

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment Inquiry into the health and wellbeing of kangaroos and other macropods in New South Wales

Supplementary questions

Questions for NSW Farmers Association

1. *On page 42 of the June 11th Hearing transcript, it was stated that “Our western division chair, Greg Rogers...-the Government did a count on his place and he had over 9,000 kangaroos,” Can you explain how the count was conducted, on what date and over what geographic area?*

In the 2017 count by the NSW Government over 7 million kangaroos were recorded in the Western Division. As the Western Division is approximately 70 million acres, this equates to 1 kangaroo per 10 acres. This is an estimate based on the size of Mr Roger’s landholding.

2. *On page 42 of the June 11th Hearing transcript, it was stated that “The decline in kangaroo numbers during the recent drought is consistent with population changes during comparable historical droughts and is not of ecological concern” species.” If plummeting kangaroo numbers is not of ecological concern, can you tell us what the reproductive rates of the different species of kangaroos are? At what age do they reproduce, what are juvenile mortality rates, how many young do females rear in their lifetimes?*

The recorded decline in kangaroo numbers in NSW is attributable to prolonged and severe drought conditions, predominately over 2018 and 2019. This drought-induced decline is not inconsistent with declines during comparable historical droughts.

3. *Do you agree that kangaroos should be able to live and thrive in the NSW environment that has been their home for millions of years?*

NSW Farmers strongly supports the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and a focus on retaining biodiversity.

4. *According to Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences. March 2015 Land Use Report, agricultural activities occur over 78% of this state, and since the repeal of the Native Vegetation Act, clearing of native grasses, small shrubs and ground cover increased from 3,666ha in 2017 to 22,310ha in 2018. In the central west, it grew from 2,270ha to 14,088ha. Is NSW Farmers Association concerned about the ongoing loss of native vegetation cleared for agricultural purposes and which forces more kangaroos into grazing on pasture and crops?*

It is NSW Farmers’ understanding that as almost no form of land management could be authorised under the Native Vegetation Act, the figures taken in isolation provide no indication of the quality of native vegetation managed, the type of management undertaken or improvements made. Farmers understand the importance of ecosystem management and actively work to maintain and improve the health and diversity of the landscape.

5. *On p 7 of your submission, you describe exclusion fencing as a “non-lethal method of protecting agricultural assets from overgrazing by kangaroos”. Given that kangaroos can neither pass under, through or over exclusion fencing that may run in clusters for 100s of*

kilometres, how are kangaroos to eat or drink where they have been either trapped in or locked out from food and water sources?

- 6. What about kangaroos that are trapped and die inside the exclusion fencing, unable to escape? According to the submission lodged by the ADO, this has the potential for farmers to be in breach of animal cruelty laws- has the Association considered this risk?*
- 7. What happens to kangaroos that are trapped on roadsides, unable to pass through properties due the presence of clustered exclusion fencing? How do they thrive on barren roadsides with the ever-present threat of being run over by trucks and road-trains?*

Kangaroos are robust, well adapted and have never been considered a threatened species. Unfortunately, NSW is home to a range of established invasive species whose prevalence and distribution makes eradication impossible. Exclusion fencing is the most cost effective measure for preventing stock predation by wild dogs and overgrazing from feral deer, pigs and goats. The goal of pest management in this scenario is to contain and limit further spread.

- 8. On p46 of the June 11 hearing transcript Ms Petrie stated that; "In the Western Division up to 50 per cent of grazers are kangaroos, rabbits and feral goats". Can you give the percentage for kangaroo grazing separate from rabbit s and goats – if so, what is it?*

The data available to NSW Farmers does not provide this level of detail.

- 9. On p3 of your submission and restated in your evidence at the 11TH June hearing, you state that "NSW Farmers' also believes the farming community has shown they can perform best practice kangaroo management without onerous tagging requirements and these should also not be reinstated." Can you please detail why you are you confident of the accuracy of this statement?*

Kangaroo management has taken place on private land for many decades. Over this period the kangaroo species has always been abundant. Dips in population have usually correlated with periods of drought.