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Australian Society for Kangaroos

'Dedicated to the victims of the largest wildlife massacre in the world'

MEDIA RELEASE

INTERNAL DEFENCE DOCUMENTS EXPOSE BLOOD BATH DURING SECRET KANGAROO CULL

Internal Defence documents received under Freedom Of Information has revealed a blood bath during kangaroo culls on a Victorian Defence base, along with deliberate attempts by Defence to avoid RSPCA involvement and adherence to animal welfare codes during kangaroo culls.

Internal Defence documents received by the Australian Society for Kangaroos have revealed that between April 2012 and May 2013, 101 kangaroos and at least 30 joeys were slaughtered by the Defence Department at the Swan Island Defence Base at Queenscliffe in Victoria. The department then applied to the Department of Environment and Primary Industries to kill another 120 kangaroos in June 2013.

The documents revealed that the Defence Department deliberately kept the killing a secret from Victoria's peak animal welfare body stating in internal correspondence that:

' (The RSPCA) has expressed concern about the management of kangaroos by Defence',
and

'If made aware of the culling activity, RSPCA will insist on compliance with the Code at reference D, and is likely to request that an RSPCA animal welfare inspector view some aspects of the activity.'

Instead they decided:

'Defence does not intend to further consult with RSPCA_ prior to the kangaroo management activity at Swan Island'

Nikki Sutterby, President, Australian Society for Kangaroos said in a statement that:

"The secret documents revealed that females carrying joeys were targeted by Defence during kangaroo culls, and an orphaned joey was gunned down when attempting to reunite with it's dead mother".

The Defence document titled 'SI Environment Management-24 February 2013-Post activity Brief' wrote: *'Outcome- 31 EGK's consisting of 13 male and 18 female of which 17 female were carrying young were shot and killed at SI within the AO between (DELETED47E). Note: An additional EGK was euthanased to the planned total cull of 30. After the last*

animal was culled a young joey approached the carcass from the scrub and was obviously associated with the deceased EGK. The shooter immediately shot and killed the young joey: this action was taken as the shooter knew that the animal would die from starvation due to the mother being deceased'.

The documents also revealed significant concern on behalf of the Defence Department that the killing would be witnessed by the public and 'island personnel', and took considerable effort to avoid this with senior Defence officers directing staff to: *'provide assurance that no organic sign of the activity is visible the next day,'* and *'avoid Sunday nights as there will be increased personnel movements on some Sunday afternoon and evenings'.*

The documents also raised serious animal welfare concerns when Defence described efforts to clean up after the shooting. An internal Defence report wrote: *'the clean up activities had increased significantly with garden beds, pathways, pavements and garden beds requiring attention, rather than just garden beds.'*

An internal Defence email also raised concern about how the kangaroos were being killed, and whether the Code of Practice was being adhered to. The email said:

'DSE have provided us with a small window for this permit- 2 months- if you intend to proceed with further kangaroo management. I propose that we issue a warning order to(DELETED) for a further activity during late April and May 2013, and trial the proposed method of (DELETED-47E) along the (DELETED-47E) and possible use of (DELETED-47E).

Nikki Sutterby added:

"The fact that large parts of the documents relating to the shooting operation were deleted from the files adds to our concerns about the humaneness of the killing".

The documents also exposed a deliberate attempt by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries to mislead the public about Defence's kangaroo killing programs. This relates to anonymous reports made to ASK in May 2013 of kangaroos hopping around the island with gun shot wounds to their face and body following Defence shooting programs. When ASK contacted DEPI to report these concerns, DEPI denied Defence had a current permit to kill kangaroos, which according to the documents was incorrect, as Defence did have a current permit to kill kangaroos on Swan Island at that time.

Ms Sutterby added:

"The Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries, a government public service, deliberately lied to the public to conceal information about the slaughter of protected native wildlife on public land".

In response to the documents, Nikki Sutterby, President, Australian Society for Kangaroos

expressed concern that:

“Kangaroos are family animals with complex social structures and close family bonds that are being destroyed by these killing programs. The suffering endured by kangaroos slaughtered in this way, and the trauma experienced by the ones left behind, including the little joeys that are orphaned, is heart wrenching.”

“The ongoing slaughter of these gentle native animals that are an integral part of the Australian environment is barbaric and unnecessary with no scientific, animal welfare or ecological justification whatsoever”, said Ms Sutterby

Pic- Orphaned Eastern Grey kangaroo joey at Monty's Rest Wildlife Refuge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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