

Animal abuse: What to do to help stop it



Sadly we are seeing more and more of this. Besides being horrifying it makes us feel pretty helpless. Stopping this sort of thing is difficult. But we can all become more aware and know what to do to aid in the police preventing or prosecuting those responsible, by taking responsibility ourselves. Do not ring 000, as this is not their area of responsibility.

To prosecute, the police need evidence. We can start by doing the following, if possible:

- DETAILS OF OFFENDERS: vehicle registrations, date, time, location, descriptions, even photos (without putting yourself at risk)
- DETAILS OF INCIDENT: photos, date, time, location.

This needs to be reported straight away to both the RSPCA and your local police station. Better still, if you know who your Rural Crime Officers are, contact them. If not, find out who they are, tell them you're a wildlife carer and leave a number. If they come across injured wildlife they can call you and start to build a relationship. You can find their areas on the police website.

If you don't have any info on who did it, still report it. Rural crime officers build pictures of what is happening in their area and change patrols dependant on crime reports.

N.B. HUNTING IN NSW NATIONAL PARKS IS STILL ILLEGAL.

Hunting in NSW National Parks is not approved yet, and it isn't being introduced to all National Parks anyway. So if you see vehicles with pig dogs on the back in a NP, even if just driving through, this is illegal. They will receive a \$500 fine if you give the info to the Local National Parks office (not police) and are prepared to go to court to say you saw them. Photos are good, but don't risk your safety. I've reported countless who have been fined, and never yet gone to court, and we have reduced this problem locally.

Your local paper will be interested, especially if you have a photo and some additional facts. Contact the Police (Rural Crime) and get a quote, and contact details to report further abuse or details of offenders. Making the public aware will help in prevention.

DO NOT RING 000. If you don't know who your local police are in NSW you can call the police assistance line on 131 444 (put it in your phone!) and report it there—you will be given a reference number. Check out what resources your state has, and be proactive.