Submission to the Federal Senate Standing Committee on “The effectiveness of threatened species and ecological communities' protection in Australia”

Dear Sir or Madam:

As an Australian citizen and a member of the ACT Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, a wildlife carer and a person concerned for our country’s biodiversity and the planet’s health I would like to make a short comment that may be more a question.

There is a lot of research into, and monitoring of, Australian wildlife numbers by Universities and grass roots groups but it seems to me that, even though much of the work is published, the Governments (both State and Federal), are way behind current thinking.

Just look at the example of the Christmas Island bat that has now become extinct through lack of action rather than knowledge. Even one species removed from the food chain causes huge ramifications. In the instance of the bat, an insect eater, there may be plagues of mosquitos on Christmas Island, potentially increasing the incidence of malaria in the region.

The EPBC Act lists many endangered or threatened Australian native animals. Does this Act have any weight in law? Here I am referring to the issuing of licences to shoot flying foxes. Two species that are commonly shot are listed as endangered. Is it not illegal to shoot or harm an EPBC listed animal? How can a government body issue licences to shoot when the same government has deemed the animal endangered?

We should be concerned, especially after the extreme heat events where many thousands of flying foxes perished, that the gene pool is being reduced. Healthy biodiversity (a balance between all living things) can only be achieved if populations are robust and plentiful.

Sincerely

Marg Peachey