

To Whom It May Concern:

Following is my personal submission to the bushfire inquiry. I give my consent for this submission to be made public.

I am a veterinarian of 35 years experience in general mixed practice, primarily small animals, with a small large animal and wildlife component. I was called up by Vets Beyond Borders to volunteer in the LAOKO triage centre for bushfire effected wildlife located in Cooma. I arrived on Friday 7th February and finished up on Tuesday 31st March (7 1/2 weeks).

One thing I struggled with during the early part of my volunteering was being unaware of the parameters I was legally working within; and assessing the range of views about what was appropriate management of the wildlife in our care.

I recommend that, as part of preparations for future bushfires, people who will be involved with the care of bushfire effected wildlife must be informed about what they are likely to face and what their options are. These people would include volunteer wildlife carers, veterinarians and vet nurses.

It should be mandatory that volunteers read through and be tested on

* the relevant local NSW Department of Environment, Energy and Sciences Codes of Practice for Sick, Injured and Orphaned Wildlife including Protected Species.

*plain English summaries of legislation covering wildlife search and rescue, initial and ongoing care, including special provisions during emergencies;

*guideline for assessing injured wildlife;

*guidelines for providing emergency care for injured wildlife;

*guidelines for ongoing care plans for injured wildlife ;

*guidelines for humane euthanasia of injured wildlife;

I believe that if all people involved were aware of the criteria used to assess wildlife (pain scales, signs of stress, type and severity of injuries, likelihood of release, etc.); the codes of practice guiding their management in care and the overarching legislation governing these animals then a more cohesive and united approach would be achieved.

I can be contacted via email or on [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Kate Colclough B.V.Sc.



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