: "Because the animals are not like us." Animal experimentation rests on a logical contradiction.'

— Professor Charles R. Magel

Sudoku Solution

8	4	6	5	3	1	2	9	7
5	1	2	7	6	9	4	3	8
9	3	7	4	2	8	6	5	1
4	6	8	3	9	7	5	1	2
1	7	3	6	5	2	8	4	9
2	9	5	1	8	4	7	6	3
7	5	9	2	4	3	1	8	6
6	8	1	9	7	5	3	2	4
3	2	4	8	1	6	9	7	5



New and renewing MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following people into the Society.

Alisha Baker
Edgar Crook
Emma Lebel
Gareth Ballard
Isha Bae
Judith Ballard
Katrina Freeman

Leah Horsfall
Lisa Green
Mark Harry
Michelle Swann
Mike O'Shaughnessy
Nicole Godwin
Rebecca Smith

Robert Davy
Robyn G Soxsmith
Sia Brook
Tara Ward
Tracey Lofthouse
Xin-Lin Goh

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