

"Australia has become a society where we are consumed by greed and apathy and apathy is one of the big problems.

"We have got some wonderful people in Australia but you've got to motivate them to do something. We need the average person to get up and have their say or else we are going to have nothing left.

"I'd liken it to some kind of illness - a disease which spreads ever so slowly but keeps spreading out and out.

"We have come to accept cruelty to animals, which is really, really sad. You just have to look at the kangaroo (meat) industry and how they dispose of joeys. Those people will just stomp on their heads with their boots.

"And now we've got turtles in north Queensland being cut up alive and, just recently, I saw some film footage of Fraser Island's dingoes and that's enough to make anyone cry.

"They are starving. We've taken their food off the island

- taken the brumbies away and now they're not even allowed to feed down on the beaches because of their interaction with people, which was one of the prime areas where they would pick up dead fish and this and that.

"Now there's nothing left for them (to eat)."

Mr Irwin said Australia's dwindling wildlife numbers and habitat needed to be urgently addressed by authorities before even more animals were put on the endangered and critically endangered list.

"If we do something to protect them before it becomes real problem it's better and easier and more

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Bob Irwin

proactive," he said. "To put it bluntly we've got to have government officials and bureaucrats with balls. That's a fact.

"Not like Kate Jones, our Environment Minister, who at the moment doesn't even believe there's a problem with turtles and dugongs. How can she have her head in the sand?

"Her responsibility is to administer the wildlife protection Act yet she doesn't believe a problem exists."

Mr Irwin said recovering in intensive care in hospital after his heart attack on March 21 he thought he'd had enough of battling to save wildlife.

"But that only lasted about a week and I thought, 'well, no, I can't give it away because of all these other people that are trying really, really hard and need as much support as they can get'," he said.

"And I look back to the Traveston Dam. If people had said it was too hard and let's just leave it, then they would have destroyed the Mary River Valley and probably those endangered species of animals that live there.

"But because they fought hard for three years they finally had a win.

"I'm just hopeful if enough people keep going maybe we are going to stop the slaughter of the kangaroos and the wombats and the rest of the animals.

"We've got to keep at it and keep plugging away. But it does get ever so frustrating."



**ACT NOW:** Bob Irwin (above) says society must press authorities to help wildlife suffering because of humans, such as this starving dingo (left) on Fraser Island. **Main Picture:** Megan Slade

