

**Submission
No 33**

**INQUIRY INTO THE RSPCA RAID ON THE WATERWAYS
WILDLIFE PARK**

Name: Ms Lee Tsakalos and Mr Gay McGregor

Date received: 1/07/2010

GPSC5 GPSC5 - Fwd: Inquiry into the RSPCA raid on the Waterways Wildlife Park

From: 139Committees
To: GPSC5 GPSC5
Date: 7/1/2010 3:23 PM
Subject: Fwd: Inquiry into the RSPCA raid on the Waterways Wildlife Park

>>> "Lee Tsakalos" <...> > 6/17/2010 8:24 pm >>>

To The General Purpose Committee No5

I would like to enter a submission relating to the removal of the eight Koala from our local Waterways Wildlife Park on 3 February 2010.

With reference to :- Term a)

From what I understand as stated in the subsequent Public Rally, there didn't seem to be any investigations prior to the unannounced arrival of the RSPCA Special Constables concerning the Koala but rather some old dingoes which had been euthanized by the Vet who has worked with and for the Park, some time prior to the appearance of the RSPCA.

Regarding Term b)

I am not of the opinion that proper protocols were followed by the Special Constables relating to investigating and assessment of the welfare of the animals, though I must admit I cannot find just what their protocols actually are since I have been unable to find their policy on their website. My belief is that the Park's owner should have been approached with courtesy and respect with a view to communication and co-operation. The owner was not even there but in Hospital following an operation at the time, and the volunteers who were approached in a quite hostile manner graciously accompanied the Constables around the Park though the dingoes were already gone. After seeing all around the Park, the volunteers showed them lastly to the Koala enclosure where the female constable was apparently very impressed and wanted to take photos to show her daughter/niece (not sure the exact relationship) told the volunteers that everything was in order and they would be back in a few days with the paperwork.

In relation to Term c)

I find it extremely hard to understand that when the RSPCA Special Constables did return, it was again

unannounced and with a very aggressive manner, equipped with Washing Baskets to take all the Koala and rudely ordering some overseas visitors to "get out!"This Park is closed". I believe the overseas visitors made a report to the Police. As to the criteria to justify the removal of the Koala – if they were "stressed and malnourished" (mind you it was in the midst of a very hot summer when many wild Koala were dropping out of trees dead from the heat or turning up in people's yards anywhere in town wherever they could access water for either drinking or cooling), then why did they leave them for NINE days before returning, and if they were so much in need of treatment why wouldn't they call in ANY of the several local vets in order to help them immediately instead of stressing them and causing more distress by removing them from their home environment and their carer with whom they bonded??? I completely fail to understand why they would subject them to a long car trip if they were so stressed!

Coming to Term e)

The television film crew arriving and filming the whole procedure for an episode of RSPCA's Animal Rescue program, I believe was pre-arranged. This used to be one of only three programs I used to love watching, but there is no way I can watch it anymore. The role of the RSPCA shown in the TV show appeared to be presented in what were genuine cases of neglect or cruelty or rescue. In the cases of apparent cruelty etc the program shows how the RSPCA respond to a report and try to find the owners and endeavor to work with the owners to correct problems. I believe this is how it should be but I'm afraid I would never take that at face value after what has happened here with the Wildlife Park and have now become aware of so many many stories where the Gestapo style tactics have been used all over Australia, UK, Canada. The stories I have become aware of may involve different animals, different people, but each one I know about just reads like a script repeated over and over again.

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While this Inquiry has to with the Waterways Wildlife Park, I would also like to add some further comments/opinions.

I would like to know why it is that the 'Special Constables' in the Compliance arm of the RSPCA are allowed to hold more power than even the Police – what gives them the right to enter private property and seize or kill animals. I see this as a violation of the rights of the people. I have heard so many stories whereby these 'Special Constables' have entered private property and often when the owners are not there, unannounced and take it upon themselves to seize or destroy animals. A case in question was the Murder of Mr [redacted] cattle in a very **inhumane** way causing them to die in pools of blood having shot them very cruelly from any angle not even with a single shot to the head. The blood tests showed they were healthy, as did photos taken the day before. These cattle even though enduring the 6 year drought were healthy enough to bear calves and maintain their calves – I would suggest that leaving these 13 calves abruptly motherless was an act of cruelty in itself from an organization which is supposed to be dedicated to the prevention of cruelty. The volunteers are no doubt dedicated to the prevention and rescue from cruelty and do a wonderful job but I don't believe there should be this group of 'Special Constables' allowed to wield power over people, using tactics very much like that of the Gestapo, I believe they should have no place in the RSPCA and allow there to be co-operation, consideration and aid to the people and the animals. I also would question the secrecy and silence of the RSPCA which has been so loud it has been deafening! No one was supposed to know where the Koala were taken, and when it leaked out nobody was allowed to enquire about their health, nor could anyone visit them. There was so much secrecy and evasion, had they been

open and responsive to questions I don't believe there would have been such an angry reaction from the community. Had there been openness, suggestion, answers, communication with the owners and the local vets instead of removing the Koala from their own home environment there would not have been such an uproar.

There are more things I would like to draw attention to but I will only refer to the "explanation" given after eight Koala had been returned. The owners, upon asking why the joey which had been in the mother's pouch at seizure, was not returned, were told it had disappeared and that the mother had eaten it. Since myself and others had never heard of such a thing I made enquiries from the Marsupial Association and the Australian Reptile Park. I am attaching the replies received from these organizations.

Yours very faithfully

Lee Tsakalos

AND

Gay McGregor

**From:** Tim Faulkner, Australian Reptile Park

**To:**

**Date:** Fri, 4 June, 2010 12:18:37 PM

**Cc:**

**Subject:** RE: Website Enquiry:

Hi there

It is not normal for a koala to eat her joey full stop. They eat eucalyptus at that alone. I have never heard of it happening and find it very hard to believe especially at the age of 4months.

I hope this helps

Tim

-----Original Message-----

**From:**

**Sent:** Thursday, 3 June 2010 8:57 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** Website Enquiry:

The following details have been submitted from the form:

01. Name: Lee Tsakalos

02. Email:

03. Phone:

04. Address1:

05. Address2:

06. Suburb: 2222 411

07. Postcode:

08. State: NSW

09. Country: AUSTRALIA

10. Message: Can you please help me with my query? I want to know if it is

correct that a koala mother will eat her four month old joey? Is it correct that a koala mother would eat her baby at any age at all? I find this hard to accept and I would like to know the correct answer.

I thank you for any clarification you could help me with on this question.

*Sincerely  
Lee Tsakalos*

I would appreciate it if you can tell me if this is or is not correct please

Thank you and sincerely yours

Lee Tsakalos

\_\_\_\_\_ Information from ESET Smart Security, version of virus  
signature database 5188 (20100610) \_\_\_\_\_

The message was checked by ESET Smart Security.

<http://www.eset.com>

**Main Identity**

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From: "Marsupial Society" <  
To: "Lee Tsakalos"  
Sent: Friday, 11 June 2010 7:32 PM  
Subject: Re: To Webmaster

Hi Lee,

Many thanks for your email.

We have never heard of anything like the scenario you describe. A four month old Koala joey would be very large and Koalas are not equipped (dentally) to eat meat. Also the Koala has a backward opening pouch (the same as the Wombat) and Mum is not able to reach the joey whilst it is in the pouch. A joey would have to exit the pouch (and at four months this is unlikely) for it to become a meal.

I think perhaps you may be confusing the issue that Koalas joeys (not the adult) *do* eat their mothers faeces in order to transmit gut flora to the joey in order to keep it healthy and provide the necessary gut flora for a life of eating Eucalypt leaves.

So, in short, what you say is not correct.

I hope this has been of some help.

Regards

Bob Cleaver  
Webmaster & President  
The Marsupial Society of Australia Inc.  
[www.marsupialsociety.org](http://www.marsupialsociety.org)

----- Original Message -----

From: .  
To: .  
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2010 8:34 PM  
Subject: To Webmaster

Dear Webmaster

I have a question to ask about Koala behavior. Specifically, I want to know if it is correct that a mother koala will eat her four month old joey? Indeed will she or any other koala eat a baby koala at a younger age. I have been told that this is not uncommon. I find it hard to accept and I would like expert clarification on this question.