

-PRESS RELEASE 22 MAY 2008-

Wildcare pulls out of National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference Committee

Wildcare has been assisting the RSPCA (ACT) Wildlife area as part of the organising committee for the upcoming National Wildlife Carers Conference to be held in Canberra in late July.

The failure of the RSPCA (ACT) CEO, Mr Michael Linke to take any responsibility for, nor advocate for the prevention of cruelty and inhumane treatment of the kangaroos currently being killed at the former Belconnen Naval Transmitter Station has caused Wildcare to reassess its involvement alongside the RSPCA (ACT) CEO on the committee. Wildcare has withdrawn from any involvement in the organisation of the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Conference (NWRC).

Members of Wildcare have constantly sought to advise the RSPCA (ACT) CEO and inspectors of the inhumane treatment during the cull being undertaken and have been handballed between the Federal offices of the RSPCA and the ACT office with both indicating that they have no jurisdiction. This is a surprising stance to make given Mr Linke's continual public advocacy for the kangaroos to be killed and incorrect claims that the animals were at threat of starvation.

Wildcare is unable to work alongside such hypocrisy and has withdrawn from the NWRC organising committee.

Wildcare has continually asked for proof that the kangaroos are causing any damage to the native temperate grasslands or the Ginninderra Peppergrass, Perunga Grasshopper or Golden Sun Moth which are the only recognised endangered species at the Belconnen Naval Transmitter Station. It was possible to move the kangaroos at a fraction of the costs the Department of Defence have publicly claimed. The protocols and fencing arrangements that the contractor performing the killing, Cumberland Ecology, are using are set up in such a way as to cause extreme stress to the animals. Advice from people experienced in handling kangaroos is urgently needed. It seems neither the RSPCA (ACT), the contractor, Cumberland Ecology or the Department of Defence are interested in seeking any such advice. The welfare of these animals is being neglected by all but most seriously by the organisation that is supposed to represent animal welfare in Australia, the RSPCA.

Wildcare regrets having to act on this but cannot be seen to give tacit support for the RSPCA (ACT) CEO by our involvement in the organisation of this conference. We apologise to those RSPCA members who are truly committed to the welfare of all native wildlife and hope that in the future the welfare of native animals will be better advocated by the RSPCA (ACT) CEO, Mr Michael Linke.

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